High Skilled Migration in Sweden and Canada:

Labour Market Integration of young skilled Romanians in Sweden and Canada

Teodora Morar
Abstract

There are few qualitative studies that focus on immigrants’ perspectives on the labour market and that take into consideration both human and social capital. A significant group of migrants that counts as one of the most mobile is constituted by the highly-skilled migrants. Canada and Sweden have proved to be two of the main countries targeting worldwide this particular group. Based on ten semi-structured interviews with highly-skilled Romanian migrants, living in the two above mentioned countries, this study strives to gain in-depth knowledge on their labour market outcomes, taking into consideration aspects such as education, social networks, type of employment and other skills they possess and are seen as valuable in the labour market. Through a comprehensive theoretical framework and a carefully selected previous research, the interpretation on the findings of the interviews is tied to the particularities of the labour market in question. The results of the study point to a complexity of labour market experiences encountered by the Romanian migrants, yet similarities in the two countries are expressed, in view of the importance of networking and further investment in higher education or language proficiency. Moreover, the interviewees encounter several obstacles in accessing and integrating in the labour market, that depend to a large extent on their own personality and motivation in order to be surpassed. Last but not least, the type and demand on the labour market regarding a profession, further influences the individual’s motivation in staying or leaving the host country. By the end of the study, further research is recommended with focus on Romanian migration, labour market practices and outcomes as well as highly-skilled migration, for a more complex understanding of these phenomena.

Key words: social capital, migration, Romanian, high-skilled migration, human capital, labour market, social network, qualitative, social constructivism, Canada, Sweden, employment, migration policies
Acknowledgment

Special thanks to all my interviewees, for their patience and interest in revealing me their experiences as well as their thoughts. Their ambition and motivation are definitely an inspiration.

I would like to thank also my supervisor, for all useful advice and positive, yet meaningful insights offered during our meetings. They proved so helpful all throughout my work.
# Table of Contents

## Abstract

## Acknowledgment

## 1. Introduction

1.1. Aim and Research Questions

1.2. Delimitation of the research

1.3. Key concepts explained

1.4. Overall Structure of the Thesis

## 2. Context and Background Information

2.1. Romanian Migration in the global international migration

2.2. Sweden: Labour Market and Integration policies

2.3. Canada: Labour Market and Integration policies

## 3. Previous Research and Contribution

## 4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. Labour Market theory: highly-skilled migrants in the labour market

4.2. Human Capital

4.3. Social Capital

## 5. Methodology

5.1. Stages of the Research Process

5.2. Limitations

5.3. Philosophical Stance and the role of the researcher

5.4. Sample of interviewees

5.5. Method and structure of the interviews

5.6. Validity and Reliability
5.7. Ethical Considerations..................................................................................30
5.8. Presentation of the interviewees.................................................................31

6. Results..........................................................................................................33
  6.1. Arrival in the host country and access to the labour market......................33
  6.2. Language proficiency.............................................................................39
  6.3. Investment in education..........................................................................42
  6.4. Social networks......................................................................................44
  6.5. Labour Market integration: benefits and challenges.................................49

7. Discussion....................................................................................................54
  7.1. Educational – occupational match in the labour market...........................54
  7.2. The use and importance of Social Capital...............................................56
  7.3. Labour Market integration: future prospects for the highly-skilled migrants...58

8. Conclusion....................................................................................................62
9. Further Research...........................................................................................63
10. References...................................................................................................64
11. Annex..........................................................................................................71
  10.1. Interview Guideline..............................................................................71
  10.2. Ethical Guideline..................................................................................73
1. Introduction

Immigrant-receiving countries have been attracting larger and larger volumes of people and mobility worldwide has increased visibly, due to globalization, capitalism and accessibility in traveling. Migration occurs in a complex context of events, experiences and goals (Sontag 2018). Moreover, migration plays a distinctive role for each type of migrant and one needs to capture in-depth knowledge on the main drivers, patterns and outcomes behind the process of immigration to gain a comprehensive picture of the migrants in cause (Saar 2017).

A significant group of migrants that counts as one of the most desirable groups, due to economic competitiveness and innovation in technology, yet not as researched as low-skilled migrants (Habdi and Elo 2019), is constituted by the highly-skilled. They have been in the core of debates in international organizations, media or political campaigns (Sontag 2018), as people possessing university education and degree as well as valuable work experience or often, both, in the moment of emigrating in a new country. It is common knowledge that education and skills have influenced highly the chances of people to be more mobile on the labour market and obtain faster and in a secure way, a type of employment that matches their qualifications. Previous research has shown the highly-skilled migrants as ambitious and motivated in adopting strategies to navigate through obstacles on the labour market, thus being assumed as a privileged group of migrants (Sontag 2018).

Romanian migration inside and outside Europe has been in the attention of both media and politics, in the recent decades, due to the large number of people that have emigrated from the country (Dinescu 2011). There is still very little information regarding Romanian migrants working in different European countries and even more scarce information and research on the highly-skilled group (IOM 2018).

Canada and Sweden have been acknowledged as developed countries, a haven for newcomers from everywhere. Having a range of both distinctions and similarities regarding migration and integration policies, I consider this aspect as a good starting point in analyzing the labour market outcomes of a particular migrant group of interest, namely young highly skilled Romanians, from the point of view of their economic well-being. What will be of great interest in this present study is the relation between social capital and the individual’s skills that trigger or
hinder opportunities to access the labour market.

I intend therefore, by conducting a qualitative research study, to cast light on the topic, through identifying potential obstacles the Romanian migrants face in the process of accessing employment and economic integration, as well as assess whether there is a mismatch between the education and occupational status in the labour market. By interviewing ten highly-skilled Romanians, currently residing in Sweden and Canada and analyzing their experiences, using theories such as human and social capital as well as labour market theory, I aim to offer a comprehensive picture of the integration in the labour market in Canada and Sweden and contribute to the still ongoing research on Romanian migration and highly-skilled migrants.

1.1. Aim and Research Questions

The main aim of this paper is to obtain in-depth information about the hindrances and experiences in gaining access to the labour market in Canada and Sweden, for a particular group of people: young skilled Romanians and, through their perspective on the matter, to understand what would motivate them to stay further in the labour market in the two countries. In this paper, human capital and the use of network ties are used as valuable tools that influence the access to the labour market for the migrants in question, by providing them with opportunities and resources that would not be accessible otherwise.

In support of the aim, the following research questions are brought forward:

- **What are the potential obstacles in accessing the labour market, in Sweden and Canada, for the Romanian skilled migrants?**

- **What factors in the labour market could motivate or discourage highly-skilled Romanians in staying in Canada and Sweden?**

- **Are there any similar tendencies that we can identify in Canada and in Sweden regarding high skilled migration?**

1.2. Delimitations of the Research
There are certain delimitations of the thesis that need to be taken into consideration, for a more accurate description of the scope of this research, since usually social phenomena are studied within a “strictly defined frame of reference” (Peter Berger in Neuman 2013:1). As a delimitation regarding the interviewees, the thesis takes into consideration only a particular target group to obtain in-depth information about their labour market integration, namely young Romanians, with the age range between 25 and 40 years old, residing in Canada and in Sweden, who have migrated alone or with their family in the last fifteen years. This specific choice of the informants is due to the interest in people with high education, work experience or even international experience and that are also active on the labour market. Moreover, the group of people is one of skilled individuals, that are in possession of a graduate diploma equivalent to a Master degree and / or a certificate for vocational training for additional qualifications.

Another delimitation worth mentioning at this point is about the choice of the geographical space, that is, Sweden and Canada, with different integration policies, thus conducting the research towards more interesting and engaging outcomes, also as an inspiration for further research. Both countries are considered widely to be attractive for highly-skilled migrants, due to their diversity and economic development, therefore the study is not meant as a comparison between the countries, but rather a research based on complementary information around highly-skilled Romanians.

Primary and secondary data increase the relevance of this study and place it in a broader context. Secondary data through existing statistics, academic literature and articles about highly skilled Romanians in Canada and Sweden from Malmö library online database, as well as official statistics or reports from the International Organization of Migration, Statistics Sweden or Statistics Canada, published online, are also provided as background information to support the primary data, namely ten interviews taken of native skilled Romanians.

1.3. Key concepts explained

This research study uses and explains the importance of the following sociological concepts:

Labour Market Integration: refers to the possibility of migrants to access employment in the country of destination, based on their skills, qualifications and education, against possible obstacles on a macro / institutional level (country integration policies) and micro level (lack of experience or education of the individual).
Social Network: is made up of social-economic resources, that can be accessed and used through people, in order to obtain better social or labour market outcomes. Networks can facilitate information exchange and opportunities that the migrant can often benefit from.

High-skilled migrant: an immigrant that possesses relevant and valuable work experience and as well a university degree or higher education (at least, Bachelor Degree), vocational or general, following after the primary and secondary one. In this study, the focus is on labour migrants that migrate for the purpose of work. The high-skilled migrants that were interviewed come from different fields e.g. IT, health care, science, business or social sciences/humanities.

1.4. Overall Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured in ten chapters, well-delimited. Firstly, an introduction of the present research, the aim and research questions are presented, further introducing the delimitations of the research, as well as the structure of the thesis. The second chapter provides background information about Romanian migration, placing it in the international context, as well as an overview of the main labour market policies in both Canada and Sweden. Chapter three and four focus on previous research regarding highly skilled migration in Sweden and Canada and offer a range of social theories relevant to the migration of the highly skilled, creating the theoretical framework of the thesis: labour market theory, social capital and human capital. Chapter five stands for the qualitative method used in conducting the research, through a range of semi-structured interviews, the selection of the participants, limitations of the research, aspects about the validity and reliability of the research as well as ethical considerations. Chapter six provides the main results of the data, grouped in main relevant categories, while chapter seven offers a structured analysis of the data, tied to the theoretical framework and background presented previously. Towards the end of the thesis, chapter eight concludes the analysis over highly-skilled Romanian migrants and their labour market experiences by returning to the aim and research questions, while chapter nine offers some suggestions for further research. The last two chapters provide the references and bibliography that sustain the current research and, in the annexes, the reader can find both the interview questions and the ethical guide provided to all of the interviewees.
2. Context and Background Information

This chapter aims to place the migration of the young skilled Romanians in the context of international migration, by providing some background details on the specific group and also, on both countries’ integration and labour market policies, which affect the chances of these migrants to integrate professionally.

2.1. Romanian Migration in the global international migration

Mobility as a characteristic of the globalized contemporary world (Favell, Feldblum and Smith 2006) stands for both a right and a privilege gained by European citizens, in the quest for a better life and access to the labour market.

In order to become members of the European Union, Romania together with other Eastern European countries had to face several obstacles in adapting to the European community (Baldwin-Edwards 2008). Patterns of migration have changed since the Communist period, from Romanians seeking political asylum and circular migration to some European countries, to U.S. and Canada, to a mass emigration after the elimination of visa requirements after 2002, with its top reaching after 2007, when Romania was officially accepted into the European Union (Baldwin-Edwards 2008).

Regarding the Romanian migration in Europe over the last years, one can refer to them as labour migrants, since their main motivation is seeking better economic opportunities (Dobre and Briggs 2014). Due to economic restructuring, Romanian migration after the 1990s was comprised mostly of low-skilled people, seeking employment in the construction field and highly-skilled groups, students or people working in specific fields, such as medicine, business, IT (Ryan and Mulholland in Ryan, Erel and D’Angelo 2015). Currently, Romanian migrants represent the second largest group of all European migrants, statistics estimating that more than 15 percent of the total population of the country have migrated in 2015 (Eurostat migration 2018). Moreover, between 2007 and 2008, Romania was also among the top countries to provide high skilled migrants in OECD (Dinescu 2011).

After being accepted in the European Union along with Bulgaria in 2007, many Romanians
have started emigrating to European Union countries, because of the principle of free movement and work opportunities, and the migration to U.S. or Canada decreased but not considerably. There were many groups of people that found it more attractive still to emigrate outside Europe, especially skilled migrants, who decided to migrate mainly because of the opportunities and less due to networks within the same group or community (Tudoroiu 2007), often correlated to geographical space. According to the National Institute of Statistics from 2008, Romania was in the top 10 countries providing skilled migrants to Canada (Dinescu 2011). The 2001 Census (Tudoroiu 2007) reported 60,000 Romanians in Canada, mostly in Toronto (Ontario region) and Quebec. Recently, in 2017, Canada lifted all restrictions regarding temporary resident visas for Romania and Bulgaria (Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2018) and allowed the electronic travel authorizations (eTAs) for short-term visits.

In 2016, Romania had its highest number of citizens living abroad in other European countries, more than three million people, according to World Migration Report (IOM 2018: 72). The main countries of destination for Romanian migrants in Europe are: Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Hungary, Denmark and Sweden (Eurostat- Migration and Migrant Population Statistics 2018). According to Statistics Sweden (Dahlstedt 2017), migration from Romania doubled the last eighteen years, from around 11,500 migrants to more than 26,000 in 2015 (Statistics Sweden 2018). Romanians are in the first twenty nationalities that have arrived in Sweden as immigrants, in the last three years (2017-2019), with predominantly more men than women, in numbers (SCB – Statistics Sweden 2018).

However, turning to a less known yet not to be neglected phenomenon, Romania is also characterised by a youth emigration tendency, with young people much more inclined to migrate than in most other European Union member or candidate countries, especially in the case of students (Baldwin-Edwards 2008) or the younger generation that fails to see improvement regarding state governance and economic potential (Dobre and Briggs 2014). This group of people is much more informed and prepared regarding the lack of work opportunities and more eager to adapt to structural changes in the labour market (Sohlman 1981).

2.2. Sweden: Labour Market and integration policies

The Swedish labour market, as a relevant context for the present research, has been in the core of various debates, regarding migration and integration policies.
Different reports published on the official Swedish website on national statistics (Statistics Sweden 2018) talk about the match between education and current professional occupation, on the labour market. According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (2015), Sweden was ranked the highest in the world for labour market mobility, anti-discrimination laws, obtaining permanent residence and family reunion aspects (Statistics Sweden 2018). When it comes to the labour market system, Sweden’s policies aim to bridge a gap still visible between immigrants and the natives.

In Sweden, due to the growth of the service sector (Sohlman 1981), recent years have brought a liberalization of policy changes that require a higher general competence and communication skills, which make it more challenging for newcomers and students to integrate economically (Dahlstedt 2017). It is estimated that half of the total job openings until 2030 will need high qualifications level (Statistics Sweden 2018).

In Sweden, in the health care and medical sector, employers continue to report a shortage of graduated personnel (Statistics Sweden 2018). Other sectors, such as technology and manufacturing are also in need of more recent graduates, estimated by the Labour Market Tendency Survey 2018. As proven by statistics, the best match, regarding educational and occupational level, in Sweden, is regarding health and medical education (Statistical News from Statistics Sweden 2018: 12-20). Furthermore, work opportunities related to fields where there is greater international mobility and transfer of skills and no language requirements (Emilsson 2014), such as IT, are easier to access by many skilled immigrants. On the other hand, the proportion of people that is considered to have a job that does not match to a full percentage their education is “high among those working in business and administration, food services and childcare” (Statistical News from Statistics Sweden 2018: 12-20). Only around 40 percent of the foreign-born people in Sweden have a job that matches their education (Bergren and Omarsson 2011 in Dahlstedt 2011), far less than the level of the natives.

Newcomers are expected to benefit from equal legal access and rights to the labour market and social security. Labour market regulations do not impose any distinctions, in theory, between Swedish and European Union citizens, welcoming them to apply to any job in the public and private sector. They have also easy access to higher education, such as Master programs, vocational training or public employment offices and free access to Swedish language training (Irastorza and Bevelander 2017).

For some labour migrants coming to Sweden and having a solida educational and professional background, having the chance of being employed on a matching skill level is
sometimes a challenge (Dahlstedt 2017), due to demand shortages or cultural/linguistic mismatch. Previous studies also criticized the limited information related to working conditions and work permit in Sweden, that is mostly produced with a Swedish target in mind (Emilsson 2014), on the National Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) or Yrkeskompassen, for example.

In Sweden, the labour market is highly regulated, mainly due to multiple collective agreements between the state, the employers and unions’ associations (Dahlstedt 2011). Furthermore, the labour market is based on a demand-driven model, where migrants’ acceptance and integration in the labour market lie in the hands of the employers (Emilsson 2014), they being required to assess what kind of skills are needed mostly, in order to facilitate recruitment of foreign workers (Migrationsverket. Report from EMN- Attracting highly qualified nationals to Sweden 2013:1). Union organization, employment protection and generous social benefits compensate, on the other hand, for those fully-employed in the labour market (Emilsson 2014).

Moreover, common practices such as hiring subcontractors or offering temporary contracts, perpetuate further a feeling of insecurity, professionally, among immigrants (Emilsson 2014). Even if there are no significant differences, in a country with a regulated labour market such as in Sweden, entering the labour market might be a challenge for most newcomers (Behtoui 2008), since there might be a stronger insider/outsider dynamic. How much newcomers and especially highly-skilled migrants are willing to invest in their professional integration and bridge the gap in the labour market is a matter that is further discussed in the current study.

2.3. Canada: Labour Market and integration policies

Since Canada is an important context regarding the current study, an overview on the country’s main integration and labour market characteristics will be provided, regarding high-skilled migrants.

Canada is based on a federation of states (Statistics Canada 2018), being a bilingual state, with a region like Quebec where French is the official language. Moreover, Canada is considered predominantly an immigration country, with 7.5 million or 21.9 percent being foreign-born, in 2016 (Statistics Canada 2017). Being a country used to immigration and having developed an entire culture around it and setting an annual target on immigration (Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2018), in Canada, diversity and international cultural background characterize a large percentage of the population. Canada is still leading, in terms of countries that promote equal
opportunities on the labour market, non-discrimination and a common sense of belonging, through language support, tailored to the newcomers and a system of quotas or point-based, where migrants are selected to apply for the work and residence permit, according to their human capital (Statistics Canada 2018).

Many skilled migrants are accepted on the so called Federal Skilled Worker Program, where national labour shortages are identified on the labour market (Kaushik and Drolet 2018:2). In Canada, highly-skilled migrants are targeted more (Devoretz 2004), due to an accessible labour market, with large self-employment sectors and a wide range of entry level jobs and also due to the selection based on a point-system, implemented in the Immigration Act in 1978 (Devoretz 2004:5). Newcomers are encouraged to go to Language Assessment Centres - Language Instruction for Newcomers in Canada Program (LINC) – (Bevelander and Pendakur 2012), where their level of language is assessed and advanced courses are provided. Moreover, there are free online programs in English providing the newcomers with available information about language training and job opportunities.

The point-system is considered as less bureaucratic and an effective means of recruiting especially skilled migrants (Kolb Chapter 4 in Menz and Caviedes 2010). Therefore, policies in the country create a supply-driven model, where migrants are admitted based on their skills and human capital (Emilsson 2014), such as: age, language proficiency (whether English or French in Quebec region), educational level, previous work experience, arranged employment or any ties with the host country (Kolb Chapter 4 in Menz and Caviedes 2010). Moreover, in 2015, a new system named Express Entry program (Kaushik and Drolet 2018:2), based on a faster processing of applications, was introduced, as a method of increasing the odds of selection for skilled migrants that might succeed on the market (Statistics Canada 2017).

Quebec and Ontario, with Toronto having the largest share of the core group of economic immigrants (Yssaad and Fields 2018:22), are among the regions of Canada where unemployment rates are the lowest, according to Statistics Canada. Among the fields of highest education for newcomers, are: business and administration, social science and humanities, engineering or health care, the last two having more job openings and an easier transferability of skills, due to special or vocational training (Houle and Yssaad 2010).

Language skills prove to be valuable regarding the improvement of labour market outcomes among immigrants (Houle and Yssaad 2010), currently 79 percent of the migrants expressing knowledge of one of the official languages, English or French (Annual Report to Parliament on
Despite this positive aspect, there is still a gap between Canadian-born people, working in a profession for which they got training or education, compared to foreign-educated immigrants: 62 percent against only 24 (Houle and Yssaad 2010:18).

In recent years, there are more restrictions regarding obtaining the residence permit, for all the family members or for those that come as temporary workers. Some recognition procedures can take longer and prove uneven, across some sectors. Still, there are future estimates of a growing number of immigrants to Canada, because of the worldwide competition for young, skilled and mobile workers (Yssaad and Fields 2018) and because of its integration policies oriented towards a dynamic economy.
3. Previous Research and Contribution

Latest migration flows have prompted many researchers to go deeper in explaining the migrants’ motivations in leaving their countries of origin and seek better work opportunities and lifestyles abroad. High skilled migrants are an interesting group of migrants and their motivations for migrating span different paths. Most existing research on this group of migrants revolves around quantitative data, based on existing statistics or recently-conducted surveys. Despite the growth of skilled Romanian migrants in Europe and Canada, the number of qualitative research concerning their experiences on the labour market in the host country is still very low.

In this chapter, the previous research and literature relevant to my topic and the whole field of research are presented. First, I will review the literature and articles published on labour migration from Romania, regarding high skilled migration. Then, I will move to discuss previous research on social capital and human capital and its impact on the labour market for immigrants versus natives, for Canada and, respectively, for Sweden.

An important study that contributes to the understanding of Romanian immigration in Canada, after the communism period, is “The Changing Patterns of Romanian Immigration to Canada”, published in 2007 by Theodor Tudoroiu. In this study, based on previous statistics and interviews conducted with skilled Romanians from Canada, both motivations behind the process of migration as well as obstacles on the institutional level, such as the migration procedures or policies, are analyzed (Tudoroiu 2008). Due to the difficulty in transferring foreign credentials in the Canadian labour market, skilled migrants often face a dramatic professional downgrade (Tudoroiu 2008) that is overcome only by obtaining the host country’s human capital.

On the other hand, in “Romanians abroad: A snapshot of highly-skilled migration” (2004), Anna Ferro aims to understand the transferability of human capital (previous work experience, education, soft or hard skills, language), in relation to the strategies the migrants apply to get integrated, in the new country. Moreover, she explains how previous studies on labour migrants had more focus on the economic consequences on the country of origin, while nowadays, the focus is more on the demand-side, the immigration policies in the receiving countries, the labour market conditions and skills needed (Ferro 2004). Lastly this research based on a questionnaire survey, investigates both obstacles and benefits of migration, working in a new environment or personal
growth versus cultural adjustment, bureaucratic procedures and language barriers (Ferro 2004), thus providing a holistic image of the process of migration for this group of people.

Another study that aims to contribute to the research around highly-skilled migrants, in relation to social capital, is the book *Global Mobility of Highly-Skilled People: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Self-Initiated Expatriation* (2019), by Driss Habti and Maria Elo (eds.). In their study, based on both surveys and interviews conducted, it is explained how immigrants social network leads to the construction of social capital that lowers the risks and costs of migration and constitutes a permanent asset for economic and social integration. They explain how the truth of a successful economic integration lies in the investment migrants conduct in their networks (Habti and Elo 2019). Another argument well developed in the study stands for the idea of new forms of mobility in the postmodern world, that go further than the migration policies established in each country. The drivers and patterns of highly-skilled migration are able to surpass constraints on the macro-level of society (Habti and Elo 2019) and human capital development plays also a significant role in this respect.

Social capital is one of the key theories used by researchers nowadays, to explain labour market and social integration of different migrant groups. In his book, *Immigrant Performance in the Labour Market: Bonding and Bridging Social Capital*, published in 2012, Bram Lancee performs an analysis based on previous surveys, on the relation between immigrants’ social capital and the labour market outcomes in Germany and Netherlands as well as the expected economic returns of social capital and its various types (*bridging* or *bonding*). He concludes by stating that in countries with a regulated labour market, bridging social capital or extending one’s network of contacts with other networks can lead to better economic outcomes and diminishes barriers of prejudice or discrimination (Lancee 2012).

Furthermore, in the study from 2019, “Extending the Human Capital Model of Migration: The role of risk, place, and social capital in the migration decision”, William Clark A.V. and William Lisowski aim to understand better the role social capital plays together with human capital, in the decision to migrate and the expected economic returns. Moreover, they indicate the importance placed on human capital evolution, when one moves between different labour markets, and also how increasing the social network can contribute to securing an employment, thus the decision of the migrant to stay or move (Clark and Lisowski 2019).

Moving on to previous research and studies conducted on the labour market and economic integration of migrants, in “Unequal Opportunities for Young People with Immigrant Backgrounds
in the Swedish Labour Market” from 2004, Alireza Behtoui comments on the influence of the social network composition on the labour market outcomes and how young people with foreign backgrounds succeed in the labour market in Sweden compared to natives, on the basis of their human capital (whether it was acquired or not in the country of destination). According to his empirical investigation on a target group of both immigrants and natives performing in the Swedish labour market, education and work experience accounted for social capital and a good status in the labour market, but this did not include migrants from non-Western European countries (Behtoui 2004), an important indicator that further research on this group of people should be conducted.

Nahikari Irastorza and Pieter Bevelander analyze the occupational mobility of the highly-skilled and the mismatch between education and occupational level in Sweden, in “The Labour-Market Participation of Highly Skilled Immigrants in Sweden: an Overview.” from 2017. In explaining the gap in employment between the natives and the migrants, the study presents, through quantitative data, that in order to access high skilled jobs in Sweden, immigrants have to acquire the necessary human capital of the host country, whether through knowledge on society and labour market or through language (Irastorza and Bevelander 2017).

A relevant study that explains countries’ migration policies and whether they aim more to attract highly-skilled migrants is “Who gets in and why? The Swedish experience with Demand Driven Labour Migration – Some Preliminary Results”, a study from 2014, by Henrik Emilsson. Focusing on the labour market in Sweden, his study aims to understand how policies shape migration flows, as well as the importance of social network and social capital in influencing migration (Emilsson 2014). Based on a demand-driven model, where the chance of the migrants to be accepted in the labour market lies in the hands of the employers (Emilsson 2014), the study based on existing statistics among occupational groups in Sweden concludes that the entrance to the labour market for migrants seems more linked to the idea of having the right contacts, less in jobs that have a greater potential of international mobility and transfer of skills (Emilsson 2014).

Another important study to mention in the previous research on labour market integration in Sweden is the doctoral dissertation of Inge Dahlstedt, *Swedish Match? Education, migration and labour market integration in Sweden. Migration, Urbanisation and Societal Change* (2017). Based on statistics and surveys, he explains the education, employment and occupational level, the challenges of newcomers in accessing the labour market, thus increasing the employment gap between the natives and the migrants. Exclusion from economic integration affects also social integration of immigrants and, despite a solid human capital, many immigrants face challenges in
finding an appropriate work opportunity and use of their skills (Dahlstedt 2017). Ideally, a strong use of both social and human capital might ensure immigrants with attractive job opportunities and influence their upward economic mobility.

Two other studies related explain the labour market integration in Canada for immigrants as well as the immigrants’ assessment regarding their lives and opportunities: “New Immigrants’ Assessments of their lives in Canada” (2010) by Rene Houle and Grant Schellenberg, published on the official website of Statistics Canada and the study by Yssaad Lahouaria and Andrew Fields - “The Canadian Immigrant Labour Market: Recent Trends from 2006 to 2017”, published last year in 2018, on the same website. Both studies focus on newcomers and recent immigrants in Canada and aim to show the importance placed on attracting young, mobile and skilled immigrants, on a macro-level, to sustain economic growth and the development of professional, scientific and technical services, but also, on a micro level, the distinctions among immigrants regarding their well-being, due to a wide range of factors.

To conclude on this chapter and express my desired contribution to the previous research, the present study intends to fill in a gap in the field of research regarding high skilled migrants, by focusing only on one particular migrant group and its outcomes in the labour market for Canada and respectively, Sweden, from the point of view of social capital and human capital. By doing qualitative analysis, I intend also to shed light on the migrants’ own perspectives about the possibility of obtaining employment that matches their qualifications and whether their social and human capital play a role in obtaining a suitable opportunity, thus making their voices heard and understood.
4. Theoretical Framework

The theories that come as a support to my analysis range from the labour market theory, to the theories of Social Capital and network ties, as well as Human Capital theory. Important concepts will be discussed on the way, as means to support and emphasize the theories. Furthermore, various policies related to the access in the labour market of immigrants will be interpreted, as a further theoretical support of the analysis of the data, in the future sections of the study.

4.1. Labour Market theory: highly-skilled migrants in the labour market

There are differences in migrants’ choices and circumstances that shape their experiences in particular ways. People take into account several risks and liabilities, such as learning and adapting to a new language and culture, accessing the labour market in the host country, cultivating new social ties (Massey et al. 1993).

Labour market theory plays on a balanced dynamic between supply and demand, suggesting that migrants will thrive in a labour market that provides enough compensation for their efforts. This aspect is not only limited to wages and benefits, but also to other means by which an immigrant can feel integrated in the labour market, such as work-life balance, the type of employment, the type of contract, future prospects for professional growth or other more personal or intrinsic rewards (Kaushik and Drolet 2018). All these aspects contribute to a more positive labour market situation for a migrant individual and can influence one’s decision of staying or leaving from the specific country.

A successful integration in the host country for a labour migrant is performed on both economic and social level. Although incorporation in the labour market is seen as a form of inclusion in the society (Reyneri and Fullin 2010), integration in the labour market does not imply total assimilation or social integration, but the aspects can influence each other and determine the individual’s membership in the host country. Moreover, integration on the labour market stands for a complex phenomenon and can be evaluated not merely because of the type of employment, but also on other important markers that differentiate between a successful or complete integration:
status on the labour market, access to social security and other benefits, wages and lifestyle.

In the process of migration, labour migrants seek mainly better economic opportunities, that will improve their resources and lifestyle. The policies of the specific countries where people migrate, also have to be taken into consideration, since they are the ones that regulate the inclusion and exclusion of a migrant in a state, according to the needs or demand in that labour market (Beenstock, Ramos and Surinach 2015). In order for the labour market to be balanced, it is important for a match between occupational level and people’s skills to be in place (Report Matching on the labour market in Statistics Sweden 2018). Labour market outcomes investigate mainly the type of occupation, the employment status, as whether permanently or temporary (Yssaad and Fields 2018) and migrants often face obstacles such as language proficiency, lack of recognition of foreign credentials or lack of knowledge regarding the specific labour market of the host country (Report Matching on the labour market in Statistics Sweden 2018:28).

Employment acquisition is a marker of “the attachment to the host country labour market and of integration” (Dahlstedt and Bevelander 2010: 159). One can secure a position on the labour market using either formal (employment services, job fairs or newspaper advertisements) or, mostly encountered in the informal sector, informal channels (reference people, personal contacts, social media), which impede or perpetuate the inequalities on the labour market (Behtoui 2008). Since more than 65 percent employers in Sweden seem to favour the use of informal channels in the process of employment, proving that they generate more job offers (Behtoui 2008), the question that arises is whether the immigrants know or can access these channels and whether they can expect the same outcomes from them, like the locals. A distinction here between whether a job is ensured before or after the arrival in the country is also significant for the migrant’s future prospects of living and integrating in the country of destination.

When it comes to the relation between highly-skilled and occupying the gaps in the labour market, attractiveness of high-skilled migrants towards a specific country is due to a more open and multicultural society, a variety of services and job opportunities or the lack of language barriers. In addition, the balance between work and personal life, health care and day care for families, non-work related factors (Povrzanovic et al. 2016) are also important reasons to determine high-skilled migrants to stay in the host country and live comfortably.

4.2. Human Capital
Human capital theory, elaborated by Gary Becker (1964), stands for how people invest in themselves, in their skills and education, for them to access and integrate into the labour market of a host country, how productive and flexible they prove to be and what decisions they take in order to increase earnings and lifetime experience. Human capital, as the one of the main drivers of an individual’s economic behaviour (Lin 2001), is comprised of education, training and experience, mainly through previous qualifications, diplomas or certificates, previous work experience, language skills and also age (Reyneri and Fullin 2010). Moreover, human capital stands for the totality of skills and qualifications of an individual that increase the productivity and chances of employment and integration.

Education prior or after the time of migration as well as the possibility of transferring skills and qualifications can be crucial in determining one’s position on the labour market and whether the job role matches the overall educational level of the individual (Dahlstedt 2017). Often, high educational qualifications in the country of origin can offer a limited level of competency required by the host country (Reyneri and Fullin 2010). Pre-migration education or qualifications might be harder to analyze by employers and often investment in the host country’s education might be seen as positive by the employers.

It is often assumed that the highly-skilled have a faster and more secure chance to get employment (Irastorza and Bevelander 2017). Many times, it is challenging for immigrants to find employment opportunities that match their previous experiences, due to a shortage of human capital in relation to the natives or misinformation on the requirements of the labour market, therefore there are often cases of educational- occupational mismatch (Behtoui 2008). Human capital is not always exposed in the case of migrants, thus acquiring the host country’s human capital is one of the main assets to obtain better labour market outcomes. Also, the younger the age when a migrant arrives in the host country, the more likely to have developed host country’s skills, such as language skills or knowledge on the country and culture (Dahlstedt and Bevelander 2010).

Often, language skills are crucial in performing in international environments and create better outcomes for the migrants, due to the ideas and information exchanged and chances of encountering local employers (Habti and Elo 2019), contributing also to a raise in wages in the long run (Borjas 1994). In the case of non-English speaking countries, the destination language skills might play a bigger role in differentiating between labour market outcomes (Chiswick and Miller 2007). Labour markets have been defined as more and more fluid, therefore international or foreign experience is often more valued in the labour market, increasing competitiveness among people.
Investment in higher education leads also to better mobility on the labour market, in changing employment, type of work, increasing wages or increasing social networks (Sohlman 1981), leading to a more selective approach by the highly-skilled immigrants to accept job offers (Irastorza and Bevelander 2017).

4.3. Social Capital

Social capital constitutes one of the key theories in migration, explaining the importance of network ties, in the process of social and economic integration. More precisely, social capital means more than just accessing resources, through ties in the networks (Lin 2001 in Lancee 2012:36), it refers to the investments and use of resources the migrant puts in practice, through different strategies (Lancee 2012).

One of the well-known definitions on social capital is stated by the sociologist Bourdieu, as being “the aggregate of the resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (Bourdieu 1986 in Richardson 1986: 248) and it is organized around specific behaviours and expectations.

Social capital theories encompass different types and categories (Bourdieu 1985; Putnam 1995; Portes 1998), but a common distinction between sociologists, regarding the social ties that are formed by the migrant, is between bonding or bridging social capital (Lancee 2012). The former concept means creating connections within the same group of people, while the latter stands for creating ties between groups of people, thus spanning one’s network with other networks. Putnam (2000 in Lancee 2012:14) explains this distinction as a way to get by in the host society versus a way to get ahead or obtain upward social mobility and defines social capital as a bundle of “networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1995: 68). As Portes mentions in his study, “Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology” (1998), social capital is not a natural given (Portes 1998: 3), but it becomes an asset the moment the individual invests in it. Moreover, although reciprocity ties are meant to increase the strength of a network, access to valuable information and eventually, social-economic mobility can occur only when there are gaps or structural holes (Portes 1998) within the network.

Newly arrived immigrants tend to create connections with people that share similar experiences to them, in the host country and this can impede their access to better prospects on the labour market, since they will be more dependent on the group’s resources and information (Portes
and Zhou 1993). It is more valuable for a newcomer in the host country to expand his or her social network through bridging social contacts, spanning culturally or ethnically different groups, make use of the *weak ties* in the social network (Granovetter 1983).

Coming into contact with the local residents seems to be one of the most beneficial and risk-mitigating investments one can do, in order to ensure a solid position on the labour market, generate new information channels and higher levels of trust (Granovetter 1983; Schumann 2004). Weak ties would be beneficial, in the long term, only if one ensures in the beginning, the strength of personal, supportive connections (Roger Patulny, Chapter 12 in Ryan et al. 2015).

What are the expected economic returns of social capital, in relation to the labour market integration? As Lancee states in his study (Lancee 2012), social capital provides a person with more information on the labour market, job opportunities, references, therefore it is important for an individual to be capable to use his or her network in the most efficient and productive way, not only to find a better job prospect, but also better labour market outcomes (permanent contract, better wages, social security) and a general level of well-being (Houle and Schellenberg 2010).

Often, immigrants experience a period of transition or adjustment, from the moment they arrive in the host country, during which they gain familiarity with the labour market, increase their social network and invest in their human capital through education and language skills (Sanders and Nee 1996). Social capital is linked to human capital, such as education and prior work experience and they are both influenced by hiring procedures and employment practices, depending on the field and demand (Suseno and Pinnington 2017).
5. Methodology

This chapter introduces some key aspects of the methodology, as the process by which this research has been conducted, as well as the methods used in gathering data, the limitations of the research, the choice of the adequate sample of interviewees, the interview structure and context. Moreover, I will conclude the chapter by mentioning the validity and reliability of this research, as well as some significant ethical considerations that were introduced to the informants, prior to the interview phase.

5.1. Stages of the Research process

The present research is structured on the basis of my interest on the topic of highly skilled Romanian immigrants in Canada and Sweden, by presenting a number of cases and drawing inferences from them (6 and Bellamy 2012). A qualitative research method was seen as the best method to get suitable outcomes from this type of research (Somekh and Lewin 2004), based on the plurality and individuality of the interviewees and an interactive approach (Neuman 2013).

After identifying the key theoretical concepts that were necessary to the research, the background information and the context of my research, I continued the process with conducting the interviews, gathering the narratives of the informants, which are presented in the next chapter. During the interview phase, I identified significant aspects and categories as well as relevant themes for my analysis that I grouped afterwards in an attempt to find coherence and a linear flow to the process of collecting data and interpretation. This process of scanning the data, categorizing and dividing or interpreting according to themes is defined as coding, or assigning meaning to any kind of information gathered during a study (Neuman 2013). Prior to the analysis and interpretation of the empirical information, I developed the theoretical framework, around the stories of the informants and their perspective of the reality and course of events. At the end of the research process, some conclusions were drawn out, on the basis of the concepts and categories analyzed, linked to the research questions and suggestions were provided, in view of further research.

The advantage of the qualitative research was that it allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the cases I selected, obtain insights into people’s lives and experiences since their arrival in the destination country, despite the limited time and scope of the research, as already
mentioned in the introduction. Furthermore, this approach conferred abundant data on the phenomenon, producing further understanding rather than mere explanations, regarding labour market and the integration of highly-skilled Romanians.

5.2. Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this research that are worth mentioning, at this stage of the study, that have to do with the shortage of time and deficiency of resources.

First and foremost, the thesis was conducted within a limited amount of time, namely six months. Due to time restrictions and lack of funds for a field trip to Canada, I had to conduct six out of ten of the interviews online, via Skype or Facebook, in course of less than a month, which might be seen as an impediment in capturing all the reactions and non-verbal responses of my participants. Moreover, due to lack of social contacts in Canada, I based my search for participants on other people’s recommendations, thus applying the snowball method in conducting qualitative research, as explained in the next section. Furthermore, seven out of ten of the interviews were recorded and transcribed, for the others, extensive notes were taken and then classified per themes and analyzed.

5.3. Philosophical stance and the role of the researcher

Regarding the philosophical stance adopted throughout the research, the nature of reality and the idea of how knowledge is created, through action and interpretation (6 and Bellamy 2012), social constructivism is the ontological and epistemological perspective that guided my research. Social reality therefore is experienced and takes shape mainly through the experiences and senses of the people, it is a relative, individual and subjective experience (Rosenberg 2012), therefore generalization of the present study is highly unlikely, as it is explained further in the validity and reliability section. The study offers thus an interpretative view of the external reality, rather than a reporting of events, situations (Charmaz 2006).

Furthermore, I believe reflexivity of the research, from the researcher’s perspective, is a necessary step regarding the implications of the research topic and the interpretation of it. Conducting qualitative research immerses the researcher in the process, one cannot keep distance and be an outside observer, but has to allow to be within the process and the analysis of the data (6
and Bellamy 2012). Eventually, the researcher ends up sharing “the same view of the meaning the participants confer to the social life, based on the storytelling” (Neuman 2013: 446), while “some interviews develop into means of self-reflection” (Sontag 2018:39), mirrors of our own experience.

I chose the topic because of my interest in a group of migrants that is still under ongoing research and also due to the complexity of the motivations behind the immigration of young and skilled people, which makes the results of any similar research more interesting and complex. I am aware that my belonging to the particular ethnic group and age range might impose certain biases when analysing the topic. Thus, being as self-reflective as possible and present my work in a transparent way, will be a significant step in the analysis of the data in relation to the research questions. I believe my background also strengthen the relation of trust between me as a researcher and the participants involved, due to our common ethnic background and education or skills and having shared similar experiences with those established in Sweden and even with those residing in Canada, despite the distance and the presupposed unfamiliarity with the Canadian society and values.

My position as a researcher helped me to understand and connect better to their experience regarding cultural or social aspects that imposed obstacles to their integration in the labour market, contributing to the reliability of the claims. On a linguistic level, the thinking of the participants and mine as a researcher were brought closer, due to the ability of communicating and expressing ourselves in a common language, our native one (Seidman 2006). Moreover, since often personal experiences are hard to be explained into words, by using my listening skills, without interruptions or unnecessary comments, I allowed my informants to tell their story in a smooth and logical way for them, only slightly guiding them based on the interview guide provided in advance.

5.4. Sample of interviewees

The participants were contacted mainly through my social network and using the snowball method. Snowball method or sampling implies that a small initial number of participants takes contact with other informants based on their social network, that could potentially contribute to the study, provided they meet the necessary criteria (Habti and Elo 2019). Getting contacts within one’s ethnic group can be harder than it is thought, especially if the migrants have arrived as individuals and not with their families, their sense of a community being decreased.

The age range of the interviewees is between 25 years old and 40, and their stay in Canada
and Sweden lasts from two to fifteen years, long enough for the informants to get accustomed to the labour market of the specific country. Their jobs and previous education in fields such as IT, medicine, business and social sciences, placed them in the category of high skilled migrants.

Moreover, the ten interviews conducted were with six informants from Sweden and four from Canada, due to the difficulties in accessing Romanians abroad that would be available for an interview, which might affect the internal validity of the results. Even if my aim was to obtain a gender balance among my interlocutors, I managed to contact six female participants and only four male participants. Although the initial number of the male ones was greater, due to some issues, the interviews could not take place so I had to reorient myself towards other social contacts available and also based on recommendations received from previous informants (snowball method).

In order to ensure the confidentiality of the information disclosed and anonymity of the respondents, I added fictive names to my interlocutors, based on their request. All other personal information, such as personal number, address, workplace or university that could potentially make them identifiable, especially those residing in Sweden, was not disclosed by any means, upon their consent.

All in all, in my belief, the interviews conducted represent sufficient empirical evidence to draw pertinent inferences from the data, in the analysis section of this study.

5.5. Method and structure of the interviews

The qualitative research material consists of a number of interviews, mainly designed as semi-structured, fairly open discussions, based loosely on an interview guide made up of open-ended questions, to allow the participants full ground in expressing their experiences and emotions, the meanings they confer to the social reality (Seidman 2006). The interviewees are themselves active members of the society, by engaging themselves permanently and reflecting on their actions (Charmaz 2006). At the core of each interview, there was the experience of accessing the labour market, the benefits and obstacles encountered by each and every participant. The language used is Romanian and sometimes, English or French, with the people that have emigrated for more than ten years ago.

The interviews were conducted in the course of five weeks, both online via Skype or at public spaces in the Skåne area, according to the interviewees availability and distance. A relaxed atmosphere was provided to the participants I met face-to-face, for example, at coffee shops, at a
time when it was less crowded, while the interviews on Skype were carefully planned and conducted sometimes in more than one occasion, as to allow the participants to get used to my presence as a researcher, to show flexibility and availability with their time and also turn back to some key aspects of their shared experiences that I hoped they would clarify more through additional details.

The interviews were recorded, as well as taking notes on the side, with their permission and awareness. Sometimes, interesting points were brought up by the participants, not included in the interview guide, that were also worth mentioning in the analysis of the study. Moreover, observations on their reactions, potential hesitations or remarks after the recording of the interviews stopped were also a means for me, as a researcher, to study more deeply their behaviour and understanding towards some events or aspects of their lives, making the empirical data richer in information and precision.

5.6. Validity and Reliability

Reliability and validity are key tools in the social research process to guarantee the truthfulness and accuracy of the findings (Neuman 2013). The case-studied research imposed some limits on the external validity of the thesis, since the findings cannot be generalized (6 and Bellamy 2012). Instead, the research provided an in-depth understanding of the target group, high skilled young Romanians, through ten interviews, describing their perception and experiences related to the process of entering the labour market in the host country.

A positive aspect regarding reliability of the study is the transparency of my findings, due to the data collection and interpretation of results and the authenticity of the people’s stories (6 and Bellamy 2012), forming quite a heterogeneous group. Moreover, since the interviews were conducted in the informants’ mother tongue (e.g. Romanian), the reliability and consistency of the empirical information also increase (6 and Bellamy 2012), since the sample of informants was more pertinently collected, increasing the chances of gaining trust and openness from the participants’ side. It is often stated that, in qualitative studies, the presence of the researcher can undermine or influence indirectly the participants’ interpretation of their experiences, thus leading to a decrease in reliability (6 and Bellamy 2012). The relevance of the questions, data and arguments, linked to the social theories and my explanation on every step of the research process, I believe sustain also a
level of confirmability and reliability of the information gained (Charmaz 2006). Despite these aspects, it is impossible to offer a complete reliability, in terms of the replicability of the study, when it comes to a qualitative research, since the focus is on everyday experiences of the individuals, highly depended on the context, their social reality being constantly under construction (6 and Bellamy 2012), as per the ontological and epistemological stance applied, namely social constructivism. Therefore, the generalization of the results on other groups than Romanians and repetition of the study are often hard in this context, external reliability being impacted.

Validity of research or “the degree to which our statements approximate to truth” (6 and Bellamy 2012:21) constitutes another key measure in establishing how sound a research is (Godwill 2015). The validity of the research, the coherence and relevance of the data, is ensured, on the one hand, due to the fact that I offered the participants the possibility to read the transcripts of the interviews, along with the theoretical review, thus ensuring triangulation as a method to increase validity (Neuman 2013). Internal validity of the research and accuracy of the results are provided by a consistency in the use of methods, the interview guide (the answers are dependent on the way the questions are shaped), the material and theoretical framework, a goodness-of-fit (6 and Bellamy 2012) and the categorization of the data gathered, by explaining a particular type of immigrants and experience of migration (6 and Bellamy 2012).

5.7. Ethical Considerations

The researcher and the research participants often establish a relation, based on trust and power, therefore, from an ethical point of view, the researcher has to guide and protect the interests of the people in the study (Neuman 2013). An ethical guideline was introduced to the participants, prior to the actual interviews, to obtain their full permission and awareness of the way the research will be conducted, in a morally correct way. First of all, protection against any kind of vulnerability was ensured due to an informed consent, prior to the interview phase (Seidman 2006). This was performed by each participant who signed a consent form before the interviews were used in the research, in order for their data to be protected and secured. Full confidentiality was provided, regarding some potential sensitive information, as well as the permission for the participants to withdraw at any time from the study. Due to anonymity aspect, the names provided in the interview section of this study are fictitious for each one of them. The recordings of the interviews were
deleted once the research was completed, in order not to make it impossible to trace back personal information to the informants of the study. Furthermore, a transcript of the interviews was provided to all of the participants, to review the information obtained, in the interview phase. Last but not least, an adequate presentation of the topic and academic goal of the research was offered to them, prior to the discussion. The complete ethical guideline is attached in the last chapter of the thesis, under the subtitle: Annex 2.

5.8. Presentation of the interviewees

The following informants were interviewed, for the present research:

**Anca**, 30 years old, has been living in Sweden for four years, she works as a resident at a university hospital, in the southern part of Sweden and has a permanent contract. She has no family and she came alone to Sweden.

**Bogdan**, 29 years old, has been living in Sweden for two years, he works as a resident at a hospital, in a city in the north of Sweden and has a permanent contract. He has no family and he came alone to Sweden.

**Bianca**, 25 years old, she has been living in Canada for ten years with her family. She arrived first in Montreal, then she moved to Toronto. She works in marketing and communication and she also coordinates several start-ups for an international organisation. She has a permanent contract.

**Celina**, 25 years old, she came to Sweden, four years ago, with her boyfriend and stayed ever since. She finished last year a Master program at a university in the south of Sweden and now she is working for a multinational company in logistics and customer support. She has a temporary contract and she is currently looking for new job opportunities.

**George**, 33 years old, has been living in Canada, in Toronto, for almost two years, together with his wife and kid. He has previous education from Canada and both work experience and Master studies from Sweden. He works in sales for a start-up and meanwhile, he is planning his
own business.

Cristina, 28 years old, came to Sweden, five years ago, but she also came previously, with an Erasmus scholarship, for a few months, during her Bachelor studies. She has finished two Master programs in two of the best universities of the country and she is currently working for a start-up in marketing. She has a temporary contract. She came alone to Sweden.

Ciprian, 38 years old, has been living in Canada for over 15 years. He arrived with his family, after he finished high-school and now he is living in Toronto with his wife and his kid. He has worked in IT and web development and right now, he has his own company on digital product management.

Madalina, 32 years old, came to Sweden three years ago, with her family, to pursue a Master program. She has a permanent contract and she is working for a Swedish company in finance and reporting, in a city in the southern part of Sweden.

Sorin, 31 years old, came to Sweden alone, seven years ago, to pursue a Master program in the north of the country. He has had a range of jobs in Sweden, in different cities. Right now, he is working as a freelancer for an international client in the field of Geography and Information Systems, while being in his final year at a Master program.

Ioana, 26 years old, she has been living in Montreal, in Canada, for the last ten years, together with her family. She is currently working for a governmental organisation and she has work experience related to the domain she has been studying: psychology. She aims to apply for a PhD position at the university of psychology in Montreal, in the near future.
6. Results

In this section of the study, the main results of the study will be revealed in the form of categories, based on the interviews conducted and the interviewees’ voices regarding the process of integration in the labour market. The analysis around the results obtained following the interviews will be further elaborated and discussed in the next section of this thesis, chapter seven.

6.1. Arrival in the host country and access to the labour market

Interviewees’ decision of migration as well as whether they have been accompanied by family or they migrated alone, influenced to a certain extent their access and integration on the labour market. Better economic opportunities and a change in lifestyle stand at the basis of everyone’s motivation for leaving for a new place, often with more international experiences and challenges, such as in the case of Bianca and George, who have been experiencing life in both of the countries, Sweden and Canada:

*For my family, Canada was like this perfect place to live and work and spend your life there. It was different than Romania (….); better job opportunities and living standards…*(Bianca)

*I arrived in Canada, last year, I have been living here previously, during 2004 and 2010. (...) I came here after living in Sweden for a few years, because I did not feel like home there (...). I was looking for a place where one feels more welcomed, where there are more international people and everyone speaks English (George)*

Moreover, their expectations and knowledge on the specific country helped them avoid some of the potential post-arrival obstacles as well as acquire additional human capital, in view of their purpose of migration. Cristina decided to focus on her education and the main reason for her arrival to Sweden was the idea of accomplishing her studies, with no clear intention at that time to stay and seek her chance in the labour market in Sweden:
I have arrived first time in Sweden with an Erasmus scholarship, during my Bachelor studies(...). I wanted to go back, after those months and pursue a master program in Sweden. But I never believed I will live for so long in Sweden. (Cristina)

Furthermore, the informants discovered further potential in pursuing their education and acquiring human capital that were inaccessible in the country of origin, namely Romania. In the case of Sorin, the field of study was both a novelty and a challenge and he decided to pursue it abroad:

I chose Sweden because I wanted to study a specific program in geography, which is almost non-existent in Romania. So, I thought it is nice to get a glimpse of the program from a country which is advanced in this respect (Sorin)

In some cases, the presence of family or relatives influenced indirectly the decision of the individual to migrate in the specific country, despite the work opportunities involved. The presence of family in the country of destination can lower the risks and costs experienced by labour migrants abroad and moreover, offers a level of stability and comfort that often individuals seek, once they migrate into a new place. In the case of Anca, the presence of her relatives in Sweden motivated her more to pursue economic opportunities in the same country, having obtained previous knowledge on the country specifics and human capital:

I used to visit often my relatives living in Sweden, when I was a teenager (...). I slowly got familiar with the language and could pronounce some basic sentences. (...) I knew I wanted to go back and spent there a certain amount of time (Anca)

Often, the interviewees decided to follow the advice of a friend, relative or close person, in their process of immigration for educational or economic reasons, such as in the case of Celina and Madalina. Celina decided to follow her boyfriend’s path and moved with him to Sweden, while he was pursuing a Master program, while in Madalina’s case, her interest was firstly focus on other country, but afterwards, she switched her decision under the influence of her relatives:
It was not my decision to come here to Sweden, it was my boyfriend’s decision, he was passionate about Sweden, he wanted to study here because of the free education (Celina)

(...) I wanted to apply for university studies in Germany, (...) but they (my relatives) advised me to apply to Sweden too and see what comes first. (....) I got the results about my admission from Sweden half a year earlier than the university in Germany, so I made up my mind (Madalina)

It is not always the migrant as individual taking a decision in migrating, often this aspect appears due to external factors or other individuals. On the other hand, one’s decision to temporarily migrate on purely educational purposes can transform into a lifelong decision to stay in the country and be part of the labour market or purely accomplish one’s personal ambition and motivation.

During the interviews, the informants expressed different views on their means of obtaining employment in Canada and respectively, in Sweden.

There were cases when the migrants experienced a very smooth process in entering the labour market of the host country, whether because of a need in the specific field, educational qualifications or prior experience that proved to be valuable assets. Bogdan reflected upon the accessibility on entering the labour market in Sweden, as based on the profession and his status, as he migrated alone and not depending on particular conditions:

My first impulse was to go to Sweden as a resident doctor, with this recruiting agency for doctors across Europe. It seemed like a good opportunity and they would have taken care of all the formal arrangements and papers (...) Eventually, I decided not to depend on their conditions, but pursue alone the opportunities offered. And they came, both from hospitals in the north and south of Sweden. I think all this experience in coming to Sweden and getting the job went very smooth for me, because I came alone(...) It was very easy to get in the Swedish system because of my profession, there is a great demand for doctors (Bogdan)

For Madalina, it was also a smooth process of being employed in Sweden and she considered her education and skills acquired in Sweden, prior to obtaining employment, as valuable in finding a suitable opportunity, although she acknowledged also the challenges of keeping and liking the job:
I am working in the finance field right now. It is a good opportunity, related to what I studied. I learned many skills at university that I am using now. Meanwhile, I got a promotion, so I chose another job, in another department. It was hard in the beginning. There are many changes at work, all the time. (...) but I will see if I like it (Madalina)

Often, the outcomes of obtaining employment surpassed the initial expectations of the newcomer in the host country, like in the case of Bogdan, who perceived his field as one of the most desired in Sweden and beneficial especially to skilled migrants:

As an immigrant from the European Union and a resident doctor, you basically have a better status than if you are from Sweden. (...) They hire you directly, without additional years of practice and you even get a better salary (Bogdan)

For the informants, being very mobile in the labour market, obtaining work experience from several entry-level jobs in their field, as well as being very ambitious and motivated, contributed to a present improvement of their labour market situation and future aspirations. For instance, in the case of Ioana, her professional path so far proved to be quite complex, yet all work opportunities built up for a current better status on the labour market:

After the studies, all my jobs were related to what I studied. (.....)I think I was lucky with the jobs, I had a good CV, I was involved in many projects also during university. I made a good profile on some online job platforms. This is how I got most of my jobs I had so far and they were all related to what I studied. It was quite easy for me, I must say....(Ioana)

In Bianca’s case, the experience of accessing the labour market was fairly similar, having been part of several work experiences that helped her succeed in the job acquired at present. Still, she understood the current work opportunity as merely a challenge among many more to follow:

I have always been an active person, having different jobs, internships and volunteering opportunities while I was a student. There was no problem in getting a job, according to my background, although I feel that marketing and communications are just a gateway to more interesting future job opportunities... (Bianca)
For Ciprian, having lived for more than fifteen years in Canada together with his family, and having acquired his university education in Canada and country-specific knowledge, the process of accessing the labour market was fairly smooth and linear, matching his previous education and following a straight course:

I have always worked in the same field, mobile development, web development...My last job was maybe ten years ago, since then, I have been working for myself, I have developed my own company. I have developed a network of different websites....Then, I opened a company for mobile development, digital product management, more specifically. That’s what I have been doing for the past years. Right now, I am focusing more on blockchain and cryptocurrency, one of the latest emerging technologies...(Ciprian)

Other participants have expressed their difficulties and obstacles in acquiring solid employment in the host country’s labour market, one that matched their educational background and expectations. In the case of Celina, starting from the beginning in Sweden, acquiring language proficiency and additional human capital under the form of university education – a master program were means of trying to obtain a work opportunity that would help her seek and find better employment conditions in the labour market in Sweden, but so far, the process hasn’t been as easy as expected:

When I arrived in Sweden, I just came to be next to my boyfriend. (...) All this time, I kept trying to apply to several jobs, but it was kind of complicated, since I did not know the language. I finished the master last year in June. I never thought about finding a job in the field I studied – demography. (...) Most of them are in research, which is not something I like, at least for now. (...) So I decided to apply to jobs related to other areas, such as accounting, marketing, logistics. It was not an easy process, (...) Eventually, I found something, after a few months(...) I had very few responses from the job applications I sent. At some point, I almost gave up the idea of finding something in Sweden, nothing seemed to work...(Celina)

A lot more investment and training were necessary for securing better employment prospects, especially in fields such as economics or social sciences, where the competition is very high. Ioana pursued a second university program, in Montreal, which she hoped to end with a PhD
position, that would increase her chances in a better status, in her field of interest and eventually, secure her employment:

Well, I hope now to get a PhD position...It is hard to apply because there are many people applying, in different universities and there are not many places available. But unfortunately, few people are accepted at university. And if you don’t have a PhD, it is hard to obtain a very qualified position afterwards. (...) Right now, I have a part-time job at a crisis centre, we work with different kind of people that need help or support, that have a hard time into adapting to society(...) Actually, I love my job, I wish I will be able to do that all my life, I am really passionate about it. The only problem is that I would like to go deeper, maybe do therapy with them, and in the case of the centre, it is not possible. That is why my ambition to continue my career in psychology (Ioana)

Furthermore, despite having a wide range of job opportunities, good knowledge of the field of work, the way the labour market works in the host country, as well as international educational or professional background were mentioned several times, by the participants, as valuable resources that triggered finding employment, for example, in the case of George, while accessing the labour market in Toronto:

So basically, when I got in Canada, I had already graduated from a Master program in Sweden and I wanted to work for start-ups. When I got here, I started making contacts and socializing. I got my current job last year, I was already being in contact with these guys for an interview and I was confident they will give me an offer, which it happened (...) But was it hard to find a job? Yes and no, I will say. Yes, in the fact that here it is a lot about networking, it is a lot about meeting and talking to people (...) Also, the fact that there is a big place, Toronto has like six million people, almost the size of Sweden right (laughing), so there are a lot more opportunities.

(George)

Previous work experience within the same field was also one of the main assets that promoted the interviewees as suitable candidates for the job position they applied to, for example in the case of Madalina, that had up to five years of relevant work experience before her arrival in Sweden, but also in Ioana’s situation in Canada:

First of all, my grades and overall performance at school are my strengths. Also, I got my
first work experiences early, like the majority of the people here...This is a positive sign for employers. I finished a program in criminology. At the beginning, I didn’t know whether I will find jobs easily. I worked instead for a governmental organisation, that had a partnership with my university. I also worked for a rehabilitation centre, a centre for convicts or prisoners that were recently released and they needed guidance to re-integrate into society, with accommodation, job advice.....And after one year, I managed to obtain a contract there for a position, but I didn’t accept to stay there for a longer time, because of the bureaucracy. I stayed only one year and a half.......I know many people accept jobs in governmental institutions and centres because they are better paid, but I think it is more important to also like what you are doing (Ioana)

Not all of the informants expressed an easy path in accessing the labour market in the host country and the number of unexpected obstacles they had to face proved often overwhelming. Whether or not, the migrants were pursuing an educational opportunity simultaneously with work or not, also influenced their process of getting integrated in the host country. In the end, despite having a smooth process of employment, relevant to their field of study and career, for my informants, their personal motivation in keeping that particular work opportunity was very important, proving their flexibility and mobility, knowing there might be other paths opened for them.

6.2. Language proficiency

Based on the interview data, the more the informants had invested in human capital and especially acquiring the language skills of the host country, the faster and better were the returns of it. For some, human capital was acquired after the arrival in the host country, while others had invested in their skills and qualifications also prior to their arrival in Canada or in Sweden.

Having acquired language skills before arriving in the host country were seen as very much valued, in the host society, according to my informants, giving them a feeling of belonging and acceptance, like in the case of Anca, Bianca or Bogdan. Moreover, knowing the official language, offered them also a competitive advantage, in the labour market:

On my arrival here, I already had a quite good level of Swedish, so it wasn’t necessary to continue with the language course. (...) I just had to learn the specific medical terminology, to be at the same level as everyone else from my colleagues (Anca)
I took some private classes of Swedish, before coming here. Everyone was really impressed because of my level of Swedish, when I came here and started working (Bogdan)

In the case of Bianca, it was easier acquiring French language skills in Romania, prior to her arrival in Canada with her family, Romania being a Francophone country and many people having a good level of French, obtained during primary or secondary education:

While living in Montreal, it was mandatory to take classes of English and French (...) I remember when I used to listen to podcasts in French, before our departure from Romania...We learned French by ourselves, on a daily basis. (Bianca)

Consequently, lack of language knowledge can trigger a certain isolation of the migrant from prospective job opportunities and information related to the labour market. This aspect was confirmed by Celina who felt she had to take everything from the beginning, if she wanted to access the labour market, since she didn’t know Swedish upon her arrival:

I was feeling very discouraged when I came to Sweden, since the jobs in English were very few and the competition was very big. (...) Hundreds of applicants for the same job opening. So I gave up and decided to wait and start the Swedish language courses. During that time, I was studying Swedish full-time, every day, at the university, so I could only work during the weekends. That lasted for 7 months. (...) I managed to put some money aside, to become less financially dependent on my parents (Celina)

For Sorin, it was also a challenging matter, because he had to learn to manage a Master program simultaneously with pursuing the Swedish language courses:

So I applied to SFI (Svenska för invandrare) to study the language, I already knew a bit of Swedish from the previous time spent here, while studying...I passed the test for the evaluation of the language level so I entered into a more advanced group. And then I followed this language course in parallel with a Master program (Sorin)

On the other hand, while still living in Sweden, George decided not to invest in the same
way, regarding language, although he acknowledged its importance for the Swedish labour market, because he wanted to invest time focusing solely on his career ambition, thus his motivation to migrate to Canada, a country which has English as its official language:

Language was an important factor. You know, when you go to Sweden…. I have been in business for some time, and I had my experiences, I knew what I can do and I did not feel like I wanted to learn Swedish. You know, go to SFI (Swedish course for immigrants), start all over with a new language at my age when I had other purposes. (…) Learning a language from scratch and dedicating my time to it was a drawback to my personal career and ambition, in terms of what I wanted to accomplish...And it is such a tiny country...Why would I do that, if I knew I could have a better life somewhere else? Knowing that I already speak an international language as well...

(George)

For Cristina, lack of language proficiency was definitely a drawback for obtaining a more suitable employment in Sweden and she admitted the need to invest more in it, in the future, also to feel more socially integrated. Working and belonging to an international environment makes it even more of a challenge to make time for learning a new language:

Everyone asks me about Swedish, I also had some interviews conducted in Swedish...It is very difficult, at work I only use English, I stopped doing language courses, I stopped going to meet-ups like I used to...(…) I learned Swedish when I came here, I was happy that here everyone was speaking English. But, actually, it is not enough. And everyone, Swedish and internationals, are saying that. For an immigrant, it will be difficult to integrate otherwise, you will be marginalised......You won’t manage to create personal relations with the locals, you will never manage to understand them (Cristina)

Personal motivation and ambition in developing country specific human capital were visible in many of the interviewees’ stories, for example, in Madalina’s case, in order to overcome the obstacle of not getting the job that she had previously applied for:

Well, I applied first time last year, for a job position, and then, I had to learn Swedish and I reapplied in October same year and they were shocked to see I learned Swedish so fast, they knew I
have applied for a job before. (…)I think it helped also that I was very motivated and determined in obtaining the job. Of course, I didn’t have a perfect level of Swedish, but I tried my best to learned it and they appreciated it…(Madalina)

Acquiring the host country’s language is clearly a significant aspect for a migrant, not only in improving his or her status in society and feel more integrated, but also in accessing information about jobs or seeking better work opportunities, often reserved only to natives. Still, not all migrants considered this aspect as a priority, therefore they applied several strategies to overcome this potential disadvantage, either moving into a new place, like George, juggling both studies and language courses like Sorin or Celina or investing more in education and international experiences, valuable in the nowadays competitive market.

6.3. Investment in education

The path from education to a matching job opportunity has not been equally smooth, among the interviewees and they had to invest in their education, after their arrival in Sweden or Canada, as a means of getting knowledge on the society and labour market, but also to ensure better work prospects, after accomplishing a degree or getting a diploma.

In the case of Ciprian, having both a general and a specialized education conferred him a competitive advantage in the labour market, in two fields that are both in demand in Canada:

Well, in my case the educational path was a bit more complicated, not as straightforward as in others’ cases….But I knew I will work in IT, all my family is very technical, I was always passionate about technology and computers… After high school, I went to Chicago for a while to study, I was also working part-time as desktop support for a medical company. (…) Afterwards, I had a job as a programmer, for two years, until I graduated university. It was more like a diploma for technical graduates specialized in IT, not really like a Bachelor or a Master program, more like vocational education. After that, I came back to Canada from U.S., started a job in programming and went to university here…..I studied business for four years. (…) I liked more this aspect, business, management, more than programming….(Ciprian)

Getting a second degree or a Master program, proved a serious investment and commitment, in the hope of securing a suitable employment in the country of destination, a strategy of accessing
the labour market, as stated by Madalina and Celina:

   My Bachelor studies were in business administration. I have also worked part-time in Romania, but in other departments. Yes, I think my studies helped me in finding a lot of different jobs, quite relevant, in my home country. In Sweden, it was harder. (...) Two years ago I started a master program in business(...)But I thought it was a good investment for the future and to find jobs here, in Sweden (Celina)

   I studied business administration, with focus on international trade, as Bachelor studies, then I finished a Master and then I worked for five years(...). I decided to pursue a Master program abroad, so then it will be easier to access the labour market afterwards, in that country. And that’s how I found out about Sweden. (....) The Master in Sweden was only one year so it suit me better, I was interested to enter the labour market as fast as possible. (....)But first, I had to get familiarised with their culture, the way they think, the society, how everything works (Madalina)

   In Cristina’s case, it was not a strategy that she pursued from the beginning, but only after she finished her studies, she prolonged her stay in Sweden and decided to continue with a full-time employment:

   Well, I studied sociology in my bachelor in Bucharest, then a Master in the same field. And after that, another Master in marketing (....) Right now, I work in a start-up, in marketing. I am responsible with organizing marketing campaigns. The knowledge I gain in university helps me like 40 % right now...To be able to use all my knowledge, I would need to work for a bigger company, with more clients and resources (Cristina)

   In Sorin’s case, the educational path was more complex and, after pursuing a master program, he felt he needed to do additional courses, more relevant in understanding the labour market needs and dynamics in Sweden. From there, he could more easily get ahead in the labour market and obtain valuable experience, according to the economic demand:

   The Master program I pursued, to be honest, was not a useful program for me. So, I went to the municipality, and I asked them for some advice, regarding the jobs I could take up. Then, they advise me to start a course, which is supposed to place various individuals from different fields, in
According to my informants, investing in education and language courses increased their chances in the labour market and offered them a better understanding and perspective on the needs and demand of the host country. Still, the social factor was missing for many, acquiring the right contacts, in order to access better work opportunities and also surpass potential obstacles in the process of employment and eventually, integration.

6.4. Social networks

All of the interviewees admitted the significance of having social networks among the locals, for getting insights on job opportunities, but also to feel more socially integrated. Networks or social contacts are part and parcel of country-specific human capital and ensure better economic and social prospects for the skilled migrants, as well as greater mobility in the labour market. My informants had the chance to develop significant social contacts, prior to their arrival in the host country, such as Bogdan, since the university in Bucharest had many foreign students back then, including from Sweden:

\textit{At the medical school in Bucharest, I made many friends, also from Sweden, and we kept in touch ever since} (Bogdan)

Coming to a new country implies a renewal of social contacts and this can be challenging for many individuals, not always willing to invest into networking and meeting new people. Personality and motivation play a key role in this respect. In Bianca’s case it was exactly the opposite, due to her personality, although she admitted to the difficulty especially in the beginning, when one had to deal with many new factors and still not belonging to a specific community, whether at university or a working environment:
It is always hard in the beginning to make friends, no matter where you go....For me, it was like that. But I am a sociable person, in the end, I made many social contacts through my education and profession (Bianca)

The duration of stay in a specific country triggers more involvement and time spent on networking, from the migrants’ side, as they develop a better understanding of the people around and the overall vibe of the new place. Moreover, as in Cristina’s case, being active and involved in different events, helped one not only socially but also professionally, in the long run:

I think social contacts are very important here. During the master program, I participated in many activities, I joined different start-ups and organized events, I met many people....When I was doing my internship at a start-up in Stockholm, I met this colleague of mine and then she recommended me, they were looking for someone....An internship, at first, but then it became a paid job. So, I had to be very active, and go to many places and meet the right people to succeed. You need many references as you apply to different jobs. For me, it was crucial, otherwise I wouldn’t have obtained the job (Cristina)

Therefore, an active lifestyle helped one not only to establish a solid network, but also to meet the right people and receive recommendations that can further lead one to seek or obtain employment opportunities, or move from a temporary position to a full-time one, as Cristina mentioned:

I am employed now, I was recommended by a former colleague, we used to work together during the master....on different projects. She was already employed in this start-up and then she recommended me...She is not Swedish, our working environment is very international(....) I don’t think if I had more Swedish contacts, this will necessarily guarantee a job position, they would probably recommend other Swedish people. But I think I still have time to meet more Swedish people. I think I am only partially socially integrated, but I am fine with this (Cristina)

But are only international people the ones that recommend international people in a country? If so, what is the role of having social contacts among local people? For George, it seemed to have been the only way of obtaining a work position in the labour market in Sweden:
In Sweden, I got a job, through a girl I have been studying with. I told her I am looking for a job, she introduced me to someone, we had the interview and then, I got the job. (...) The girl was Swedish. Before that, when I was searching by myself, I could not find anything. Once I got introduced to someone, it was so much easier to get a job. If I had not talked with her, probably I would have been jobless. (...) So, getting a job it was more based on luck and finding the right person (George).

Also, recommendations from high-skilled people with good status in the host country, such as professors or managers, might be more valuable and credible and thus helpful in obtaining the work position desired, like in Madalina’s case:

I had several recommendations from university, from a professor and one from a manager, in Romania. (...) I also had a recommendation from a professor at the university in Sweden. He was my supervisor during the Master thesis, I remember. I liked him a lot as a person, I also got to collaborate with a company during the Master thesis, so it was pretty useful (Madalina).

On the other hand, social ties from within the same group might not prove as significant in relation to the labour market integration, but are seen as important for ‘getting by’, day by day or simply confer mental support to the person. In this respect, Anca mentioned her Romanian colleague, as a true mentor for her in her daily work:

I have a Romanian colleague at work, we work in the same department (...). I see her as my mentor. (...) I am always saying that, if she made it so far, then I could do it as well. (...) She always gives me valuable advice, for all the difficulties I encounter (Anca).

Bogdan and Celina also acknowledged the help and moral support offered by Romanian friends that proved to be valuable in Sweden, but on the other hand, the professional opportunities one could access through them were fairly limited or temporary:

I applied through a recruiting firm (...) A friend of mine actually, also from Romania, advised me to apply. They added me in their database and, once the job opening in French appeared, I applied. It is a one-year job opportunity (Celina).
Networking is part and parcel of a successful career in many domains and in Canada, it is common practice and largely encouraged in the labour market, yet my interviewees confessed that they applied in a standard way for a job position, through formal channels and they appreciated the transparency and openness of the employers, like in George’s case:

"Here, in Canada, my first job was not based on social contacts, I just applied online. They called me for a meeting, we had the interview and after a while, they called me back saying I got the job. Here, it is ok to chase someone, or to call someone more than once, job-related. (...) It is ok to be persistent" (George)

Of course, networking was acknowledged by most of my informants as an important tool for migrants, although it depended on a great extent to the domain, since, for example in Ciprian’s case, working in IT or web development meant proving one has the right skills and abilities and less the right contacts:

"It really depends on the industry. Of course, networking helps a lot. You know, knowing people, getting out there(...) Obviously, you compete with locals, people that have finished education here or were born here, they might have more previous experience than you and so on. But, if you have a network, you as an immigrant, you might find it easier. Knowing people that can get you in the system...But if you have to look for yourself, find a job, you don’t know anybody....it is a lot more difficult, you won’t have recommendations from people. Like everywhere, I think. I always applied online. I went to the interviews and I got the job. The simplest way ever. But I always had very specialized skills, don’t forget that, it is very important. (...) If you are in the computer science field or artificial intelligence, I don’t know, you will probably find a job fairly easy, you won’t have to struggle that much(...). If I only had a general business degree, it would have taken forever to find a job...For almost all other kinds of jobs, communication, arts, marketing, you need contacts, you need networking, it will be tough(...). In my field, it is easy to find a job, you are basically judged based on your skills, nothing else....(...) (Ciprian)

Knowledge of local people and other ethnic groups can increase one’s chances of integration both professionally and socially but, according to Ioana, it is also a country-specific matter since Canada is predominantly a country of immigration, therefore the majority are part of very international environments. Networking in this case becomes less a means for integration and
Ioana explained that it was more of a matter of the domain in which someone activates, according to her view:

*Well, honestly, I have never been so involved in this networking thing….I never joined a job fair or an event where you could meet people or do networking. But I am sure it can help someone find about possible job positions. And of course, recommendations are very valuable. Personally, I never experienced any kind of barriers (…..)I think it is important to be integrated here, as well, not stay in a corner within your ethnic group or community you know…But, it is different in Canada maybe than other countries….Big cities here are mostly places full of immigrants, there is a lot of diversity. So you cannot say you know natives or immigrants, you don’t have this division (Ioana)*

Overall, all the informants admitted the relevance and importance of having an extensive network of social contacts, in coming into a new country, to compensate for possible drawbacks in terms of skills or country-specific knowledge:

*In Sweden, job opportunities are also based on networking. And if you are an outsider and you come to Sweden, it will take you five, ten years to get in. You need to speak both English and Swedish perfectly. (...) Just like my boss used to say: ‘ There is like an unspoken VP rule in Sweden. Once you get it, you are in, for good.’(George)*

*I prefer to stick with the natives, even during my lunch breaks. If you are not joining their group, you will never be invited to an afterwork or a fika (...) I work in an international environment ..Yet, I think it is wrong to stay all the time in a group, with people that share your culture or ethnicity, it is a drawback (Bogdan)*

In Sweden, especially, having social contacts among natives seemed both a goal and an obstacle for the interviewees due to the chances of obtaining information on job opportunities that would not be available among the same group of people, although this was not an easy process for all of the informants, like Celina and Sorin for instance, as part of their daily experiences and interactions with Swedish society:

*I have to be more involved in meeting people, expanding my social network, it was never*
one of my priorities, as a person (...) That is why, I do not feel completely integrated. My lifestyle is not really Swedish (laughing) (Celina)

Networking is very important. Especially here in Sweden. Society is quite closed here, although people are eager to help and everyone is considered equal...it is very hard to feel like you belong to the community, if you are not a native. Networking helped me a lot, for example, when I found the internship, three years ago. I asked one of my professors at school and he gave me an advice, he talked with someone....I am currently a member of different associations, so I still grow my network. It is a bit harder with the natives, in the beginning, but I am optimistic in this respect. If you are part of organisations or associations with the natives, you will get to know them, at some point, and they will get to know you. You just have to be persistent (Sorin)

Both human and social capital seem very valuable and relevant for migrants to thrive on the labour market. But what other aspects do migrants consider in evaluating their current status in the labour market and how do they envisage their future options, in the destination country, in the long run?

6.5. Labour Market integration: benefits and challenges

For the interviewees, being part of the labour market in Sweden or Canada represented many benefits and opportunities, that influenced their stay in the host country, for the long term.

First and foremost, social security and health benefits were considered important factors to ensure good conditions and advantages on the labour market, for highly-skilled people, even if some of the costs were quite high. In George’s situation, having a three year-old kid meant a lot of responsibility and determination to work harder to secure a good future in Canada:

It was so easy to move here with the family (...). It is easier since everything is in English, in Sweden, everything was in Swedish....Yeah, I have a wife and a three year-old kid and they love it so far here. (...)My kid started to go to daycare. Her first language was Swedish, because we were living there in Sweden. But she accommodated very well here, there is a lot more diversity among children. Day care here in Canada, is expensive, we pay so much money monthly. (...) So, everything is more expensive, but we work, and we feel a lot happier, we get more money....
Apart from daycare and social security that were highly prized by informants from both countries, despite the high costs, one of the most important benefits stood for the work-life balance, that was highly valued in Sweden, as Anca stated, in her motivation to continue working in Sweden:

*Here, I feel that the work-life balance really exists, one has time for oneself, apart for the working hours, to pursue hobbies or spent time with family, friends. This is something that is hard to find in Romania, for example. (...) Of course, what I realised after all these years is that there is no perfect system for a country. Sweden has its imperfections as well, the society is quite close which makes it hard to have friends among the natives. (...) But I don’t consider that this aspect affects a lot my integration in the Swedish system* (Anca)

In Canada, on the other hand, the lack of work-life balance seemed more of a drawback, in the long run, acknowledged by both Ciprian and Ioana, hoping for a future change in this aspect:

*There are both good and bad aspects in Canada....It is a great place. But....And this is only my opinion, OK?...But, for me I think, it is too much work, but not enough time to enjoy the results of your work, you know. You feel sometimes that life passes you by... That’s what I don’t like about Canada, and this is something that in Europe is not happening. The big problem here in north America, is the life-work balance. Everyone here just works so hard to make a lot of money, to buy more and bigger...Everyone is a consumer and everyone is just working a lot. That’s what bothers me the most* (Ciprian)

*Of course, more and more employers are starting now to be more flexible, more open for people to work from home. I think there are also studies done that show that people can be more productive, if you work from home. To be able to balance better work and personal life...This is an advantage. Of course, there are still employers who are very conservative, it depends on the job* (Ioana)

For better future prospects on the labour market, the interviewees admitted the importance of developing more their skills and work experience, in regards to a more competitive approach on
the labour market opportunities, according to Sorin’s opinion:

*I need to gain more working experience, in the geography field, like working internationally maybe in developing countries, with maps for example. I just need to work harder. Maybe develop a bit my hard skills, new systems, new tools, one always has to remain updated* (Sorin)

Cristina and Celina shared also a similar view on the idea of skills’ development, considering these can be mostly developed through work experience and less through education, although personality plays an important role as well. In this way, migrants often apply various strategies, valuable for their professional trajectory, while trying to meet the current demands on the labour market, in their field:

*I think I have soft skills, I like to coordinate activities, I am creative, sociable, I propose new ideas...But I don’t know many tools, hard skills, I am still developing them...Adobe Illustrator, for example, it is important for a marketing expert, it will give me a competitive advantage* (Cristina)

*Well, the fact that I have finished a Master program here, in Sweden, it is an advantage, everywhere you go. Also, my language skills and I had a bit of work experience from Romania too, plus many other extra activities....Maybe it will prove useful to learn more programs, develop more my hard skills, follow more trainings in programming or marketing, business-related fields. It will improve anyone’s chances to get a job here, in Sweden. (...) Yes, it is something to consider for sure, invest my time more wisely and obtain a better job* (Celina)

The type of employment and status on the labour market were a big influence on the success of the migrants professionally and better future prospects available to them. On the one hand, interviewees that have a permanent contract experienced a level of stability in the workplace that they enjoyed and they were willing to invest further in it, in the long run, according to Madalina and Bianca:

*I have a permanent contract. They need me, apparently (laughing) First time, I had a six-months contract, but then they renewed it, so now it is permanent. Honestly, I think there are only
advantages in working here. If you have good qualifications, it is easy to change jobs, be very flexible on the labour market. I would like to stay in Sweden, in Romania the economic situation is still not the best. I have already put many effort here, with the studies and now the work.....

(Madalina)

Actually, I love my job! It allows me to travel a lot, have a spontaneous schedule and meet all these amazing people from everywhere, passionate about start-ups, cryptocurrency and blockchain. (...) It is really amazing and I feel grateful for this experience (Bianca)

On the other hand, those that had temporary contracts or difficulties in progressing in the labour market, experienced a high level of uncertainty in the labour market and therefore, started questioning their future in the host country, like in the case of Cristina and Celina who shared a similar experience, in this respect:

I had to stay two years here without the personal number, only with a temporary one, because my contract was not permanent, I had a temporary one....And this is against the Swedish rule. I still have a temporary contract. I think it is beneficial for the employer. You can fire someone whenever you want, you do not have any guarantee. Swedish people will never accept temporary contracts. Only we as immigrants, have to accept this, because we want to be on the labour market...(...) I wish these practices were more regulated and restricted....Many leave because they don’t get a permanent contract, there is too much instability (Cristina)

What motivated me was that I got so many negative replies from my job applications, that made me wanted to try even more. I was sure there was something there for me too. (...) Right now, I have a temporary contract, only for a few months. It will expire this year since the company will move its processes in other country and right now, I am looking for other jobs. Unfortunately, there is a trend nowadays among employers, to offer you temporary contracts, which increases instability, in the working place. (...) (Celina)

All in all, the labour market experience of the informants had been complex and changed their perspective on the country or the opportunities, in a more comprehensive and realistic way. The labour market experience in Sweden or Canada has helped them in understanding what they
valued most in life, whether there were financial resources, independence, work experience and how they should work more to obtain the employment they wish for, eventually. For Anca, it was a better alternative working in the health care field in Sweden than Romania:

*I don’t consider living here a permanent decision in my life, but it was still a challenge that I wanted to pursue. (...) I was craving for mutual respect at the working place and also a degree of independence for myself* (Anca)

For other migrants, such as Celina, persisting on finding success in the labour market in Sweden was more of a means of getting international work experience, as well as a personal ambition of hers:

*Right now, what will motivate me to stay in Sweden is to find a well-paid job, but I am not sure about the professional satisfaction...It will be more like a personal thing, like I made it here where it is harder, you know?* (Celina)

Cristina also shared this ambition, in the professional environment in Sweden, hoping for better future possibilities, even if the challenges still seemed to be quite high:

*I think Romanians are quite appreciated here, in Sweden, on the labour market, because of their hard work, they can get advanced fast....They are responsible and ambitious, which are good qualities....Swedish people don’t ask themselves whether they will integrate or not, since it is their society. But immigrants have to be more competitive....They don’t have anything to demonstrate. We have to* (Cristina)

To conclude, this chapter offered an overview of the answers of my interviewees, to the study, regarding their experiences on the labour market in Sweden and, respectively, in Canada. They provided information on benefits, challenges and opportunities encountered since their arrival in the destination country, from acquiring new skills, learning a new language and completing their education, to developing their social networks, thus pursuing interesting and often unexpected paths of integration.

The findings of the current research are analysed and further discussed in the next chapter, by linking them to the theoretical framework and my own interpretation of the results.
7. Discussion of the findings

This section aims to draw inferences from the findings gathered in the previous chapter, based on both the interviews taken and the theoretical framework and previous research.

7.1. Educational – Occupational match in the Labour Market

The results of the study prove interesting insights on the occupational mobility and status of the highly skilled, in answer to the aim and research questions, as expressed in the first section of the study.

For a labour migrant, the educational-occupational match or mismatch in the labour market of the host country can facilitate or impede social and economic integration, in the short and long run. Skilled migrants should be viewed as assets for any country’s social and economic prosperity (Kaushik and Drolet 2018), individuals that can contribute with their skills and knowledge as well as diverse or international background. The individuals require incentives to invest in human capital, such as the prospects of a better job in the labour market (Sohlman 1981), a better status and respect in society. Many of the informants stated that developing further their education, by taking up courses or a Master program helped them to acquire country-specific knowledge and facilitated their access to the labour market, such as in the case of Madalina or Sorin, but not all of them applied this strategy prior to their arrival in the host country. They developed this strategy once they got familiarised to the society of the host country and once they were faced with barriers to access employment. In Celina’s case, she decided to continue her education in Sweden and take up language courses, once she understood that the education acquired in her home country and previous work experience, as well as lack of host country language proficiency, won’t be beneficial for her integration in the Swedish labour market.

As identified previously in the thesis and mentioned by my informants as a key role for integration, having the language proficiency in the destination country can offer a competitive advantage, on the labour market, to the highly skilled migrants (Dahlstedt 2017). This aspect being considered, it is more of a challenge for migrants coming into a country where the official language is not an international one, like in Sweden, thus needing to invest more time and energy in pursuing language courses, to obtain better employment in the labour market or getting familiarised with the
specificities of it, mostly available to locals (Emilsson 2014).

On the one hand, for some of the participants, coming to Sweden and finding employment was a smooth process, because of their field of work and the great demand in the labour market of the host country, like in the cases of Bogdan and Anca, working in the health care field. A similar experience was shared by Ciprian, because of his experience in IT and programming, which is currently one of the most desirable domains worldwide, where there is constantly a need for people. On the other hand, for others, previous education acquired in the destination country seemed insufficient in accessing better-paid jobs in the labour market and here in this case, social contacts and network resources, proved as valuable sources of help and information (Lancee 2012), for instance in the case of Celina, Cristina and George.

The cultural capital represented by education acquired in the host country, certificates or diplomas is taken for granted in the labour market and it is easier to assess (Behtoui 2008), thus an advantage for the locals. The migrants therefore have to find different strategies to overcome these barriers of human capital.

Benefiting from human capital means having both formal education and qualifications, but also possessing the inner characteristics and motivation that allows one to progress both socially and economically. Higher human capital leads to social-economic integration and it is often associated with community participation, social cohesion, better public health and other benefits. Personality of the individual through motivation and persistence shapes his or her personal experiences and this was obvious in the case of Madalina, who decided to commit herself to studying Swedish in just a few months, in order to obtain employment that would match her education. People have to be ready to invest a lot of time and personal resources in acquiring human capital, but not everyone is willing to commit to the challenge, because of other factors, such as having a family to provide for or simply a lack of motivation or ambition. For instance, George decided not to invest in pursuing Swedish courses, perceiving it as a drawback in his professional path and also having his family to provide for, thus moving to Canada meant thinking of a more inclusive environment that will benefit his entire family.

Naturally, there are barriers for newcomers in all countries due to factors such as lack of language proficiency, lack of social networks or a limited work experience (Bevelander and Pendakur 2012). Moreover, from the human capital perspective, a general university education might not be the only key factor in finding suitable employment, but, vocational training and specialized skills can often strike a difference among the labour market outcomes of the migrants.
(Dahlstedt and Bevelander 2010).

It is not only a matter of separation between the highly and the lower-skilled migrants, but also between those having specific skills or generalist-skills (Kolb chapter 4 in Menz and Caviedes 2010), which can influence their labour market outcomes. Judging by the respondents’ answers during the interviews, a vocational education seemed to matter more than a general one, to access faster and more securely a job opportunity (Dahlstedt and Bevelander 2010), when it comes to the foreign residents of a country, like in the case of Anca or Bogdan, as residents in two distinct hospitals in Sweden.

It is significant to point, with respect to this, that the field of profession plays also a key role when it comes to a lower or higher chance of mismatch between education and occupation. Whether in Canada or Sweden, there are professions with a high demand overall, like in programming or IT as confirmed by Ciprian, where one is judged based on the level of specific skills and portfolio, less on language proficiency or knowledge on the labour market, therefore there is a higher transferability of qualifications and a higher chance to employ foreign skilled workers. On the other hand, professions that imply a general education increase the level of competition on the labour market, thus decreasing the odds of employment, as in the case of Cristina or Celina that acknowledged the importance of acquiring more training on specific tools or skills to have a competitive advantage in the business environment.

Depending on their investment in educational and linguistic skills, obtaining and securing an employment constituted definitely an intricate path for the informants, in both countries of residence, Sweden and Canada and the specificities or demand in the labour market had also a lot to say on the matter, requesting a high level of flexibility from their side.

7.2. The use and importance of Social Capital

Investigating the bonding/bridging aspects of social capital, as per Lancee’s study (2012), the findings of the study show that strong ties, developed within the same community provided trust, moral support and reciprocity for the individuals, while weak ties brought forward opportunities in the labour market (Suseno and Pinnington 2017). Bridging ties means getting across cultural differences, connecting to native residents (Lancee 2012) and this is a challenge for any newcomer, if not familiarized with the culture of the host society. Without the right recommendations, Madalina might have found it more difficult to access the labour market in
Sweden and find a suitable work opportunity in the finance field and George, might not have succeeded in getting a job in Sweden without a Swedish reference person. Therefore, not all types of interactions proved to be fruitful in terms of social capital and labour market access.

As Portes (1998) states that structural holes within networks help getting access to valuable information and knowledge, the informants acknowledged the importance of having contacts from locals or people that were already incorporated in the labour market, as a means for upward social-economic mobility or getting ahead (Putnam 2000 in Lancee 2012), as compared to getting by, through personal network or people belonging to the same ethnic group, which lead only to temporary opportunities or motivation, mental support, like in the case of Anca, Bogdan or Celina, each benefiting from a good friend or mentor that was Romanian as well.

Social ties have a significant impact also on organizations or employers, signalling the presence or skills of an individual that wouldn’t be taken into consideration otherwise (Lin 2001) or not at a level matching the education or previous background. Despite this aspect, informants admitted that they applied for jobs without the aid of social networks and they were judged based solely on their skills, for instance in Ciprian’s case or Ioana’s, but also George stated that there was no need for networking when he applied for employment in Canada, compared to Sweden where the recommendation of a Swedish colleague weighted positively for his access to the labour market. Generally, it is preferable to have international contacts in most of the domains, such as in business, in George or Bianca’s case, in Canada, although, on the other hand, having contacts mostly among locals, proved to be more beneficial or desired in the Swedish society, as my informants living in Sweden confirmed.

The type of labour market, whether it is highly regulated or more flexible, can also shape the extent to which social contacts would bring more benefits to the migrant (Lancee 2012). Judging by the experiences of other informants residing in Sweden, we could see a tendency for people to seek for connections, references or recommendations from people already settled in the Swedish labour market or who had a certain status, for example a manager or a professor. In Madalina’s case, this type of recommendation was valuable for her skills to become more credible in the eyes of the employers and for Sorin, to find more about job prospects that he wouldn’t have known otherwise. On the other hand, having international contacts, as in Celina or Cristina’s cases, proved significant to access the labour market in Sweden, but in order to obtain a better qualified status, Swedish contacts might have been more valuable yet difficult to find. “Those without the right contacts are penalised” (Granovetter 1974 in Behtoui 2008:415), on the labour market, regardless of competence.
and skills, as the experiences of Celina and Cristina in Sweden showed. A social capital deficit could lead to a decrease in positive outcomes on the labour market (Behtoui 2006), as acknowledged by Celina and Cristina, that stated the importance of investing more in social network.

Often, for highly-skilled migrants, social contacts do not stand for their decision to migrate, it is more a part of the international environment in which they thrive (Ferro 2004), but not something mandatory, depending a lot on the field of work and the labour market in the specific country. Being more closed and rigid in Sweden, social contacts among local people might prove beneficial to the migrants, for upward professional mobility (Behtoui 2007).

Social capital increases proportionally with human capital (Behtoui 2008), once the migrant gets familiar to the host society, starts taking part more in social life, belongs to certain groups of people. Networking is a social skills that requires time, energy and investment, therefore people that have migrated for more years in a country benefit more from their social ties. The longer the stay of the migrant in the destination country, the more the size of the network increased over time and more informed decisions could be taken in the labour market (Clark and Lisowski 2019).

It is difficult to sustain that having social contacts can facilitate only migrants’ status and mobility in the labour market, since social capital is equally effective for native people (Lancee 2012:57). What is certain is that social capital can lead to a better perspective overall on job searches and opportunities, thus to more perseverance on integrating in the labour market (Lin 2001). For jobs that have more specific requirements like in technology, skills and training compensate enough for people to obtain those positions (Lin 2001), like in Ciprian’s case. But other jobs might require more social skills (Lin 2001), therefore the crucial need of developing social networks.

7.3. Labour Market integration: future prospects for the highly-skilled migrants

According to the labour market and integration theory, in order for an individual to feel accomplished professionally, there are several aspects that need to be taken into consideration and the overall experience on the labour market has to be a positive one, in order for the chance of the migrant to stay in the host country to increase. Considering this point, the interviews and their presentation of experiences, all my informants struggled to move beyond the typical ‘migrant’ experience (Saint-Blancat and Zaltron 2013), transforming it into a positive one. Adjusting to the
demands of the new market meant adopting a new set of skills, depending on the field of work, but also adjusting their expectations and motivation according to the opportunities offered and the overall prospects on the labour market (Sohlman 1981).

The course of events, after the migration process, proved to be unpredictable for the informants. Many faced the challenge from a temporary stay to a longer-term one, in the country of destination, like in the case of Celina, who accompanied her boyfriend initially and only afterwards decided to continue her master education and seek employment in Sweden or Cristina and Madalina, who pursued their university studies, without the certainty of being part of the labour market afterwards.

The beneficial aspects of skilled migrants revolved around the idea of working in new environments and contributing to a personal and professional growth (Ferro 2004), but, according to the interviews, there were many challenges that migrants had to face, such as cultural adjustment, learning a new language and integrating into the professional environment.

Highly skilled migrants are often tempted to pick host countries that provide them with faster returns of their human capital, usually having a liberal welfare system with a less restrictive labour market (Reyneri and Fullin 2010), as Canada, known worldwide to attract mostly economic immigrants, while Sweden through her integration policies, seems to favour family migrants and refugees (Bevelander and Pendakur 2012). The findings of the current study, despite not having the intention of being a comparison on the labour market between the two countries, but more of a comprehensive study of both of them, show certain similarities and differences based on the lenses of the informants’ experiences.

There were several differences regarding Canada and Sweden, related to the type of welfare system, the exposure to immigrants and immigrant communities, the languages and certain practices on the labour market. Furthermore, both societies showed similarities, regarding the importance of networking and establishing social contacts in the labour market, as well as the significance placed on education and acquiring useful skills and certificates, as expressed by my informants’ account of professional experiences. Migrants from both of the countries stressed the importance of having networks, in order to have better outcomes professionally, as well as secure their education and skills valuable to their profession, in order to obtain advantages on the labour market and increase their odds of selection for employment.

One potential obstacle that impeded a smooth process of economic integration in Sweden for the informants was the language acquisition, that involved additional investment from the part of
the informants such as Celina, Cristina or Sorin, compared to Canada where there was no significant language barrier, English being the official language of the country, a language with international circulation, spoken except from the Quebec region, where French was the mandatory one.

Another difference that resulted from the findings of the interviews was the level of interaction with locals or people born in the country of destination. In Canada, the informants admitted they were part and parcel of international environments everywhere, thus networking came up as natural or didn’t require additional investment, as George’s experience for instance. On the other hand, the informants from Sweden acknowledged the difficulty of obtaining social contacts among locals in a natural way, therefore they made conscious decisions of getting more involved in networks and events, in order to increase the chances to meet more people and develop useful contacts, professionally.

All this been said, the findings point to a demand-driven labour market, in the context of Sweden, where individuals from some professions that have shortages of workers can thrive better and adapt faster economically, while individuals that face higher competition in their employment, have to put more effort and struggle to overcome those barriers through trainings, education or networking. In Canada, according to the findings, although the highly-skilled migrants are supposedly carefully selected and targeted, within a supply-driven labour market, they still face similar obstacles while accessing the labour market and, even without the language proficiency skill, they still have to invest in their education and networking, in order to be better assessed professionally.

Migrants deal permanently with obstacles on the labour market, that is why they develop different strategies and motivations than other migrants, at the same time being aware or reflexive on the benefits or constraints of their situation. Migrants have to adopt a risk-mitigating behaviour, in cases where no job is ensured before the arrival in the host country, like it happened to Anca or Bogdan, who knew they got employment before their arrival, in hospitals in Sweden. Getting ahead economically implies persevering and learning the ‘unwritten rules’(Ryan et al. 2015) of the society, the so-called VP-rule that can get one in the system for good, as mentioned by George during the interview.

Personality is also an indicator that may play an important role for the general well-being of a person, how extrovert and assertive one can be and whether it is accepted in the professional environment to be like this (Houle and Schellenberg 2010). Developing a new set of social skills,
such as adaptability and flexibility, because of the difficulty of integration is vital for migrants (Habti and Elo 2019). Moreover, one has to be ready to face challenges, prepare to constantly move through projects, professional opportunities, to thrive in an uncertain labour market (Ferro 2004). Asserting oneself and taking initiative might seem as appropriate behaviour in the labour market in Canada, but in Sweden, another approach might function better for economic opportunities. Of course, a good level of economic integration might not always be equal to social integration, so it is challenging to assume that having only one aspect might completely deter a migrant from leaving the specific countries.

In-depth information about different means of integration in the labour market for highly-skilled migrants can contribute to the shaping of integration policies and determine the future, community participation and social integration of the migrants in cause. Collaborations between institutions, specialized organizations and other actors can bridge the gap in the obstacles that sometimes this group of migrants encounter. Specialized programs between one skilled migrant and an established professional in the specific field, in the host country (Kaushik and Drolet 2018) might also be a helpful tool for integration.
8. Conclusion

Both previous research and the theoretical framework used in the present study show the highly-skilled migrants as a mobile group, in the process of economic integration in a host country (Habti and Elo 2019). On the other hand, the labour market of a specific country proves to offer a specific context for migrants to thrive economically, through its policies, therefore different groups of migrants experience differently the labour market process of integration.

The aim of this thesis, based also on the research questions, was to understand the various experiences and obstacles encountered by migrants in the labour markets of both Canada and Sweden, their experiences in finding employment, investing in their skills or education, increasing their social network and obtaining eventually a better status and motivation in staying in the specific country. Based on the qualitative research study through the interviews conducted with native Romanians in Canada and Sweden, my attempt to show their experiences in a comprehensive way proved fruitful, gaining new insights and in-depth knowledge on the phenomenon of labour market integration and highly-skilled migration.

The results of the study point to a complexity of labour market experiences encountered by the Romanian migrants, based on their personal motivation, human and social capital, type of profession, some more in demand than others and thus less challenging to find suitable employment. Despite the differences in the labour market policies in Canada and Sweden, the interviewees expressed similar points regarding their labour market experiences, while navigating through various obstacles. The need of developing social contacts among locals proved to be crucial, in most of the cases, for accessing better information on employment, obtain credible references or simply feel more integrated. Also, further investment in education or language skills acquisition were necessary in countries with a language circulation that was more restricted internationally, like Sweden or when the human capital obtained in the country of origin did not confer enough economic advantage on the labour market.

In view of the above aspects, I consider this study to highlight in an original and authentic way the experiences of an often underestimated group of highly-skilled migrants, presenting in a complementary rather than comparative way, the different contexts and economic aspects they have to cope with, in order to feel included in the host society. With the help of the present study, I
believe their voices and experiences can be heard and brought forward.

**9. Further Research**

The present qualitative research guided the reader through the economic experiences of Romanian highly-skilled migrants living in Sweden and Canada, the obstacles they encounter and their ambition in trying to overcome them, therefore contributing to the field of research on both labour migration and highly-skilled migration. Since Romanian migration has been fairly little discussed in economic and sociological research, mainly through the perspective of lower-skilled or family migration and often tied to aspects of ethnicity or social discrimination, more research is further welcomed to cast light on the less researched aspects of migrants’ lives, encouragingly more from the perspective of the highly-skilled.

Moreover, few quantitative and qualitative studies can be found regarding labour market aspects of this group of migrants, considering for instance, wage differentials, gender dynamics or profession, therefore, in my view, they are highly welcomed and necessary to offer a holistic approach to Romanian migration nowadays and provide inspiration for further comparison with other similar groups of migrants. On the other hand, further studies around the labour market and employment practices in both Sweden and Canada are encouraged as well, to provide a more in-depth understanding as well as suggest potential future paths, regarding their economic and integration policies.
10. References

Books and Articles:


Dahlstedt, Inge (2017) *Swedish Match? Education, migration and labour market integration in*
Sweden. Migration, Urbanisation and Societal Change. (doctoral dissertation in International Migration and Ethnic Relations)


Saar, Maarja (2017) *The answers you seek will never be found at home: Reflexivity, biographical narratives and lifestyle migration among highly-skilled Estonians*. Södertorn Doctoral
Dissertations. Elanders, Stockholm.

Saint-Blancat, Chantal M. and Zaltron, Francesca (2013) “Making the most of it…: How young Romanians and Moroccans in north-eastern Italy use resources from their social networks”. *Ethnicities*. 13 (6). 795-817


Official reports:


Official Statistics:


11. Annex

10.1. ANNEX I - INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

Introduction:

- Introduce myself (name, surname, background info)
- Explain the aim, the structure, length and content of the interview
- Explain the ethical guideline (anonymity, no harm intended, permission for the interviewee to withdraw at any time, transcript of the interview available) and ask for the interviewee’s acceptance

Interview main questions:

- Introduction (name, surname, age, civil status, years living in Sweden/Canada, year of arrival, profession): Could you please introduce yourself?

- General information:
  Where do you currently live in Sweden/Canada?
  Did you come here alone or with family?
  Why did you choose Sweden or Canada?
  Do you have a stable job/long-term employment?

- Motivations behind migrating from Romania:
  What was the main reason of your departure?
  What were your expectations about Sweden/Canada? Any previous knowledge on the country?

- Arrival and accommodation in the receiving country:
Did you know anyone upon your arrival in Canada/Sweden?
What were the main obstacles you encountered, while trying to accommodate to the Swedish/Canadian labour market? How did you find help or solutions?

- Main skills and qualifications:
As an economic migrant, what skills and qualifications recommend(ed) you as suitable for the current/desirable job position?
Did you know the official language before your arrival or did you acquire the language skills after your arrival?
How does your previous education looks like? Have you studied in Sweden or Canada as well or is your previous education only from Romania?
Do the skills and qualifications you have match the job position on the labour market? Any strategies you applied to gain more human capital?

- Social capital and networks:
Are you in contact with any other Romanians within your field, similar and/or different fields?
Did you make friends and acquaintances easily, after your arrival in Sweden/Canada? Would you say they are mostly natives, from your ethnic group or other ethnic groups?
Do you believe contacts with people were significant in your case, in order to be employed?
What were the main hindrances in obtaining job in Sweden/Canada? How did you solve them/are you thinking of solving them?
What were the main ways (formal and informal) for you to seek for job/obtain job in Canada/Sweden?

- General differences between Romania and Sweden/Canada:
How difficult or easy is it to adjust and adapt in the labour market in Canada/Sweden? Any positive outcomes?
Do you perceive any differences on the labour market between the natives and the immigrants?

- Additional comments and potential questions from the interviewees

Conclusion:
• Thank you for the participation in the interview process
• Possibility to obtain the transcript and/or refuse data or information to be disclosed
• Ensure the participants once more, about the ethical guideline.

10.2. ANNEX II – ETHICAL GUIDELINE

• Informing the participants about the study - Presentation of the aim, topic, structure, objectives and potential outcomes of the research, conducted in the name of Malmö University, as a student of the Master Program in International Migration and Ethnic Relations
  • Anonymity of participants’ identity is guaranteed (fictive names are used)
  • Creating a warm and natural atmosphere for the participants, during the interview process
  • Full consent of the interviewees is obtained before conducting the interviews
  • No overly personal questions are to be introduced in the interview guideline, the questions will remain general and relevant to the research purpose
  • No coercion and forms of constraint imposed in answering the questions, liberty of the participants guaranteed when it comes to formulate their answers, according to their personal experience
  • No harm intended on the participants, neither physical nor psychological, the dignity of the participants remains in focus
  • No deception regarding the representation of facts or events presented by the interviewee, as well as the nature or consequences of the research study
  • The perspective and individual experience of the participants in focus
  • The results will be used solely for academic use, confidentiality of disclosed information in ensured
  • The result of the interview and the final research paper, as well as the transcription of the interview will be shared with the participants, upon request
  • Possibility to withdraw from the interview process, at any stage – voluntary participation to the interview process is ensured