

MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY

Portuguese Immigrant Women Who Work as Cleaning Ladies,  
or Domestic Workers, in Canada:  
Working Relationships Beyond Boundaries

By

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## Abstract

This thesis seeks to expand understanding of why Portuguese women enter domestic work (DW) instead of other types of jobs; how DW advantages and or disadvantages them; what are the key characteristics of the relationships they form as a result of DW; and what kinds of formal and informal learning occur in the context of DW.

Besides having typically entered Canada outside of any statutory DW immigration program, the Portuguese immigrant women who are engaged in DW often differ from other domestic workers in terms of their education levels, fluency in English and cultural attitudes.

The research for this study focused on five Portuguese-Canadian women from three cities in Canada, who had been engaged in DW for at least 2 years within a household setting, and whose jobs were neither brokered by a formal employment agency nor covered by an employment contract. The women participated in a qualitative, semi-structured interview process, in which they discussed the advantages and disadvantages of employment in DW; the relationships they formed during their DW experience; and the formal and informal skills they acquired as a result of DW.

The framework for this study is Marxist Feminism theory, which is utilized to attempt to explain the condition of this identifiable class of female workers.

The findings show that on the one hand, various positive factors contribute to the choice of Portuguese-Canadian immigrant women to stay in the DW profession. These include personal fulfillment, recognition for work done, the feeling of being one's own boss, flexible working hours, a relatively decent salary and the avoidance of income tax, and the formation of positive relationships with employers and their families. On the other hand, these women recognize certain disadvantages of DW, such as the lack of a guaranteed income, job security, retirement provision, union representation and legally enforceable labour rights.

These negative factors contribute to a situation of relative vulnerability for Portuguese-Canadian immigrant women. They rely on a variety of means to protect their interests, for example by organizing their schedules in such a way as to maximize their earning potential; contesting their assignment of tasks within the household; leaving exploitative employers; and finding new employment opportunities through social networks within the Portuguese-Canadian community.

This thesis concludes that Marxist Femism theory does not recognize the full complexity of the social condition of this class of working women, for whom issues such as racial and cultural stereotyping, and outright racism, are significant considerations.

My conclusion brings to light the need for the Canadian government to formulate policies designed to protect this “invisible” group of women working in the margins of Canadian society.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Interest in the Topic**

My interaction with domestic workers began in early childhood. I was born and raised within a working-class urban community in Brazil, where women were commonly employed as domestics, while their husbands worked in the local male-dominated metalworking and automobile manufacturing industries. At that time, many multinational corporations established operations in Brazil, especially in the ABC Region of Greater São Paulo, where I lived. In the 1980s, Brazil experienced a period of stagflation — economic recession combined with high inflation, leading to a loss of industrial jobs. During this period, I clearly remember going with my mother to the supermarket and experiencing a shortage of meat and other basic consumer goods. Supermarket shelves were often empty, and the prices of whatever goods were in stock seemed to multiply by the minute. During this difficult economic period, many more women entered the labour market as domestic workers, especially those who had received no more than elementary education. Domestic violence was a common phenomenon, which may have contributed to these women's motivation to seek work outside the home.

Adult women often congregated outdoors and chatted while their children played in the streets. As one of these children, I routinely heard the complaints of women who were employed in DW; most of their gripes were about low pay, being undervalued by their employers, the lack of employee benefits such as entitlement to paid holiday, sick leave and health insurance.

It was not until 2013 that domestic workers in Brazil were granted rights equal to those of all other workers, through the passage of a constitutional amendment (Emenda Constitucional 72/13). However, the extension of statutory benefits did not cover all domestic workers, and many pre-existing domestic jobs were cut in the wake of this enactment.

I got back in touch with the reality of DW in 2006, when I started working on my master's thesis in Political Economy. My research centered on informal labour in Brazil. At that time, informal employment in Brazil's economy, the largest in Latin America, accounted for 51.2 percent of the total labour market (Dos Santos, 2009).

In the years since I began my graduate studies, the rights of workers in the informal labour market have continued to be a concern for most of the Brazilian population. This preoccupation motivated me to seek a deeper understanding of the informal labour market — to ascertain who worked there and why. I was interested in discovering the criteria what defined informal labour. My conclusion was that the existing interpretation of “informal” was too vague (Dos Santos, 2009). Basically, any working arrangement that did not conform strictly to the official definition of the formal sector had previously been classified automatically as “informal”. I posited in my thesis the need for a more granular conception of informal employment.

I found then that DWs fell into an informal sector classification first because they typically lacked employment contracts, and second, as some admitted to me, because DWs generally did not file federal income tax returns. Most DWs were not protected by workers' rights legislation, did not benefit from union representation or collective bargaining, and were not contributing toward their retirement, which was essential to them. However, I discovered that DWs enjoyed the significant compensating advantage that their incomes went mostly untaxed.

When I arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to continue my studies, I came across research and articles on immigrant women in Canada, particularly those who had worked either under the Live-in Caregiver program, or otherwise informally in DW outside of any immigration program. The relevant articles and research included: *Immigrant domestic workers in Canada*, written by



Marilyn Barber in 1991; *Introduction: Regulating decent work for domestic workers*, written by Adelle Blackett in 2011; and *Filipino domestic workers abroad: contradictions, resistance, and implications for change*, written by Susan Brigham in 2013. I also read articles about Portuguese immigrant women in Canada, such as *Portuguese-Canadian women: problems and perspectives*, written by Fernando Nunes in 1986; *Not ashamed or afraid: Portuguese immigrant women in Toronto's cleaning Industry, 1950-1995*, written by Paula Miranda in 2010; and *Jamaican maids, Filipino housekeepers and English nannies: representations of domestic workers in Toronto*, written by Bernadette Stiell and Kim England in 1999. Most of the articles were related to the difficulties these women faced, how they were treated in the labour market, and the conditions under which they worked, as well as the role of stereotyping in the process of integrating immigrant women into the Canadian workplace. I learned too how in other countries DW was undervalued in monetary terms. An International Labour Organization (2013) report found that domestic workers were underpaid throughout the world, receiving typically 40 percent of the average wage for their respective labour markets. Furthermore, DW was found to be underestimated in cultural terms, with its value being insufficiently appreciated by both governments and societies (Budlender, 2011). These and other sources revealed the extent to which DWs were seen to be marginalised, collectively and universally.

However, the literature on this subject suggested equally that jobs in DW had served as a lifeline for Portuguese immigrant women upon their arrival in Canada. Additionally, the popular complimentary stereotype of Portuguese and Latin American women as excellent domestic workers was prevalent then, and persists to this day, as evidenced by the anecdotal accounts of members of the Portuguese-Canadian community. Indeed, Portuguese women identify

themselves as “Cleaning Ladies”, and this term is recognized by the Canadian Census, as will be described in more detail in Chapter 4.

I came to realize moreover that, while a lot of research had been conducted on women who had entered Canada under programs that were designed specifically to recruit DWs, such as the West Indies Domestic Scheme (WIDS), Foreign Domestic Movement Program (FDM), Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) and Caregiver Program (CP), very little research had been conducted into groups like the Portuguese, who tended not to immigrate under these programs, taking up the DW profession after entering Canada through other immigrant streams.

It has been reported that the language barrier, their lack of marketable skills, and the desire to own their own homes in Canada, were key among the factors that led Portuguese immigrant women into DW (see Giles, 2002; and Miranda, 2010). However, forty years later, many Portuguese women, as well as women from other ethnicities whose first language is Portuguese, continue to work as household domestics or cleaners, without a contract and independent of employment agents, even after they have been granted permanent resident status in Canada.

This finding raised several questions. If Portuguese women did not need to take up the DW profession as a precondition for immigration, then why did they? Why did they consent to working in vulnerable situations, without contracts, pension provision, unemployment insurance, or entitlement to Worker’s Compensation? More important, after so many years of reports about DWs being mistreated, why did this group of women continue disproportionately to seek work in that field?

In addition, what, if anything, had changed in their work situation over the years, and what had they learned? What relationships had developed between DWs and members of the

households in which they worked? It was with these questions in mind that I began my research into this group of women who had chosen to be employed in DW.

The present study focuses on Portuguese women who have been employed for at least two years within the last ten years, in part-time or full-time DW by a household employer in Canada, without any type of contract or intermediary agency.

The choice to limit my study to the Portuguese-speaking population is based on the following considerations. First, very little research has been conducted into Portuguese immigrant women, particularly those engaged in DW. Second, while other immigrants, such as those from the Philippines and Jamaica, have arrived in Canada speaking English already, many Portuguese immigrant women have not brought this asset. Third, Portuguese immigrant women generally have lower levels of education than their Filipino or Jamaican counterparts. Fourth, Portuguese immigrants are distinct from their Caribbean and Filipino DW counterparts, as they have generally not entered Canada under formal DW or caregiver recruitment programs. Nor have Portuguese immigrant women typically immigrated into Canada via a temporary visa or visitors' visa process; instead, they have arrived in Canada with the declared intent to settle, most frequently with their husbands and children. Finally, being of European origin, Portuguese immigrant women can be expected to help a researcher expose any possible issues concerning race, by means of comparing their experiences with those of women of Caribbean and Filipino origin.

My research is thus aimed at understanding why Portuguese women enter DW instead of other kinds of work; what are the advantages and disadvantages of DW; what are the characteristics of the relationships they form while performing their DW; and what formal and

informal learning have these women experienced as a result of DW. These questions are presented in detail in the “Research Questions” section.

I applied Marxist Feminism theory as the framework for my research. Through the lens of this theory, I analysed, and sought to explain, the conditions of Portuguese immigrant women engaged in casual DW in Canada.

**a. “Domestic Workers” or “Cleaning Ladies”**

I realize that the term “cleaning ladies” is regarded by some people as pejorative and demeaning. However, this study deliberately uses the terms “cleaning ladies” and “domestic workers” interchangeably. This is because historically (when the Portuguese were immigrating to Canada between the 1950s and the 1980s), the term “cleaning ladies” was used most often. This designation was easy for Portuguese speakers themselves to pronounce, and it was a fairly literal translation of the nearest equivalent Portuguese term “*mulheres de limpeza*”. It was the term that members of the Portuguese community were most likely to understand when it was used in a help-wanted advertisement. For these reasons, many Portuguese do not consider the term “cleaning ladies” to be pejorative. The more recently coined term “domestic worker” (DW) is used mostly to describe immigrants coming into the country under the government sponsored DW programs, who are legally bound to work within a single designated household.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the distinct Canadian and international definitions of DW. From the Canadian perspective, it will then examine how DW has been the source of an immigration stream; how Canada has attracted DWs under immigration programs; and how DWs, who are predominantly immigrant women, are ‘trapped’ by the requirements of these programs. This chapter will further consider DWs who arrived in Canada outside of foreign domestic worker programs. Finally, it will discuss my current study of Portuguese immigrant women DWs in Canada and present my research questions.

#### **a. Definition of “Domestic Work”**

Once an identifiable social group is labelled, it is easily presumed that the entire definition of the group is captured within the label. The application of this presumption to the rather vague designation “Domestic Worker,” without any explicit clarification of the respective boundaries and expectations of the providers and consumers of domestic services, exposes DWs to the risk of increased vulnerability.

It turns out that defining DW is not a simple task. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2013), DWs are not a homogeneous group; they vary widely, both by demographic profile (age, sex and immigration status) and by the nature of their jobs. Within the household context alone, the tasks DWs perform are as diverse as cleaning; washing, ironing and sewing; taking care of children, elderly, infirm or disabled family members; preparing food; shopping; making school runs; driving; gardening; and protecting the home (ILO, 2013, p. 7).

Certain elements are logically essential to the definition of work of any kind. One of these is the output or product of that work. In other words, the tasks performed must be considered “productive” in order to qualify as work. However, according to the International Labour Organization’s 189<sup>th</sup> Convention — the Convention on Domestic Workers (ILO, 2011) — DW is defined simply as “work performed in or for a household or households” (n.d.). This is too broad a definition that raises more questions than it answers. For instance, what kind of “work in or for the household” should a national interpretation of the ILO definition encompass? Are all the tasks typically assigned to DWs within a household environment “productive”? Is the work done by DWs accounted for in the Gross Domestic Product? With respect to Canada, which has not yet ratified the Convention, and in the instance of the Portuguese immigrant women DWs in this study, the answers to all these questions are unclear.

The parties to the ILO’s 189th Convention based their definition of domestic work on the “lowest common denominators” among its varied manifestations. As the Convention states, the term “domestic work” is understood simply to mean any work performed for a family (ILO, 2011). Thus, a “domestic worker” is a person who performs such work “within an employment relationship”. However, to fit the definition, the worker must be employed on a full-time basis, as the Convention excludes work that is done “only occasionally or sporadically”.

There are other considerations that influence whether and how DW is recognized as such. According to Blackett (2011), misunderstandings of domestic labour occur because it is not always indisputably productive, and because it is not always easily distinguishable from the unpaid work that in many societies has traditionally been done by housewives. Thus, the laws and protections governing DW seem to get lost in the profession’s very definition, owing to the inherent difficulty of deciding where employers’ obligations end and employees’ rights begin.

Furthermore, as is the case in Canada, occupational classification schemes can be ambiguous as to where “Cleaning Ladies” should be categorized. In Canada’s National Occupation Classification, the “house cleaner” falls under Major Occupational Group 67 — “Service Support” and “Other Service Occupations, n. e. c.” By contrast, “homemaker”, an occupation that also entails cleaning tasks, is listed under Major Occupational Group 44 — “Care providers and educational, legal and public protection support occupations, n.e.c” — and more specifically under Group 4412.1 – “Visiting homemakers” (Employment & Social Development Canada and Statistics Canada, 2016a).

Another definition of DW is provided by the United Nations, through its International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) (United Nations, 2008). One part of ISIC (Classification 9700) lists the types of occupation that may be employed by households and are considered “domestic personnel” — maids, cooks, waiters, valets, butlers, laundresses, gardeners, gatekeepers, stable-lads, chauffeurs, caretakers, governesses, babysitters, tutors, [and] secretaries, etc.” (United Nations, 2008, p. 269). ISIC includes the further proviso that, in economic terms, “the product produced by ... [domestic labour] is consumed by the employing household” (United Nations, 2008, p. 269). However, it stipulates too that in areas such as cooking, gardening etc., the classification excludes the provision of services by independent service providers (companies or individuals). Taking this into consideration, domestic cleaning work might then also be catered for in ISIC Classification 8121 — General Cleaning of Buildings, a class that includes “general (non-specialized) cleaning of all types of buildings, such as offices, houses or apartments, factories, shops, institutions; general (non-specialized) cleaning of other business and professional premises and multi-unit residential buildings” (United Nations, 2008, p. 239). The ambiguity points to the inability to define clearly

and situate domestic work that is conducted within an individual household, where the cleaner is independent, but does not work under contract or receive a salary.

A final consideration is that in different countries and regions, DWs undertaking essentially the same tasks may be known by different terms. For example, a DW in Brazil might be described as an “*empregada doméstica*” (domestic employee), “*diarista*” (day labourer), or “*faxineira*” (cleaning lady). A DW in Portugal may be called a “*mulher-a-dias*” (day woman). Similarly, in Toronto, Portuguese and Italian DWs who did not enter Canada under a DW immigration program are referred to colloquially as “cleaning ladies” rather than “domestic workers” (e.g., see advertisements on Kijiji for the services of “cleaning ladies”).

In summary, the lack of an exact definition of what DW is, and what duties it entails, highlights a major omission in society’s understanding of this profession, one that, if not addressed adequately, may open gaps in social and employment policies.

## **b. Domestic Work as an Immigration Stream**

The manner in which immigrant DWs arrive in their host countries is significant, as it points toward potentially unbalanced power dynamics in working relationships between DWs and their employers, which might result from the migration process. Some DWs have entered Canada through immigration processes that permit them to undertake this occupation exclusively - e.g., West Indians (Calliste, 1993-1994; Villasin & Phillips, 1994). In these cases, the immigrant is granted a provisional resident status that is linked directly to their employment contract. In other words, when an immigrant DW works under an employer-sponsored contract that has been arranged through an immigration program that is designed to augment the supply of domestic labour, the DW is ordinarily not free to seek a new job, even one in the same



profession. Furthermore, for the DW to maintain their immigration status, they must remain with the original employer (Parreñas, 2017). Under these circumstances, it is virtually impossible for a DW who was contracted to work for a sponsoring employer to find any other, possibly better, job. In addition, according to Parreñas, "most countries do not offer labour protection to DWs, resulting in reasonably low employment standards, including denial of privacy, the absence of a minimum wage and exclusion from overtime pay" (2017, p. 119).

For example, between 1955 and 1967, Caribbean women were admitted into Canada to fill DW positions under the umbrella of a program called the West Indies Domestic Scheme (WIDS) (Rodríguez, p. 2005). Although this program ended in 1967, the Canadian government resumed the recruitment of Caribbean women in 1978 on the same terms as were applied under WIDS; the later Caribbean arrivals were permitted to be employed in Canada only as DWs (Lawson, p. 2013). Canada's ongoing Live-in Caregiver program — which is now closed to new applicants — continues to impose similar conditions on foreign live-in-caregivers who apply for permanent residence. Briefly, these foreign workers can only apply for permanent resident status if they have worked for at least two years as a live-in caregiver, and if they already hold a work permit in Canada under the live-in caregiver program (Government of Canada, 2020).

#### *i. Lack of Protection for DWs in Foreign DW Programs*

Whether caused by industrialization in the nineteenth century or by the aging of the population, the DW category worldwide has been less protected by national labour legislation than other segments of the workforce (ILO, 2015). When it comes to the effects of globalization, Gouthro (2009) argues that dynamics of class and race "are played out when domestic labour and childcare responsibilities are transferred to less privileged women" (p. 167). She states that

instead of this transfer of responsibility solving a broader social problem of gender inequality, its effect is that privileged women "simply displace domestic labour onto other women" (p. 167).

In Canada, DWs who have immigrated under the various government-sponsored DW recruitment programs have faced serious challenges to their rights. Brigham (2013) points out that overseas DWs "are neither permanent residents nor citizens; they are 'guest workers' or temporary workers, with little protection or security" (p. 105). Stasiulis and Bakan (1997) also point out that there are no common labour laws governing the working conditions of DWs across the country (p. 122).

Another challenge foreign DWs face in Canada is the obligation to work for two years in this field in order to be eligible for permanent residency. This makes them vulnerable to many types of exploitation, and a DW's prolonged separation from family influences their decision whether or not to tolerate injustice or exploitation by an employer. Foreign DWs are inclined to place the highest priority on satisfying the eligibility criteria for permanent residence to be able to reunite their families in Canada (Banerjee, Kelly & Tungohan, 2017).

Considering that Canada has received, and continues to receive, a high number of immigrants, including many who are women engaged as DWs, it is worth noting that as of the date of this thesis, Canada has not yet ratified the 2011 ILO Domestic Workers Convention No. 189, which seeks to protect DWs, especially immigrant women and members of disadvantaged communities, against undervaluation and exploitation.

### **c. Workers Who Enter Canada Outside Foreign DW Programs**

There are situations where immigrants, who may not have entered Canada originally through a DW program. They have already obtained permanent resident status, solicit

employment as DWs through cleaning contractors, such as Molly Maid. In these cases, women are free to enter and leave their jobs and are not normally tied to an employer. They are also covered for unemployment insurance, Workers' Compensation and retirement.

A third group of immigrants may be permanent residents, or even citizens, of the host country, and undertake DW as independent entities (i.e., not through an intermediary cleaning company) but without a contract. In doing so, they also generally don't discount for any benefits or protections, such as employment insurance, pensions or Worker's Compensation. They are also generally not protected by labour legislation against exploitation or abuse. It can be believed that some of these women are paid cash in hand, which they do not necessarily declare in their income tax returns (personal communication with a DW in this group, July 14, 2020).

Many Portuguese immigrant women in Canada seek employment as DWs on their own, relying on referrals, word of mouth, or postings in online ads, and taking up positions as self-employed individuals. This group of DWs is the least well researched. That is, although much is known about the challenges that women in FDW programs have faced, less is known about the situation of women who immigrated to Canada as spouses via the family immigration channel, as did many Portuguese and Italian women, and then sought employment as DWs by their own devices. By contrast, most Filipina and Jamaican female DWs entered Canada through the FDW channels (Giles, 2002), and they had relatively higher levels of education and fluency in English than did their Portuguese counterparts.

It is estimated that in 1991, approximately 16 percent of Portuguese immigrant women in Canada earned their living from doing work under Major Occupational Group 67 – “Service support and other Service occupations, n.e.c.,” which includes the category of “Cleaning Ladies” (Giles, 2002). The corresponding figure in 2016 was 11.5 percent. Despite the significant decline

during the intervening years, Portuguese immigrant women remained proportionally well represented in this category, considering that only 6.7 percent of women of Canadian origin were similarly classified in 2016 (Employment & Social Development Canada and Statistics Canada, 2016b).

The propensity of Portuguese immigrant women to choose to work as cleaning ladies merits a deliberate effort to find out more about them. Indeed, in a PhD thesis on the history of Portuguese women in Toronto's domestic and building cleaning industries between the 1960s and the 1990s, Miranda (2010) discusses how the historiography on Canadian DWs has not focused enough attention on the experiences of Portuguese cleaners. Based on interviews with 41 cleaners, labour leaders and social workers, Miranda, in her thesis, summarizes the reasons the Portuguese women give for choosing this profession. However, the thesis is mainly historical, and focuses particularly on women who clean office buildings for cleaning contractors. Miranda explores how the economic and political environment affects these women and documents their attempts to improve their working conditions through collective action.

Other authors, such as Giles (2002) and Januario & Marujo (2000), have explored the motivation for Portuguese women to enter DW, but none of their work has focused entirely on women who clean family homes as independent contractors. Nor has the literature studied what these women have learned within their work environment, or how they have learned it.

Thus, we may ask the same questions of contemporary Portuguese immigrant women who choose to be employed independently and informally as DWs, in order to gain a better understanding of why they entered this field, and what advantages or disadvantages this type and mode of work has brought them, as well as what they have learned in the process, and how they learned it. My research attempts to go beyond Miranda's (2010) study, in trying to understand

these women's lifelong learning experiences, and more specifically how Portuguese women deal with the challenges they encounter in their workplaces, as domestic cleaning ladies. It is important too to understand how their choice has affected their self-esteem. Is this occupation still enabling them to fulfill their current and future dreams? How does this type of DW fit in with the objectives they had set for themselves when they first immigrated? How do they see their role in Canadian society? And so on.

In support of the premise that more focused research is necessary in the area of DW, further evidence is found in the significant number of immigrants employed in DW globally, as well as in the growing demand for these workers in Canada, especially as a result of the increasing elderly population — as pointed out by Blackett (2011), and based on data reported by the Canadian Medical Association (2013). These latter sources show that the proportion of the Canadian population aged 65 and over, which was 14 percent in 2010, is expected to reach 24 percent by 2036.

#### **d. The Current Study**

The current study is based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five Portuguese women who are working, or have worked, as independent cleaning ladies without intermediaries. Even though the ILO's Convention No. 189 narrows the term "domestic worker" to comprise only those who work full-time, I included in this study women who had worked as part-time DWs in Canada, for at least two years within the last ten years.

The selection of this target population is based on the following criteria: first, little research has been done on Portuguese immigrant women, particularly those who have been employed as DWs. Second, while other immigrants, such as those from the Philippines and

Jamaica, come to Canada speaking English, many Portuguese immigrant women do not. In addition, Portuguese immigrant women are distinct from many of their Caribbean and Filipino counterparts in domestic service, as they have typically not entered Canada through formal Foreign Caregiver or Domestic Worker programs, but most frequently arrived along with their husbands and children, through family-class or economic immigration streams, with the intention of settling. Finally, Portuguese immigrant women have traditionally brought lower levels of formal education than their Filipino or Jamaican counterparts.

#### **e. Research Questions**

My study explores the following questions with the Portuguese women:

- What is the process by which they first enter into DW?
- What conditions of employment do they encounter?
- Why do they prefer DW to other types of work?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of DW?
- Why do they remain in DW after settling in Canada, when there is not necessarily a pressing financial need?
- What kinds of relationships have they formed with their employers?
  - Have they developed a critical awareness of their rights?
  - How did they become aware of their rights?
  - How do they defend themselves against potential exploitation?
- How does DW fit in with the goals they set when they first arrived?
- How does DW affect their self-esteem?
  - How much fulfillment does DW bring them?
  - How do they see their role in Canadian society?

- What formal or informal learning experiences has DW afforded them?
  - How did this learning occur?

#### **f. Summary**

In this chapter, I have shown that the existing definition of DW is inadequate, since there is no universal codification of the tasks that it encompasses. This has certainly contributed to a lack of understanding of DW as an occupation. Foreign DWs have generally entered Canada under government-sponsored immigration programs. This has impacted the lives of immigrant DWs in Canada, since these programs have kept employers bound by the terms of contracts that were predetermined by the relevant legislation. However, unlike other groups of immigrant women, the Portuguese immigrant women who have been employed in DW in Canada without a contract, typically did not enter Canada under a Foreign DW program. My research is focused on this group of Portuguese women, and the research questions were formulated to try to understand why they have entered into this line of work and why they have stayed in it.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methodology**

In this chapter, I describe the methodology that has been used in the research for this thesis, which is a qualitative methodology. I list the criteria that I applied in selecting interview candidates from among the sample population, and the process I followed in recruiting the interviewees. Next, I discuss how the transcriptions of interviews were done, and how the data was coded and analyzed. Last, I present the theoretical framework that I chose for the research.

#### **a. Qualitative Methodology**

According to Merriam and Tisdell, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people construct meaning, “that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (2016, p. 15). The qualitative approach is also focused on understanding "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15). Thus, I have chosen a qualitative approach in order to clarify what leads Portuguese women to engage in DW, and to continue to do so long after they have obtained permanent residence and Canadian citizenship. My objective is to understand the reasons the focus group of Portuguese immigrant women choose to be independent DWs, in preference to other kinds of employment, and why they continue in this work even after other job opportunities are opened to them. I seek to understand what the advantages and the disadvantages of this type of work are, including the relationships DWs form with their employers and how these relationships affect the DW’s self-image. Finally, I seek to understand



what these women have learned through their experience. Therefore, the qualitative approach is the best methodology to answer my research questions.

The qualitative research methodology used in this study employs a semi-structured interview. According to Merriam and Tisdell, the semi-structured interview “is in the middle, between structured and unstructured” (p. 110), which means that the interview questions are flexible, or structured with a measure of flexibility. Thus, the interviewees could share their stories and experiences of DW, and provide context to those experiences, in order to explain their decisions and actions.

There are other advantages to the semi-structured interview. “This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging world view of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 111). Therefore, this instrument contributes to my study, since all these factors may have influenced the personal and professional decisions made by Portuguese immigrant women in Canada.

## **b. Sampling**

I have interviewed five Portuguese immigrant women who have worked as domestic workers in Canada for at least two years within the last ten years. Their pseudonyms are: Luana, Joana, Neusa, Ana and Claudia. Two of them are from the Azores and three are from Portugal. Claudia has been living in Canada for 31 years, Luana for 17 years, Ana for 34 years, Neusa for 18 years, and Joana for 32 years. The women are between 39 and 59 years of age. All of them received secondary education in their country of origin<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This level of education is higher than what earlier generations of Portuguese immigrant domestic workers brought to Canada.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). The type of purposeful sampling chosen for this research is convenience sampling. "Convenience sampling is just what is implied by the term — you select a sample based on time, money, location, availability of sites or respondents, and so on" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 98).

The interviewees were referred by community contacts in Canada, which were initially provided by the Thesis supervisor. These community contacts were asked for referrals to women of the appropriate age, who had been working as cleaners for two years or more. Permission was requested to cite the contact's name as a reference when approaching the interview candidate, they had referred. This permission was appended to the Informed Consent Form, which is reproduced below in Appendix A.

Additionally, a letter was sent to the Abrigo Center, a community organization in Toronto, explaining the study and asking for assistance in identifying and contacting suitable interviewees (see Appendix C). I addressed an email communication to the staff at the Abrigo Center, describing the study in greater detail (see Appendix E). As I was unable to find suitable interview subjects either through the contacts or through the Abrigo Center, I also solicited interviewees via social media and through the Kijiji website, where Portuguese DWs often advertise their services.

The interviewees were contacted by phone, the study was explained to them, and their consent to an interview was sought. In making contact, I used the telephone script reproduced in Appendix B, which contains four questions related to the sample selection criteria. All of the participants I contacted met these criteria. I then organized a follow-up interview at a

predetermined time of each participant's choosing. The interviewee was informed that she would receive a small gift voucher, as a token of appreciation (worth CAD 35.00) for her participation. Before interviewing any confirmed participant, I used the script in Appendix D — the Demographic Information Sheet — to obtain basic demographic data about the interviewee, and to reconfirm that they met the sample selection criteria.

### **c. Data Collection**

The method of data collection was a semi-structured interview. After a Demographic Survey was administered, the Interview Protocol in Appendix H was followed. Merriam states that "Interviewing is a common means of collecting qualitative data" (1998, p. 71). The interview was "semi-structured" because this allows for greater flexibility, although a list of questions is drawn up in advance (Merriam, 1998). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), in this type of interview structure, the questions are not rigidly structured, so they can be used flexibly. The interview is usually guided by exploratory questions that do not have to follow a predetermined order.

The interview instrument – a questionnaire – was written primarily in English, then translated into Portuguese, then translated back into English, and then compared to the original to see if there were any significant differences. My supervisor, who is Portuguese-Canadian, helped with this process of translating from English to Portuguese and back. Then, since some of the interviewees were from the Azores, the advice of a Portuguese Azorean native was sought, to make sure the questions retained their original sense between dialects.

The interviews were conducted in Portuguese, which facilitated communication, since my first language is also Portuguese. The Portuguese language was thought to provide the

medium through which Portuguese natives could best express to a Brazilian researcher the nuances of culture reflected in their daily lives, in words that might not have the same meaning, or might not even exist, in English. Besides, it is believed that one's mother tongue is the language in which one is best able to express emotion. Although Europeans and Brazilians have different Portuguese accents, the interviewees had no difficulty understanding the researcher, because they had watched countless Brazilian television soap operas, and were familiar with both Brazilian Portuguese expressions and the Brazilian accent (which is spoken more slowly and with more open vowel sounds).

Even among the Portuguese, there are differences between the accents and the regional idioms of those from the Iberian Peninsula and those from the Azores. The interviewees from the Azores spoke in their regional dialect. In the cases where this happened, my supervisor assisted with the interpretation and transcription of the audio recordings.

The interviews took place in the fall of 2020, and due to ongoing COVID-19<sup>2</sup> restrictions related to in-person interaction, they were conducted via telephone, using a hand-held digital recorder. This was a departure from the initial plan for data collection, which was to conduct interviews in person in Toronto (which is home to a substantial Portuguese immigrant population).

When each interview ended, a debriefing script was read to the interviewee, in which several ethical points that had been raised before the interview were reiterated, such as the option they had to withdraw from the interview in case they were uncomfortable with the answers they

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<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has caused a worldwide pandemic in 2020-21. Human coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with illnesses, like the common cold (Canada, 2021). In 2021, research all over Canada was constrained, due to government and university directives prohibiting people from congregating except when this was necessary.

had given to any of the questions (see Appendix G). As none of the interviews had been facilitated by the Abrigo Center, Appendix F was never used.

As a gesture of thanks for their participation, each interviewee received a Walmart gift voucher, either by email or, for those who did not have easy access to a Walmart outlet, by transfer into their bank account of the full-face value of the voucher.

The interviews were captured in an audible form, using a digital voice recorder. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), audio is the standard medium for recording interviews, because it “ensures that everything said is preserved for analysis; [plus,] verbatim transcription of recorded interviews provides the best database for analysis” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 131).

#### **d. Data Transcription**

The audio recordings of the interviews were uploaded to the Trint online service, where they were transcribed digitally (<https://trint.com/>). Any errors in transcription were corrected manually by my advisor and I through the Trint interface, which allows online manual correction as the audio file of the interview is being played back. Then the transcriptions were downloaded to the MSVU secure server, where they resided while they were undergoing analysis.

Each interviewee was sent the Portuguese transcript of their own interview, to allow them to correct any misunderstandings.

In addition, the supervisor reviewed one of the transcripts for accuracy, which helped in resolving any incidental differences between the Portuguese, Azorean and Brazilian dialects. Additional help was provided by the supervisor, in order to verify their accuracy of quotes after they were translated into English. Both the supervisor and the researcher had access to Trint

(www.trint.com), and therefore, using both the audio file and the transcript, the supervisor was able to check the originals of all the quotes that were chosen for possible extraction. Then the quotes that are included in this thesis were translated into English.

The laborious methodology outlined above was adopted in order to preserve the complexity of language, since in research language is an important tool for analysis, and because it is mainly through language that respondents can express their opinions and emotions. Thus, great care is taken to ensure that the data encoded in language is neither lost nor misinterpreted.

#### **e. Data Coding & Analysis**

The transcripts were encoded manually. All transcripts were printed out, and then a written code was placed next to each significant comment. Themes that ran across interviews were derived from the text and given a common code. According to Theron, "A code is a descriptive construct designed by the researcher to capture the primary content or essence of the data" (Theron, 2015, p. 4). Theron states further that this method consists of "look[ing] for words or phrases that seem to stand out, for example, nouns with impact, action-orientated verbs, evocative word choices, clever phrases, or metaphors" (Theron, 2015, p. 5). Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) state, "Codes are primarily, but not exclusively, used to retrieve and categorize similar data chunks, so the researcher can quickly find, pull out, and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, hypothesis construct, or theme" (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 72).

The coding method chosen is In Vivo Coding (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). According to one source, "In Vivo coding uses words or short phrases from the participants' own language in the data record as codes" (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 75). As I read the

transcript, I made a note of codes that captured ideas and concepts, since "coding is also a heuristic" method of discovery. "You determine the code for a chunk of data by careful reading and reflection on its core content or meaning" (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 72). These codes may thus reflect what was found in the literature review or may emerge from the transcript itself. As I read the transcript and recognized common ideas, I devised an appropriate code, based on the participant's own language. According to Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014), "pattern codes can emerge from repeatedly observed behaviors, actions, norms, routines, and relationships" (p. 88). Thus, I identified themes by noting patterns that were evident in the participants' articulation of events. I read and reread the transcripts throughout the data collection process.

I recorded my own personal reflections in a journal about the research process, as I was continually reading and re-evaluating the relationship of the data to the literature, in order to improve my analysis.

Finally, the supervisor undertook an independent simultaneous thematic coding of the first interview transcribed, as an inter-rater reliability check on the coding process, after which the two sets of themes and codes were compared. The themes and codes that were common to the separate coding processes in respect of that first interview were the primary codes used for the coding of subsequent interviews. The remaining codes and coded segments were examined and discussed by researcher and supervisor, and only the similar themes found in subsequent interviews were used. The most common themes from the coding of all the interviews are summarized and analyzed below in the Results and Discussion section(s).

## **f. Theoretical Framework**

Data were interpreted from the perspective of Marxist Feminism theory (Tong, 1989), a theory that applies well to the domestic work performed by Portuguese immigrant women. The position of these women, both in the job market and within the family, was considered through the lens of Marxist Feminism theory, which places an emphasis on the exclusion of women in a paternalistic and capitalist society. According to Marxist Feminism theory, DW is left out of the capitalist production process (Tong, 1989). In other words, the factors of production, including the productive workforce, derive their value based on the exchanges made between them. However, since women's family household labour, such as cleaning, cooking, and taking care of children, is unpaid, the services of DWs, or cleaning ladies, are not considered productive. Therefore, the women who perform these domestic services in most instances have been left out of the capitalist production system (Dalla Costa, et. al., 2019). In addition, even though these women work outside the home, they continue to bear responsibility for domestic chores in their own households. The results were interpreted from the perspective of Marxist Feminism, and by examining the ways in which Lifelong Learning impacted the women's lives. This approach helped explain what the women had learned, concerning the management of their lives and occupations, and how that learning occurred.

In summary, the methodology used for this research was qualitative, utilizing semi-structured interviews. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were Portuguese immigrant women who had been engaged in DW in Canada for at least two years within the last ten years. The interviews with five women were conducted in Portuguese and over the telephone, due to



COVID-19 restrictions that were in force at the time. The theoretical framework used for this research is based on Marxist Feminism theory and Lifelong Learning.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Literature Review**

In this chapter, I provide an overview of Canadian and international domestic work, and of how immigrant women have entered Canada to fill a gap in the supply of domestic labour. I follow this with a historical overview of Portuguese immigrants in Canada, followed by the current profile of the Portuguese-Canadian population, and a description of the socio-cultural context in which Portuguese immigrant women live. In the final part of the chapter, I discuss the theory of Marxist Feminism, and the importance of Lifelong Learning in the lives of these immigrants.

#### **a. Domestic Work Internationally**

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 67.1 million people across the world were employed as DWs in 2013. Of this population, 11.5 million were migrant DWs, and among the migrant DWs, 73.8 percent were women (ILO, 2015). Around 24 percent of female migrant DWs work in South-East Asia and the Pacific, while 22.1 percent are in Northern, Southern, and Western Europe, and 19 percent in Arab states (ILO, 2015). The ILO defines migrant workers as “all international migrants [who are] currently employed, or seeking employment, in their country of usual current residence” (2015, p. 28).

These statistics can be viewed in the context of the host country’s per capita income, where countries with higher average incomes receive more immigrant DWs than countries with lower average incomes.

The immigration of DWs occurs mostly between neighbouring countries, for example, from Peru to Chile in Latin America; from Somalia and Uganda to Kenya; and from Ukraine to Poland. Patterns of migration are equally identifiable between geographical sub-regions: from South Asia to East and South-East Asia, for example. Inter-regional migrant flows occur too, for instance from Africa, Latin America and Asia to Europe and North America (Tayah, 2016). Due to the lack of decent work opportunities in their countries of origin, women seek jobs in wealthier countries, leaving their youngest and most elderly relatives at home. These vulnerable family members are often supported financially by the migrant workers (ILO, 2015).

Finding decent DW is made more challenging by the often-conflicting interests and policies of the country that provides the migrant labour and the country that receives it (ILO, 2015). To cite a well-known case, many Filipinos travel abroad to take up jobs in DW and remit money to their relatives and children. This pattern began in the 1970s, when, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to reduce the country's foreign debt burden, the Philippines government encouraged outward migration, with the objective of stimulating the inflow of hard currency remittances and shoring up the balance of payments. (Brigham, 2013).

DWs face many challenges. Bundlender (2011) describes the typical experience of DW in countries around the world as one of being “undervalued, underpaid and unprotected” (Bundlender, 2011). Blackett finds that one reason DW is often undervalued is that the service is frequently performed by members of ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged social groups, alongside immigrants (Blackett, 2011). She explains why DW is effectively unregulated in many countries, noting that “paid domestic work remains relatively invisible as a form of employment, because it occurs at home, often isolated from other workers” (2011, p. 3), and practically

indistinguishable from the services performed by housewives. On the other hand, Blackett (2011) points out that paid DW contributes to the economy by increasing the family income, thus stimulating consumption.

According to Brigham, travelling abroad for work invariably comes with a lack of protection and security, as immigrant DWs are regarded as "guest workers" (Brigham, 2013) because they are not completely embraced by the country host labor right and even less by their original country's origin labor right. Brigham observes that "domestic workers are treated as an underpaid labourer, whose mobility is restricted to the house; the [incidence] of abuse is high, [including] violence in the form of physical, psychological, sexual, and verbal abuse" (2013, p. 105). Eventually, migrant women DWs become hostages to a sense of responsibility for supporting their family in the home country.

Blackett (2011) notes that the 2011 ILO report entitled "Decent Work for Domestic Workers" advocates changes in the current working relationship between DWs and employers. In brief, the ILO urges a shift away from the current pattern of exploitative working conditions to a norm of "decent" working relationships. DWs are victims of this flawed system because of the difficulties they face in being recognized as equal to other workers. The lack of recognition stems from either the unequal relationship between DWs and their employers, or the fact that DWs work in isolation, and therefore have limited opportunities to establish a common cause among themselves (Blackett, 2011).

Another challenge faced by immigrant DWs is their exclusion from national labour laws, compounded by weak regulation of the agencies that recruit this workforce. Additionally, due to opaque immigration rules, DWs often find themselves trapped in informal, and potentially unsafe, working arrangements (ILO, 2015). According to the ILO (2015), although there is a

lack of official data on the nature of DW and the working conditions of domestic labourers, documentary evidence exists of injustices perpetrated by unlicensed recruitment agents, including physical and sexual violence. Another hurdle potential migrant DWs confront is that, on account of language and cultural barriers, they are often insufficiently well informed about the immigration and employment legislation that applies in the destination country. Adding to their vulnerability, migrant DWs are often subject to formal or informal restrictions of their freedom of movement (ILO, 2015).

#### **b. Domestic Work in Canada**

Throughout its history, Canada has implemented immigration programs that had the designed effect of attracting foreigners to work in industries that were experiencing unmet demand for labour, including DWs. For example, young female DWs from Great Britain were recruited between the 1890s and 1920s to work in Canada (Stasiulis & Bakan, 1997). They obtained landed immigrant status as soon as they arrived in Canada to work for six months. The choice of white immigrants was racially motivated: white employers preferred them to women of colour, and the Canadian government envisaged that white DWs would eventually become Canadian wives and mothers (Stasiulis & Bakan, 1997; Calliste, 1993/1994). Canadian immigration laws, which, until the 1940s, had continued to be targeted exclusively at admitting immigrants from Britain, were amended after World War II (Cohen, 1994). Canada began then to accept immigrants from Central Europe, particularly Germany, Italy and Greece. According to Cohen (1994), the change occurred because British and Northern European immigrant women who were entering Canada as DWs had tended to move on to other occupations, causing a renewed shortage of domestic labour in Canada.

Under the Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) program, which was launched in 1981 (Banerjee, Kelly, & Tugohan, 2017), and the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), introduced after FDM was wound up in 1992 (Villasin & Phillips, 1994), Canada brought in foreign DWs from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Applicants for admission to Canada under the LCP had to satisfy prior conditions for eligibility (Cohen, 1994). They needed to have a minimum level of education equivalent to Grade 12, and to demonstrate fluency in either English or French. Additionally, they were expected to have graduated from a six-month course in a field related to their work as caregivers. Initially, applicants had to undertake to live in their employers' home for at least two years (Cohen, 1994), but this residential condition was revoked when the program was renamed the Caregiver Program (CP) in October 2014 (Banerjee, Kelly & Tungohan, 2017).

The live-in mandate under LCP was in turn a precondition for the migrant worker becoming eligible to apply for permanent resident status in Canada (Galerand, Gallié & Gobeil, 2015). Despite the transition to CP, in practice the condition remains in effect, since a caregiving DW who was admitted into Canada under the program must still have worked in the designated employer's home for at least two years before applying for permanent residence.

Black migrant workers from the Caribbean were not treated in the same way as their British counterparts. While they were brought in to meet the pressing demand for labour in job positions that Canadians were unable, or unwilling, to fill, Black immigrants were typically the first to be laid off – and repatriated – when the economy entered a recession (Calliste, 1993/1994).

British immigrant DWs were expected to settle in Canada and contribute to building the country by giving birth to white children, as discussed by Villasin and Phillips (1994). In order

to deter, hinder or prohibit Caribbean immigrants from applying for permanent residence, Canadian immigration authorities employed a variety of pretexts that can be recognised now as racist, amongst which were the argument that Afro-Caribbean were "biologically incapable of adjusting to the Canadian climate, incapable of assimilating themselves into Canadian society, and incapable of succeeding in its competitive, capitalist economy" (Calliste, 1993/1994, p. 133).

Racial stereotypes of female foreign DWs entering Canada have historically led to a preference for women with lighter skin colour, say Villasin and Phillips (1994). According to them, "more and more Filipino workers have been brought in, while the number of Caribbean workers admitted remains the same" (Villasin & Phillips, 1994, p. 88).

In Canada, the demand for DWs has remained robust; a phenomenon that is tied to the increasing elderly population (Blackett, 2011). According to the document entitled "Health Care for an Aging Population", from the Canadian Medical Association (2013), 14 percent of Canada's population in 2010 was 65 years or older, and this proportion is expected to rise to 24 percent by 2036.

The various government initiated DW immigration programs have not met the demand. A substantial portion of Canada's DW need has begun to be filled by women who have arrived from countries like Italy, Portugal and later Eastern Europe and Latin America, as the spouses of immigrants (Giles, 2002; Barber, 1991).

Unfortunately, very little has been written about this subculture of women who enter the field of DW independently of government immigration and labour-recruitment programs. In addition, the actual numbers of women engaged in this occupation is unclear, since many of

these women do not report their employment to the Canadian Census — or to Canada Revenue when they file their tax returns<sup>3</sup>.

It should be noted though that the term “cleaning ladies,” which is used commonly among Toronto residents to refer to women who are employed in their individual capacity to clean family homes, is recognized by the Canadian Census, in its National Occupational Classification. Cleaning ladies are counted under Major Occupational Group 67 — “Service Support and Other Service Occupations, n. e. c” — and more specifically under Group 6731 — “Light duty cleaners.”<sup>4</sup>

However, the information gap is widened by the fact that Major Occupational Group 67 comprises three Minor Occupational Groups, two of which might also be relevant to DWs: “Food Counter Attendants, Kitchen Helpers and related Support Occupations,” and “Support Occupations in Accommodation, Travel and Amusement Services.” The Canada Census does not report separately the statistics for each Minor Group; instead, it indicates only the sum of all Minor Groups under Major Occupational Group 67. It is therefore impossible to determine with absolute accuracy the number of women who are occupied as DWs. Nor does the Census data reveal exactly what proportion of those women are engaged in independently secured, in-house DW.

The best estimate can be inferred from the fact that, according to the 2016 census, 11.5 percent of the women working in Major Occupational Group 67 were Portuguese, while women of Canadian origin (who outnumber Portuguese women in the general population) represented just 6.7 percent (Employment & Social Development Canada and Statistics Canada, 2016b). This

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<sup>3</sup> This information was gathered anecdotally from community informants. It is also mentioned by Miranda (2010)

<sup>4</sup> See this government of Canada

<https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/Structure/NocProfile/a7fe056ee298417db0d0660ab46927f6?objectid=RHUWgbJnVzsuBUTo8Gapm6eNY%2BVScC%2B2C5%2F8g9EeYd1M%2B5JNTxIkxVqhT7dVFX>



data gives us some idea of the propensity of Portuguese women to be employed as DWs (Cleaning Ladies), relative to that of Canadian-born women.

### **c. History of Portuguese Immigration to Canada**

Portugal is a country located on the Iberian Peninsula, in the south-western corner of Europe; it occupies one-sixth of the peninsula's total surface area, as well as the Madeiran and Azorean archipelagos (Higgs, 1982). Migration has always been part of Portugal's history; according to Teixeira and Lavigne (1998), during the last 100 years, approximately 4,500,000 Portuguese have emigrated to other countries.

The Portuguese arrived in Newfoundland in the 16th century, as fishermen who came to the shores of the New World to take advantage of its abundance of marine resources (Giles, 2002). However, the major presence of the Portuguese in Canada can be argued to have begun in the middle of the 20th century, since their settlement there was negligible before the 1940s, as Anderson and Higgs (1976) state. The first significant waves of Portuguese migrants were recruited through Canadian immigration programs, which at the time were focused on hiring the workforce to build the railways, and to provide farm labour for Canadian agriculture (Anderson & Higgs, 1976).

More than 60 percent of the Portuguese in Canada came from the Azores Islands (Anderson & Higgs, 1976). Many of these immigrants had previously been born into families of peasant farmers, and most of them spoke poor English, which encouraged them to build relationships with other Portuguese speakers already living in Canada. These relationships were cemented through the sharing of accommodation and information about job opportunities, etc

(Anderson, 1974). This was the beginning of a growing Portuguese community in Canada, especially in the city of Toronto, Canada's largest city.

The Portuguese who came to Canada between the early 1940s and the 1970s had varying levels of education and professional experience (Anderson & Higgs, 1976). At that time, Portugal was a predominantly agricultural country, with few opportunities for education beyond the primary stage (Higgs, 1982). Thus, the first waves of immigrants came from farming backgrounds, and had the lowest levels of education in comparison to subsequent waves of Portuguese immigrants (Nunes, 1998). On average, the first generation of Portuguese immigrant men had approximately four years of schooling, while women had less (Anderson & Higgs, 1976; Nunes, 1998). The arrival of many Portuguese with low levels of education was mainly due to the decline of small farms back home (Januario & Marujo, 2000). In the 1950s, many Portuguese immigrants came to Canada because their level of education did not qualify them to fill jobs in the urban economy of Portugal (Januario & Marujo, 2000).

Another characteristic of these first Portuguese immigrants to Canada in the 1950s relates to their lifestyle in the mother country. The traditional Portuguese peasant society is built on local, family-based economic activities, so even after arriving in Canada, many of them sought to maintain family ties, as Higgs notes (1982). According to Noivo (1997), many of the Portuguese immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1955 and 1980 were admitted based on an immigration policy that fostered family reunification.

Portuguese immigrants faced many challenges when they arrived in Canada (Nunes, 1986a). Most of them came in search of economic opportunity in Canada, but they were slow to adapt to the new culture. Records of the earliest post-1940 Portuguese immigrants show that they had little to no knowledge of French or English (Anderson, 1974; Nunes, 1998a). As Anderson

(1974) states, immigrants from the Azores had less English than immigrants from mainland Portugal. Their ability to speak English was linked to their incomes, as interviews conducted by Anderson confirmed (1974); the higher the standard of a Portuguese immigrant's English, the higher his income would be.

The Portuguese immigrants who arrived in Canada in the 1950s came with their first job already arranged for them by the government (Anderson, 1974; Higgs, 1982). These first waves of migrants were almost exclusively male (Marques & Medeiros, 1980), and most of the jobs they filled were on farms, with railway companies, and in cities like Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto (Anderson, 1974). However, these early immigrants tended not to stay in their jobs for long. Exploitative working conditions, such as insufficient food, unfair treatment, and language barriers with their bosses, caused many Portuguese immigrant workers to change jobs. Many of them moved on to construction jobs, or to work on tobacco farms (Oliveira, 2000). Owing to their lack of fluency in English or French, and to the existence of networks among Portuguese immigrants, they found jobs based more on effort than on skill. As Higgs points out, they were employed in "janitorial jobs, trucking, landscape gardening, clothing factories [and] restaurants," (1982, p. 15).

Portuguese immigrant women were brought to Canada as spouses and as family members, through the family reunification process (Anderson & Higgs, 1976; Higgs, 1982). Like Portuguese immigrant men, Portuguese immigrant women also started working in manual jobs as soon as they arrived in Canada (Giles, 2002). These women, often together with their children, performed menial tasks, such as "[gathering] worms to sell for fish bait ... Women often worked two or more jobs in the cleaning industry and in factories to support the household" (Giles, 2002,

p. 37). They also worked in clothing factories and bakeries, or engaged in caring for the elderly and cleaning, among other jobs (Januario & Marujo, 2000, p. 103).

Portuguese immigrant women were no more fluent in English or French than their husbands and male relatives, which impacted their job choices in the same way. Furthermore, the skill incompatibility between their jobs in Portugal and the opportunities available in Canada meant that many of them had to come up with new specialties (Higgs, 1982; Nunes, 1986a). Still, according to Higgs, many of them received help from friends and family in securing jobs. Many of the Azorean women accepted “janitorial work, where their education was immaterial, and dependability made them prized workers” (Higgs, 1982, p. 9). Others worked as housekeepers, and as kitchen hands in restaurants, Higgs states (1982).

Some Portuguese employees did not receive legal protections or benefit from labour rights, such as the Portuguese women who worked as cleaners in government buildings in Toronto during the 1980s (Nunes, 1986b). A loophole in Ontario’s labour laws at the time permitted Portuguese women working as cleaners to be exploited. This allowed an employer to fire cleaners without notice, and to hire a cleaning contractor who could recruit new cleaners at the minimum wage rate (Nunes, 1986b). The motivation for an employer to take such action was that when a business with a unionized workforce was sold, labour law required the new owner to recognize whatever additional rights had previously been negotiated by the union on behalf of the company’s employees. The loophole was that this legal obligation did not extend to office cleaners, or to staff hired by subcontractors. The exploitation of this weakness by a Toronto-based cleaning company during the 1970s led to the calling of a strike by a group of first-generation Portuguese women (Giles, 2002; Nunes, 1986b; Miranda, 2010). The women organized themselves to fight against their low wages and against a company policy that forced

them to re-use dirty garbage bags. The women went on strike even though many of them had a very low education level and did not speak English well. Their landmark industrial action inspired another strike against a sock company in 1987. It serves as evidence of how Canadian labour laws failed to protect the Portuguese immigrant women's rights, and how the Canadian government neglected the women's interests.

In summary, Canada benefited, for more than three decades, from cheap Portuguese migrant labour (Noivo, 1997). The working-class economic status of Portuguese-Canadians, according to Noivo (1997), Anderson (1974) and Nunes (1998), is a function of the type of work they do, such as building maintenance and cleaning, as well as their low education levels (Nunes, 1998, 2004).

#### **d. Current Profile of the Portuguese Population in Canada**

According to the 2016 Census Profile (Statistics Canada, 2017a), there are now approximately 482,605 individuals in Canada who claim to be of Portuguese ethnic origin; more than 20 percent of these (100,415) live in Toronto.

Historically, Portuguese-Canadians have been classified as "working class." The Portuguese in Canada "tend to hold jobs where they earn substantially less than other Canadians, where they have much less job security, and where they occupy a low social status" (Nunes, 1998, p. 33). However, according to Nunes (1998), "most Portuguese in Canada have the work ethic, adaptability and willingness to do any type of work" (Nunes, 1998, p. 33), which has helped them to survive in times of crisis. In fact, Portuguese-Canadians have experienced low levels of poverty and unemployment historically (Nunes, 1998). However, many of them have encountered financial problems, in times of recession, such as the late 1990s. These problems

seem to relate to the unavailability of opportunities for formal education, training and re-training, especially for those who were not fluent in English or French (Nunes, 1998), according to Portuguese immigrants surveyed at that time.

Second and subsequent generations of Portuguese-Canadians are fluent in English, and better educated than the first generation (Higgs, 1982; Nunes, 1998). According to research carried out by Noivo (1997), half of all second-generation Portuguese-Canadians have attended high school in Canada, and many of them have worked in “factories, construction, maintenance jobs, and in housekeeping” (Noivo, 1997, p. 33).

Many Portuguese mothers chose jobs outside the home that allowed them to take care of their families at the same time. Noivo (1997) describes the case of one woman who, despite having grown-up children, decided to work as a housekeeper, but only for a few days per week, because she needed to take care of her grandchildren, while maintaining both her own house and her daughter's house. The assumption of being obliged to care for the home and children was firmly rooted in these Portuguese women's understanding of the concept of family, states Noivo (1997).

Yet, becoming established in a host country does not necessarily make a community of newcomers part of the political, economic, cultural and social life of that country. According to Nunes (2004), the situation in which the Portuguese community in Canada finds itself can be described as “marginalized.” As Nunes points out, the Portuguese immigrants who arrived in Canada between the 1950s and the 1990s had not been politically engaged in Portugal. This background, combined with their relative lack of education and poor-to-non-existent English, made it difficult for the Portuguese to immerse themselves in political, economic, cultural and social interaction with the wider Canadian community (Nunes, 1986a). Nunes highlights in 1998

the finding that "Luso-Canadians display significantly lower levels of formal education than either the general population or other minorities" (Nunes, 1998, p. 7). In 2004, he notes further, "The combination of widespread low education levels, persistent second-language difficulties amongst the older immigrant generation, and the latter's experience of having lived for decades in a dictatorship, have all served to promote a tendency amongst ... Luso-Canadians to withdraw into the family unit and to minimize their participation in the political, cultural and social life of this nation" (Nunes, 2004, p. 169).

Some of the patterns that were observed in the earliest generations of Portuguese-Canadians are perceptible in later generations, notably the persistence of comparatively low levels of education, and low rates of participation in the Canadian political process (Nunes, 1998, 2004). Consequently, Portuguese-Canadians were not included, at least not to the same extent as other ethnic groups, in the formulation of public policy or in the design of economic, social and cultural programs (Nunes, 2004).

In fact, these patterns hold true for Canadians of Portuguese descent right up to the present. According to the 2016 census data (Statistics Canada, 2017), 52 percent of the general Canadian population have a post-secondary qualification, a diploma or degree, while the corresponding figure for the Portuguese ethnic population is below 45 percent. This is lower than the rate of post-secondary education for any of Canada's mixed-ethnicity population groups.

Regarding economic fortunes, Portuguese immigrants in Canada in 1990 had a significantly lower average income than both the Canadian-born population and all other immigrant communities, and this remains the story of the 2016 census data. The average income of Portuguese workers in 2015 was 8.9 percent lower than that for all Canadians, and 6.2 percent less than the lowest among the average incomes for each of Canada's ethnic groups (Statistics

Canada, 2017). Nunes (2004) argues that the low education and income levels have combined to keep the Portuguese community in a marginalized political, economic and cultural state. Thus, although a high rate of Portuguese immigration to Canada began in the mid-1950s and continued into the 1990s, this community entered the Third Millennium separated from the "forces [that were] shaping their new nation's future" (Nunes, 2004, p. 169).

Another important ethno-cultural consideration that deserves to be highlighted is that Anglo-Canadians often regard Portuguese-Canadians as not white (McLaren, 1986; Harney, 1990; Pacheco, 2004). Harney (1990) utilizes historical documents to illustrate how the Portuguese have traditionally been racialized by English-speaking people. McLaren (1986) conducted observations and interviews in one Toronto middle school in the 1980s and revealed how teachers in this school characterized the Portuguese as dark-skinned and coming from a primitive culture. Finally, Pacheco (2004) argues that the Portuguese in Canada continue to occupy an "in-between" status between being considered white and non-white. (All of the women who were interviewed for this research identified themselves as white. This might mask their inability to recognize discrimination based on skin colour, when it is directed at them.)

One objective of this study is to ascertain the extent to which Portuguese women's choice of DW as a profession may be linked to their perception of themselves and their place within the Portuguese-Canadian and broader Canadian societies. In this regard, this profile of the Portuguese community is essential as a framework to understand the situation of these women.

#### **e. The Context of Portuguese Women**

It is estimated that in 2016, 11.5 percent of Portuguese women in Canada worked under Major Occupational Group 67 — "Service Support and other Service Occupations" — versus 6.7



percent among women of Canadian origin. Considering that “Cleaning Ladies” fall under this Major Occupational Group, it can be assumed that the percentage of Portuguese women employed in all forms of DW is higher than the percentage of women of Canadian birth in the same line of work (Employment & Social Development Canada and Statistics Canada, 2016b).

In 2002, Giles interviewed over sixty of Toronto’s Portuguese immigrant women and community workers, spanning two generations, in order to document the experiences and life trajectories of immigrant women and their daughters. In her book, which is based on research conducted between 1989 and 1992, Giles illustrates the effects on these women of gender (their role within the family, with responsibilities defined by the female gender); race and class relations (their role defined by their status in Canadian society); cultural and national inclusion; multiculturalism and Canadian immigration policies; and positioning with respect to global and national forces. Among the women Giles interviewed were some who were engaged in DW.

According to Giles (2002), more Portuguese women than Portuguese men of working age immigrated into Canada in the early 1960s, and women typically started working as soon as they arrived, contributing financially to the family's livelihood. It is important to mention that, according to Miranda (2010), by virtue of the work they do, whether paid or unpaid, women in Portugal play an important role in the fortunes of their families. Portuguese women played a major role in the migration to Canada, as well as in the search for jobs for themselves and their husbands (Giles, 2002). As Giles maintains, “the majority of women interviewed in this book indicated they used their kinship networks in Canada to arrange sponsorship, housing, and jobs for themselves and their husbands” (Giles, 2002, p. 35). Miranda makes a similar observation in her studies, which state that, according to the Ministry of Labour report on new immigrants from 1966 to 1977, the Portuguese (as well as the Italians) "started work within a month of arriving.

This was partly due to family and friends' networks, as well as their willingness to take any job at first" (p. 96, 2010). Most Portuguese immigrant women entered Canada as dependents of men, and this affected the way they were first processed under the settlement policy and then treated by employers (Giles, 2002). They were generally seen as not needing rights of their own, separate from those of their husbands and families. Besides this, Portuguese culture generally encouraged women to channel their energies into the whole family, and not just themselves. In keeping with this, Giles (2002) and Miranda (2010) report that many of the Portuguese women they spoke with continued to be responsible for domestic chores in their own homes, even while they held down a second job outside of the home.

This division of labour is a legacy of Portugal. Giles (2002) highlighted how Portuguese immigrant women of the first generation (who arrived in Canada aged 15 and older) worked mostly in manufacturing and other jobs, such as domestic service. As immigrants who faced difficulty with the English language, had little leverage in negotiations with employers, and lacked formal education, but nursed the desire to acquire their own home, Portuguese women became "household help, charwomen, office cleaners, dressmakers, nurse's aides and nurses" (Anderson & Higgs, 1976 quoted in Nunes (1986b, p. 61). According to Anderson & Higgs (1976), these were usually undervalued and underpaid occupations, which often involved working in degrading conditions. Many of the women Giles interviewed (2002) took two or more jobs to pay their bills. Many Portuguese immigrant women chose to work at home, in the service industries, so as to be able to take care of the home and children while earning money (Clifton, 2008).

The work these Portuguese immigrant women undertook helped their husbands to survive Canada's economic upheavals during the 1990s (Giles, 2002). In this regard, Giles notes that the

number of Portuguese women working in domestic services increased between 1981 and 1996, due to the loss of Canadian manufacturing jobs during this period.

Giles (2002) finds that the education level of Portuguese immigrant women in Canada has changed over the years. In 1981, almost 60 percent of foreign-born Portuguese women had no more than the required minimum elementary school education, but by 1996 this percentage had dropped to 47 percent, as more Portuguese women obtained secondary and post-secondary education, whether in Portugal or Canada (Giles, 2002). This finding has implications for the current study, since the interviewees for this thesis had higher education levels than was typical of the Portuguese women who entered Canada before them.

In contrast to the first immigrant generations, the second-generation of Canadian-born Portuguese worked mostly in the retail trade (31 percent), followed by accommodation and food services (13 percent), health and social services (10 percent), and other services (10 percent) (Giles, 2002). However, Giles (2002) notes that some Portuguese immigrant women of the second generation are still engaged in DW, especially those who have not obtained a high school diploma (Giles, 2002).

Giles highlights the differences between Portuguese women of the first, second and third immigrant generations, in the way they see themselves within the contexts of family and society. In Giles's (2002) research, women of the first generation chose work according to the needs of their families, as they perceived that their role as mother and wife was more important than anything else. Their work began after they dropped their children off at school and ended in time for them to return home before their children did. The ability to reconcile work with family responsibility is portrayed equally in Miranda's study (2010). Miranda finds that Portuguese

women prioritise this, alongside wage rates, over other factors that might influence their decisions whether to accept or reject job offers.

By contrast, the second generation of Portuguese immigrant women aspired to higher education, although their parents did not always support them in these aspirations (Giles, 2002). Canadian-born Portuguese women had much greater opportunities to gain an education than the previous immigrant generations, because "they have been able to use state services in the areas of childcare, retraining, and personal counselling." Giles finds that access to education influenced the employment choices of second-generation Portuguese women (Giles, 2002, p. 109).

It is not clear why, notwithstanding this particular generational difference, second-generation Portuguese women still chose to enter DW, and why many of them continue to work in this field. Giles attempts to explain this observation by considering factors that might have prevented Portuguese immigrant women from securing better jobs. According to Giles, there were both "internal" and "external" factors that created barriers to education. Giles labels as "internal factors" "household and family gender relations, attitudes towards education, insufficient economic resources, class, age, and the number of dependents." Meanwhile, "external factors" include "inadequate language and employment training resources; unequal access to education due to immigration status and racialization; and gendered attitudes vis-à-vis education in the country of origin." (Giles, 2002, p. 97). However, Giles does not delve into these reasons in great detail, especially in the case of the second generation, who had broader choices.

A point that merits emphasis is that cleaning services offered more benefits than other jobs. For example, factory jobs typically required employees to remain in a standing position for

extended periods, which caused some women problems with podiatry, as shown by Miranda's survey (2010), in which she interviews Portuguese women who had this complaint. According to Miranda (2009), many Portuguese immigrant women worked in factories during the day, then as cleaners in commercial buildings at night, with their husbands helping out by taking care of the children while the women were at work.

In their study "Voices of Portuguese Immigrant Women," Ilda Januario and Manuela Marujo (2000) showcased women who chose DW because it fitted into their schedules as mothers, wives and workers outside the home. One of the women interviewed in this study said that she had chosen to work as a cleaner in order to reconcile her work schedule with her son's school hours. As a cleaner, she could start work after 9:00 A.M., which would not have been possible if she were employed in a factory. That same interviewee gave up her job as soon as her son started coming home for lunch.

Another participant in this study had accepted paid DW, even though she had a negative perception of that kind of work. She only agreed to do DW because the employer treated her like a family member. Additionally, she liked the flexibility the job gave her; for example, to be able to leave work early to keep a doctor's appointment, or if her husband was waiting for her.

The actions of the DW and her employer point to an ambiguity that makes it difficult to distinguish the advantages of this mode of work from its disadvantages. The picture that emerges is one in which these women often see their bosses as "good people," when they are allowed to leave work early. Yet, they consider themselves as being exploited by their employers when they perceive injustice, such as not being paid for working overtime.

This same ambiguity is perceived through one of the interviews in Giles's study (2002). A woman secured a job at a sports club, where she worked in the cloakroom, in addition to cooking

and serving food in the snack bar. She recalls receiving invitations from club members to clean their homes on her days off. According to the interviewee, this happened because the club members really liked her. On the other hand, she questioned a club member to whom she was close, as to why she was being invited to that member's home not for supper, but to clean the house. This made her confused about how the club members saw her, and what relationships actually existed between them, because even though the club members treated her well, they evidently did not see her as a person they would like to have over for dinner.

In the research for Miranda's (2010) PhD (History) dissertation on the working and organizational experiences of Portuguese women in Toronto's domestic and building cleaning industries between the 1960s and the 1990s, she interviewed 41 cleaners (some of whom were day cleaners in the homes of individual families), labour leaders and social workers. Combining these interviews with archive material, Miranda examined how the economic and political environment during that period affected Portuguese women working in Toronto's cleaning business. She described how these women tried to improve their working conditions by establishing links with community activists, joining unions, and calling on the state to act in their best interest, especially in the case of those who did office cleaning. The research focused on how "women who laboured independently [of] one another in day domestic cleaning, expressed a collective culture of resistance" (Miranda, 2010, p. 5).

In this study, the Portuguese women who were engaged in domestic day cleaning reported experiencing an increase in their bargaining power, as the demand for their services grew. Miranda found that the women who cleaned houses "... were able to effect change in the occupation over time, making it more contractual, and less of a 'servant' experience. They did so

in such ways as limiting tasks, reducing hours, increasing their wages, and cultivating their 'expertise' in the occupation” (Miranda, 2010, p. 119).

However, although Miranda’s research contributed to a better understanding of the factors that led Portuguese women to enter the cleaning industry, it left important gaps. One unanswered question was how these women came to understand that they had, or could gain, the power to promote their interests in an environment where there was no legislation to support them. Therefore, examining how increases in their knowledge and skill may have contributed to the women’s actions, in raising their voices in their own defence, is essential to knowing how lifelong learning processes work in this context.

In summary, as seen in previous studies, many Portuguese-Canadian women were, and are still, employed as DWs. Yet, not one study so far has focused exclusively on women who clean family homes as independent contractors (cleaning ladies); nor has any study examined these women as direct subjects of the lifelong learning process, or how this process manifests itself throughout their lifespan. Lifelong education is an important point to be considered when it comes to the decision-making of these DWs. According to Dave, lifelong education is a “process of accomplishing personal, social and professional development throughout the lifespan of individuals, in order to enhance the quality of life of both individuals and their collectivities” (Dave, 1976, p. 34).

The ambiguity that Portuguese immigrant women perceive in their working relationships with household employers, has not been well studied either. This ambiguity raises questions about the ways in which these women perceive themselves in this work position, as well as the need for a fuller examination of the relationships with employers, either of which might have resulted in possible misperceptions of justice and injustice. In other words, how far can the

friendship between employee and employer in this situation go, before it risks resulting in an unintended facilitation of the worker's exploitation? There is further inherent ambiguity regarding racialization. Portuguese women consider themselves to be white Europeans. However, the evidence exists that they are often racialized by the wider Canadian society, including their clients (Harney, 1990; MacLaren, 1986; Giles, 2002; Pacheco, 2004).

Another essential point that deserves to be studied further relates to what these women have learned during the years they were employed as DWs, and how that learning has contributed to other life decisions, as well as how their experiences as DWs in Canada have contributed to improving (or diminishing) their quality of life.

My study attempts to go beyond an understanding of what Portuguese immigrant women have done to deal with the practical situations they face, such as combining work outside the home with caring for their own homes and children. More important is understanding how these women did it; how they learned, formally or informally, to deal with the challenges that are common to all migrant DWs in foreign countries, as discussed by Shibao Guo (2013).

The existing research findings reinforce the need to study this group of women who seek employment as DWs or cleaning ladies. Whether it is a good or bad choice, many Portuguese women choose to secure their future, and the future of their family, through the occupation of cleaning houses. Since the Portuguese woman generally serves as the anchor of her family, understanding how and why DW affects the lives of these women is essential to gaining a better understanding of the Portuguese community in Canada. A study of Portuguese immigrant DWs can teach us more about this community's integration in Canada. Equally important, the example of Portuguese cleaning ladies may help us to better understand the strengths and limitations of the theory of Marxist Feminism in explaining the situation of female DWs.



## **f. Marxist Feminism**

A variety of feminist theories and their associated modes of interpretation have been disseminated throughout the world. All these different interpretations have a common goal, which is to understand and explain the nature of gender inequality. This study uses the lens of Marxist Feminism theory, which is rooted in economic concepts, to understand the role of Portuguese immigrant women in an economic context. These women crossed the ocean in search of a better life, entered the domestic work field for many reasons and chose to remain in this field when most, or all, of these reasons no longer exist. This section, supported by Marxist Feminism theory, seeks to address the following questions:

- What does Marxist Feminism say about the role of married women and their husbands in the capitalist system?
- How does Marxist Feminism regard the class consciousness of working-class women? How is domestic work, as unalienated labour, understood by Marxist Feminism theory?
- How is the labour of domestic work discussed, analyzed and understood by Marxist Feminism theory?
- How can class consciousness be achieved? And how could Lifelong Learning help in this process? What does Marxist Feminism say about the role of married women and their husbands in the capitalist system?

In the capitalist system, with its emphasis on the differences between the products of exchange-value and use-value, the differentiation of power is established based on who produces what. Unlike men, women are seen as the “class responsible for the production of simple use-value things such as meals that are cooked to be eaten by the family rather than to be packaged for sale alongside the Swanson and Armor frozen entrees” (Tong, 1989, p. 53). As discussed by Vogel (1973), women were oppressed in the feudal family as well as in the capitalist family, but with a difference: in the feudal family the woman's work was socially meaningful, even though it was defined based on gender. In the domain of capitalism, women's entry into the workforce historically has been much harder to achieve because her role in the capitalist system has been limited to domestic work. Moreover, since domestic work has been historically and deliberately imposed on women, says Federici (2012), under the pretext that this type of work is inherent to the female gender, it was "transformed into a natural attribute of our female physique and personality, an internal need and aspiration, supposedly coming from the depth of our female character" (Federici, 2012, p. 16). Furthermore, what role do traditional gender roles play in helping to understand the relationship between husband and wife under capitalism?

*Class* – The class system existed even before the appearance of the capitalist system, as argued in *The Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels (1848). According to them, "In ancient Rome, we ha[d] patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradation" (Marx & Engels, 1848, p. 34). As time went on, what changed were the new conditions of oppression as well as new forms of class struggle because it was no longer a question of lords and vassals but rather the bourgeois and the proletariat. Thus, it is in the context

of an evolving class system that we seek to understand the position of women within the relatively new capitalist system.

Through the lens of Marxist Feminism theory, the source of coercive power and oppression has always existed in hierarchical class relations, and it is also understood as a dimension of class power and its connection to sexual oppression. But, as discussed by Beasley (1999), "the first forms of class oppression are prior to sexual oppression" (p. 60). So, it was "the emergent organization of the first forms of private wealth and therefore of class hierarchy, [that] led to the treatment of women as property" (Beasley, 1999, p. 60). Thus, concludes Beasley, power is "not primarily associated with sex [gender] but with the imperatives of class, private wealth, property and profit. The 'main enemy' in this form of analysis is the class system (capitalism, in modern societies) which creates divisions between men and women" (Beasley, 1999, p. 61).

The class struggle also exists inside the home, in Vogel's words, because unpaid work in the household is consumed by the man who works for capital, this means that capitalism benefits from the products and services made at home and without payment.

*Use-value:* Use-value as well as exchange-value dictate the rule of this new system. Use-value, according to Donovan (2000), "refers to the worth of an article produced for (usually immediate) consumption, and usually by members of one's own group" (p. 86). Some examples of use-value include cooking, cleaning, and sewing. Exchange-value, by contrast, "refers to articles produced for exchange. The inherent meaning of an article changes when it is to be used for exchange" (Donovan, 2000, p. 86).

*The role of women in the capitalist system:* With the advent of capitalism, relations between men and women and related power dynamics changed. In Engels' view, discussed in the

Josephine Donovan study *Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions*, “in the communistic household, the man and women held equal power, being the division of labour based on sex “(the man hunts, the woman tends the house)” ...they are each master in their own sphere” (Engels as cited in Donovan, 2000, p. 87). However, Donovan continues, with the advent of new inventions, and with that, the increase in production (exchange of surplus value) the need for cheap labour became a necessity (2000). Thus, production with use-value started to become devalued in relation to production with exchange and surplus-value; this is how according to Engels, domestic work (which produces use-value) is then devalued by capitalism. The woman becomes a commodity for the capitalist system because she produces what is now considered a labour force (children) to keep the engine of the capitalist system running. The bearing of children for the formation of a labour force reduces the woman to a condition of servitude, becoming a mere instrument to produce children. The man then takes control of the home as well. According to Donovan, “The family was then transformed into a monogamous nuclear unit dominated by men,” a situation from which the first-class oppression arose (Donovan, 2000, p. 88).

When the woman is placed in the role of wife and mother, her unpaid labour in the home is not valued because it is not monetized. Briefly, “The value of a thing is just as much as it will bring” (Marx, 1912, p. 3). Therefore, monetizing the work of the housewife is one of the discussions of Marxist Feminism theory, since value within the capitalist system is measured in exchange-value. That's because Marx (1912) focuses on the process of buying and selling of labour-power as the basis of capitalism; as such, he views the labour force as a commodity. Furthermore, the owners of this labour consider it as a commodity, as they can sell it on the market. According to Marx, a worker can sell his or her labour for a specified period: "He must

constantly look upon his labour-power as his own property, his own commodity, and this he can only do by placing it at the disposal of the buyer temporarily, for a definite period of time"

(Marx, 1912, p. 147).

In summary, when the feudal system was germinating in its womb the new system that would later be called capitalism, women who until then exercised their power through domestic work, soon became reduced to commodities, in order to serve the development of capitalism. When capitalism arrived, power was divided between those who produced exchange-value, removing power from those who produced use-value. As the main producers of use-value, women were therefore left without power. To fulfill their economic destiny, with the division of labour and the growing need for workforce, they came to be seen as suppliers of labour. And as such, they occupied spaces along with the other commodities.

Marx also discusses the “natural division of labour in the family” in his writings, and he says that “one of the primary divisions of labour occurs in the family”, which creates the “first form of ownership of one person by another”; he saw the enslavement of wives and children by husbands as the first form of private property (Marx, 1867 cited in Donovan, 2000, p. 83/84):

- *How does Marxist Feminism regard the class consciousness of working-class women? How is domestic work, as unalienated labour, understood by Marxist Feminism theory?*

To understand what Marx calls “class consciousness,” we must begin with a discussion of what is alienation, since understanding alienation is essential to understanding consciousness. With the division of labour, it was possible to increase production, but to increase production,

men lost control of production from beginning to end. This meant that “workers were deprived of a sense of participating in the integrated process” (Donovan, 2000, p. 82). With the emergence of the division of labour, the worker was not responsible for the operation from start to end, but only for a small part of the operation. By way of explanation, “instead of each man being allowed to perform all the various operations in succession, these operations are changed into disconnected, isolated ones, carried on side by side; each is assigned to a different artificer, and the whole of them together are performed simultaneously by the co-operating workmen” (Marx, 1912, p. 329). This is what Marx (1867) calls alienation created by industrial capitalism. An important point to be highlighted is that these women in this study were not alienated in the traditional sense, since they saw their work happening from beginning to end. They started the day with a dirty house, then ended with a clean house, and took part in every step of this process. However, they were alienated by virtue of not working together on the same factory floor, or in the same building.

Donovan (2000) argues that workers “feel ‘homeless’ on the job, and only ‘at home’ during leisure hours” (p. 82). Thus, as Marx writes, “the product therefore becomes a thing that is alien to the worker” (Donovan, 2000, p. 82). This disconnection with the production process is what makes labour alienated and therefore affects the worker’s understanding of the whole. And consequently, it affects his consciousness of himself within this system.

Consciousness is another important point to highlight in Marx’s thought, as shown in Donovan's studies. Marx’s *Critique of Political Economy* (1859), as cited in Donovan (2000) describes that “the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness” (Donovan, 2000, p.

80). Based on the principle that productive labour is also alienated labour, consciousness comes from the social environment in which it is inserted. This is to say that consciousness can be biased since the alienated job does not allow the worker to see the whole, as stated previously: "A class only existed when it was conscious of itself as such, and this always implied common hostility to another social group" (Marx 1859, as cited in Donovan, 2000, p. 81).

Meanwhile, in *The Earthly Family*, Lise Vogel (1973) argues that consciousness lost in alienated labour is not lost in unalienated labour. Thus, when it comes to use-labour, where the products come from that are considered non-productive by capitalism, Vogel argues that work in strictly useful labour provides access to the possibility of non-alienated work. She argues that women's domestic work is primarily useful labour: It "has the power, under the right conditions, to suggest a future society in which all labour would be primarily useful. This is one of the sources of the consciousness and strength that drives women into the forefront of revolutionary movement" (Vogel, 1973, p. 26).

In brief, worker alienation seems to be an obstacle to the class consciousness, and therefore to the working class. Without consciousness, the criticism of their role in the capitalist system is biased and therefore doomed to be accepted as such. On the other hand, women (through the lens of Marxism feminism) have been historically left out of the system of production, leaving them with only the production of use-value. And once use-value production is considered an unalienated product, whoever produces it knows the entire production process, which, following Vogel's thinking, leads to consciousness among these workers. Therefore, since there is consciousness of their role within this system, change may be possible. Ironically, these labourers are women.

*Why is consciousness important in Marxist thought?* For Marxist thought, class consciousness needs to be from the point of view of the working class and not from the standpoint of capitalists (owners of capital). This is what Marx calls "true class consciousness" (Donovan, 2000, p. 81). Marx, according to Allman (2007), understands that consciousness is constituted in the same way as people's feelings. Therefore, "when people sensuously engage with the material world, their thoughts and feelings, their objective and subjective responses, are produced simultaneously" (Allman, 2007 p. 33). Thus, according to Marxist thought, human beings need to develop their capacities and strengths, as this is inherent to human beings:

Marx thought that all human beings should be engaged in a continuous process of becoming, i.e., a process of developing and extending all of their capacities and potentials. In capitalist societies, however, it is normal for people to alienate their potentials, or in Marx's terms, their powers, to surrender them, or give them up, to other people and/or things. (Allman, 2007 p. 35)

Another important point to highlight is that Marxist Feminists believe that "social existence determines consciousness" (Tong, 1989, p. 40). Social position determines the conscience of those who are part of it, states Tong (1989), and this can result in tacit acceptance of one's place in society. So, understanding how women are linked to work and how they see themselves in this process is important if we wish to know why women are oppressed differently from the way men are, according to Marxist Feminism Theory (Tong, 1989, p. 40).

When it comes to Portuguese immigrant women, this theory can help to explain why they often choose jobs based on their home routines. As pointed out by Tong (1989), these women enter the job market taking with them the responsibility for their household chores. So, they are engaged



in two jobs, two schedules, and two sets of responsibilities, at home and outside the home. How and why do these women choose employment as domestic workers? Is it a choice or an absence of choice? Are they aware of the benefits or lack of benefits from working as cleaners? Being recognized as “Portuguese Cleaning Ladies” would this be a turning point in their choice of work? The exploitation of women in the capitalist system could be represented in the situation of some of these Portuguese immigrant women who are employed as domestic workers.

The example of some Portuguese domestic workers can help us to better understand some aspects of the theory of Marxist Feminism as well as to question some of the assumptions of Marxist Feminism.

- *How is the labour of domestic workers discussed, analyzed and understood by Marxist Feminism theory?*

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2013, 67.1 million people in the world were employed as domestic workers. Of this population, 11.5 million were migrant domestic workers, and among the migrant domestic workers, 73.8 percent were women (International Labour Organization, 2015). Once women leave home in search of work and find in the position of domestic work the opportunity to enter the labour market, it could be a first step towards an attempt at emancipation and equal rights. However, according to Federici (2012), any attempt to fight for social services, equal pay, and so forth will not be legitimate if it is not clearly stated that the domestic work performed by women is, in fact, work. The author also claims that in getting a second job (outside the home), women are not necessarily

emancipating themselves, but instead increasing their exploitation, as demonstrated in many cases:

Getting a second job does not change that role [women role], as years of female work outside the home have demonstrated. The second job not only increases our exploitation but simply reproduces our role in different forms. Wherever we turn we can see that the jobs women perform are mere extensions of the housewife's conditions in all its implications. ...We become nurses, maids, teachers, secretaries – all functions for which we are well trained in the home..." (Federici, 2012, p. 20)

Along the same lines, Dalla Costa, et. al. (2019) highlights that the role of "housewife"<sup>5</sup> is seen as essential to being female; furthermore, she continues, all women are seen as housewives by society, even if they work outside the home. With the arrival of capitalism, points out Dalla Costa, et. al. (2019), the factory became the centre of the socialization of production, and everything that did not represent a percentage of this type of production was excluded from the means of payment. Therefore, according to Dalla Costa, et. al. (2019), only those who worked at the factory were given wages, while those who were not engaged in this type of work received nothing. Recruiting men as wage workers, "has created a fracture between him and all the other proletarians without a wage who, not participating directly in social production, were thus presumed incapable of being the subjects of social revolt" (Dalla Costa, et. al., 2019, p. 23). Therefore, Dalla Costa, et. al. concludes that "where women are concerned, their labour appears to be a personal service outside of capital" (2019, p. 23). So, within this cycle of social production, states Dalla Costa, housework is invisible because it is unpaid labour.

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<sup>5</sup> This term is outdated and now homemaker is the term now more frequently used.

- *How can class consciousness be achieved? How could lifelong learning theory help in this process?*

As consciousness is the first step to understanding the context in which we are included, it then becomes the locomotive for change. And how can this awareness happen? Paulo Freire (2007), who is an internationally renowned Brazilian educator, explains the various types of consciousness: Critical consciousness, naïve consciousness, magic consciousness:

[Critical consciousness represents] things and facts as they exist empirically, in their causal and circumstantial correlations, naïve consciousness considers itself superior to facts, in control of facts, and thus free to understand them as it pleases... Magic consciousness simply apprehends facts and attributes to them a superior power by which it is controlled and to which it must therefore submit". (Freire, 2007, p. 39)

What Paulo Freire shows in his book is that people see the world through their *conscientization* and in order to be truly free, everyone needs a critical consciousness. This would be the first step in understanding their relationship with the world and then moving from a relationship of submission to a relationship of action. Therefore, if labour does not have a critical consciousness of the world around it, then workers can't see what their role in society is.

Consciousness happens through education, which in turn does not necessarily happen within classrooms, as perceived in Freire's phrase "Já agora ninguém educa ninguém, como tampouco ninguém se educa a si mesmo: os homens se educam em comunhão, mediatizados pelo mundo" [*No one educates anyone else, nor do we educate ourselves, we educate one another in communion in the context of living in this world*] (Freire, 2018, p. 96). This means that education

happens in the communion (dialogue) between people, and through reflecting on the world and their occurrence in the world.

Marxist Feminism believes that women can develop what Paulo Freire calls “critical consciousness.” Based on the acknowledgment that *conscientization* is the key to understanding the reality in which people are inserted, lifelong learning theory is important to show how that could be achieved. Lifelong learning “can and should occur throughout each person’s lifetime” (Knapper & Cropley, 2000, p. 1).

According to Knapper and Cropley (2000), lifelong learning has the following characteristics:

- It is intentional – learners are aware that they are learning.
- It has specific goals, and it is not aimed at vague generalizations such as ‘developing the mind’.
- These goals are the reason why the learning is undertaken (i.e., it is not motivated simply by factors like boredom).
- The learner intends to retain and use what has been learnt for a considerable period of time. (Knapper & Cropley, 2000, p. 12)

Adult learning can happen in many ways, one of which is communicative learning. According to Cranton (2013), “People have a practical need to understand each other and the social world within which they live” (p. 99). Therefore, learning happens through the interactions of people seeking to understand the environment in which they are inserted, which is related to what Karl Marx calls class consciousness, and what Freire calls dialogue leading to critical consciousness. Another point to be highlighted is recognizing the importance of critical

theory in the process of lifelong learning, as it goes beyond comprehension to action, as described by Cranton:

“Critical theory goes beyond interpretive methodologies, moving from understanding the meaning of experiences to determine the knowledge distortions that may be present and to change the social systems. Ideological critique leads to the realization of human potential – emancipation”. (Cranton, 2013, p. 99)

Reflection is part of the lifelong learning process. According to Boyd and Fales (1983), reflection is “the process of creating and clarifying the meaning of experience (present and past) in terms of self (self in relation to self and self in relation to the world)” (p. 101). In the case of Portuguese immigrant women, understanding their own situation as domestic workers and understanding the job of domestic workers in the Canadian context, has helped them to reflect on how to negotiate their working conditions in this labour market, without a labour contract, without a union, and without an intermediate agency. Boyd and Fales go on to say,

Adult life is full of experiences that hold the potential for learning, learning that leads to growth and development and to an even greater capacity for learning. These life experiences shape us and influence how we think about and value both ourselves and the world around us. (1983, p. 86)

According to Marx, class consciousness happens through a long and complex process of workers “struggling together about issues of local, and later national, interest to them, [and] they gradually become a unity, a true class,” (as quoted in Tong, 1989, p. 43). And so, as noted by Tong, “as soon as a group of people is fully conscious of itself as a class, it becomes extremely

difficult to prevent that group from achieving its fundamental goals” (p. 43). Moreover, when it comes to the condition of immigrants, where learning is part of daily life due to the new challenges they face in their adopted country, from learning their new language, to finding housing and jobs, to adjusting to a new culture, lifelong learning is the key to becoming established in the host country (Guo, 2013).

Lifelong learning is crucial to understanding how Portuguese women engaged in DW first learn to circumvent, and perhaps then to overcome, the challenges they face, such as poor English or none, low wages, disrespect shown by other people for DW, learning the limits of their rights and responsibilities, and the labour of DW itself. It is crucial to understand how these workers became aware (or did not) of their condition as domestic workers and how this awareness might have helped them to defend themselves (or not), as well as how they banded together (or did not) during their period of engagement in DW.

Overall, the rising need for DWs around the world, along with globalization, has been shown by the growing number of immigrant women crossing borders in search of this type of job in wealthy countries. Canada has received more and more female immigrants through immigration programs, especially in the areas of DW and caregivers. Portuguese immigration to Canada has been happening over the years bringing labour for manual jobs, and this is also repeated for many Portuguese immigrant women of the first generation, working in cleaning occupations. Marxist Feminism theory discusses the exploitation of women within the capitalist system and notes how DW's are left out or undervalued. According to Karl Marx, only the critical awareness of this working-class can break this cycle of exploitation. Lifelong learning brings about this role of awareness, through the reflection of these women on their experiences

and the situations in which they find themselves, as well as on those of other workers in conditions of exploitation.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Interviewing Five Portuguese Immigrant Women Domestic Workers**

In this chapter I present the data from the research carried out with five Portuguese immigrant women, and attempt to answer the research questions, through their statements. This chapter also analyzes how the result of this research could be explained by Marxist Feminism theory and how lifelong learning contributed to the continuance of these women in this field.

This study sought, through the perspective of Marxist Feminism, to shed light on a population that works in a field which capitalism has trouble explaining, since it is seen not as a generator of exchange-value but merely a generator of the value of use. This group is known collectively as domestic workers (hereafter referred to as DWs). Although these people work in jobs that are not part of the capitalist system's rulebook, they certainly "feed" capital.

There are several links between these five Portuguese immigrant women employed as DWs and the division of labour based on gender as well as the division of class in the capitalist system. Additionally, the power of class consciousness discussed by Marxist theory and emphasized in Paulo Freire's theory contributes to the discussion of why these women entered and stayed in the field of domestic work when the reasons no longer exist. This goes far beyond a mere discussion of being employed or not employed as a DW, but also includes a consideration of the reasons behind this choice of job, how these women see themselves working as a DW, and why they are still employed in this field. Would lifelong learning play an important role in the career decisions made by these workers? There are no easy answers but trying to ask the right questions is the purpose of this research.



Throughout the interview process with these Portuguese immigrant domestic workers, many topics were uncovered, showing their perception of their participation as DWs in Canadian society as well as in Portuguese-Canadian society. Their experience of their role as first-generation immigrants came out often during the interviews. Even though none of them had worked as a DW in their home country, they were proud of themselves for being recognized in Canada as excellent professionals in the field of cleaning. What is behind this? Developing a critical consciousness is one of the main tools for self-determination and agency; most of these women had just one choice, and the critical consciousness (or absence of this) of her role as Portuguese and as a DW might be responsible for that.

I sought to answer the research questions that looked at the reasons, processes and learning that these women experienced as DWs (see section on Research Questions). The discussion which follows does not necessarily follow the order of questions listed in the Research Questions section and some answers may address more than one question at the same time.

#### **a. Profile of the Research Participants**

I interviewed five Portuguese immigrant women who worked or are still working as DWs in Canada: Luana, Joana, Neusa, Ana, and Claudia. The women are between 39 and 59 years of age. Two of them are from the Azores and three are from continental Portugal. All of them had secondary education in their country of origin. Joana held a four-year accounting certificate, while Ana was an optician's assistant. Luana owned a photographic business with her husband in the Azores, and Claudia was a pattern cutter. This is a much greater education level than the first generation of those Portuguese women who first immigrated in the 1960's and who began to

work as cleaning ladies. That generation generally had 4 years of primary education or less (Anderson & Higgs, 1976). This made them much more vulnerable than the women in this study to exploitation.

Luana, Neusa, and Joana began working in the cleaning field as soon as they arrived in Canada. While Luana and Neusa worked as DWs, Joana went into housekeeping in hotels. Although Ana chose another type of work when she arrived in Canada, she cleaned houses on some weekends, and she started working as a full time DW after five years working as an optician's assistant.

Of the five immigrants, one immigrated to Montreal, Quebec, two of them immigrated to Victoria, British Columbia, and two of them to Halifax, Nova Scotia. These women came to Canada as adults, and most of them were already married or about to get married when they arrived. Only one was single at the time of arrival, and one of them already had a daughter when she decided to immigrate.

**Table 1: Profile of participants in this study**

Name	Claudia	Luana	Ana	Neusa	Joana
Region of birth	Continental Portugal	Azores	Continental Portugal	Azores	Continental Portugal
Race	White	White	White	White	White
Age	59	57	59	39	52
Year of living in Canada as landed immigrants	31	17	34	18	32
Marital status	Widowed	Married	Married	Divorced	Married
Children	2	2	2	2	3
Education completed in their home country	Designer Technical	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
English proficiency when arrived in Canada	Poor	Intermediary	Poor	Poor	Basic
Proficiency in another language	-	-	-	-	Basic French
Fluency in a second language	English	English	English	English	French

<b>Retired from all work</b>	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
<b>Working now as DW</b>	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<b>How many years have you been working as DW?</b>	5	3.5	15/16	18	2 <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Worked on weekends as DW</b>	No	No	No	Yes	No
<b>Working hours per week as DW</b>	5 to 6	16	30	8	40
<b>Worked in other jobs, simultaneously</b>	No	Yes	-	Yes	-
<b>Which type of other job, simultaneously</b>	No	Janitor	-	Janitor	-
<b>Worked in different houses</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Previous occupation</b>	Pattern Cutter	Owned photographic studio <sup>(3)</sup>	Optician Assistant	-	Housekeeping Director at a hotel

(1) She started working as DW in 2018.

(2) She had a photography business in her home country.

All five of the women had at least a secondary education and had not previously worked as a DW before. Some of them started working as a DW as soon as they arrived in Canada and some started working in other types of services, including in the same field, such as housekeeping. Two of them started in other sectors, such as an assistant optician and pattern cutter, before switching to DW. These women had generally higher levels of education than those first generation of women who entered Canada in the 1960's and 70's many of whom only had an elementary education.

## **b. Findings and Discussion**

After finishing the five interviews, I began to recall my past life in Brazil, especially when I first heard about exploitation, power, resilience, class and gender division, oppressor and oppressed through thinkers like Milton Santos, Paulo Freire, and Eduardo Galeano (the first two are Brazilians and the last one is Uruguayan). More than that, it brought me the same feelings

that I had while reading the book “Open Veins of Latin America” (written by Eduardo Galeano, published in 1971) in my first year at University where I took a Sociology course. The Book “Open Veins of Latin America” points to the economic exploitation and political dominance of the continent first by the colonizers and later by the United States. These thoughts helped me understand this quote from an unknown author "there ain't no such thing as a free lunch" because all of the relationships between developed and developing countries are based on the interests of the strongest over the weakest, and this is no different from what is happening today.

Having my first contact with Marxism Feminist theory in Canada, I could see that in addition to the division between the proletariat and the owner of capital, there is another class that is also exploited, even though they are not recognized as such as by patriarchal society, as seen in Federici's studies. Federici (2012) says that “behind every factory, behind every school, behind every office or mine there is the hidden work of millions of women who have consumed their life, their labour, producing the labour power that works in those factories, schools, offices, or mines” (Federici, 2012, p. 20). Thus, the exploitation of women by capital begins in the reproduction of labour power, which means by having and raising children who are the future workforce. Still according to Federici (2012) "capitalist accumulation is above all the accumulation of workers, a process that occurs primarily through immigration", and she says, "it means that a significant part of the work necessary to reproduce the metropolitan workforce is now performed by women in Africa, Asia, Latin America or the former socialist countries "(p. 71). Thus, this helps to understand the increase of immigration of women domestic workers to wealthy countries, and how immigration programs help with this. In this way, the exploitation of women continues to happen through the flow of immigration.

The first form of women's exploitation takes place by the exclusion of women from the Capitalist system, and the other is the exploitation that takes place in the home, where they are oppressed, and their husbands are the oppressors. I sought to understand what happens to Portuguese immigrant women who chose to continue working as DW in Canada. These topics (which are discussed below) are explained through examples that were drawn from the interviews. Therefore, I sought to understand what lies behind the responses of the five Portuguese immigrant women who work as DW's in Canada, through the lens of Marxism Feminist. All the women mentioned below have been given a pseudonym, to maintain their anonymity.

*i. Benefits of and Reasons for Remaining in DW*

Some of the research participants described having had some difficulty in settling into Canada, during the first year of immigration. These difficulties were due to the delays in the process of issuing a Permanent Resident visa, their lack of English, lack of Canadian experience, lack of recognized jobs skills, and receiving no help from the government upon entering Canada. This was the case with Claudia, who received an invitation letter from her sister, and was ineligible, as was her husband, to receive financial assistance from the Canadian government, as shown below.

*[00:41:14] ... it was very difficult for my husband because he had to get a job at night to be able to go to school during the day, and ... we had my sister in charge ... Yeah so ... it's six hours [of English course] and then the government helps with a ... like a salary. You [referring to herself] are ... you can't do anything because you have to go to school*

*to learn and then, we were denied this salary [financial support] because we had my sister, that's because she called us [through the invitation letter]. Claudia]*

Joana, as well as her husband, had to find a job outside of school hours, and she was hired to work as a part-time pattern Cutter in her free time (preparing the clothing molds, cutting, sewing, and guiding other employees in their jobs of cutting and sewing) and switching to full time when the English course ended. It is important to note that the English course she took was not relevant to finding a job as a Pattern Cutter, as she describes herself, because she was hired to work as a pattern cutter when she did not speak English yet.

I cite this example to call attention to the fact that the jobs offered to newcomers, often do not need much knowledge of English, (Joana's case). Consequently, the employees in these jobs might not be aware of the labour rights they might have, resulting in possible exploitation by employers. This exploitation could be in the form of not recognizing the employee's efforts, not paying the salary they deserve and even sexual harassment (in Joana's statement), as I will discuss in the section: Reason for Continuing to Work in Domestic Work.

Settlement difficulties were also observed in the case of Neusa; she entered domestic work because she did not have a work visa, or Permanent Resident status, to be able to work legally. She already had a job that had been set up by her mother-in-law (who at that time already worked as a DW in Canada). This was arranged by Neusa's mother-in-law, so Neusa could work as a DW as soon as she and her husband arrived in Canada:

*[00:14:38] when I got here, I didn't have the opportunity to go to school right away, I wasn't [sic] legal at the time either. Uh, it took me a long time, almost a year, to be legal ... My mother-in-law... was also a domestic worker, and she wanted to go into*

*retirement; but she waited for me to give me her clients<sup>6</sup> because she already... had good clients, good houses because uh... when we have many-- she always has good and better than others, and then she said: "Oh, I have good houses and I want to go into retirement, but I will leave it for you". So, when I arrived in Canada, she still worked for a few months with me... [Neusa]*

Although Neusa planned to follow in her mother-in-law's footsteps as a DW in Canada, she had a desire to return to school, but because of the circumstances, she was unable to attend school. The first year for immigrants in the host country is a critical time for them to strengthen their economic, emotional, and social circumstances. Delays in accessing educational opportunities and developing new networks and friendships within and outside the Portuguese Canadian community can affect their ability to integrate and challenge Canadian policies that affect immigrants.

Providing newcomers immediate access to educational opportunities, such as English language classes, is a way to not only assist in language skill development but can help learners to begin to take a critical perspective on their social realities and contribute to what Paulo Freire (2007) calls *conscientization*. Paulo Freire (a Brazilian educator and philosopher) explored the many dimensions of critical consciousness and how reflection and action leads to liberation, “Precisamos estar convencidos de que o convencimento dos oprimidos de que devem lutar por sua libertação não é doação que lhes faça a liderança revolucionária, mas resultado de sua conscientização” [We need to be convinced that the conviction of the oppressed that they must fight for their liberation is not a donation that is made to them by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their conscientization] (Freire, 2018, p. 74). Therefore, the *conscientization* of

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<sup>6</sup> Although these families are “clients” strictly speaking, they are not clients in the traditional sense of the word, and that a hierarchy still exists between the cleaning women and the families that they serve.

Portuguese immigrant women, as domestic workers, cannot come from those who pay them to be in this position, but *conscientization* must come from these women as domestic workers.

Understanding their individual problems and experiences and the social contexts in which the immigrants are embedded is important as Guo (2013) points out in his studies. According to Guo, immigrants face many challenges; that is why education has a major role in the lives of these immigrants as a support for their settlement in Canada, helping them with "with language, employment, housing, childcare, education, health, counseling, legal, and social services" (Guo, 2013, p. 322).

The company that hired Joana did not care about her level of English, which shows that the job did not require an English skill, probably because it was a hands-on job. This shows that most of the newcomers entered into unskilled jobs before they improved their English skills, thus narrowing their opportunities of having other kinds of jobs. This also means that, often, immigrants are trapped in jobs in the secondary sector, as explained by the Dual Labour Market Theory of American economists Michael Piore and Peter Doeringer (Smith, 1976). According to these authors, there are some types of jobs that are classified as being in the secondary sector, that are people mainly by women, migrant workers, and those who leave quickly or can be replaced quickly.

For Piore and Doeringer, cited in Smith (1976), there are two job markets, the primary and the secondary. The primary sector consists of well-paid jobs, good positions, while the secondary sector would be composed of low-status jobs that earn a low- to minimum wage, operate in precarious working conditions, and have low job security and few opportunities for promotion. This latter sector includes the types of jobs that these Portuguese immigrant women held when they entered Canada, even when they were not working directly as a DW.



The difficulty in the acceptance of educational credentials from outside of Canada was another of the reasons that led Joana to start all over again.

*[00:17:27] I thought about going back to school, but I had a language problem, I did my equivalences, but they were two years late, I had to start over almost everything again, and ... and I left the schooling aside. [Joana]*

This difficulty in recognizing foreign credentials in Canada is also noted by Carpenter (2018) as one of the challenges facing all those that immigrate to Canada. According to her, “all people migrating to Canada face significant challenges in accessing postsecondary education, often involving lost, incomplete or unrecognized credentials” (p. 242).

As for Ana (another interviewee), she began her job as a DW right after her second child was born, because this job would allow her to spend flexible hours on a job, so she could care for her children while making money. Ana is an example of what Noivo (1997) says is a traditional conception of Portuguese women as carers of the home and children, which is firmly rooted in the way Portuguese women in general often understand the meaning of family.

Based on Ana’s example, what appears to be a genuine mother's choice between choosing one job over another, in order to accommodate her routine of mother and homemaker is the result of a history of oppression and exploitation of women, which according to Karl Marx is the first type of exploitation class. In the view of Marxist Feminism, women are left outside the Capitalist System, leaving them with the responsibility for reproductive labour, and maintainer of the house where the husband goes to rest after a day's work. Therefore, the division of labour based on gender is rooted in a patriarchal culture and has been passed down from generation to

generation, so the women (represented by Ana), decide to make their employment decisions based on domestic routines and as caregivers for their children.

Brazilian culture follows the same belief about the role of women in a society, where women can only work outside the home, as long as they can keep their home neat and organized, and their children nourished. Thus, this imposition does not come only from men, but from the women themselves.

I have witnessed this happening within my family. I have heard my own mother say that women should stay at home to take care of their homes, children, and husbands instead of going outside the home to work. For my mother, the reality of women working outside the home was a symbol of a family's financial failure. Interestingly, in contraction, my mother strongly encouraged me to study, so that I would not be dependent on men. This is clearly the contradiction between the way of thinking that is passed from generation to generation, but which sometimes clashes with reality, and does not make much sense when exploitation falls on the same shoulders, over and over.

During our interview, Joana commented on the decisions made by other Portuguese immigrant women who, upon arriving in Canada, are unable to return to school (including taking an English course) due to the difficulty in recognizing their diplomas, and due to their financial need to support their families.

*[00:17:27] ... I know many Portuguese women who work every day [each day in different houses] [...] and it is not by choice ... it is not. They have no other way out, they have no ... Because what happens is that the first generation that arrives, and I am the first generation, is ... I came alone, the diplomas are not recognized, and many Portuguese families arrive uh [...] many [Portuguese women] have children ... young*

*children, and they have to start working to support their children and they can't go back to school. [Joana]*

Having a second job outside the home does not exempt the woman from having to perform domestic work. The woman remains responsible for the housework in her own home (Dalla Costa, et. al., 2019), even if she has a job outside the home (Federici, 2012).

Neusa is one of the women who says that working as a DW is good for raising a family because of the flexibility of schedule and the good pay:

*[00:30:37] The advantages are ... it's good to raise your family because ... we choose our schedule; we choose the time we want to be in a house: three, four, six, eight hours; we choose the clients we want; it's good money; there are no [payroll reductions], so we received the money [...]. And besides, it's good to raise... the family, your children. [Neusa].*

Ana was one of the interviewees who initially managed to enter the same profession in which she had worked back home. She was an optician's assistant and worked in Canada for five years, during which time she also worked as a DW on some weekends. However, she began working full-time as a DW when her second child was born, and she realized the benefits of working in this field. According to her, there was no need to work on weekends (as she did when she was working as an optician's assistant) as she wanted to be with her family instead, and there was no need to start so early; she also enjoyed a more flexible schedule, and during the summer she could travel to Portugal.

*[00:29:13] I continued to work in that area [as an optician's assistant], and I was offered my job back by the optician I worked for, so I could be his technical assistant again. But ... afterwards I had a great dedication to the people I worked with, I could be - I didn't need to work on weekends, I didn't need to work at night for people. And I, having a normal job, I, especially this job that was in the shopping center and I worked Saturdays, Sundays, sometimes... at night. And this job, this cleaning field was more beneficial to me because I wouldn't need to leave the house anytime soon. If I wanted to work, start cleaning the house at eight in the morning I would clean it..., if I wanted to go at ten, I would [start then] ...-- And at work it was a little bit different because you have to work - if it's eight o'clock, it's eight o'clock, it's four o'clock, it's four o'clock; and that, too, I began to notice that it was more beneficial for me,[...] during the summer I could go to Portugal for two months as I always did with the boys.... When I came back, many people didn't even clean up, they expected me to come back from vacation. So [that] was the reason why I continued to work in this field [for so long]. [Ana]*

Ana's statement about the advantages she has in working as a DW instead of as an optician's assistant exposes the challenges she faced in as an optician's assistant, which included work hours that did not permit her to keep up her obligations as a homemaker and caregiver in her home, as she had to work on weekends and sometimes at night. A more critical look at the complex reasons why newcomer women who arrive in Canada choose to work as DWs is required in order to expose gender, class and ethnic inequities.

Much has been discussed about recognizing housework as 'real' work and therefore the importance of this labour being paid accordingly (Dalla Costa, et. al., 2019, Federici, 2012). The job of DW across the world has generally been an undervalued, underpaid, and unprotected job

(Bundlender, 2011). Even among the women interviewed in my study, some of them do not recognize the housework and caregiving work they have been doing in households as a job, as seen in Neusa's statement, "working at clients' home was not a job". Neusa mentioned during the interview that she needed a job because working as a domestic worker at the client's house was not really a job. The only position that she considered as a job was the one that she held at the University, as Janitor. It is because they may be conditioned to think that their work is not a real job because they don't discount for a pension, unemployment, and medical benefits. What could make it much harder for them to reach conscientização.

## *ii. Stereotyping of Portuguese Immigrant Women in Canada*

### *Cleaning Ladies*

When Joana is asked how the Portuguese community and the Canadian Community sees her [as a DW], she responded promptly that being a DW is normal for the first generation of Portuguese women and that Canadians appreciate Portuguese women for their abilities to do domestic work. As for Portuguese immigrant men, it is normal to work in construction, as well.

*[00:23:44] The Portuguese community [they] see me as DW. I think it's normal, it's normal (laughs) it's normal. It is immigration, uh ... from the first immigration, as, as I explained to you, being a domestic worker or working in hotels, like men working in construction, it is normal. [Joana]*

*[00:23:44] ...[Canadians] see the DW as someone who is gonna help them (laughter), they appreciate the Portuguese people. We realize that they appreciate [Portuguese*

*people] [...] ... it is [like having] a diploma (laugh) almost, just because we are Portuguese... [Joana]*

These are resilient women who accepted that the first generation of Portuguese immigrant women to arrive in Canada work in the area of cleaning because it has always been so, as stated by Joana.

Furthermore, due to the fact that Portuguese immigrant newcomers seek out the assistance of the Portuguese community for such things as employment, housing, etc., they end up entering the vicious circle of the labour market. Often, when someone first immigrants, they have to take any kind of job that they can, just to begin to earn money. If all their friends work in one specific type of employment, then they are more likely to enter that type of employment, because their friends will help them get a job. Therefore, because Portuguese women generally work in the cleaning area, their network is in this field. And consequently, previous immigrants help newcomer women to get into this type of work, as noted in Luana's statement.

*[00:51:56] When, when I arrived here, uh, of course I wanted to - I wanted to introduce myself into the [Portuguese] community, [...] to get to know ... I'll tell you, I'll be honest, it was the Portuguese, it was mostly the Portuguese who helped me [to settle in Canada]. [Luana].*

In relation to this, one of the topics that was most discussed by the women who were interviewed was about how immigrant Portuguese women are stereotyped as “Cleaning Ladies” and about how they are positively stereotyped as clean, honest and dedicated women. We can see this in Joana's statement “...we have a reputation for being clean, honest and dedicated women,

*isn't it"?* [Joana]. The interviews further show how this stereotype is well accepted, making these women very proud of it, as seen also in Luana's statement.

*[00:46:27] Ah ... here I can-- I don't know how it is in other Provinces, how it is; but here [British Columbia.], here the DW ... uh ... is respected and highly sought after. And now I'm going, I'm going to put my modesty aside a little bit. Portuguese women are very much in demand for domestic chores." [Luana]*

However, this stereotype is also a double-edged sword. It helps them but also limits them. The stereotype makes these women proud of themselves, but when this recognition as "good cleaning ladies" embraces the entire Portuguese female community, it can limit Portuguese women from accessing other types of jobs that are not related to the cleaning field. According to Fiske (1993), a stereotype is a form of control over someone / or community. As the author states, "stereotyping operates in the service of control. Stereotyping is a category-based cognitive response to another person. Apart from prejudice (affect) and discrimination (behavior), stereotyping describes people's beliefs (cognitions) about an individual based on group membership (Fiske, 1993, p. 62). Where there is control, there is power, as previously explained by Fiske (1993); and the presence of the "positive" stereotypes, combined with the lack of other opportunities to limit the ability of these women to get other types of jobs in Canada.

Although these women are not required to be attached to one employer or occupation, in the same way as those DWs who are attached to an immigration program, they are nonetheless trapped into jobs that, although they may pay well and are flexible, also keep them from getting further education and moving into occupations that are not as limiting, or that offer greater opportunities for advancement. In this way, the Portuguese Community is seen as a supplier of

the workforce for the cleaning occupation, thus reducing the opportunities (or making it difficult) for Portuguese immigrants to enter any other type of job such as engineers, architects, doctors, teachers, and so on.

At the moment there is a passive acceptance of this stereotype in the community, there is no resistance. If there is no resistance there is no change, and this will persist for a long time, as we can see in the circumstances of Portuguese immigrant women since the 50s to the present day.

### *iii. Conditions of Employment.*

These women mentioned other limitations to being a domestic worker in Canada. As noted by Neusa, at its most basic level, the work of a DW is tiring and hard.

*[00:31:29] ... it's hard work (emphasis). So, it's hard work, very tiring work. We work from beginning to end [clean the entire house] [...] So, I'm always working fast and its hard work, so you have to move furniture, you have to change a lot, so it is not an easy job. [Neusa]*

Luana also mentioned hard and tiring work as a DW. Although she was an active person in her country, participating in marathons; she says that this is because working as a DW she uses other muscles in her body.



*[00:35:22] I remember, the first days ... I was always a very active person physically in my country, I did gymnastics, I did marathons ... I was a very active person [...]. But of course, with this type of job we use different muscles of our body ... [Luana]*

Another disadvantage of working as a DW without an employment contract is not getting paid when they don't work, as noted in the Neusa's statement "[00:26:33] ... if they called [the clients] they canceled, and for example, or were [clients] sick or going on vacation, we don't make money. And if I called that I was sick or couldn't, they wouldn't pay us either. It has no benefits... [Neusa]

A similar limitation that was mentioned was the fact that, for many Portuguese domestic workers, there is no cleaning work in the summer because the fact that many of their clients will leave on family vacations, at this time of year.

*Ana [00:13:06] ... You [she] don't work in the summer because the boys are out of school, many people have "cottage" to go to or if they go on vacation. You [she] don't work, you don't earn. [Ana]*

Another limitation was the fact that – being paid in cash - these women were not paying into and therefore not eligible for employment insurance, vacation pay, pensions or other deductions. In this regard, Luana recognized that when working in people's homes, she was not having access to benefits, which she calls "making points" (i.e., contributing to retirement).

*[00:18:34] Benefits I didn't have [working]at home. [...] Because when I was working at the houses, it was all cash [paid], under the table; because if I wanted to start my own*

*company and continue to work on houses [like DW], I could have done it. I was doing an illegal service and I was not making points [means benefits]. [Luana]*

Luana summarized all of the above limitations to this occupation:

*If we don't work, we don't get paid, no pension, physically hard and tiring work, there is no work in the summer because of family vacations, no job security. [Luana]*

A further complaint that was mentioned by some of the women was the fact that there was no job security for cleaning women. For example, Claudia only started working as a DW after the company she worked for was discontinued. When I asked her why she didn't start working as a DW right away when she arrived in Canada, her response was that a DW's job is not guaranteed, and she needed to have a secure income. According to her, domestic workers are dependent on the call of employers, and since this type of service is without labour rights, cleaning women have *no guarantee of earning money*.

*[00:28:20] So, this job that I had for 18 years was a guarantee, yes. It was always right, it was a salary, right? And then, one of the reasons that never made me think [working as a DW when she arrived in Canada]. [...] That was the fact that it was never guaranteed. Because I know that sometimes they [the bosses] want you to [clean the house] other times they don't ... [Claudia]*

Thus, the work of DW in people's homes, which is without a contract, is a type of occupation where women are vulnerable, as it does not have the benefit of job security.

#### *iv. Relationships with Employers*

The relationship with their employers occupies an important place in these women's decisions to continue working as DWs. In many of the situations of domestic work for Portuguese women, their professional relationships are transformed into personal relationships and sometimes even close family-like relationships. When this does not happen, the women often choose to leave those clients at the first opportunity, continuing to work just with those with whom they have a family-like relationship.

The relationship between an employee and their employer is a relationship where the first is subordinate to the second. There is no benevolence within the Capitalist system, so everything is an exchange of interest, as noted in the quote by Adam Smith, Economist and known as the “father of the economy”, “it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self-interest” (Smith, 1776). In other words, employers may be taking advantage of these women for having a family relationship with them, for example, asking for some favors without paying for them. One instance of this was when one of the interviewees in this study said that she had accompanied one of the clients during her shopping in the market, because her client had postpartum depression. This interviewee did this as a friend, so she was not paid for it.

Another consideration that was highlighted by the five interviewees was the constant thanks and praise they received for their work, which is very well accepted by them, as seen in Ana's words:

*[00:19:17] Look, in so many years everyone has treated me with dignity and respect. In fact, they even said that they preferred me to "take charge" [in my work]. People liked*

*me to enter the house and everything I did people liked; they didn't need to give me orders, because... they started to see that my job was the job that I knew how to do.*

*[Ana]*

In contrast, when it comes to the way domestic workers are seen in Portugal, Ana states that people see domestic work as low-status and unimportant.

*[00:42:09] ... But in Portugal, a DW - and I say this because it is true - a DW in Portugal, DW is, it is, she is not treated badly [e.g., disrespected] but it is a job that people try to escape a lot. [Ana]*

Talking to these women about working as a DW, they commented that the occupation of domestic workers in Portugal is diminished in relation to other types of jobs and many people there are ashamed to say that they are domestic workers. This is important to know because their conception of how domestic workers are seen and treated back home is fundamental to their judgment regarding the way they are treated in Canada. According to them, if someone says they are a teacher, or a doctor (in Portugal), people admire and respect them, but if someone says they are a DW people look differently at them, judging them as inferior, as servants. This may also be related to slave labour, which existed for a long time in Portugal, in which many domestic jobs were done by slaves (Fonseca, 2014). The word slave was mentioned by Ana when she mentioned a client who did not have respect for her, and she wrote to her client saying that she wasn't a slave to anyone.

*[00:21:51] ... I think you [client] are going to need to find someone else to work with because I'm not anyone's slave. I dedicate myself, I am very dedicated to cleaning, but I like to be treated differently." [Ana]*

Another crucial topic to analyze is how the participants in this study compared themselves to their clients, ignoring the fact that they are workers who are hired to work for the latter, and that this relationship between them is a power relationship. The employers/clients pay for the service and the domestic workers deliver the service. If they don't work, they don't get paid.

Previous generations of Portuguese Domestic Workers in Toronto explicitly recognized that there existed an unequal power relationship between them and their clients. Most Portuguese women of the generations that worked from the 1960's to the 1980's in that city referred to their generally female clients as "patroas" (bosses) or by the Portinglês equivalent "a bossa" (the boss) (Cabral, 1986; personal communication with Thesis supervisor, March 29, 2021).<sup>7</sup> However, this practice was not noted in the women that I interviewed. In the present study, only one woman alluded to the word "boss," but considering herself as her boss: "*I didn't have to follow orders from the boss [ because] I was my own boss.*" [Ana]. Perhaps the interviewees in this study were of a different generation, or because they had more education did not consider their clients to be bosses. Also, none of them lived in Toronto, which has the largest Portuguese-speaking community, where this most occurred. Thus, they did not refer to their employers as "bosses" or "a bossa".

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<sup>7</sup> Portinglês is a hybrid language, a mixture of Portuguese and English, that is used widely in the Portuguese-speaking communities in North America.

In contrast to the idea that there was a hierarchy between them and their clients, some of these women even identified with their clients. In the interview with Ana, it is noticed that she sometimes compares herself to her female employer/client in that they are both working mothers.

*[00:14:00] Because I helped them, I as a mother of children, know perfectly well what [it's like to be] a mother who has to go out to work and who cannot be at home to take care of their child, pick up their child at school. I often pick up the children at the school.*  
*[Ana]*

The identity (or alienated identity) of these Portuguese women as DW's may have an influence on how they identified themselves (or did not do so) as a minority in Canada, as observed by Nunes (2004). This author describes that "the Portuguese are neither physically nor culturally similar enough to those of the traditional Anglo-Canadian tradition to be considered familiar by the pre-existing power of this nation. However, they are also not distinct enough to be considered exotic" (Nunes, 2004, p. 176). Because the Portuguese generally do not classify themselves as a visible minority, they also generally do not consider themselves to be the victims of discrimination, in the same fashion as many visible minorities do (Nunes, 2004, p. 176).

When Ana related to her client as a mother and was sympathetic to the situation of the woman not being able to take, and pick up, her child from school, she neglects the fact that her client is exercising power over her, by employing her to do this service. There is a power relationship at work here, in which being able to work outside the home allows this woman to hire another woman to do her domestic duties. However, Ana did not focus on this aspect.

This power relationship is most noticeable in those instances when the employers show the power they have over their domestic worker. The conflict between the feeling of being

treated as an employee, versus being treated as family, can be seen in Ana's testimony about her disrespectful treatment by a previous client and the reaction that this caused.

*[00:19:17] There was a case that I will never forget. A person who came from Toronto, had had a Portuguese person working with her... And when she arrived here, she looked for the Portuguese Social Club, looking for Portuguese women who worked as cleaners. She was interested in hiring a person. So, my number was given, because I was cleaning houses at the time and ... I went to her house ... [...]... When I went to her house for the first time, she had a huge, huge list and I had never worked for anyone with a list of everything, everything, everything I had to do and for a "check mark", I did it. The second time I went there, after a week, she had the same list and in that same list she had underlined parts that I, at the point of seeing her, had not devoted so much time to what she intended to be done; for example, one of the things I still remember today, was the baby chair that was white and the baby ate in the chair, and I didn't lift the chair cushion and it was marked with dry ketchup and, of course ... because she wasn't at home, she left me notes. She didn't look at me to speak.*

*I am very open, I told people early on how I worked. [I said], "If you ever have anything to say to me, please tell me, because... I will do my job differently next time; I will dedicate myself more to knowing my faults." [Ana]*

*[00:21:51] ... I was in my forties at that time, [or maybe] around fifty, and ... that touched my heart a lot: it was the humiliating way she spoke to me in notes. And I said [to myself], 'I've been working for so long, everyone is so happy with me, why didn't she*

*call me? Why didn't she wait for me to tell me things face to face?' Do you know what I did to her? She left me 60 dollars there, on top of the big list and the humiliating way she was treating me as if I were some slave; and... in English, I wrote her a note back and said: 'Look, I'm sorry, but I will take 20 dollars, because I came a long way and spent money on gas, and I think I have a right. But I'm not going to do anything in your house, and I think you will need to find someone else to work with, because I am not anyone's slave. I am very dedicated to cleaning, but I like to be treated [well]'. And I turned my back and left. She never said anything to me again. [Ana]*

Ana felt humiliated and disrespected by the client, since she had expected that, in this situation, the client would have called her, or talked to her, about any problems in person and not through written notes. What seemed most shocking to her is that this client was also Portuguese. Consequently, Ana left this client on her second day of work, with no regrets.

In addition to Ana, other interviewees, such as Neusa, spoke of similar cases about the use of power over them. She complained about how one of her clients did not like it when she used their kitchen to make tea or when she stopped work to eat; they watched her all the time.

*[00:20:42] I had a client that ... when I [took a break], she didn't even like me to use her kitchen to drink tea. Because I took my food ... because many clients I worked with, and to emphasize, I never ate anything, but they always said 'Please, I have a little cake there, I have food in the fridge, if you want to eat.' [Neusa]*

She also complained about how some of her clients liked her to clean their floor on her knees. She said that she first did this, because she did not know the customs here, or the language



(English). But as time went by, she started to observe that this was not quite what happened in other houses, and then she started to leave these employers.

*[00:17:52] And I also worked in certain houses that I liked to clean, wash their floors on my knees (she emphasized this). I started in these houses ... At the time, I accepted this for some time, because I didn't know the language, I didn't know the customs, whether they were exactly that ... if that was how we worked [in Canada]. [Neusa]*

Joana also pointed out some situations in which she felt disrespected in her job. For example, in one instance, Joana lamented how her clients did not seem to be concerned about how their children were free to do whatever they wanted, including messing up what she had just cleaned, or packed up.

*[00:25:37] "...I feel like ... how can I explain ... that there is disrespect with my work, not with me, but with my work, like ... ah ... they have children ... it is an example, there are children and they can do whatever they want, if they decide to paint the walls, Joana will be here to clean it up (laughs) and, or I will just clean it up and they'll come after me and dump all the toys, which I didn't even look at, to see if everything is in order and they dump the toys ... [Joana]*

Despite these difficulties, these women also mentioned certain advantages to working as a DW. Unlike other immigrant domestic workers who work under domestic worker immigration programs, these Portuguese immigrant women have the autonomy to leave their clients and

quickly replace them with others. This is due to their ease of finding clients, based on their good reputation, as previously explained. However, that does not change the fact that their position as domestic workers maintain the employer's power relationship over them, as noted in Neusa's statement.

*[00:17:52] I had many houses that I didn't like. I worked in many houses that after a while I left because there were certain people... [for whom I was] just their employee.  
[Neusa]*

The family-like relationship between DW and employers was present in most of the homes that they worked for. One of the interviewees, Claudia, said that, herself, as well as many people she knew, had a relationship of family with her employers.

*[00:11:23] "... other people I know who clean up, they all have family relationships."  
[Claudia]*

Luana mentioned that working at home as a DW provided her with financial, economic, and emotional aid. In addition to this, because she had no family in the region where she lived, she also made friends and family from amongst her clients.

*[00:20:26] Working at home for me was opening doors [helping] financially, economically, and emotionally. I made friends, I created a family [...] Here in Victoria we have no family, therefore. It is the advantages for the financial part, that the houses*

*put good money ... and the part was ... emotional. I made a family, I made friends for the rest of my life. [Luana]*

Listening to these Portuguese immigrant women talk about being treated like family, made me rethink what it is like to be DW in my country of origin, Brazil (a nation that is culturally similar to Portugal). The division of social class in Brazil is very strong and well-defined, where those who belong to the lower class have no relationship with those in the upper class. And since many women from the lower-class work as DWs for the middle and upper classes, this relationship of inequality remains between them. Generally, the relationship between the DW and the employer is strictly professional, and a DW is not "invited" to participate in the employer's life, whether it be for sitting down for coffee and talking or introducing them to guests and family members from outside.

This similar working relationship is also the case in Portugal, a country where Ana even says that they are not mistreated, but where nobody wants to be a DW. Similarly, Claudia says that, in that country, the DW profession is openly considered inferior in relation to being a Teacher or Doctor, for instance.

*[00:30:40] In Portugal it is like that, if you were a teacher, they almost get on their knees because you are a teacher, or a doctor. [...] But if you're a cleaning lady, uh, it looks like they already look at you differently. Do you understand? Not here [in Canada].*

*[Claudia]*

Neusa described the times when she was invited to enjoy the pool with her employer's children, when she was checked on when she was sick or gave birth to her children, as a culture shock that shook her perception about her relationship to her employer. This type of treatment

fell into the sphere of a family-like relationship (through the lens of the outside culture), as noted in her statement.

*[00:24:38] They weren't [good employers] in all houses, they weren't in all, but there are some – for example, the ones I have today, which are very good. And when they know you are sick, they call you, they are very good, very concerned. They always asked ... if I needed anything. When I had my children, they came to visit me.... Things like that, and they also invited my children ... because... I didn't have a pool at my house and... some ladies had pools for their grandchildren, or their children and they invited my kids to play in the pool with their grandchildren or children. So that's a very good thing.*

*[Neusa]*

Based on my 36 years of living in Brazil, within a culture that was historically inherited from the colonial period and maintained through the immigration flows coming mainly from Portugal and Italy, I can say that the relationship between domestic workers and their employers is very similar in Portugal and in Brazil (also discussed and agreed during our interview). This allows me to say that, in general, in both above countries there is no friendship formed between domestic workers and employers. For example, there is no interest from employers in knowing whether domestic workers need any help or how they are faring, or calling them when they are sick, or visiting them when their babies are born. This concern by their clients, showing the DWs that they care about their welfare (as stated by Neusa), may have confused these immigrant women with regards to the relationship between them, even leading them to think that the relationship between DW and a client could be a family-like relationship. In fact, Canada does not have the same feudal tradition as Portugal and Brazil, nor the same large differences in

income between the rich and poor, as in the above two countries, which mean that it is easier for people to engage in family-like relationships with their employees in Canada.

In addition, we may also take into consideration the fact that these Portuguese immigrant women are/were far from their relatives or from a large community, since none of these women were from large Portuguese-speaking communities, which increases their emotional need. This fact may also have played a part in their search for a family-like relationship.

***v. Strategy for Accessing Benefits Denied to the Casual DW***

Not having an employment contract made these women reflect on their situation of not having any formal rights and benefits, such as paid holidays, union membership, maternity leave, and pensions. Some of them described how they found a second job as a way to access the benefits that they didn't have in their work as a DW, as seen in Neusa's statement.

*[00:15:42] Four years [after beginning work as a DW], I started working [as a cleaner at a University] and am still at the University; I started..., because, uh ... they paid less, but I had benefits, I had a Union... ... so it was an opportunity that I wanted to build a family. Because I waited six years after being married to have children, because working at home was not a job. If I stayed at home, I didn't have any benefits, I couldn't spend a year at home with my children earning. [Neusa]*

Yet, even after getting this job as a cleaner at a large regional University, Neusa continued to work as a DW during her free time.

*[00:09:50] So, what I did, I always had clients whose houses I cleaned every two weeks [...]. So, in two weeks I would go to the same house and so for every day of the week. Sometimes I had clients that went on for four hours, it wasn't the whole day, but clients that I only went for four hours and sometimes I already had another house for that eight-hour day. Because of that, there was a time when I had 14 houses and that's how I started my life in Canada. [Neusa]*

Immigrating to Canada at the age of 47, Luana knew that it would not be easy for her and her family to start all over again in Canada. She mentioned the example of her daughter who, even though she graduated in IT, also worked as a housekeeper in a homecare facility. Luana came to be successful in Canada and focused on this objective, she worked for about a year as a full-time DW. Later, she secured a job as a janitor at a university, and she reduced her number of clients but never stopped working as a DW. The reason given by Luana, for the extra work was earning money for out-of-budget spending (extra) to be used in travel, leisure time with friends, spending on herself, or for an emergency.

*[00:47:07] And I'll be honest with you, I have that house [the house that she still cleans] so as not to disturb my budget. I save this money [working as DW] to go out with my friends on a trip, dye my hair, if I see something I like, I buy, I spend that money there ... I don't need that money to live. I leave it there for an emergency or for a trip. [Luana]*

By saying that she used this money (which she earned working as a DW) for extra expenses which would not affect her budget, she differed from other immigrant women who are domestic workers under an immigration program. Luana had a privilege because she did not depend solely on the income coming from her DW job. This was also repeated in the case of

other interviewees, which shows that these women were not dependent on this money, since some of them had a second job, in addition to their husbands also contributing to their household incomes. This was a major difference between them and other DWs, whose sole source of income is their cleaning. This also explains why these Portuguese immigrant women seemed to be generally happier than is normally the case with other domestic workers, or with their predecessors in the Portuguese community, from earlier waves of immigration, who also worked as DWs, in the 1960's to 1980's.

Luana mentioned that the benefits from DW are financial and emotional, as the money made in this field is very good, and she commented that they can charge up to \$30.00 an hour. She also said that she received a lot of used goods from her clients, including good clothes and shoes to furniture.

*[00:20:26] I look around here and my house is furnished with good furniture, [from] people I worked for. Working at [their] home for me opened doors financially, economically... and emotionally. I made friends, I created a family that we, we ... came here, my husband's family is in Toronto. Here in Victoria, we have no family, therefore, [there were economic and emotional] advantages. I made a family, I made friends for the rest of my life, [I got] ... unconditional help. Look, it was an opening of doors. I am still thrilled when I think [of it]. [Luana]*

Despite these stated benefits of being a DW, at least one of the respondents mentioned how members of the previous generation warn those of the current generation of DWs about the attention they should pay to their retirement funding. According to Neusa, many of them say that it was a big mistake for them not to have thought about retirement and that, now that they are

getting older, they have no pension. She added how many Portuguese women have lived very comfortable working lives, but now they have very little, or no, money for retirement.

*[00:31:29] ... But it is a job that many Portuguese have done their lives and very well. But, but nowadays, things are getting more difficult if you want to retire. Because they [old domestic workers] are now at the time of retirement, and they say it was a very big mistake because now they have worked so hard, and they don't have enough retirement. [Neusa]*

Not having domestic work available in the summer is another of the disadvantages pointed out by Ana. This happens because children are out of school, and clients go on vacation and to the cottage. But when asked about the advantages of domestic work, Ana says being her own boss, being autonomous and being free to choose her work schedule are important considerations for her:

*[00:14:00] ...I chose my schedule, what tasks I should do at their [clients] house ... I didn't have to follow orders from the boss [ because] I was my own boss... [Ana]*

Because Joana was a housekeeping manager before working as a DW, she also sees one of the benefits of working as a DW as not having to deal with, and find, subordinates.

*[00:37:35] The positive side of working at home and not in the hotel is not having to worry about finding the workforce. Because as I said before, in the hotel service I always had difficulty, I always had to find the manpower I needed. [Joana]*



Working as a DW has its advantages and disadvantages, and these Portuguese immigrant women constantly compared the pros and cons, in order to stay in this field. In addition to the good salary, other important points were all weighed in the balance, at the moment of their decisions to continue working as a DW. These were such considerations as: freedom; a flexible schedule; autonomy; being afforded respect and recognition; getting compliments; recognition for their knowledge of the job; their good reputations; and their relationships with their employers.

In contrast, the majority cited as disadvantages the fact that, if they do not work, they do not earn any money. In addition, they do not contribute to their pension funds and consequently will have no pension upon retirement. They also have no union; no job security and the work are physically hard and tiring. Finally, there is often no work in the summer, because of family vacations.

#### *vi. Goals and Dreams Versus Reality.*

When I asked these five women if working as a DW in Canada was part of the goals and dreams they had, when they arrived in Canada, the answers were unanimous: Working as a DW was not a part of their dreams, but since they had needed to settle in Canada, they did not mind doing it. Joana complemented her statement by saying that she thought that being a DW was not the goal of any woman.

*[00:17:27] I don't think it fits into any woman's goal or dream, no. It is ...- what happens is ... well, I know many Portuguese women who work as DW [...], and it is not by choice ... it is ... it is not. They have no other way out; they have no way. [Joana]*

Neusa said that when she started work as a DW, it was not with the intention of working so long in this field; however, now it is her profession of choice. On the other hand, she also said that her skills as an accountant had decreased over the years, because she now worked full-time as a DW. This work was still fulfilling because, according to her, having money is very important to start a life in Canada. She said she never had financial problems. However, Neusa complemented her words by saying that, now that she did not have a lot of clients, she would like to go back to school.

Luana achieved her goal when she came to Canada, immigrating at the age of 47. She did not expect to work in an office job. She knew it would be more challenging to settle in Canada. Thus, she said that being a DW fit her lifestyle and that working as a DW did not negatively affect her self-esteem in any way.

When Claudia was asked about her self-esteem when working as a DW, she said that she regretted not entering this field when she arrived in Canada. She did some work cleaning houses but only on weekends. She said she was always highly praised and appreciated for her work as a DW, so she felt sorry for having dedicated herself to another job instead of this one. She stopped working as a DW after her husband died in an accident at work. Claudia is now receiving her husband's pension.

Although the focus of the interview was on working as a DW, Claudia brought up what had bothered her for many years, while working at her previous job. Claudia was never recognized for the work she did at that company. In that workplace, she always had to use strategies, such as threatening to resign so that her boss (and owner of the company) would increase her salary. She also had held leadership positions but was never congratulated for that.

Furthermore, the employees never received a bonus at the end of the year. Lastly, she suffered sexual harassment at work.

So based on this unfortunate prior experience, Claudia said she regrets not having started working in the cleaning field earlier; a field where she said people are constantly praised, recognized, and well-paid. She worked for two years as a domestic worker and decided to stop when her husband suffered an accident at work and died, as mentioned above. Her previous experience may even have impacted the relationship she had working as a DW for two couples, because, working as a DW, she now felt respected and valued for the job she was doing, whereas in her previous job it never happened.

In stark contrast to the other participants, Joana, who worked for only one house, said that for her, this work was monotonous, solitary, degrading, and devaluing. Before working as a DW, she worked for 28 years in Hotels, reaching the position of Manager of Housekeeping, and said that the work in the hotel was dynamic, challenging, and varied. When asked if being a DW fit with the goals that she had when she came to Canada, she said “no,” and that her self-esteem has decreased because of her work. Even so, she planned to continue working in this field, but working only for those who need it most.

These Portuguese immigrant women are aware of their reality based on the role they play in Canadian society as DWs, and they are aware of some of the reasons why the first generation Portuguese-Canadians, ended up in this job.

*[00:17:27] Well, I know many Portuguese women who work as DWs [...] and it is not by choice [...] They have no other way out... Because what happens is that the first generation that arrives, and I am the first generation, is ... I came alone, the diplomas are not recognized, and [when] many Portuguese families arrive, ... many have children*

*... small children, and they have to start working to keep their children and they can't go back to school ... [...] In Québec society, when other immigrants are arriving, such as refugees... they are already more supported, and more likely to return to school, have government aid and all that, while... European immigration is not guided... in this way, and then there is no other option to work ... the only job... is a maid, that nobody wants to do. [Joana]*

Joana pointed out important topics that made it more difficult for women to get a job, such as lack of guidance, the need to get jobs quickly, a lack of recognition of foreign diplomas, and lack of support for European immigrants versus support for refugees from other regions.

Similar to Joana's statement, Ana also mentioned the lack of support for Portuguese immigrant newcomers in Canada.

*[00:53:11] There should be more benefits for people who arrive here who do not have many supports, especially in English, because there are many Portuguese in Toronto that I know that speak almost no English yet, and their friends take them to work right away. We could have more benefits in relation to the work I already told you, even at the government level. There should be more for us [support, resources], because it really is a necessary job for many, and it is a job that could be more valued and more rewarded. Because in this case, only the people who hire us really reward us ... by giving us the opportunity to work for them, that's all. But there should be another way. [Ana]*

Ana further suggests that DWs could benefit from having a late cancellation policy for their work, in the same way as health professionals do:

*[00:54:19] That could also be something I could tell people: 'look, you have twenty-four hours to ... to cancel your cleaning appointment with me, but in those 24 hours if you don't cancel, at least half of what you owe me, you have to pay.' Except that sometimes I thought it was a bit unfair to do that to people, I never did. [Ana]*

According to Ana, Portuguese immigrant women need to work as soon as they arrive in Canada to support their children, and because of that, they do not have time to attend English classes. Thus, Ana believes that if the government offered some support to these women, they might have the opportunity to study English and perhaps enter another type of occupation. Also, for those women who are already working as DWs, the government should help by creating some protection for them, for example, forcing employers to pay at least half their cleaning fee in case they cancel the cleaning service at the last minute. Thus, this situation only happens because there are no government guidelines, or protections, for workers who engage in cleaning people's homes without a contract.

Some might consider that, since domestic work is a part of the informal economy, where people are paid in cash and don't get discounts for benefits, and therefore the government is not able to help these women. Others might say that the relationship between these women and their clients more closely resembles that of a freelance contractor. These are not generally granted protections under Canadian labour laws (Employment & Social Development Canada, 2019). However, we can also understand that this occupation provides a needed function in Canada, as it allows families (and probably other women) to focus more time on their paid employment. To deny the existence of DW's by not discussing how these workers could be protected through

labour rights is the government turning its back on those who have left their countries of origin, believing in the promise of a better future in Canada.

***vii. Formal and Informal Learning Gained by Women in DW***

According to Cormier-MacBurnie (2010), informal learning takes place through new experiences, either through observations made in the workplace or in the search for solutions to the problems faced by them. Learning is a constant element in the lives of these Portuguese immigrant women, whether it be formal or informal learning. Some learning is related to how to gain respect and to their approach to their occupation as a DW. According to Gouthro “individuals must be versatile in determining their learning pathways, with democracy presented as the freedom to make choices to survive and thrive within the global economy” (2009, p. 159). Thus, as stated by Carpenter (2018), learning through daily experience “is fundamentally a mediation of social relations, processes and institutions” (241).

Even though she had learned some English back home, Luana wanted to improve her fluency by taking an English course in Canada. When asked what she learned from her life as a DW, she says she learned to “never say never. “By this, Luana meant that she never expected to be a DW but surprised herself by ending up working for years in this occupation. The saying means that we must not say that we will never do something, as we might do it one day.

Luana also said that she learned that all jobs are dignified because we are all needed. “*I am not my job. I am Luana, I am not what I do. And what I do has dignity.*” In this sentence, it is possible to capture the main idea of who Luana is, how she sees herself within that process, and more than that, how she knowledge the profession in which she works. Luana detached herself from what she does, saying that she is not the work she does, she is Luana, so she knows her

identity is hers, and her identity is not lost or modified based on the work that she is doing. Thus, she recognized that the work she does has dignity, as she knows the importance that DW has in society and that, without her, people would have difficulties going out to work. Luana is aware that the occupation of DW is like any other job and like other jobs must be respected. However, when stating that working as a DW without a contract is like having any other job, Luana does not take into consideration that this occupation does not have labour rights, like in other jobs and that, in itself, it cannot be considered equal.

The Marxist Feminism argument described by Federici (2012) states that “our struggle for social services, that is, for better working conditions, will always be frustrated if we do not first establish that our work is work” (p. 20). Thus, when the topic of learning came up in her interview, Neusa gave an example of overcoming challenges and how she figured things out herself, so that she always kept working. She came to Canada with no proficiency in the English language and, through her work, she was able to learn English and communicate. In addition, she learned how to structure her time, so that she was never left without a home to clean, when clients went away for holidays. Her scheduling skills allowed her to work in two different homes in one day, making a total of 14 homes weekly.

In her home country though, she helped her mother and father with the chores on weekends and, when she was on vacation from school, she had to learn how to clean houses in Canada, which is different from how to clean houses in São Miguel. According to her, this is because house cleaning in the São Miguel (or in other Islands in the Azores and Continental Portugal) is more intense and deeper than here in Canada. This is especially the case because the houses there are built of masonry and can be washed with water and soap, for example. Over the years she learned, through her Portuguese colleagues / friends, to distinguish what she should do

in a house and what she should not do in a house. They would meet to discuss these topics on Sunday, at church, at Holy Spirit parties, or even during home visits.

Ana also took an English course as soon as she arrived in Canada and took a three-month intensive course in optics. She further had to learn over time how to charge her clients for domestic work. Initially, she charged less than her clients expected, then she started asking customers what they wanted to pay (mostly it was always higher than what she expected), and over time, she started to charge based on the size of the house.

The participants also discussed some examples of the types of formal learning experiences in which they participated. These are summarized, below:

#### *Formal Learning*

- A hospitality course
- An English course (at MISA - Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association and Camosun College)
- A French course
- A Three-month intensive course in optics (at MISA - Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association)

#### *Informal Learning*

- Learned to look for opportunities through friendships and social networks with the Portuguese society
- Learned to respect the job of DW
- “Never say never” (which means that we must not say that we will never do anything, as we might do it one day)



- Learned that all jobs are dignified
- Learned to separate herself from her work (she is not what she does)
- Learned to use public transport to reach clients' homes
- Learned how to structure her time to not have days off
- Learned how to clean houses in Canada
- Learned to distinguish what she should and should not do in the house
- Learned the best way to charge her clients
- Learned how to get more clients and keep the ones she has
- These women learned to survive within this social context which they encountered.

According to Cormier-MacBurnie (2010) "informal learning focuses more often on what the student is interested in and how he makes sense and uses the information learned through practice" (p. 18). and this is noticed in the learning of these Portuguese immigrant women, as they had to learn to be DWs in Canada.

Despite this, there remained a lack of critical thinking about their role in Canadian society. This is what Paulo Freire (2007) calls *conscientization*, which would be the first step in understanding the relationship of these women with the world and then moving from a relationship of submission to a relationship of action.

Reflection upon situationally is reflection about the very condition of existence: critical thinking by means of which people discover each other to be "in a situation." Only as this situation ceases to present itself as a dense, enveloping reality or a tormenting blind alley, and they can come to perceive it as an objective-problematic situation—only then can commitment exist. Humankind emerges from their submersion and acquires the ability to

intervene in reality as it is unveiled. Intervention in reality—historical awareness itself—thus represents a step forward from emergence, and results from the conscientização of the situation. Conscientização is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergences. (Freire, 2000, p. 109)

As long as Portuguese women do not challenge the idea that they are known only as good cleaning ladies, and do not go beyond this to be recognized as excellent professionals in other areas, they allow themselves to continue to occupy a lower socio-economic position. In this way, they allow those who wield power to not do anything to change that status quo. When leaving the houses where the abuses were happening (such as cleaning the floor of the house on their knees or not being able to use the kitchen to warm up their food or drink), these women demonstrated that they had a critical awareness of these abuses and decided for themselves to move to another employer, getting rid of that situation.

Lastly, Marxist Feminism theory does not seem to adequately explain the results of my study. It does not recognize the complexity of the situation of these women. For example, these women are exploited, but also have learned to use their power to avoid exploitation, to be paid a good wage, to have constant work and to be recognized as being good workers, etc. They also work as independent contractors, rather than employees, which gives them more freedom to sell their labour. They actively seek situations where they are treated like a part of a family, and where they are not dependent on their clients. Interestingly, many of these benefits are only available to these women because they work outside of the formal economy. If they were working for a salary and contributing to taxes, pensions, etc. they would have more constraints than what they currently do. They would probably earn less money, have less freedom to move jobs, or to set their own hours. So, by not working within a government-regulated relationship,

they are actually freer to get what they want, or need, but not in the long term, when it comes to pension, employment insurance, sick days, and so on.

Marxist Feminism also does not seem to account for all the details perceived in this research, such as issues of stereotyping, race, culture, racism, and so on. The fact that while the participants saw themselves as white Europeans, they are often racialized. In her study, Giles (2002) mentioned racialization of Portuguese women by the wider society as one important factor that prevented these women from getting a better job. Similarly, Pacheco (2004, p. 115) also describes how negative stereotypes “position the Portuguese community as peripheral in Canada, where racialization often inflects experiences of white racial privilege, particularly in relation to employment and educational segregation.” The category “white” ignores “stereotypes of Portugal as perpetually backward and of the Portuguese as intellectually and culturally inferior” (Klimt, 2000, p.543); and ignores how these stereotypes position the Portuguese community as peripheral in Canada, where racialization often inflects experiences of white racial privilege, particularly in relation to employment and educational segregation. However, Marxist Feminism does not include analyses of racism, where it might apply to other Europeans.

In short, the theory of Marxist Feminism should be re-evaluated, in the case of Portuguese Domestic Workers, who work without a contract. The situation of Portuguese domestic workers cannot be explained only by the optics of the theory of Marxist Feminism, or, in other words, the Marxist Feminism theory cannot fully explain the situations of these women, related to race, racism, among others, that are going beyond the division of production in the capitalist system. An example of this is argued by Brewer (1993), in which she shows that the division of the working class between white and African American women happens by race and

that this does not change even if "changes in the occupational structure historically tend to maintain this racial division of the work" (Ferguson, Hennessy, & Nagel, 2016, n.d.).

Although these Portuguese immigrant women identified themselves as white, Harney (1990), McLaren (1986) and Pacheco (2004) provided evidence that the Portuguese are often not considered white by other white Anglo-Canadians. And it can affect how these Portuguese immigrant women are seen in Canada, in relation to the job that most of these women have entered.

### **c. Limitations**

There were a number of limitations that affected this study. Firstly, because of COVID19 restrictions, I couldn't speak to the participants in person, which could have helped me to reach out to those who are not familiar with using social media, such as WhatsApp, Kijiji, or Facebook, as well as to those who did not want to be interviewed by phone. Thus, all the women that I interviewed had Facebook. Perhaps if I had interviewed these women who did not speak much English, and who lived in Portuguese neighborhoods, such as in Toronto (which has the largest Portuguese community in Canada) my findings might have been different.

### **d. Implications**

This research has contributed to bringing to light the difficulties that are faced by newcomers, in terms of lack of help or insufficient help by the Canadian government, especially for those who are not a visible minority. This draws attention to the need for the Canadian government to be aware of the entire immigrant population that is arriving in Canada and their needs, such as developing programs to receive and help immigrants in their language.

In addition, this research points out the need for the Portuguese community to work with the government to find ways in which Portuguese immigrant women who have been working as DWs without a contract could be protected by labour laws or be entitled to some types of benefits. Also, the Portuguese community itself could set up workshops or other types of events within the community, whether through churches or cultural organizations, to bring information about the disadvantages of working for cash and without benefits. Alternatively, if they see themselves as self-employed, these women could be instructed by community organizations about how to set themselves up as independent business-owners, deducting for benefits as a self-employed person, and saving a portion of their salary for their retirement.

Furthermore, this research has shown that the Marxist Feminism theory is not sensitive to issues of race, ethnicity, culture or stereotyping. This makes it difficult to use this theory to explain the results of my studies.

In summary, this chapter showed that the reasons why these women continued in this occupation, when the initial reasons might no longer exist, are personal fulfillment, recognition, flexible schedules, good money with no tax deductions, the feeling of being their own boss, and having positive relationships with employers and their families. Lifelong learning was important for these women to establish themselves and continue to work in this field. Finally, this research has shown that the theory of Marxist Feminism is not sensitive to issues of race, ethnicity, stereotyping or culture. This makes it difficult to use this theory to explain the results of my studies.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

Over the centuries of immigration to Canada, immigrants have been utilized as cheap unskilled labour, and this is still happening today. A series of official immigration programs have been designed to recruit immigrants, especially women to do domestic work, taking advantage of their dreams of a better life in Canada, but on terms that benefit Canada more than the immigrant. These terms include restriction of the immigrant's freedom to change jobs without their current employer's authorization, or to bring their family members to Canada. As Brigham states (2013), "ODWs are not allowed to bring their families with them when they migrate" (p. 111). Many women have immigrated to Canada under these programs, leaving their families behind; others have been repatriated to their countries of origin, citing pretexts such as their "inability to adapt to the Canadian climate", but in fact in order to exclude dark-skinned women (Villasin & Phillips, 1994). Yet, Canada's demand for domestic workers and caregivers continues to grow, due to the aging of its population. Consequently, a number of immigrant women who did not enter Canada initially through an official DW recruitment program, have ended up as DWs, as in the case of the Portuguese women on whom this research is focused.

This study has sought to understand how and why significant numbers of Portuguese immigrant women have taken to the DW occupation in the first place, and why many of these women have remained DWs in Canada after their initial reasons for choosing this occupation no longer apply. I interviewed five Portuguese immigrant women, each of whom had a secondary-level education. According to these women, a variety of factors contributed to their choice to stay in the DW profession – personal fulfillment, recognition, flexible schedules, good money

with no tax deductions, the feeling of being their own boss, and having positive relationships with employers and their families. The interviewees recognized the disadvantages of DW, such as not being paid when they could not work, not being entitled to a retirement pension, not being represented by a union, and not enjoying job security. Nevertheless, from their perspective, the advantages of their occupation outweighed the disadvantages. Some of these women had taken on extra jobs in other lines of work, just so as to secure the benefits that DW did not afford them but were unwilling to give up their jobs in DW. This demonstrates the vulnerability of women DWs, for whom labour rights, guaranteed by law to most other groups of workers, are a privilege. These women understood why the first generation of Portuguese immigrant women in Canada joined the “domestic workforce.” They knew that the first generation generally had only an elementary school education, and were compelled to work to support their children, which left them no time to learn English or French. They also knew that finding employment in DW was easy for Portuguese women in Canada, since their predecessors had earned a good reputation in this field.

When asked what changes they would like to see in the field of DW, two of the women suggested that new immigrants from Portugal should receive more social welfare assistance from the Canadian government as soon as they arrived in Canada, to prevent them from rushing into DW, purely on account of their poor English (or French) skills. Another of the interviewees proposed income insurance for DWs in situations where the employer cancelled a shift. The women all questioned why the government had policies to assist other nationalities or ethnicities (for example, refugees), but not Portuguese immigrants. This validates Nunes’s (2004) characterization of Portuguese immigrants in Canada as a “marginalized” community. According to Nunes, becoming established in a host country (i.e., getting a job, owning a home, etc.) does

not necessarily make a community of newcomers' part of the economic, political, cultural and social life of that country.

As Marx (1886) says, class consciousness happens when the proletariat is aware of his/her role in the society in which he/she is inserted; this is a step towards revolution. Similarly, Freire (2007) argues that everyone needs *conscientization*, which would be the first step in understanding their relationship with the world, and then moving from a relationship of submission to a relationship of action. Understanding, in fact, why many first-generation Portuguese immigrant women entered DW is indeed the beginning of *conscientization*. Once they reached critical awareness, today's "good cleaning ladies" could break the stigma attached to this stereotype, and allow themselves to move forward to other futures, with new possibilities.

These Portuguese immigrant women are trapped in one way and free in other ways. There is a combination of these perspectives: they are clearly being taken advantage of because they have no contracts of employment, they do not receive any statutory social benefits, they are not saving for retirement, and they are in jobs that offer them no opportunities for obtaining a better education and thus progressing in life. They are at the mercy of employers who may want to disrespect and or exploit them. On the other hand, as mentioned previously, they are free, because they can choose a good employer to work for (or to leave a bad employer whenever they please); they can set their own hours; they are shown respect for their good work; and they earn a relatively good income for a working-class position.

It is important to mention too that there are a number of realities that contribute to making the condition of these women less than ideal: among other things, the repeated history of the first generations of Portuguese immigrant women, who were trapped in DW, due to delays in the immigration process or to the refusal of officials to authenticate their documents; the lack of



government support for members of their ethnic community; the persistence of the "Portuguese cleaning ladies" stereotype; and the language barrier.

With respect to lifelong learning, these women learned to act in situations where they were being exploited or disrespected. For example, they learned to leave their employers when they were not treated with respect. They learned to seek work across multiple households, so that they would not be left without work when one family went on vacation. These Portuguese women had to learn to "be domestic workers", to charge for their services, and to decide what to clean and what not to clean in their clients' homes.

Ultimately, none of these women attended university, and none of them ended up working full-time in any field other than domestic work, which suggests that their career ambitions might have been stifled.

Marxist Feminism theory fails to explain the results of my research, because it does not recognize the full complexity of the situation of these women, in which issues of stereotyping, race and culture are implicated.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Informed Consent**

Dear Ms.

My name is Márcia dos Santos, and I am a graduate student in the Master of Education Program (Studies in Lifelong Learning) at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. I am conducting a study on the experiences of domestic workers (cleaning ladies) in Canada. The purpose of this study is to better understand the reasons why women, like yourself, entered this type of work, some of the advantages and disadvantages of this profession and what this profession has taught you, across the years. This study will form the basis for my thesis and will fulfill the requirements of completion of my Master of Arts Degree in Education.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will interview you for approximately one hour by phone or internet connection. During this interview, I will ask you questions about your past experiences relating to working as a domestic worker. The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed to paper. Your name will not be used in the tapes, nor in the transcribed records (you will be given a pseudonym). Your identity will only be known by any participant whom you refer to me. You will also receive compensation for your time, in the form of a gift card.

You will be provided a follow-up phone call to review the transcripts to ensure that the transcription captures their meaning and intent. I will then set up a time for the transcript reviews. You will have two weeks to review transcripts orally (an extension deadline will be given for a later, mutually acceptable date, if they request more time). You may choose to withdraw from the research. If you are unable to read, an oral recording of the interviews will be sent to you.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You will be free to stop and leave the interview at any time. If you choose to leave the interview at any time, you will still receive the gift card. After the interview, if you wish, your comments may be omitted from the summary data, up to the time of writing the final thesis. Thus, we do not foresee any risks, or discomfort to you, from your participation in this study.

By participating in this study, you will contribute to our understanding of the type of difficulties that workers like yourself, have experienced as well as any opportunities for growth that you have had. You will also help us to determine the ways that we may better support other women in the cleaning industry.

All information you supply during the research will be held in strictest confidence and your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. All participants will be identified by pseudonyms. All recordings from this project will be collected on my password-protected home computer. After each interview is completed, the recording will be immediately copied to a password-protected server at Mount Saint Vincent University, where undergraduate students store electronic data, then immediately deleted from my home computer. Only myself and my Supervisor will have access to the electronic recordings and printed transcripts. The printed transcripts of the audio recordings, master lists of the participants, the list of pseudonyms, and participants' contact information will be kept in a separate locked cabinet, in my home. The contact list of all participants who are interviewed, as well as the audio recordings, will be deleted three months after the defense of the thesis. The electronic and printed transcripts will be destroyed 6 months after the defense.

Once I have analyzed the data gathered in this study, I will prepare a thesis presenting my findings. This will be accessible to professors and students at Mount Saint Vincent University, as well as those using the university's library system. I will also provide a short summary of the results to participants, such as yourselves, and for any community organizations who have helped me with recruiting.

If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me directly at (902) XXX-XXXX, or by e-mail (marcia.dossantos@msvu.ca). You may also discuss any questions or concerns with my Thesis Supervisor Dr. Fernando Nunes at (902) XXX-XXXX or via e-mail at Fernando.Nunes@msvu.ca. This research has been reviewed by the *Ethics Review Board of Mount Saint Vincent University* and conforms to the standards of the *Canadian Tri-Council on Research Ethics*. If you have questions about how this study is conducted and wish to speak with someone not directly involved in the study, you may contact the Chair of the *University Research Ethics Board (UREB)* care of *MSVU Research Office*, at (902) 457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

I have read the information contained above and hereby consent to participate in the interview as described above.

By checking here, I also consent to giving my name to any participants whom I have referred

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

Participants' Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

Telephone Script for follow-up contact with potential participants  
who were already contacted by referring person

My name is Márcia dos Santos, and I am a Master's student at Mount Saint Vincent University. I was referred to you by **(insert person's name)**, who has already contacted you informing you about my research-

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences that you had working as a domestic worker in people's family homes, what were the benefits and disadvantages of your occupation and what you may have learned from this profession. This study will contribute to helping all immigrant women who work in this type of occupation, and in particular to helping us to understand how to better protect their rights.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will phone you by Skype or by phone and at a time that is most convenient for you, for a one-hour interview that will be audiotaped. You will not be identified by name in the interview. As a thank-you for your time, you also will receive a \$35 grocery gift card.

Would you be interested in knowing more about this study?

**A. If the person shows interest, then you continue below, (if not, go to B):**

Thank you for your interest in this study. Before I can continue, I only need to ask you 4 questions, in order to confirm if you fit the parameters of the participant that we are seeking to interview:

1. Were you born in any of the following: Portugal, the Azores or Madeira?
2. Are you between the ages of 35 to 70 years of age?

3. Are you (or did you) clean individual family homes, as an independent domestic worker (i.e. not for a company, nor for an office building)?
4. Have you been working in this capacity for at least 2 years (or, if retired: Did you work in this capacity for at least 02 years, before you retired)?

**If all of the answers to the above are “yes,” then continue with this below. (If not, go to B):**

O.k. Before the interview, I will need to send you a letter of informed consent, which you must sign, saying that you accept being interviewed. If this is not possible, I will read this form to you, and you will accept it orally, at the beginning of the interview. The interview will be audiotaped, so that we may record your answers, as well as your consent to be interviewed

Thank you for your time and attention. When do you think we can hold this interview? If you have any questions, you can contact me at (902) XXX-XXXX, or by e-mail at [marcia.dossantos@msvu.ca](mailto:marcia.dossantos@msvu.ca).

**B, If the person states that they are not interested, or if they do not fit all of the criteria above, then say the following:**

Thank you for your time. I would like to know if you could refer me to any other Portuguese woman who you know, who you feel may want to participate in this research. She must be Portuguese, between 35 to 70 years old, born in mainland Portugal, Azores or Madeira and who works (or worked) as a domestic worker independently in single family homes (i.e. not in offices, or for a cleaning service) for at least 2 years. They can also be retired.

Thank you for your time and attention. If you have any questions, you can contact me at (902) XXX-XXXX, or by e-mail at [marcia.dossantos@msvu.ca](mailto:marcia.dossantos@msvu.ca).

## **Appendix C**

### **Letter of Introduction to Abrigo Center**

Dear Mr. Ed Graça,

My name is Márcia dos Santos, and I am a graduate student from Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. I am conducting a study on Portuguese-Canadian domestic workers (cleaning ladies) in Canada. My purpose is to better understand the reasons why these women entered into domestic work (versus other types of work), some of the advantages and disadvantages of this profession, the relationship between themselves and their employers and what they have learned in the process. This study will form the basis for my thesis and will fulfill the requirements of completion of my Master of Arts Degree in Education, from the Faculty of Education, M.A. Program in Lifelong Learning.

I will be interviewing between 4 and 6 women, who were born in Portugal and who have worked as independent domestic workers (cleaning ladies) in private households for at least 2 years. I will also consider those who have previously worked in this capacity for that same time period but have been retired for fewer than 10 years. The interviews will take place during the Fall of 2020 and – given current Covid-19 restrictions - will be conducted by phone or Skype. Since I am Brazilian, the language of the interviews will be in Portuguese.

I am now seeking the assistance of the Abrigo Center in referring potential participants to this study. I have completed a proposal detailing my research plans, which has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. I am here sending you the final copy of this proposal so that you will consider my request to assist me in recruiting participants. If you would like to arrange a meeting by Skype or telephone to discuss my research proposal and any



questions or concerns you may have, please contact me at (902) XXX-XXXX or by e-mail at marcia.dossantos@msvu.ca. You may also contact my Thesis Supervisor, Dr. Fernando Nunes, of the Department of Child and Youth Study, at Fernando.nunes@msvu.ca (home telephone during Covid-19 restrictions 902-XXX-XXXX). Alternatively, you may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) care of MSVU Research Office, at (902) 457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Márcia dos Santos  
Mount Saint Vincent University  
66 Bedford Hwy, Halifax, NS B3M 2J6

## Appendix D

### Demographic Information Sheet

**Participant Identification #** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Age in Fall 2020  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Born in

- Mainland Portugal
  - Azores
  - Madeira
  - Other
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the highest level of schooling that you've achieved

- No formal schooling
- (1a to 4a classe) 1º ciclo – Grades 1-4
- (5a to 6a classe) 2º ciclo – Grades 5-6
- (7a to 9a classe) 3º ciclo – Grades 7-9
- Secondary (10º ano to 12º ano) - Grade 10-12
- Post-Secondary (college or university)

4. How long have you been in Canada?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you currently working (or did you previously work) as a domestic worker in private households (i.e. self-employed, not for a company and not in office buildings)?

- Yes
- No

6. If **currently working** as a domestic worker, how many years have you been in this occupation?

- Number of Years ( must be equal to or more than two years)

)

7. If **currently retired** from being a domestic worker, for how many years have you been retired from this occupation?

- Number of Years (must be fewer than 10)
- \_\_\_\_\_

8. How many hours do you work (or did you work) per week as a domestic worker?  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Marital status

- Single
- Married (or common law and not separated)
- Widowed (including living common law)
- Separated (including living common law)
- Divorced (including living common law)

10. Number of children who still live (or lived) at home while you work (or worked) as a domestic worker (including adopted).

\_\_\_\_\_ Female

\_\_\_\_\_ Male

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Check the alternatives below and tick the ones that are true for you.

- ( ) You always worked in the same house.
- ( ) You have worked occasionally in different houses.

- ( ) You have always worked in different houses.
- ( ) You work (or worked) as a cleaner only on weekends.
- ( ) You work (or worked) as a cleaner only during the week.
- ( ) You work (or worked) as a cleaner on weekends and during the week.
- ( ) You are, or were, employed in another type of work while cleaning houses.

12. If you have (or had) a second job besides cleaning, what kind of work do (or did) you do?

---

13. How do you identify yourself, racially (check all that apply)?

- White
- Black
- Asian
- Other –specify\_\_\_\_\_

14. With what ethnic origin do you most identify (check all that apply)?

- Portuguese
- Azorean
- Madeiran
- Other – specify\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E

### E-mail communication to staff at Abrigo Center

I am a Master of Education student at Mount Saint Vincent University, in Halifax. I am seeking your assistance in recruiting participants for my MA thesis research on Portuguese immigrant women's perceptions of their experiences working as a Domestic Workers (or Cleaning Ladies) in individual homes. I am contacting you in the hopes that you will be able to help me recruit between 4 to 6 participants for this study. I have been given permission from the Abrigo Administration to contact you and to seek your assistance in this recruitment.

Potential participants must be women between 35 to 70 years old, who were born in mainland Portugal, Azores or Madeira and who have worked at least 2 years as domestic workers in Canada, or who have retired from this occupation fewer than 10 years ago. All interviews will be confidential and no identifying names or information will be included in the final thesis or other material which may be released.

I am asking you to contact potential participants and inquire if they might be interested in being interviewed for this project. If they express an interest, you may forward their telephone numbers to me. I will then contact them, to explain this study and better determine whether they fit the inclusion criteria. Potential participants do not need to speak English well, because I am a Portuguese speaker, and the language of the interviews will be in Portuguese.

Each participant will receive compensation for their time and effort in the form of a \$35 gift certificate for a local grocery chain. I plan to conduct an individual interview of approximately one hour with each participant via Skype, or over the phone, whichever is most convenient for each individual.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at [marcia.dossantos@msvu.ca](mailto:marcia.dossantos@msvu.ca) or by phone at (902) XXX-XXXX

Sincerely, Márcia dos Santos

## **Appendix F**

### **Debriefing Script**

(Interviews set up through Abrigo Center)

As the interview is over, I would like to repeat some things we discussed before the interview. Your name will not be used and any identifying information that you have given in this interview will be changed to protect your identity. I will make every effort to protect the information you have provided to me. I also want to repeat that, if you are not comfortable with the answers that you gave to my questions, you can choose to withdraw at this point. In addition, if you change your mind after we are finished with our meeting, you also have two weeks from today to request to withdraw any or all of your answers. Please just contact me at: (provide my phone or email address). I would also like to repeat that your participation or withdrawal choice will not impact the services you will receive at the Abrigo Center.

Is there anything else you would like to discuss at this point?

## **Appendix G**

### **Debriefing Script**

(Interviews set up directly contact with Portuguese Immigrants women)

As the interview is over, I would like to repeat some things we discussed before the interview.

Your name will not be used and any identifying information that you have given in this interview will be changed to protect your identity. I will make every effort to protect the information you have provided to me. I also want to repeat that, if you are not comfortable with the answers that you gave to my questions, you can choose to withdraw at this point. In addition, if you change your mind after we are finished with our meeting, you also have two weeks from today to request to withdraw any or all your answers. Please just contact me at: (provide my phone or email address).

Is there anything else that you would like to discuss at this point?

## Appendix H

### Interview Protocol

---

- First of all, can you tell me where did you were born?
- Tell me about your family. Do you have kids? Are you married?
- Can you tell me how old you are?
- When did you first immigrate to Canada?
  - So, how long have you been in Canada?
- When did you first begin to work as a domestic worker / cleaning lady?
- Tell me a little bit about this first experience. In particular:
  - How did you get this first opportunity?
  - What strategies, or process, did you use to find it?
  - How did you get subsequent placements?
- Why did you enter into domestic work? In particular, I want you to think about what led you to choose this this type of job instead of others.
  - Was there anything about your previous experiences that caused you to choose this occupation, over others?
  - Was there anything about your living conditions (like, for example, family, financial condition) at the time of immigration that led you to enter into domestic work?
  - What were the advantages, at the time of immigration, for you to enter into this type of work?
- Could you describe the conditions of your employment in your first few positions as a domestic worker?
  - Did you work full-time or part-time?
  - Did you only work for one household, or for multiple households?
  - Did you work under a written contract, or under a verbal agreement?
  - Did you work for cash, or did you work on a salary?
  - Did you have any benefits (ex. discount for employment insurance, Canada Pension Plan, etc.)?

- Did you discount for vacation pay and were you given a paid vacation by the person who contracted you?
- Have any of the things that you've told me changed over the years, that you've been working as a domestic worker? For example, are you now working for different households? Do you now make discounts for such things as unemployment insurance, etc.? What, if anything, has changed?
- Overall, how would you describe the benefits and disadvantages that you've had working as a domestic worker?
  - What are the challenges that you have faced?
  - What aspect of the job empowers you?
  - What are the advantages and disadvantages of working for oneself, as opposed to working for an agency?
  - What are the advantages and disadvantages of working without a written contract?
- Can you tell me about any significant good or traumatic experiences that you've had, in this field of work?
- Please tell me how you would characterize your relationship with your bosses.<sup>8</sup>
  - Do your bosses treat you like employees, like servants or like family members, etc.?
  - Do they treat you with dignity and respect?
  - How do you resolve disputes with your bosses?
- Why did you continue to work in this occupation after you became settled in Canada?
- Can you tell me anything valuable that you've learned from your experience of working as a domestic worker?
  - Where did you learn this? In school? On the job? From other people?
  - What different types of things have you learned from this job?

---

<sup>8</sup> Please note that the actual word which Portuguese domestic workers use to refer to the households that employ their services is the English word "bosses" and not the Portuguese word for employer "empregador."



- How do you believe that this type of domestic work fits within the goals and dreams that you had when you first immigrated?
  - Has this occupation met, or stifled, the goals and aspirations that you had for yourself?
- How has this type of domestic work affected your self-esteem throughout your life?
  - Has this type of work increased or decreased your self-esteem?
  - How do you feel that your society perceives your role as a domestic worker? (Both your Canadian and Portuguese society – please comment on each in turn)
- Could you share any experience or opportunity that you have had, which has led you to better perceive, understand, or learn about, your situation as a domestic worker?
- Have you ever faced any situation where you were exploited, discriminated against, experienced sexism, or any other type of situation that put you in an uncomfortable condition? If so, how did you defend yourself? Did you have an opportunity to talk to anyone else about these problems you were experiencing? If so, how and where did these meetings take place?
- Since you arrived in Canada, have you taken any courses, job training, and language classes? Which courses did you take, and for how long?
- Over the years, have you been involved in any community activities that have contributed to your learning (e.g., volunteer community work, opportunities for social engagement, etc.)? If so, for how long?
- Do you think that your occupation of domestic worker is still fulfilling your current and future dreams for yourself?
- Is there anything about your experiences working as a domestic worker that we have not addressed, and which you think is important to mention?

## **Appendix I**

### **Message to be sent to the websites**

I am a Master's student at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I am seeking participants for my thesis study on Portuguese Domestic Workers, who work as independent Cleaning Ladies in private households. This study will help us to better understand both the hardships, as well as the benefits, that Portuguese women encounter in this occupation.

Participants will be interviewed for approximately one hour over the phone or via Skype, whichever is most convenient for each individual. The interviews can be in Portuguese or in English. Each participant will receive a \$35 gift certificate for a local grocery chain, as a thank you for their time and effort.

Potential participants should be women aged between 35 and 70 years, who were born in mainland Portugal, Azores or Madeira, and who have been domestic workers in Canada for at least 2 years within the last 10 years. All interviews will be confidential, and no identifying names or information will be included in the final thesis or other material that may be released.

Potential participants (or their contacts) should e-mail me at [marcia.dossantos@msvu.ca](mailto:marcia.dossantos@msvu.ca) or phone +1 (902) XXX-XXXX.

This study has been approved by the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) of Mount Saint Vincent University.

Sincerely,

Márcia dos Santos