



DOI: 10.2478/genst-2025-0001

**PUBLIC DISCOURSES ABOUT/BY WOMEN MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES  
FROM CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE:  
(IN)VISIBILITY AND (DIS)EMPOWERMENT<sup>1</sup>**

**IRINA DIANA MĂDROANE**

West University of Timișoara

irina.madroane@e-uvt.ro

**RUXANDRA TRANDAFOIU**

Edge Hill University

trandar@edgehill.ac.uk

***Abstract:** The article, an extensive introduction to this issue's special section on public discourses about/by women migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, outlines the current scholarly debates as well as the main theoretical and methodological approaches to gender in the context of transnational migration practices, with a focus on labour migration, forced migration and exile. It discusses the core aspects of an intersectionality-driven, social constructionist and postcolonial (adapted to the post-socialist space) approach to the analysis of gendered transnational practices and relations. Within this framework, it proposes to examine how public discourses and positionings construct and deconstruct gendered forms of identification and (dis)empower women migrants and refugees from this space through various modes of public (in)visibility, intersectional articulation of identities and (dis)engagement. The articles in the special section articulate theoretical concepts, such as intersectional “trap” and “displacement,” “agency-in-waiting,” “mediated proximity-distance relationship,” “precarious citizenship” or “microhistorical” media devices, and analytical tools from different areas in qualitative research and discourse studies – thematic analysis, multimodal critical discourse analysis, semio-pragmatics, non-fictional memoir analysis – in empirical work on the symbolic (self-)constructions of Ukrainian, Moldovan, Romanian and Azerbaijani women migrants. They invite both academic and non-*

---

<sup>1</sup> This article is the introduction to the special section titled “Women’s Migration from Central and Eastern Europe: Discursive, Sociocultural and Historical Perspectives,” edited by Irina Diana Mădroane and Ruxandra Trandafoiu, this issue (*Gender Studies*, 24(1), 2025).

*academic readers to conversation and (self-)reflection across East-West gendered borders and boundaries.*

**Keywords:** *gender, transnational migration, exile, public discourse, intersectionality, agency, (dis)empowerment, post-socialism/communism, Central and Eastern European women migrants, Ukrainian women refugees*

## **1. Women migrants, refugees, and exiles in transnational contexts:**

### **Theoretical and methodological parameters**

#### **1.1. Contemporary debates in gender and migration studies**

Current studies reveal that the “feminization of migration,” first brought to attention by Stephen Castles and Marc J. Miller in 1993, requires careful contextualization due to its “dynamic and complex” nature, differences between regions around the globe and types of migration (skilled or deskilled, for labour or family reunification purposes), among other aspects (Christou & Kofman, 2022; IOM World Migration Report, 2024). Regarding the region under scrutiny in this special section, data from 2021 identify a feminized (labour) migration trend in all the four Central and Eastern European countries that are ranked among the top 20 countries of origin in the world, namely the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Poland and Romania, while at a European level the distribution of migrants is relatively equal between men and women, across origin and destination countries (UN DESA, 2021, cited in IOM World Migration Report, 2024, p. 26, p. 79). Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 resulted in “the largest displacement within Europe since the Second World War,” forced migration from the targeted areas being an overwhelmingly feminized phenomenon, as many women left with their children and sometimes elderly relatives, men between 18 and 60 having to stay behind and fight (IOM World Migration Report, 2024, p. 82).

Whether the number of migrating women surpasses that of men or not, women migrants represent a significant group in the migratory population, migration in their case displaying specific characteristics and problems that can only be solved through gender-sensitive policy interventions and, on a broader scale, sociocultural change. Scholarly literature (Amelina & Lutz, 2019; Christou & Kofman, 2022; Lutz, 2008; Mora & Piper, 2021; Ozyegin & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2008, among others) highlights a number of gender-related issues as central to women’s migration. Among them are underpayment, low social status, and vulnerability to

exploitation in domestic and (informal) care work, a sector that employs women migrants predominantly, as well as in other feminized, less skilled labour sectors, such as hospitality, contract cleaning, beauty and wellness work, or sex work, within the frame of neoliberal policies and global inequalities. Relatedly, the formation of “global care chains” and the commodification of emotional labour (Hochschild, 2000) result in women migrants who look after children and the elderly in destination countries also engaging in “transnational motherhood” (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2005), “home-making” in multiple locations (Boccagni, 2013), intimacy, emotional ties and care provision at a distance (Ahmed et al., 2003; Baldassar, 2008). These transnational relationships rely upon new media technologies (Madianou, 2014) as a chief infrastructure for the transnational “circulation of care” (Baldassar, 2016). Women migrants also suffer deskilling, downward reclassification and misrecognition of skills, affecting highly skilled women migrants. They remain at risk of sex trafficking, abuse and violence in a context in which forced migration and asylum outcomes exclude important factors of risk for women. Women are often the target of gender discriminatory practices related to migrants’ rights, such as social welfare, visa and citizenship requirements, family reintegration policies, and, more broadly, societal integration pathways.

Gender inequalities and power asymmetries are (re)produced in institutional practices and structures, social relations, legislation as well as everyday interactions, being compounded through intersections with other inequality axes, *e.g.* class, race, ethnicity, nationality or religion, and, in the case of migration, transferred and rearticulated within transnational social fields<sup>2</sup> (Amelina & Lutz, 2019; Christou & Kofman, 2022; Mora & Piper, 2021). As migration scholars point out, however, and we discuss later on, transnational social fields simultaneously provide opportunities for agency development, contestation, resistance and empowerment. Transnational capital acquired through migration might lead, for example, to gender role reversals during migration and upon return, and overall sociocultural transformation.

The gendering of migration processes, with its impact on women migrants, was acknowledged rather late by researchers and policymakers, and, despite progress being gradually made since the 1980s (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2011), particular situations that women

---

<sup>2</sup> “Set[s] of multiple, interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices and resources are unequally exchanged, organized and transformed” across borders (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004, p. 1009), transnational social fields are constituted through the transnational actors’ agency, structured by laws and institutions, and supported by various infrastructures, communication technologies and global mobilities (for the related concept of transnational social spaces, see Faist, 2009).

are faced with still fall through the cracks of official statistics and definitions (Amelina & Lutz, 2019; Mora & Piper, 2021). If recent studies stress the importance of examining men as well as non-binary, gender fluid identifying migrants through the lens of gendered migration practices (Christou & Kofman, 2022), a position that necessarily completes previous research, this special section continues to take women as its principal research subject. It does so against the backdrop of what we regard as the enduring under-representation of this social category in research and policymaking and the emergence of new relevant contexts. The post-Covid-19, post-Brexit and post-Black Lives Matter developments (Christou & Kofman, 2022), as well as the massive forced migration of Ukrainian women, which maps onto a recent history of labour migration from Ukraine (Andrews et al., 2023), have led to significant transformations, among which relatively new labour markets and communication practices, digital and social media related (Ponzanesi, 2020; Triandafyllidou & Monteiro, 2024; Trandafoiu & Balabanova, forthcoming). At the same time, it is illuminating to revisit old contexts, histories and memories of displacement and exile, such as those related to forced migration from the ex-socialist<sup>3</sup> and ex-Soviet spaces, in conjunction with women migrants' renegotiations of their identities and journeys in destination countries, always connected to the countries of origin and a traumatic past.

To fill this niche, the special section zooms in on women migrants from a geopolitical region that remains under-researched, especially from a gender perspective, despite taking an increasingly sharp contour on the map of world migration since the 1990s, following the fall of communism: Central and Eastern Europe (Trandafoiu, 2022). The labour migration of women from this region toward the West started in the late 1990s and surged in the 2000s, being prominent in the field of domestic and (informal) care work, but also noticeable in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and nursing (Christou & Kofman, 2022). Catalysed by demand from certain destination countries that have redefined their domestic and care work policies, among which Italy, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Sweden (Christou & Kofman, 2022, p. 37), it has been structurally supported by European Union visa liberalization policies, enlargement waves and international treaties. Over the years, it has triggered a phenomenon of “care drain” from the East to the West (Panzaru & Gravina, 2024) and, as a result, it has created

---

<sup>3</sup> Articles in this special issue use post-socialism and post-communism interchangeably to refer to the market liberalization and democratization period that started in the late 1980s for most Central and Eastern European countries. Following Chari & Verdery (2009), we use post-socialism in this introduction to emphasize the sociological and anthropological impact of the communist system in the region.

vulnerable categories (left-behind children and elders) and fostered practices of transnational care provision that involve circular migration patterns, emotional labour at a distance and specific uses of digital communication technologies.

Four articles in the special section seek to confer visibility to relevant facets of post-socialist feminized migration from Eastern Europe to the West as well as the East (two of them look at Romania as a country of destination for Ukrainian women refugees from the Russo-Ukrainian war). Ukrainian forced migration, risks of exploitation, discrimination, and instrumentalization, co-existing with resilience and integration strategies, are discussed at length by Mariya Shcherbyna and Tetiana Havlin, who focus on highly skilled migration, and by Mălina Ciocea, Elena Negrea-Busuioc, Florența Toader, and Bianca-Florentina Cheregi. Camelia Beciu analyses the emergence of hybrid positionings in media discourses of the country of destination, in her contribution on the representations of Ukrainian women refugees and the ensuing modes of audience engagement in the Romanian public sphere. Adina Baya explores how a documentary symbolically constructs homemade videos circulating between Moldovan mothers and their children (with a focus on daughters), seen as reverse remittances, and reflects on the mediation of transnational parenting. Two other articles build symbolic bridges between the present problematizations of migration and those of the ex-socialist and ex-Soviet experience of forced migration and exile, from Romania and Azerbaijan, respectively, as they are construed in two memoirs, Domnica Rădulescu's *Dream in a Suitcase* (2021), analysed by Dwitiya Sarkar and Dhiman Roy, and Banine's *Parisian Days* (2022), examined by Shafag Dadashova.

## 1.2. Gendered transnational practices through a discursive lens

As its chief contribution, the special section proposes to interrogate symbolic construals and positionings of/toward women migrants from Central and Eastern Europe in non-fictional *public discourses*, viewed as integral and co-constitutive elements of transnational social practices, relations and structures<sup>4</sup> (Beciu et al., 2017, 2018). The special section investigates

---

<sup>4</sup> This editorial project builds upon and extends research in gender and transnational migration, by focusing on the role of discourse in transnational social fields and the relevance of discourse-based analytical frameworks for the investigation of transnational processes opened by Beciu et al. (2017, 2018). Advanced articulations related to theories of intersectionality and a postcolonial lens of interpretation, adapted to the post-socialist space, are also proposed.

public discourses about/by women migrants and the multifaceted forms of identification and positioning they generate, by expanding more significantly in the direction of gender a research agenda centred upon discourse and culture within transnational spaces, outlined only in passing by migration scholars (Bauböck, 2010; Guarnizo & Smith, 1998; Pessar & Mahler, 2003; Vertovec, 2009) and extended by media and communication scholars and linguists (Beciu et al., 2017, 2018; Musolff & Viola, 2019; Zappettini, 2019), and, in a different sphere, by literature and cultural studies scholars concerned with migration in literary works and other types of cultural production, e.g. film and music (Adair, Fasselt & McLaughlin, 2024; Davis, 2012, among others). In so doing, it aims to fruitfully contribute to a more insightful understanding of the dynamics of (dis)empowerment and (in)visibility of women migrants and their symbolic struggles for social repositioning within the “networked and fragmented space of mediated transnational communication” (Georgiou, 2012, p. 794).

The premise of this editorial project is that *gendered* transnational practices and relations, including power relations, are (co-)constituted in discursive practices in the transnational social field. By examining public discourses and their conditions of (re)production, researchers may identify underlying gender ideologies, deconstruct gender stereotypes, expose instances of instrumentalization, victimization, and discrimination of women in discourse, and cast light on strategies of counterclaim-making, resistance, and rearticulation of gender hierarchies and gender-related forms of knowledge. Media discourses, as well as other types of public discourse, provide audiences with semiotic resources for understanding transnational realities, connecting to the transnational space (including in emotional terms), and even taking action (Beciu, 2017, 2018; Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Georgiou, 2012; Vertovec, 2009). Different representations, genres, styles and formats in combination with different technological affordances institute diverse patterns of representation and modes of visibility for the (self-)identification of women migrants and refugees (Beciu et al., 2018; see also Baya, 2025a; Mădroane, 2017; Mădroane & Cărlan, 2024; Trandafoiu & Balabanova, forthcoming).

Through the ways they are discursively built and enacted, such patterns and modes facilitate specific interactions with the publics and invite distinct ways of imagining and relating to the women migrants’ situation, by constituting them as subjects and agents with a voice or not, by legitimating or delegitimizing their claims or by constructing inclusive transnational communities or exclusive national ones. The leading research question of this special section is

in what ways the public discourses about/by women migrants and refugees from Central and Eastern Europe and various positionings toward them contribute to the (re)production and contestation of gendered worldviews, values and norms, and to the reconfiguration of the gendered power dynamics at play in transnational contexts and intersections, resulting in the (in)visibility and (dis)empowerment of women migrants and refugees. Each of the articles in the special section seeks to answer this question by engaging with different types of discourse: the Ukrainian women refugees' positionings in semi-structured interviews, which also construct their identities in response to mainstream representations and imaginaries in the countries of destination (Ciocea et al., 2025, this issue; Shcherbyna & Havlin, 2025, this issue); media discourses about Ukrainian refugee women from different sources, *i.e.* commercial and independent media, and the ways they engage audiences through the patterns of representation they build and perform (Beciu, 2025, this issue); the multimodal discourse of a documentary about Moldovan transnational mothers and daughters (Baya, 2025b, this issue); memoirs of forced migration and exile from the ex-socialist space (Dadashova, 2025, this issue; Sarkar & Roy, 2025, this issue).

### **1.3. Transnational intersections and postcolonial insights. Gendered discourses in the interstices of transnational space**

The focus on discourse and culture takes shape in line with the latest developments in the study of migration and gender, two fields that “have established themselves independently from each other” but came together within the frame of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches (Amelina & Lutz, 2019, p. 13). This editorial project thus conceptualizes women's migration from transnational migration, poststructuralist and postcolonial perspectives, highlighting the specific experiences of women from Central and Eastern Europe, displaced by historic, ideologic and economic ruptures, who claim symbolic justice and visibility. Within this framework, a social constructionist, anti-essentialist view of identities is employed, seen as relational, contingent, construed and performed in discourse (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000), as well as, significantly, (re)articulated at the intersection of multiple axes of inequality (Amelina & Lutz, 2019; Anthias, 2006, 2013; Christou & Kofman, 2022; Mădroane, 2021; Mora & Piper, 2021, among others).

Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality (1989) has become central in research on migration and gender, being integrated into theories of transnational social fields, where the intersections among axes of inequality (gender, class, race, ethnicity, nationality, etc.) are often reconfigured without being entirely erased. An article in the special section contributes to the theoretical work in this area, by coining the term *intersectional trap/entrapment* to signal the restrictive nature of Ukrainian women refugees' ambiguous status: Shcherbyna and Havlin (2025, this issue) outline the dilemmas posed by being a Ukrainian woman scientist, now (potentially) temporarily based in Western Europe, at the intersection of professional privilege and precarious refugee status, and finding themselves simultaneously included and excluded. The geopolitical axis of inequality, noticeable in the perceived misrecognition of scholars from the Eastern European space, enhances this position of liminality.

What distinguishes transnational social fields is a multi-scalar organization of space that enables "simultaneity of connection," "here" and "there," and power relations and struggles across multiple locales (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). As noted earlier, this socio-scalar organization reveals a "paradoxical" potential to victimize but also empower transnational social actors. As such, migrant women workers may be disempowered when deskilled or exploited in the destination country but empowered as remittance-senders in the country of origin (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc, 1994; see also Amelina & Lutz, 2019; Mădroane, 2017, 2021). Understanding the gendered dimension of transnational migration therefore entails situating gender relations within the "geographies of power" (Pessar & Mahler, 2003) of the transnational space, with its complex dialectic of opportunity and constraint, empowerment and disempowerment (Guarnizo & Smith, 1998; see also Amelina & Lutz, 2019; Köngeter & Smith, 2015; Tuider, 2015). This lens has been applied to examine the migration of Central and Eastern European women, with its own specificities.

On the one hand, the label "Eastern European" itself draws on historic tropes that invoke the availability of cheap labour, while implying the "racialization" (Lewicki, 2023, p. 1483) of labourers. It converges with symbolic associations of housework with "dirtiness" and "inferior morality" in various geographical spaces, from the perspective of social class, which have gradually shifted to associations with sexual promiscuity and crime along ethnicity and nationality lines (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2008). If such ideological intersections affect women migrants from around the world, in the case of Central and Eastern European women, they are articulated against the backdrop of popular culture representations of sex workers and victims

of sex trafficking from this area, stereotypes about the “Slavs” and “Gypsies,” and Western women employers’ memories of travelling east, as well as prejudice regarding the “backwardness” of this space, plagued by the exploitation of children, the subjugation of women to men prone to violence, in traditional gender roles, and prostitution, which may also arouse the emotion of pity, and, not least, counter-stances (Capussotti, 2007; see also Christou & Kofman, 2022; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2008; Lyon, 2007). Such positionings and boundaries are renegotiated and redrawn both by women employers in host countries and by women migrants to distance themselves from a symbolic “Other,” ranging from Western to Eastern European, via the category of Central European (usually bestowed with more prestige than that of “Eastern European”), and further on to the exotic “Oriental.” On the other hand, Passerini et al. (2007) point to hybrid stances, and optimistically envisage that stereotypes forged under the East/West divide could be dismantled through a mutually discovered “Europeanness” and that new transnational subjectivities could come into being through cultural encounters between women from the two spaces, across symbolic boundaries. Women from Central and Eastern Europe are also appreciated as good, reliable workers, endowed with agency and capable of sacrifice (Lyon, 2007) or even celebrated in certain destination countries, such as Italy, for doing heroic work (“angels”) in aiding vulnerable elders, a discourse that is often recontextualized in the country of origin (Mădroane, 2017, 2021). A similar position was noticeable in public discourse in Western European countries during the Covid-19 pandemic, for instance in the UK, where essential workers were briefly represented as “heroes” (Gawlewicz et al., 2023). Recent research also shows that Romanian women entrepreneurs in the UK share a sense of empowerment and belonging and feel more accepted in the country of destination (Chițac et al., 2025, p. 93), while Dolea (2024) refers to the perceived burden of gender role reinforcements and mixed emotions in negotiating transnational ways of life, which occasionally emerge in her research interviews with members of the Romanian diaspora in the UK. Interrogation of gender roles and stereotypes, financial independence, improvement of social status and recognition may take place during migration and, to a lesser extent, upon women’s return, just as the same processes may, on the contrary, reinforce older stereotypes and traditional roles (Vlase, 2013, about Romanian women migrants). Such dynamics confirm Lutz’s understanding of transnational women migrants as pursuing their “own agendas” and “subjectivity needs” (2008) and emphasize the importance of a nuanced interpretation of the

transnational experiences of Central and Eastern European women migrants (Passerini et al., 2007).

It is an approach taken by the articles in this special section, as they look into agency development, including forms of resilience and acquiring a public voice, modes of audience engagement and occasions for (self-)reflection, while simultaneously engaging with limitations and pushbacks. Shcherbyna and Havlin examine to what extent the academic work of Ukrainian women scientists displaced by war helps resist victimhood and counter epistemic injustice, while intersecting with marginalization and a state of suspension in-between spaces and times, also addressed by Ciocea et al., who capture it in the (adapted) concept of *agency-in-waiting*. The exilic literature analyzed by Sarkar and Roy, as well as Dadashova, proves that writing and memorialization can become important forms of epistemic resistance despite the fact that the new destination spaces are far from entirely liberating. Baya interrogates the role of documentaries in telling the women migrants' microstories of persistence in precarity and affective loss, while Beciu takes a critical look at women's agency in broadcast news stories about refugees. Ciocea et al. further show how resilient adaptation takes shape through everyday decision-making and flexibility that is constantly faced with compromise and symbolic barriers.

The postcolonial angle brings to the fore past and current domination, prejudice, racialization and trauma, alongside ways of resisting and destabilizing them, and lends itself well to co-articulations with the concept of epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007), targeted at women migrants from the South and, in the present case, the East (see Sarkar & Roy and Shcherbyna & Havlin in this special section), in relation to post-socialist and post-Soviet frameworks of interpretation. They are largely informed by Balkanist theories (Todorova, 1997; Wolff, 1994), but also by the call to think "between the [postsocialist, postcolonial] posts" (Chari & Verdery, 2009, p. 9), because in isolation neither post-socialist nor postcolonial lenses can give us a complete understanding of East-West migration today.

This call has been answered in an attempt to prevent mere replication of postcolonial frameworks that are not always applicable to Central and Eastern Europe, which have been shaped by their particular relationship with the West. While countries in this region do not neatly fit either Third World or postcolonial classifications (Boatcă & Parvulescu, 2020), many are seen to be epigonal in their quest to "re-produce" the development stages of heroic Western Europe (Boatcă, 2013, p. 57), leading to inequalities that are reiterated in the treatment and

representation of migrants from this region (Goldis, 2025). Moreover, the status of “inter-imperial” semi periphery (Boatcă & Parvulescu, 2020; Doyle, 2020) that defines this region, which has been at the intersection of several imperial practices and legacies, comes with certain tensions and vexations, often manifested in the women’s relegation to “submerged channels” (Doyle, 2020, p. 45) and hidden roles. As Doyle (2020, p. 45) points out, women have been invisible at the level of statecraft activity, and yet, for centuries, they have played a key role in national reproduction, as “carriers of lineage” and “sexual commodities” for nations and male leaders in this region. These historical power inequalities tend to be reproduced when Central and Eastern European women emigrate, with women being assigned and internalising a lower status within migrant communities (see Dadashova in this special section; Trandafoiu & Balabanova, forthcoming). However, despite historical injustices and institutionalized practices of disempowerment both at home and abroad (see Dadashova, Sarkar & Roy and Shcherbyna & Havlin in this special section), women continue to seek visibility, by crafting exile into a space of feminist enunciation and transforming transnational experiences into social capital.

From a social and cultural perspective, the formation of transnational networks and structures has generated new ways of being, acting and belonging, individual and collective, rooted in beliefs, attitudes, values and norms (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Vertovec, 2009), that, as noted earlier, are both deeply gendered and carry a potential for change. So are the discourses that (co-)constitute transnational identification practices and relations, as they are (re)configured and (re)produced in public and social imaginaries that span across transnational social fields and intersections. In this sense, agency development, as a form of empowerment, involves “social positioning/meaning and practice,” (co-)shaped in connection with “social position,” within particular contexts of (inter)action (Anthias 2006, p. 27; Anthias, 2013). These are localized in the interstices of “dominant discursive venues” in the transnational space (Guarnizo & Smith, 1998, p. 21), in the potent hybridity of the Third Space of cultural encounters (Bhabha, 1994) or in constricting heterotopic spaces (Foucault, 1967), presumed to be safe yet projecting vulnerability. If migrant women may experience marginalization and a limitation of their agency even when they find themselves in the role of cultural producers, there are opportunities for self-representation, visibility and resistance. The articles authored by Baya, Dadashova and Sarkar and Roy in this special section dwell upon the paradoxical potential embedded in migrant cultural production, with its contradictions and occasions for (self-)reflection and deconstruction. To Sarkar and Roy, the text of the memoir analysed

becomes itself a heterotopic archive that is both constraining and liberating. From a more sociological perspective, Shcherbyna and Havlin, and Ciocea et al. apply a similar grid of interpretation when they engage with the heights and limits of resilience and agency in the ways Ukrainian women position themselves in relation to symbolic construals about them in the countries of destination and to the effects of such construals in practice.

Forms of cultural production such as literary works, fictional and non-fictional, and fiction and documentary films on migration (re)create the “transnational imaginary” (Vertovec, 2009). Alongside media and other types of public discourse, they contribute to a varied scope of representations, narratives and images that construct for migrant and (non-)migrant publics modes of transnational identification (Davis, 2012; Amelina & Lutz, 2019) and, as Beciu shows in her contribution to the special section, audience engagement. Post-socialist literature, in particular, can undermine the demarcation line between fiction and anthropology, thus transcending its creative or aesthetic value (Goldis, 2025, p. 568) to become a political act that reaffirms the value of migrant women’s voices and visibility. At the same time, literature written from a migrant’s perspective complicates the dominant narrative of flourishing Europeanization, especially when East-West migration reveals structures of neoliberal exploitation (Goldis, 2025, p. 569).

Similarly, the extent to which films and documentaries provide a coherent and empathetic narration of the complexities and consequences of migration and the extent to which migrants’ voices are allowed to speak for themselves carry important political and ethical implications (Trandafoiu, 2024, p. 2). As Baya (in this special section) points out, video recordings are *microhistorical* social experiences with the potential to provide a counter-hegemonic alternative to official history. They also challenge the traditional understanding of history, which eschews intimate personal experience at the expense of narratives driven by national interest and (male) historical figures to become a form of disruption, resistance, subversion and counter-hegemonic social action (Kaur & Grassili, 2019, p. 4).

The contributions to this editorial project outline the disrupted existence of women migrants, refugees and exiles, often defined by loss, absence and the disintegration of family or community ties. They chart the human dimensions of the large-scale social and historical transformations of Central and Eastern Europe over the past century. Most of them provide personal micronarratives that expose “bare life” (Agamben, 2000), by highlighting the essentialization of humanity through migration. However, they also underscore the potential

for resilience, self-reinvention, agency and visibility that emerges from layered experiences determined by shifts in time and space.

The methodological approaches used by the authors of the articles contained in the special section include semi-structured interviews (Ciocea et al.; Shcherbyna & Havlin), participatory observations and reflexive autoethnography (Shcherbyna & Havlin), qualitative thematic analysis (Ciocea et al.; Shcherbyna & Havlin), semio-pragmatics and critical discourse analysis (Beciu), multimodal critical discourse analysis and film analysis (Baya), as well as literary textual analysis (Dadashova; Sarkar & Roy).

## 2. A brief overview of the articles

In the opening article of this special section, **Shcherbyna and Havlin** reveal the tension between the personal everyday micro experiences of Ukrainian women scientists now living in Italy and Germany and the legal, structural and contextual macro frameworks that limit permanency and inhibit career security. If Ukrainian women scholars are protected by the EU's Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), which grants them access to the labour market for now, the authors highlight the "intersectional trap" arising from Ukrainian women's postcolonial positioning, which undervalues their Ukrainian scientific credentials and non-English publications, while granting them temporary positions as "researchers at risk." Thus, they remain entrapped by a state of liminality, working "in-between systems" while "academically suspended." Shcherbyna and Havlin denounce this "epistemic injustice" (Fricker, 2007) that leads to the marginalization, precarity and (in)visibility (they are visible, but disposable at the same time) of Ukrainian women scholars. However, they note the resilience acquired through navigating multiple transnational workloads and the strength to keep prioritizing professional self-actualization. The authors rightly call for policies that would more effectively address the "recursive temporality of war-induced displacement" by giving refugee women the right to stability amid precarity while preserving their academic identity. They also warn against a celebration of resilience that may result in reinforcing structural, systemic inequality.

**Ciocea, Negrea-Busuioc, Toader and Cheregi** also explore how Ukrainian women understand and navigate the complexities of integration, this time in Romania, one of the target countries of Ukrainian resettlement. Uncertainty, fluidity and "agency-in-waiting" are present here too. Experiences are problematized through "a lens of precarity and structural constraint,"

yet Ukrainian refugee women choose to build resilience through day-to-day survival and re-enacting familiar family routines. Caregiving responsibilities thus become a source of strength and empowerment, part of a multifaceted “embeddedness” and transnational “homemaking.” Ukrainian women refugees walk a tight rope between agency and constraint, clearly shaped by their expected gendered roles but also by shifts, the most important one being that women have become the main family providers. While the women in Shcherbyna and Havlin’s sample have chosen professional self-actualization as a coping mechanism, for the women in the study conducted by Ciocea et al. “care becomes strategy, advocacy becomes transformation and resilience itself becomes a form of empowerment, a critical endurance that redefines normality and asserts the right to stability amid precarity.”

**Beciu’s** concern with the symbolic construction of Ukrainian refugee women in the Romanian public sphere brings into focus their media representations (via televised news broadcasts by *Euronews*, *ProTV* and online investigative outlet *Recorder*) and the modes of audience engagement they foster. Defined by the media as vulnerable actors, Ukrainian women in Romania invite the moral commitment and responsibility of Romanian audiences to recognize their capacity for resilience through two distinct patterns of representation. One portrays Ukrainian women in situations where they are being helped by various institutional and organizational actors, while actively participating in the reconfiguration of their identities in the country of destination (*Euronews*, *ProTV*); the other emphasizes the personal involvement of regular Romanians in actions that demonstrate initiative, solidarity and a sense of urgency (*Recorder*). Encompassing both generic and individualized migrant depictions, the two patterns and the types of audience engagement they invite – more distant in the former, more mobilizing in the latter – empower Ukrainian women refugees to different degrees, as “both agents and subjects of symbolic power relations,” within a mediated relationship of “proximity-distance.”

**Baya’s** analysis of Otilia Babara’s documentary *Love Is Not an Orange* (2022) is less optimistic in terms of the opportunities to transform loss into agency. Based on intimate reconstructed monologues and archival footage arising from the migration experiences of Moldovan women and their families left behind, the documentary and the analysis trace the consequences of emigration through layered narratives of family separation, adaptation and evolving identity. Home videos become “microhistorical” devices and act as “reverse social remittances” that provide emotional support to migrant mothers forced to leave their children

at home. As in other accounts of displacement (Sarkar & Roy, 2025, this issue; Shcherbyna & Havlin, 2025, this issue) the micro stories paint the picture of broader social and historical phenomena.

The epistemic injustice suffered by Ukrainian women scholars present in Shcherbyna and Havlin's work is echoed in the analysis presented by **Sarkar and Roy** of Domnica Rădulescu's memoir *Dream in a Suitcase*, which recounts the author's journey from communist Romania to the "freedom" of the United States. As Sarkar and Roy observe, despite the transition to a place of opportunity, women migrants remain defined by precarious citizenship, with women's ambitions often rendered invisible or deviant. Here too, displacement compels Rădulescu to reinvent herself, highlighting once more the intersectional pressures migrant women undergo. Both the space of the homeland and the space of the hostland are experienced as heterotopias, because they remain defined by some form of subjugation, with "home" being felt as liminal, fractured.

The colonial hangovers (inferred by Sarkar & Roy and described by Shcherbyna & Havlin, this issue) that limit the professional options of women from the East who find themselves in enforced exile comes clearly through in **Dadashova's** analysis of *Parisian Days* (1947), by Azerbaijani-French author Banine. For Banine, colonial marginality becomes diasporic marginality, while intersectionality continues to define her postimperial identity. She is displaced in cultural and gender terms but chooses writing as a form of resistance to both patriarchal and cultural imposition. Rather than focusing on loss, she deploys reflective nostalgia (Boym, 2001) to highlight the contradictions of her positionality in-between Russian imperial culture, French modernity and her Azerbaijani heritage, and uses these tensions to inspire her creative emancipation. As Dadashova compellingly argues, Banine embodies an "intersectional understanding of displacement."

The articles in this special section showcase the gendered impact of Central and Eastern European migration from intersectional, postcolonial and poststructuralist perspectives. Systemic structures often reproduce the marginalization of women at destination, and yet migration also offers women opportunities for self-representation, agency, visibility and empowerment. The authors in this special section expand existing research about the capital generated by women's migration and forms of transnational identification through reworking a number of conceptual devices, such as "intersectional trap/entrapment" (Shcherbyna & Havlin), "agency-in-waiting" (Ciocea et al.), "precarious citizenship" (Sarkar & Roy), "intersectional

displacement” (Dadashova), “mediated relationship of proximity-distance” (Beciu) and “reverse remittances” (Baya). The evidence provided through interviews, memoirs and autoethnography by women from Central and Eastern Europe, who carry inter-imperial, postcolonial and gender oppression throughout their refugee and migratory experiences, highlights the enhancing contribution of emotional engagement and support provided by witnessing audiences (Beciu), the archival nature of microhistorical narratives (Baya) and the power of self-realization achieved through memorialization (Dadashova; Sarkar & Roy). Bringing this evidence into the public domain creates an archive of knowledge that leads to self-reinvention and empowerment.

The articles in this special section also point to the merging of women’s intimate spaces, where they raise a family and attempt to reimagine a home, with the public spaces migrant women are required to perform their new identities in. This new space of liminality and multiplicity brings into relief the complexity of adaptation that might entail personal and professional reinvention (Ciocea et al.; Dadashova; Sarkar & Roy, Shcherbyna & Havlin), as well as engendering practical and emotional support (Baya; Beciu) in the creation of networks of hope and self-realization.

All the articles engage with discourse and its role in shaping, in the sense of (de)constructing, gendered transnational ways of living, acting and feeling, from the macro level of policy texts and media representations to the micro one of women migrants’ (self-)identification and (self-)reflection in interviews or media productions, within a broad post-national methodological framework (see Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002, on “methodological nationalism”). Public and semi-public discourses about/by women migrants and refugees from Central and Eastern Europe can yield insights into the reproduction and negotiation of gendered relations in interstitial, hybrid transnational spaces, the critical questioning and opposition to gendered hegemonic worldviews at the intersection with those on ethnicity, class or geopolitical provenance, the relationships of solidarity with publics and citizens of the countries of destination, and of moral and emotional commitment to those of the countries of origin. The articles demonstrate the potential lying in the semiotic affordances of different genres (news story, documentary, non-fictional memoir, interview transcripts) and communication dispositives, with their technological affordances, to reveal the rich dynamics of gendered transnational relations, including of power, and to make (in)visible the opportunities and challenges women migrants are faced with in transnational social fields.

The authors, almost all women and some with migration experience, invite reflection on the symbolic power of research to influence public discourse and policy. Multiple voices in these articles (the researcher's, the media or social imaginary in the country of destination, the oppressive discourses and policies in the country of origin, the voices of migrants that come through videos, memoirs and interviews) amount to narratives that are juxtaposed against national, historical narratives that often silence individual voices and simplify the complexity of migration's impact on both individuals and communities.

### Acknowledgment

Our editorial project was supported by a *Mobility grant for senior researchers in the diaspora* (PN-IV-P2-2.2-MCD-2024-0314, The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding; proponent: Irina Diana Mădroane). In October 2024, Ruxandra Trandafoiu visited the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies (CISG) at the West University of Timișoara. Research, teaching and training activities focused on the relationship between gender and migration, highlighting new theoretical and methodological approaches. The support of staff and students at the Faculty of Letters, History, Philosophy and Theology was essential for fostering the collaboration which resulted in the current special section. Thanks are also due to colleagues who contributed to a previous (unfunded) research project proposal, in particular Alexandru I. Cârlan (The National University of Political Studies and Public Administration) and Adina Baya (West University of Timișoara).

### References:

- Adair, G., Fasselt, R., & McLaughlin, C. (Eds.). (2024). *The Routledge Companion to Migration Literature*. Routledge.
- Ahmed, S., Castañeda, C., Fortier, A.-M., & Sheller, M. (2003). Introduction: Uprootings/regroundings: Questions of home and migration. In S. Ahmed, C. Castañeda, A.-M. Fortier, & M. Sheller (Eds.), *Uprootings/regroundings: Questions of home and migration* (pp. 1–19). Berg.
- Agamben, G. (2000). *Means without end: Notes on politics* (V. Binetti & C. Casarino, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press.
- Amelina, A., & Lutz, H. (2019). *Gender and migration: Transnational and intersectional prospects*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351066303>
- Andrews, J., Isański, J., Nowak, M., Sereda, V., Vacroux, A., & Vakhitova, H. (2023). Feminized forced migration: Ukrainian war refugees. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 99, 102756. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2023.102756>
- Anthias, F. (2006). Belonging in a globalising and unequal world: Rethinking translocations. In N. Yuval-Davis, K. Kannabiran, & U. Vieten (Eds.), *The situated politics of belonging* (pp. 16–31). Sage.
- Anthias, F. (2013). Intersectional what? Social divisions, intersectionality and levels of analysis. *Ethnicities*, 13(1), 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796812463547>
- Babara, O. (Director). (2022). *Love is not an orange* [Film]. Clin d'Oeil Films; Basalt Film; Alegria Productions.

2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

- Baldassar, L. (2008). Missing kin and longing to be together: Emotions and the construction of co-presence in transnational relationships. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29(3), 247–266. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860802169196>
- Baldassar, L. (2016). De-demonizing distance in mobile family lives: Co-presence, care circulation and polymedia as vibrant matter. *Global Networks*, 16(2), 145–163. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12109>
- Banine. (2003). *Parisian days* (A. Thompson-Ahmadova, Trans.). Peter Owen Publishers.
- Basch, L., Glick Schiller, N., & Szanton Blanc, C. (2005 [1994]). *National unbound: Transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments and deterritorialized nation-states*. Routledge.
- Bauböck, R. (2010). Cold constellations and hot identities: Political theory questions about transnationalism and diaspora. In R. Bauböck & T. Faist (Eds.), *Diaspora and transnationalism: Concepts, theories and methods* (IMISCOE Research, pp. 295–321). Amsterdam University Press. <https://doi.org/10.5117/9789089642387>
- Baya, A. (2025a). Is it still journalism? Hybridity and genre innovation in Recorder’s alternative video reporting on Ukrainian women migrants in Romania. *Journal of Media Research - Revista de Studii Media*, 18(2), 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.24193/jmr.52.1>
- Baya, A. (2025b, this issue). “We gained our independence, but we lost our mothers”: Documenting post-communist female migration through home videos in Otilia Babara’s *Love is not an orange*. *Gender Studies*, 25(1), 112–131. <https://doi.org/10.2478/genst-2025-0005>
- Beciu, C. (2025, this issue). The visibility of Ukrainian women refugees in the Romanian public sphere. Representations and modes of engagement. *Gender Studies*, 25(1), 85–111. <https://doi.org/10.2478/genst-2025-0004>
- Beciu, C., Ciocea, M., Mădroane, I. D., & Cârlan, A. I. (2018). Introduction: Intra-EU labor migration and transnationalism in media discourses: A public problem approach. In C. Beciu, M. Ciocea, I. D. Mădroane, & A. I. Cârlan (Eds.), *Debating migration as a public problem: National publics and transnational fields* (pp. 1–37). Peter Lang. doi: 10.3726/b14216
- Beciu, C., Mădroane, I. D., Ciocea, M., & Cârlan, A. I. (2017). Media engagement in the transnational social field: Discourses and repositionings on migration in the Romanian public sphere. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 14(3), 256–275. [doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2017.1284682](https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2017.1284682)
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
- Boatcă, M. (2013). Multiple Europes and the politics of difference from within. In H. Brunkhorst & G. Grözinger (Eds.), *Studies on political sociology, the study of Europe* (pp. 51–66). <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845225487>
- Boatcă, M., & Parvulescu, A. (2020). Creolizing Transylvania: Notes on coloniality and inter-imperiality. *History of the Present*, 10(1), 9–27. <https://doi.org/10.1215/21599785-8221398>
- Boccagni, P. (2013). Caring about migrant care workers: From private obligations to transnational social welfare? *Critical Social Policy*, 34(2), 221–240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018313500867>
- Boym, S. (2001). *The future of nostalgia*. Basic Books.

- Brubaker, R., & Cooper, F. (2000). Beyond “identity.” *Theory and Society*, 29(1), 1–47.  
<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007068714468>
- Capussotti, E. (2007). Modernity versus backwardness: Italian women’s perceptions of self and other. In L. Passerini, D. Lyon, E. Capussotti, & I. Laliotou (Eds.), *Women migrants from East to West: Gender, mobility and belonging in contemporary Europe* (pp. 195–211). Berghahn Books.
- Castles, S., & Miller, M. (1993). *Age of migration*. Macmillan.
- Chari, S., & Verdery, K. (2009). Thinking between the posts: Postcolonialism, postsocialism, and ethnography after the Cold War. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 51(1), 6–34.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417509000024>
- Chițac, I., Michielsens, E., & Miles, L. (2025). *Bricolentreprenuring: A comparative phenomenological study of Ukrainian refugees’ entrepreneurial bricolage practices in the UK and Romania*. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 37(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2025.2473101>
- Chouliaraki, L., & Stolic, T. (2017). Rethinking media responsibility in the refugee “crisis”: A visual typology of European news. *Media, Culture & Society*, 39(8), 1162–1177.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717726163>
- Christou, A., & Kofman, E. (2022). *Gender and migration: IMISCOE short reader*. Springer.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91971-9>
- Ciocea, M., Negrea-Busuioc, E., Toader, F., & Cheregi, B. F. (2025, this issue). Resilient adaptation or reclaimed agency? Ukrainian women’s negotiation of integration in Romania. *Gender Studies*, 25(1), 52–84.  
<https://doi.org/10.2478/genst-2025-0003>
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). *Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics*. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139–167. Retrieved from <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>
- Dadashova, S. (2025, this issue). “Not one of them:” Exile, colonial memory, and identity in Banine’s *Parisian Days*. *Gender Studies*, 25(1), 157–178. <https://doi.org/10.2478/genst-2025-0007>
- Davis, R. G. (Ed.). (2012). *The transnationalism of American culture: Literature, film and music*. Routledge.
- Dolea, A. (2024). *Diaspora diplomacy, emotions, and disruption: A conceptual and analytical framework* (CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy). USC Center on Public Diplomacy.  
<https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/default/files/Diaspora%20Diplomacy>
- Doyle, L. (2020). *Inter-imperiality: Vying empires, gendered labour and the literary arts of alliance*. Duke University Press.
- Faist, T. (2009). Making and remaking the transnational: Of boundaries, social spaces and social mechanisms. *Spectrum: Journal of Global Studies*, 1(2), 67–89.
- Foucault, M. (1967, March 14). *Of other spaces: Utopias and heterotopias* (J. Miskowiec, Trans.). *Architecture / Mouvement / Continuité*, 5, 46–49.
- Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press.
- Gawlewicz, A., Narkowicz, K., & Wright, S. (2023). Heroes or villains? Migrant essential workers and combined hostilities of Covid-19 and Brexit. *Discover Society: New Series*, 3(2).

2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

- <https://discoversociety.org/2023/03/30/heroes-or-villains-migrant-essential-workers-and-combined-hostilities-of-covid-19-and-brexit/>
- Georgiou, M. (2012). Introduction: Gender, migration and the media. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35(5), 791–799. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.628041>
- Goldis, A. (2025). The migrant’s voice and the colonizer’s gaze in Romanian 2000s fiction. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 61(4), 567–581. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2025.2529475>
- Guarnizo, L. E., & Smith, M. P. (1998). The locations of transnationalism. In M. P. Smith & L. E. Guarnizo (Eds.), *Transnationalism from below: Comparative urban and community research* (Vol. 6, pp. 3–34). Transaction Publishers.
- Hochschild, A. R. (2000). Global care chains and emotional surplus value. In W. Hutton & A. Giddens (Eds.), *On the edge: Living with global capitalism* (pp. 130–146). Jonathan Cape.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2011). *Gender and migration scholarship: An overview from a 21st century perspective*. *Migraciones Internacionales*, 6(1), 219–233. <https://doi.org/10.17428/rmi.v6i20.1066>
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., & Avila, E. (1997). “I’m here, but I’m there”: The meanings of Latina transnational motherhood. *Gender & Society*, 11(5), 548–571. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124397011005003>
- IOM [International Organization for Migration]. (2024). *World Migration Report 2024*. <https://doi.org/10.18356/9789292685980>
- Kaur, R., & Grassilli, M. (2019). Towards a Fifth Cinema. *Third Text*, 33(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2018.1546452>
- Köngeter, S., & Smith, W. (2015). Transnational agency: Migrants, movements, and social support crossing borders. In S. Köngeter & W. Smith (Eds.), *Transnational agency and migration: Actors, movements and social support* (pp. 1–20). Routledge.
- Musolff, A., & Viola, L. (2019). Migration and crisis identity. In L. Viola & A. Musolff (Eds.), *Migration and media: Discourses about identities in crisis* (Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture, Vol. 81, pp. 1–10). John Benjamins.
- Levitt, P., & Schiller, N. G. (2004). Conceptualizing simultaneity: A transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 1002–1039. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00227.x>
- Lewicki, A. (2023). East–west inequalities and the ambiguous racialisation of “Eastern Europeans.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49(6), 1481–1499. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2022.2154910>
- Lutz, H. (2008). Introduction: Migrant domestic workers in Europe. In H. Lutz (Ed.), *Migration and domestic work: A European perspective on a global theme* (pp. 1–10). Ashgate.
- Lyon, D. (2007). Moral and cultural boundaries in representations of migrants: Italy and the Netherlands in comparative perspective. In L. Passerini, D. Lyon, E. Capussotti, & I. Laliotou (Eds.), *Women migrants from East to West: Gender, mobility and belonging in contemporary Europe* (pp. 212–227). Berghahn Books.
- Madianou, M. (2014). Polymedia communication and mediatized migration: An ethnographic approach. In K. Lundby (Ed.), *Mediatization of communication* (pp. 323–348). De Gruyter Mouton.

- Mădroane, I. D. (2017). Symbolic (self-)identifications of care workers in diasporic media: Romanian migrant women in Italy. *Gender Studies*, 16(1), 87–114. <https://doi.org/10.2478/genst-2018-0008>
- Mădroane, I. D. (2021). Shame, (dis)empowerment and resistance in diasporic media: Romanian transnational migrants' reclassification struggles. In I. Reifová & M. Hájek (Eds.), *Mediated shame of class and poverty across Europe* (pp. 61–83). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-73543-2\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-73543-2_4)
- Mădroane, I. D., & Cărlan, A. I. (2024). The enactment of rhetorical citizenship in a cultural journalism podcast: Empowering low-skilled women migrants. *Feminist Media Studies*, 24(6), 1405–1421. [doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2023.2236806](https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2023.2236806)
- Mora, C., & Piper, N. (2021). An intersectional and global approach to the study of gender and migration. In C. Mora & N. Piper (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of gender and migration* (pp. 1–16). Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-63347-9\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-63347-9_1)
- Ozyegin, G., & Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2008). Conclusion: Domestic work, migration and the new gender order in contemporary Europe. In H. Lutz (Ed.), *Migration and domestic work: A European perspective on a global theme* (pp. 195–208). Ashgate.
- Panzaru, C., & Gravina, G. (2024). “Care Drain” from East to West: The narrative of Romanian women migrant working in the Italian domestic care sector. *Health & Social Care in the Community*. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2024/7435493>
- Parreñas, R. S. (2005). Long distance intimacy: Class, gender and intergenerational relations between mothers and children in Filipino transnational families. *Global Networks*, 5(4), 317–336. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2005.00122.x>
- Passerini, L., Lyon, D., Capussotti, E., & Laliotou, I. (Eds.). (2007). *Editors' introduction*. In *Women migrants from East to West: Gender, mobility and belonging in contemporary Europe* (pp. 1–20). Berghahn Books.
- Pessar, P. R., & Mahler, S. J. (2003). Transnational migration: Bringing gender in. *International Migration Review*, 37(3), 812–846. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2003.tb00159.x>
- Ponzanesi, S. (2020). Digital diasporas: Postcoloniality, media and affect. *Interventions*, 22(8), 977–993. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2020.1718537>
- Rădulescu, D. (2021). *Dream in a suitcase: The story of an immigrant life*. Austin Macauley Publishers.
- Sarkar, D., & Roy, D. (2025, this issue). “But what are you, mama?": Gendered migration, epistemic injustice, and feminist resistance in Domnica Rădulescu's *Dream in a Suitcase* (2022). *Gender Studies*, 25(1), 132–156. <https://doi.org/10.2478/genst-2025-0006>
- Shcherbyna, M., & Havlin, T. (2025, this issue). Intersectional trap of (in)visible identities and belongings. Between engagement and entrapment of displaced Ukrainian women scientists. *Gender Studies*, 25(1), 23–51. <https://doi.org/10.2478/genst-2025-0002>.
- Stan, A. (2025). The new subalterns: Economic migration, Eastern Europe, and neocolonial paths in contemporary literature. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2025.2535696>
- Todorova, M. N. (1997). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University Press.

- Tuider, E. (2015). Between empowerment and exploitation: Migrant women's transnational practices on the Northern Mexican border. In S. Köngeter & W. Smith (Eds.), *Transnational agency and migration: Actors, movements and social support* (pp. 23–43). Routledge.
- Trandafoiu, R. (2022). *The politics of migration and diaspora in Eastern Europe: Media, public discourse and policy*. Routledge.
- Trandafoiu, R. (2024). Introduction. In R. Trandafoiu (Ed.), *Migration, dislocation and movement on screen* (pp. 1–14). Berghahn.
- Trandafoiu, R., & Balabanova, E. (forthcoming). Part solution, part problem? How Romanians and Bulgarians navigate Facebook, gender and entrepreneurship in the UK. *Journal of Global Diaspora & Media*. In L. Candidatu et al. (Eds.), *Researching gender and digital media in migration and diaspora settings* (Special Issue).
- Triandafyllidou, A., & Monteiro, S. (2024). Migration narratives on social media: Digital racism and subversive migrant subjectivities. *First Monday*, 29(8). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v29i8.13715>
- Vertovec, S. (2009). *Transnationalism*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203927083>
- Vlase, I. (2013). Women's social remittances and their implications at household level: A case study of Romanian migration to Italy. *Migration Letters*, 10(1), 81–90. <https://doi.org/10.59670/ml.v10i1.113>
- Wimmer, A., & Glick Schiller, N. G. (2002). Methodological nationalism and the study of migration. *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 43(2), 217–240. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000397560200108X>
- Wolff, L. (1994). *Inventing Eastern Europe: The map of civilization on the mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford University Press.
- Zappettini, F. (2019). *European identities in discourse: A transnational citizens' perspective*. Bloomsbury Academic.

**Irina Diana MĂDROANE** is Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and Cultural Studies at the Faculty of Letters, History, Philosophy and Theology, West University of Timișoara. She has co-edited a special issue on “Discourse in Transnational Social Fields” in *Critical Discourse Studies* (2017, Taylor & Francis) and a book, *Debating Migration as a Public Problem: National Publics and Transnational Fields* (Peter Lang, 2018). Since 2020, Irina Diana Mădroane has been the editor-in-chief of the *Gender Studies* journal (De Gruyter/Paradigm) and the executive director of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies at the West University of Timișoara.

**Ruxandra TRANDAFOIU** is Professor of Politics, Communication and Diaspora in the Department of History, Geography and Social Sciences at Edge Hill University. Her research explores the political engagement and advocacy of diasporic communities and investigates how technology shapes transnational mobility. She is the author of *Diaspora Online: Identity Politics and Romanian Migrants* (Berghahn) and *The Politics of Migration and Diaspora in Eastern Europe: Media, Public Discourse and Policy* (Routledge), as well as several edited collections and numerous articles exploring the relationship between mobility, public discourse and state policy.

2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).