

BEYOND MOTHERHOOD: UKRAINIAN FEMALE LABOR MIGRATION TO ITALY

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Statement

I hereby state that the thesis contains no materials accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions. The thesis contains no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

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Abstract

Conceptualizing contemporary labor migration from Ukraine as a form of transnational, cross-generational familial project, this dissertation looks into the shifting practices of Ukrainian women's migration to Italy and asks what kinds of ruptures, coping mechanisms and continuities were triggered and emerged in response to this transnational, feminized migration.

Drawing on the fieldwork conducted among Ukrainian care- and domestic workers in Bologna and Naples, my research has indicated the centrality of motherhood in such familial migration projects led by women. To bring out dynamic role of motherhood in imagining, strategizing and carrying migration I introduce an analytical distinction between motherhood as a trope and motherhood as a situational practice. Such distinction between the two allows me to address the very mechanism of justifying, making sense of and dealing with the unequally distributed responsibilities within migrants transnational social fields, and to capture the emotion work and negotiations that shape these fields and the power struggles within them.

Though motherhood has been addressed extensively in transnational literature dealing with migration of women from the global South to the global North, neither the studies which analyze Ukrainian migration to Italy under motherhood as trope nor those which analyze through the lens of motherhood as experience are able to capture the multifaceted dynamics of shifting of meanings and practices that allow women to deal with prolonged absences and resist blaming discourses of both Italian and Ukrainian states that often surround female mobility. Shifting within their positions in transnational social fields between the modes of motherhood at home and in migration, women learn to engage in a variety of economic social and intimate relationships and turn migration into a beneficial project worth undertaking. Seeing how motherhood as an idealized trope is translated into the situational practices not only at the intersection of migration and family, but also at the the site where migration brings rupture into women's professional and personal lives this dissertation explores how women daily shift between various regimes of performativity and identification, which enables them to maximize earnings, maintain personal integrity, keep ties within the transnational families, feel strong about themselves, protect themselves from the pressure of the public opinion and various forms of exploitations.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

When in winter 2010 I set out from Ivano-Frankivsk to a small village nearby to interview yet again Oksana Pronyuk, one of the central figures in my research, I could imagine the direction that our conversation would take. Indeed, Oksana reiterates her vision of the consequences of Ukrainian female migration to Italy.

Look at who has gone to work in Italy. It's mothers! It's the maternal migration. What is a family without a mother?! What kind of childhood can a child have without a mother? Ukraine will have to face the consequences of this migration years from now, when all those children who are now separated from their mothers will grow up.

Oksana, a forty-seven year old returnee migrant who has spent three years working as a domestic worker in Bologna, interrupts her passionate commentary to greet an old lady who enters a tiny convenience store, which she runs these days and where our interview takes place. Surrounded by buckets, flowery table clothes, a variety of bulbs, ropes and many other necessities Oksana's shop offers to the villagers, I sit perched on a tiny stool by a table supporting both a cashier machine and a computer, which according to my interviewee, is "her only connection to the world."

As I watch Oksana chatting enthusiastically with her customer about farming and prices, I realize more and more how much she seems to be out of place in this cabin, surrounded by nails, buckets and building instruments. A professional computer programmer, with an undeniable creative spark, after her return from Italy in 2006 she found it impossible to get a job, even remotely related to her profession. Instead, with the money earned in Italy, she supported her husband opening a small village shop a few kilometers away from their home, in Ivano-Frankivsk. For lack of any other paid income, Oksana is now resolved to work as a shop assistant.

My interviewee has strong leadership qualities, which I realize once again when by the time her customer has paid for her purchase she manages to convince the old lady to organize an exhibition of her embroidery in the tiny shop. Oksana tells me that she has also been putting together and printing an A4 format newspaper for the villagers ever since she started a job here and she says it is really picking up. She complains that selling things is "not her thing" and in the times she is not busy with customers she works on her book of memoirs about the Ukrainian community in Bologna between 2003-2006.

Oksana then goes back to our interview by saying how painful it was after her return from Bologna to reconnect to her teen-age sons: "It took me two years at least to gain their trust again.

Two years to melt their hearts, to warm them up towards me.” Upon her return in 2006 she organized a group of social support for the returned migrants and their families, called *Pieta*, with a clear religious reference to the image of the mother mourning her child. Among the two other organizers of the group are Oksana’s friends from Bologna who had returned at the same time: Alla, who after four years of efforts upon her return from Italy is still trying to get on talking terms with her 25-year-old daughter, and Olexander, who though has migrated to Italy with his wife, found his marriage disintegrating and has since returned home alone.

I met Oksana, who became my first contact in 2006 at one of the events organized by *Pieta*. In these years Oksana has gathered much strength and experience in activism, raising awareness about labor migration and especially confronting the blaming discourses surrounding the issue of female migration from Ukraine. Among her most outstanding victories are her role in organizing the annual nine-day walking Pilgrimage dedicated to the families of labor migrants, organizing a traveling photo-exhibition “Our People in Italy,” the newspaper page “Labor Migrants’ Wave” which she has been publishing monthly for three years and the publication of two monographs of memoirs on the time in migration. She has also facilitated several collected volumes of migrants’ fiction and poetry, numerous exhibitions, concerts, awareness campaigns in schools, libraries and churches all over the Western Ukraine. In each one of her activities, Oksana’s emphasis is on the effect of migration on the family, trying to connect the families separated by borders by the exchange of the written word, children’s pictures, photographs and video records meticulously taken during the events and steadily delivered to mothers working in Italy in an effort to bring their lives and experiences closer. In her book of memoirs on her life in Bologna Oksana points out more than one disruption of migrants’ lives brought on by migration.

The people who left [Ukraine] were not likely to become labor migrants; they were highly educated people, intelligentsia and the labor potential [of the country]. The people who left the country were factory and plants’ workers, teachers and doctors, who have had 20 years of work experience and one single entry in their labor record book¹. The people who left were mothers, who had never left their homes and families before. These people left searching for work and earnings, and none of them were ready for the trial by the [prolonged] labor migration (Pronyuk 2009:6).

However, by 2010 when I interviewed her in the small convenience store over the Christmas time, in four years of the existence of *Pieta*, they had not managed to add a single member to their association, and Oksana, though engaged much help from various people, remains practically the only driving force behind many of these events. Among all the pained words of separation and disruptions that migration has brought to her, she all of a sudden comments with sadness: “What I really miss from Italy is our comradeship... that friendship, that inspirational creative power that

¹ I.e. Had one continuous employment for the same company for many years.

we had as a group of migrant activists working, after endless hours of cleaning, on a church paper, or an a choir performance or on a demo in support of the Orange Revolution. That is impossible to re-create here, where we are so immersed into our positions in the society and in our families.”

The quote from Pronyuk’s book (2009) sums up the multiplicity of dilemmas linked to this migration for the Ukrainian economy, society, migrants’ families and individual life-trajectories of migrants. For the author, whose voice here eloquently sums up the multifaceted public debates about the significance of labor migration in Ukraine, migration stands for a major turning point, a break with the previously established professional, familial and personal life and a dramatic event for the whole Ukraine. Migration to Italy, which is estimated as the second largest migration destination, has become the most visible one in political and public debates in Ukraine due to its gender and age composition. In 2007 about 83% of all Ukrainians in Italy were women,² mostly between 41 and 60 (Markov et al. 2009), i.e. as Pronyuk points out “the mothers and the professionals,” most of whom started their careers and families during the Soviet era.

Today’s Ukrainian migration to Italy, which is estimated at 600 thousand (Markov et al. 2009; Khomra, Ozhevan, and Prymak 2006; Shuster 2009; Pronyuk 2009) is characterized by both a long-term continuous stay of migrants and a very low record of returnees to Ukraine. Despite the changes that this migration might have brought into migrants’ biographies, it remains a very durable and dynamic phenomenon, not in the least due to the significant energy, resources and time that migrant women invest in maintaining strong and frequent connections with their families in Ukraine. Their daily activities simultaneously follow their working-day tasks in Italy and the their children’s school-day in Ukraine, as some women call as often as five to seven times a day trying to make sure their children have had proper lunch and are dressed up warmly for the outdoors. At the same time, migrant women inhabit heterogeneous spaces in Italy, in which they, especially with time, find ways of establishing new professional, social and personal lives. The connections, simultaneous and heterogeneous in their strength and meaning, link women with the place of home and the place of migration thus constituting migrants’ transnational social fields (Glick Schiller and Levitt 2004). The strength and directionality of care-flows, responsibilities and dependencies within these social fields create complex hierarchal networks based on migrants’ legality status, age, and gender. Such hierarchies are a subject to constant renegotiations by all the participants; it is in these struggles and tensions I locate the emerging coping mechanisms

² Compare to Portugal with only 38% of women or Spain 50,3 % women. The only other comparable gender / age relation is the case of Greece (where 70 % are women and majority are in their 40s) but in its total number there are only 20 000 Ukrainians registered in Greece. (Markov et al. 2009) (More debate on the numbers of migrants in chapter 2).

and strategies that migrants develop in order to deal with the personal and professional ruptures that migration brings into their biographies and their family histories.

Prompted by the initial scope of questions, - what kinds of ruptures as well as coping mechanisms and continuities were triggered by and came in response to this particular type of migration, i.e. transnational and feminized labor migration from Ukraine to Italy? - my argument will unfold at the intersection of migration with three specific sites, i.e. 1) family and gender-defined family roles, 2) labor and care-work and 3) space. While I will discuss these intersections in a more nuanced way in my theoretical chapter (chapter 3) I briefly refer here to how I locate ruptures in these three main spheres and what processes and negotiations I describe as continuities.

Thus, when looking at the intersection of migration and family, I frame migration not only as an act of leaving home and working abroad but as a familial, cross-generational project. Migrants and their non-migrating family members assume and negotiate mutual but not equal responsibilities in relation to each other based on their age, gender and changing position within an ongoing familial migration project. The intersection of labor and migration allows me to look into paid domestic and care-work as a specific labor regime that creates gendered demand for workers and reinforces gendered and ethnic hierarchies. Performed in the privacy of the employers' homes, domestic and care-work often creates multidirectional disciplining regimes, dependences and intimacies between the migrant and the employer. These tensions and negotiations often trigger the formation of a new marketable migrant self. By addressing the intersection of migration and space I refer to the latter as a specific locality which, a) being experienced bodily and emotionally, creates multilayered connections to the place of migration, b) provides specific pathways and shapes migrants opportunities for incorporation and maintaining transnational connections, c) responds to migrants' presence and is shaped by it.

Various ruptures that migration triggers in all these sites stem not only from the abrupt changes in personal life or professional biographies. Ruptures also constitute the ongoing dissonances between the family situation migrant women might have in Ukraine and lack of family, or on the contrary, intimate relationships established in Italy. Similarly, rupture in a labor sphere might refer to the ongoing process of negotiation in which a migrant woman has to come to terms with her loss or giving up of a prestigious position in Ukraine and instead working for a higher salary as a cleaning lady in Italy. In terms of space, the dissonance between experiencing the socio-spatial geography of home in Ukraine and coming to terms with the role of foreigner and migrant in the streets of Italy might be a brief example of a spatial rupture.

To capture the directionality of flows of responsibilities and entitlements, as well as the flows of care and support within transnational social fields, I refer to the concept of *morality of transnationalism* in which migrants and non-migrants are positioned differently and where the experience of leaving, being left behind and returning appears to have inherent moral dimensions (Carling 2008a:1457). I define the mechanism that allows migrants to make sense of and position themselves in transnational social fields as *emotion work*; “an active stance vis-à-vis one’s own feeling” (Hochschild 2003a:95) that allows to explain and justify one’s position, choices and situational practices and act upon these choices with conviction. The position of a woman and a mother as a migrant is particularly heavily embedded in various moral obligations. As it is seen from the opening of this introduction, within this migration motherhood functions on many levels. It is a dilemma of separation with children in order to be able to “provide them a better life” and an issue of public and political discourses, often accusing women of neglecting their children. To capture the mechanisms of emotion work done around motherhood, I introduce an analytical distinction between motherhood as a trope and motherhood as a situational practice. This methodological distinction allows me to see the processes of translation of moral judgments and beliefs linked to motherhood into daily practices and strategies in migration.

Building on my analytical concern with ruptures and continuities, my ethnographic chapters evolve at the intersection of migration with gender and family, labor and space. Following the introductory chapter, chapter 2 will address the important socio-economic and historical background for Ukrainian migration to Italy (and particularly Bologna and Naples) and embed it into the wider context of labor migration from Ukraine. Chapter 3 will go into a more nuanced discussion of my argument about the ruptures and continuities at the intersection of the specific sites and position my work in relation to the literature engaged with similar issues in migration studies.

Locating one of the central ruptures experienced by migrant women in a prolonged separation from the family and, in particular, from children, chapter four focuses on the long-distance connections and morality of transnationalism (Carling 2008a) emerging within migrants’ families separated by borders. By focusing on the symbolic and practical meaning of the flow of material objects across borders and the system of mini-vans transporting these objects, the chapter discusses not only the pain of separation within transnational families but also the strategies of maintaining intimacy despite the prolonged absences and the directionality of care and responsibilities within the families.

Chapter 5 continues to discuss the ruptures and continuities occurring at the intersection of migration and family by looking into the experience of migrants’ reunification in Italy with their

children. Introducing the arrival of the younger generation into individual and family migration stories opens up a new perspective on the meaning of gender, life-stage and age within the familial migration project that is carried out in the name of and sustained by the needs and support of the whole family. The reunification with family members in migration is often undertaken in an attempt to bridge the separation and create the continuity in one's familial life. However, as my material indicates, the arrival of the new generation creates new types of ruptures for both newly arrived migrants and for the women who have pioneered migration, further shifting the hierarchies, obligations and entitlement within transnational families.

Chapter 6 steps away in its focus from the issues of migrants' families and looks into the intersection of labor and migration. A number of ruptures, such as drastic downward mobility, lack of linguistic skills and entering the intimate space of Italian homes, are linked to labor and make it one of the most central and immediate experiences of migration. Learning to cope with the challenges of a new job, the position of a paid care-giver (as opposed to the non-paid position of mother and a wife in her own family) often becomes one of the strongest senses of achievement in migration, thus creating new forms of connection to the place and in women's professional and personal biographies. Discussing the centrality of the bodily and emotional experiences of the care regimes allows me to capture the construction of a new migrant self, which often reflects the global demand in flexible gendered work force.

Building on the discussion of labor regimes and workspaces in the previous chapter, chapter 7 looks into the "inscription of difference and belonging in urban space" (Ayse Çağlar 2001:601). Exploring the modes of migrants' visibility in public spaces in Naples and Bologna allows me to discuss migrants' self-identification and performing of a gendered migrant self under the scrupulous observation of Italians, other migrants, and migrants' families back in Ukraine. Looking at space as a lived experience is important for understanding the ruptures and the situated practices of place-making that allow migrants to establish meaningful social and experiential connections.

Following the exploration of ruptures and coping mechanisms in relation to family (chapters 3 and 4), and individual experiences of labor and space (chapters 5 and 6) the final ethnographic part, chapter 8, looks into the intimate and sexual relationship that migrant women establish with Italian men. Focusing on intimacies created beyond migrants' transnational families I seek to conclude the discussion of new ruptures and continuities. Chapter 8 thus seeks to break up the dichotomy of money vs. romance and explores how romance, intimacy, and performing work in the intimate sphere of Italian homes involves considerable emotion work (Hochschild 2003b) that brings

money, care, motherhood and sexuality into a complex pattern shaped by the goals and aspirations of the migration project.

Research and Fieldwork Methodology

Location and people. Majority of my research was carried out in two main locations in Italy: Bologna and Naples between August 2007-August 2008. However, I started my research with a nine-day walking Pilgrimage from Sambir to Zarvanytsya in Ukraine, organized by the Bologna community of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), the Sambir chapter of Caritas, and a small but active Association for the Returned Migrants called *Pieta* (in Ivano-Frankivsk). The Walk was dedicated to labor migrants' families and while it started as an annual event in August 2006 it has been growing ever since into a noticeable public event. Thus, when I joined it in 2007 it had 40 participants, many of whom were labor migrants who came back from Bologna for this event or for a short vacation. In 2008, when I finished my field work by attending this event again, there were over a hundred participants, including migrants from other parts of Italy and some of their family members from Ukraine. In 2010 the Pilgrimage had over 300 participants and a place had been allocated in Zarvanytsja monastery, – a destination of the pilgrimage and the home of a widely-known miraculous icon of Mother Mary, - to establish a monument dedicated to labor migrants and their families, called *Pieta*, as a symbol of Mother – Ukraine mourning for her children scattered throughout the world. The much debated monument is constructed with the migrants' donations and emphasizes the sacrifice of mothers in migration in their attempt to give better chances in life to their children.

Joining the Pilgrimage allowed me to get my first contacts, which were in Bologna, while listening to priests' and pilgrims' presentations of migration in every church on their way to Zarvanytsja gave me an insight into the struggles of self-representation and public discourses surrounding the feminized migration. While in the beginning of my research I was doubtful about my contacts due to their affiliation with the UGCC and was very anxious to expand them to those who do not attend the church, I realized upon my arrival in Italy that UGCC is indeed the only overarching organization that provides some sense of infrastructure and unity for Ukrainians from all regions and all religious affiliations (see more in chapter 2).

In the first few months of my stay in Bologna, I visited my expanding contacts in several larger and smaller cities mostly in Northern Italy, i.e. Milan, Padua, Brescia, Mestre and Venice, Ferrara, Ravenna and Rome. In most of these places, my contacts admitted that these locations were not the places of their first arrival in Italy; unless they came to join family members who had been working in Italy before. Many of my contacts, especially among the older generation, first arrived

in Naples or its vicinity and moved North after a year or two, having obtained residence permits and enough money for the move.

Thus, my second research destination became Naples, which provided me with a significant comparison for the Italian context between the situation in the North and in the South, but also gave me, even if indirectly, a longitudinal insight into migration, as most of my respondents have experienced a transformation of migration over the years, starting in the South and moving up North, which offers higher salaries and more secure working conditions and generally attracts migrants with longer term migration plans (see chapters 5 and 7). Naples, which was initially a gateway city for Ukrainian migration into Italy, remains one of the main destinations for the migration “first - timers,” which allowed me to understand the mobility of migrants throughout the years of their migration project, within their status and link their status and experiences to the geographic mobility within Italy (see more in chapter 4 and 7).

Some parts of my research were conducted in Ukraine. Thus, besides the two Pilgrimages which I attended in the beginning and in the end of my fieldwork (August 2007, August 2008), I spent about a month over the winter celebrations (New Year, Christmas, Old New Year) in Ukraine during the time, when many migrants return home to spend these holidays with their families. In Ukraine my research was limited to Western Ukraine regions (mostly the Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv region) which are the major sending regions for Italian migration. Another invaluable location for the research was the 30-hour drives in Ukrainian mini-vans that transport migrants and goods on a weekly basis between Ukraine and Italy. I joined these rides twice going from Ukraine to Italy and four more times going from Italy to Budapest and back, which gave me a great insight into the institutional farce of the border crossing procedures, and also allowed me to see the shifts of self-representation of the migrants literally on the move between Ukraine and Italy (see more in chapter 3).

Pioneered in the late 90s by women in their 40-50s, Ukrainian migration to Italy in 2007-8 was experiencing a fascinating transformation. Faced with the lack of prospects of retiring in Italy, and high precariousness of the political and economic situation in Ukraine, migrant women determined to secure the flow of Italian money into their families by bringing one or more of their adult children over to Italy. In 2003 95% of these women left their children in care in Ukraine (Pronyuk 2009). However, in 2007 only 87 % indicated that their children stayed in Ukraine. These transformations, though did not become per se the focus of my dissertation, guided me in the choice of my respondents. I set out to interview twenty families in both Bologna and Naples, limiting the concept of family to a unit in which at least one representative of the generation of parents and one of the generation of children was experiencing migration to Italy.

A small-scale sociological inquiry conducted by an organization for returned migrants *Pieta* (Ivano-Frankivsk) in 2007 indicated that among children brought to Italy approximately 45 % were between the 21-30 years old (Pronyuk 2009). Among my respondents almost all first-comers were mothers, who then brought in their children (or one child) either under 18 (through the unification of the family legislations) or above 18 and in their early twenties through various semi-legal means. The majority of the children who did not have a family of their own yet and joined their mothers were sons, which gave me space for investigating the shifting gender paradigm in migration as a project spilling over several generations. In many cases when children were married they would bring in their spouses and try to raise their small children in Italy, while still planning to return to Ukraine in a while (see details in chapter 5).

This cross-generational choice of respondents opened up an invaluable depth of the meaning of gender, life-stage and age and linked to them ideas of responsibility and entitlement within migration as a familial project. It also allowed me to challenge the categories of who can be labeled as a migrant, a returned migrant, or a circular migrant and allowed me an insight into families' much detailed situational strategies, their responses to shifting sources of insecurities and precariousness. I also conducted ten interviews with migrants' non-migrating children and family members in Ukraine, however, I used this data mostly as an additional comparison that allowed me to strengthen some points. Including two generations among my main respondents gave me sufficient insight into experiencing migration both as a migrant and as a child-left-behind, as well as an invaluable insight into the experience of the reunification of the family in migration, which gave me a better understanding of the shifting moralities of transnationalism (Carling 2008a) in relation to the non-migrating family members.

In my research I also relied on the interviews and participant observation within single migrants of different ages, as well as had close contacts with migrants from other post-USSR countries (mostly Russia, Belarus, but also Moldova and former Central Asia Soviet Republics). My Italian contacts were limited mostly to the few employers of my respondents, as well as their friends, acquaintances and partners. My institutional contacts included mostly UGCC, Ukrainian civic organizations in Italy, Ukrainian language schools, Ukrainian Consulate representatives, Italian charity and civic organizations dealing with migrants (e.g. Caritas Bologna, ACLI Naples), various centers for immigrants, hospitals and shelters in both Naples and Bologna.

Researcher's positioning. My position as a researcher in many ways determined my methodology and access to information while my research agenda was guided not only by the information that I collected but equally so by the silences I have encountered during my research

and obstacles which I could not resolve or overcome. Thus, being a Ukrainian female in my late 20s allowed me to experience many of the attitudes and institutional regulations that labor migrants from Ukraine face. Even though my position as a holder of a Hungarian resident permit and my experience of traveling abroad put me in a rather privileged position in comparison to some of my respondents for whom their trip to Italy might have been done illegally or was their first trip abroad, as a Ukrainian passport holder most of the time I was assumed to be a labor migrant on the basis of my citizenship, which allowed me to get first-hand experience of how nationality becomes a marker of a status and occupation and projected on to me overall attitudes towards females from Eastern Europe.

However, my privileged position of an “insider” to Ukrainian migration was not all advantageous for the research, as certain cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 2004) that I shared with my respondents made some aspects of migrant experience unspoken but assumed as mutual and understood. Being a young Ukrainian woman also made it difficult for me to discuss certain issues with older women or men without violating a culturally-shared sense of propriety. Thus, it was particularly hard to ask questions about how women deal with prolonged separation from their husbands or how they maintain trust and manage intimate relations with Italian men while maintaining transnational families in Ukraine. Particularly, one of the failures of my research was the fact that I could not approach those husbands who stayed in Ukraine while their wives migrated. The highly stigmatized discourses about women working abroad made it almost impossible for me to approach men left behind, while my position as a young woman did not allow me to ask them about their feelings. However, these failures gave me a very good sense of how strong these discourses are, how determining they are for migrants’ families and what kind of difficulties a migrant woman may experience while trying to challenge these discourses even within her own family.

Approaching families in Italy and in Ukraine contained another, quite unexpected challenge. If my initial contact within a family was through the generation of parents (mother), the younger generation respondents would hardly open up to me; the children would still give me an interview but they would never allow me closer into their leisure, friendships, places of spending time outside of work. Similarly, if I accessed a family through the younger generation, who would open up to me, the generation of their parents would hardly ever take my research seriously or give me more than a very formal and dry interview. Similarly with the families of migrants in Ukraine: even those women who were most open and eloquent in their interviews in Italy often did not want me to contact their families in Ukraine or would specifically ask me not to talk to their husbands in Ukraine. This situation was so predominant among my respondents that I had to resolve to

complement my data from Ukraine by interviewing those families whom I knew had mothers in Italy, but who I had not actually met during my research in Italy.

The failure to come up with equally insightful interviews within one family unit however turned into a most valuable insight into family “politics” and relations between migrants, those family members who have joined them and those who have stayed behind. It brought out the unevenness of the transnational connections; thus even though migration is a project that involves a family unit, the obligations, responsibilities and care flows within these networks are not equal for its members, while all family members negotiate their positions within internal hierarchies.

The core of my materials are semi-structured and life - stories interviews conducted with twenty families in Naples and Bologna. Despite the difficulties described earlier with equal access to migrants of different generations, my interviews usually lasted for 1-2 hours, and most of them did not have follow – up interviews. My most in-depth interviews seemed to be due to the “effect of the train compartment:” people whom I met in the streets, through other friends, or in meeting arranged in advance would often pour out the most intimate stories of their lives. They would agree to me taping the interviews and had no problem in me using it for my work. However, if I tried to follow up the interview, the second meeting would often be awkward, my respondents being visibly uncomfortable due to the fact that I knew so much about them and they knew so little about me, while it was clear that we would be unable to develop further ties of friendship and familiarity (e.g. due to the age differences or time constraints).

Another large part of my material comes from participant observation; thus, during my stay in Italy I lived in shared accommodation with individual migrants and families. Several families in Bologna, Naples and other Italian cities, which I have visited, more briefly opened up the doors of their rented flats for me and generously allowed me to share their daily life with them. With several of these families (in Naples and Bologna) I kept very close contact, participating in various events in their life, sharing leisure, sometimes work and seemingly endless quests for legalizing their status. It was with these families I had accumulated most of my data about the everyday realities of Ukrainian migrants in Italy, though in the end, I never managed to get a formal interview with them.

A significant part of my data comes from the participant observation carried out with various people in specific spaces. For example Ukrainian Sunday bazaars and mini-vans parking lots in many Italian cities became my week-end routines throughout my fieldwork. Long hours spent in parks, call centers, second-hand markets with my unemployed respondents and friends (as most

of my employed respondents would never have free time) gave me an insight into the meaning of precariousness linked with unemployment in migration and gave me a chance to interact with various people, especially migrants from other countries. I also got invaluable data from accompanying my respondents to the immigration offices, charity organizations, hospitals, police, churches and cultural events. On several occasions I could join my respondents at work, where I was often presented to an employer as a “scholar,” a “book-writer,” or a “journalist” and was asked to tell the employers about my project, my time spent in other countries, speak in English or tell them how much my stipend was. On all of these occasions, I could witness a constant struggle for dignity and respect from my respondents’ side even with their most sensitive employers, migrants’ efforts to deal with downward mobility experienced in migration, their desire to show to their employers that “Ukrainians are not just cleaners.”

A special word has to be said about the data which I collected during the numerous cultural events organized by individual migrants, migrant institutions, Italian cities’ municipalities and UGCC. Picnics, trips to various historic places in Italy and abroad, dance clubs organized for migrants of various ages, and places of the emerging vibrant Ukrainian youth culture (especially in Naples) kept reminding me that labor migration is not all about labor. It is also in these places that the interaction with Italians and other migrants presented the most interesting cases for analysis.

The majority of my respondents never gave me their full names. While speaking freely about many quite personal experiences, the exact identification of their first and last names seemed inappropriate, as even among their own friends they would go by generalized names like “Anya from Sambir,” “Ira from Mestre” or an Italian version of their names (see chapter 6). The use of these names seemed to me not so much a matter of keeping anonymity, but rather, a matter of irrelevance of the full name and last name to their Italian experiences. Some of my respondents insisted that in my dissertation I should indicate their full name reasoning that it is a matter of honesty and that as migrants they feel that their voices should be identified and thus testify that “they have nothing to hide.” However, to avoid confusion in my material and misuse of my respondents’ statements I decided to use fictitious names, unless they are public figures who use their position to speak up for migrants’ issues.

Chapter 2. Contextualizing labor migration from Ukraine

General background: Politicizing labor migration from Ukraine

The statistics on the contemporary labor migration from Ukraine display a vast discrepancy in numbers; in 2009-2010 the unofficial numbers quoted widely in Ukrainian media and press suggested that approximately 7-8 million people (Tymkiv 2009), - out of a 47-million population, - left Ukraine to work abroad. Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) and Caritas (Markov et al. 2009), - both institutions taking an active stance in relation to Ukrainian labor migrants both in Ukraine and abroad, - give a more modest number – 4.5 million people (Markov 2009: 92), while Ukrainian state statistics point at 1.5 - 2 million Ukrainians working abroad (Libanova, Burakovskyy, and Myroshnychenko 2008; Malynovska 2006). The remarkable speculation of the fate, location and source of income of some six million people is, however, indicative of the crucial processes accompanying Ukrainian labor migration. Even though statistics fail to provide reliable qualitative data, it suggests that these numbers are played out in a wide range of power struggles and serve the differentiated interests of various social actors.

The confusion within statistics indicates high political interests and social contestation over labor migrants' discourses. Thus, labor migration from Ukraine has been placed in the center of numerous political and socio-economic debates, to name the most prominent ones, the Orange Revolution in 2004-5, parliamentary and presidential elections of 2006 and 2010, declaration of the foreign income and double taxation (2009-2010) debates, dual citizenship debates (2009-2010) and debates on the so-called "Euro/social orphans" (2007-2010)³. The very naming of the labor migrants in these debates becomes a matter of claims and statements; while politicians choose to refer to labor migrants as "Diaspora" labor migrants reject this term arguing that through substituting the terms, Ukrainian politicians deny people working abroad the prospect of return and denounce the state's responsibility for the economic and political situation that triggered migrants' departure in the first place.

Such debates reveal the emerging forms of ruptures and negotiations triggered by mass migration; i.e. questioning of belonging to the nation and the trust to its citizens (and their families) residing outside Ukraine. These ruptures, located in the nationalistic ideological construction of the nation as a community, have given rise to an entire set of ideological, political and economic contestations, the central ones of which are who has the right to migrants'

³ For more detailed discussions on Euro-orphan discourse see chapter 5.

remittances, what rights migrants have in Ukraine based on their participation in Ukrainian life mostly through remittances, how much migrants can be trusted and whether their loyalties lie with Ukraine or their migration state instead. These ideological debates however, - though they lead to the attempts of exclusion migrants from the public, social and political life in Ukraine, - should be rather understood as power struggles over the resources made available through migration, than real representation of the negotiations and new forms of connectivity and arrangements in the transnational life of Ukrainian citizens.

The word which denotes a labor migrant in Ukrainian, *zarobitchanyn* (m) / *zarobitchanka* (f) literally means “the person who earns money.” It has a common connotation of a person who travels away from home in order to earn, and whose work brings neither career development nor settlement in the place of work (Pronyuk 2009). This definition reflects the economic core of this migration. Starting already at the beginning of the 1990s and escalating to a mass phenomenon in the early 2000, it became a major response to the ruptures in professional, social and economic life caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent massive collapse of social services, loss of employment, year-long delays in salaries, polarization of the society, low income and devaluation of diplomas and specialists (Khomra et al. 2006).

Thus, labor migration served its role of economic survival strategy for many Ukrainian families and today it remains a pivotal economic force for the whole national economy; in 2007 the estimations about the remittances sent back to Ukraine based solely on the bank transfers amounted to 27 billion Euro (Shuster 2009; Markov et al. 2009:92) which compared to the 141 billion of the GDP indicates a massive flow of money, invested mostly in upscaling migrants' families' living standards (purchase and refurbishment of accommodation, purchasing consumer goods, celebrating weddings, everyday consumption), education (mostly college level and above and private tutors), and related to them industries like construction, banking, and services (Vianello 2009a; Malynovska 2006; Tymkiv 2009; Markov et al. 2009; Libanova et al. 2008; Khomra et al. 2006; Pronyuk 2009). Thus, Olexander Khomra, in his essay on the effect of Ukrainian labor migration on the life-standard of Ukrainian citizens argues that labor migration has not only prevented the pauperization of the population (especially in the mono-profile towns which lost their pivotal industries in the post-socialist collapse of the centralized economy) but became the main generator of Ukrainian middle class (Khomra et al. 2006).

Despite its significance for Ukrainian economy and visibility in various public discourses, labor migration remains largely unaddressed by the Ukrainian state; Ukraine still has no unified migration policy (Seleshchuk 2009:89). As one of the leading Ukrainian researchers of migration, sociologist Olena Malynovska suggests, despite the ever-growing numbers of its citizens working

abroad, Ukraine has neither spelled out its state policy concerning labor migration, nor has it created a unified organ that would take up advisory, legislative or policy making functions within the spheres of migration (Malynovska 2010). Thus, the first attempt to address labor migration on a state level was made in 2007 but the legislation has never passed the Parliamentary hearings. The few dispersed regulations addressing labor migration that existed were finally recognized as invalid by the newly formed Yanukovych government after the 2010 presidential elections. The state's neglect of labor migration and public populism surrounding the issue comes through particularly vividly in the xenophobic debates during the presidency of Yushchenko (2005-2010) about Ukraine as a buffer-zone for receiving the re-admission refugees from the EU and Ukraine as being swamped by exotic nationals bringing disorder and tropical diseases. In fact, the numbers of refugees that Ukraine has received since its independence in 1991 is only two thousand, - an insignificantly small number in comparison to the some-millions of Ukrainians cited to be working abroad (Malynovska 2010).

The striking disagreement on the number of labor migrants can only partially be attributed to the lack of surveillance of the transnational movements of Ukrainian citizens; a great part of this confusion comes from the difficulty to fit in a wide array of transnational economic activities into a category of labor migration, while another big part of statistical discrepancy stems directly from the interests of the turbulent Ukrainian political scene. Indeed, as Savik Shuster, - the host of one of the most popular political talk shows on several Ukrainian TV channels, - eloquently summed up the debate concerning Ukrainian labor migrants' political and economic rights: "So what if you are 7 million, unless you are all voting, you are not interesting for us" (Shuster 2009). Labor migrants thus found themselves between an almost complete neglect from the side of the Ukrainian state-support, and in the center of various public and political debates and discourses which often times effect migrants' self-esteem, relation with their families and determine long-term strategies for (non-) return. While many migrants seek to maintain active political and social links with Ukraine, (e.g. organizing of voting in presidential elections of Ukraine, which I will discuss in the following part of this chapter) their social citizenship is undermined by the multiple blaming and shaming discourses on the public and political level, in which, as I will discuss later in this chapter, gender and specifically motherhood plays a particularly prominent role.

Ukrainian migration, Italian context: Specifying the location

The data on migration to Italy reflects a similar confusion in numbers, as does the overall statistics for labor migration from Ukraine; the unofficial number often quoted by sociologists is 600 thousand while Caritas quotes 195 thousand officially registered migrants in Italy.⁴ Yulia Tymoshenko, a former Prime Minister of Ukraine, in her documentary on female migration to Italy

⁴ Here I use numbers for 2007 – 2008, when my research was conducted.

entitled *Mother and Step-Mother* (2007) quotes 3 million Ukrainians in Italy alone, an overt exaggeration that has sent even migrant activists in fury. However, voiced in the documentary made in summer 2007 to be screened on Ukrainian television three days before the parliamentary election in September 2007 (when Tymoshenko ran as a candidate), this juggling with a few million people was hardly a slip of the tongue but rather a part of a larger wrestling for the votes in a context when a significant number of voters reside abroad.

Despite the great inconsistency in migration statistics and their frequent manipulation for various political reasons, I still refer here to two major sets of sources of quantitative data: one being the numbers generated by the Italian Statistical Institute (Istat) and Caritas organization of Italy, both of which base their data on the number of residence permits issued each year in Italy. The other is the results of a Ukrainian sociological survey conducted by a non-partisan international philanthropic foundation, Open Ukraine, between January 2005 and June 2008. This research was conducted among forty-eight thousand individuals in twenty-two thousand households across Ukraine, and its results are often used and cited by various Ukrainian researchers and the press (Libanova et al. 2008).

There are a number of limitations in these sets of data that I am aware of. For example, Open Ukraine's research though conducted among a quite wide range of households is still a selective survey, and its limitations are not only in the number of participants but in the way the categories are constructed in the survey and understood by the interviewees. Istat's numbers, while present an absolute data in terms of the number of residence permits, give no idea about the actual numbers of migrants present in Italy without residence permits. Though I understand the limitations of these sources, the numbers they provide feature in my dissertation in two ways, i.e. they provide some idea of the volume of processes in place and reveal how the actual practices of migration expand far beyond the categories implied by the states and their agencies controlling migration processes.

Most researches indicate that migration to Italy is the second largest destination country for Ukrainians (Markov et al. 2009; Libanova et al. 2008). The first destination is Russia for an estimated two million Ukrainians (Markov et al. 2009) as besides linguistic and cultural familiarity, it offers a visa-free entry regime that allows migrants to keep the investments in migration extremely low, and thus migration affordable and flexible. However, migration to Italy is incomparable to any other migration from Ukraine due to the quite specific profile of the migrants: about 84 % of all Ukrainians in Italy are women (Caritas 2007), with 53% being 41 - 60 years old (Markov et al. 2009; Libanova et al. 2008) as compared to two-thirds men dominating the labor migration from Ukraine as a whole (Libanova et al. 2008). 80% of all Ukrainian migrants in Italy

are engaged in care or domestic work, and over 85% have college education and professional experience. In Italy, Ukrainian migrants also stand out as a group due to their age-gender composition. Thus in 2007 Ukrainians were the fourth largest migration group (after Romanians, Moroccans and Albanians) and in 2008 – fifth largest group (after Romania, Albania, Morocco and China). However, none of these leading groups of immigrants come close in terms of gender composition; the four leading groups have almost equal representation of men and women (Caritas/Migrantes 2008; Istat 2008).

While Italy becomes a destination for more and more women migrating from all over Ukraine, it was pioneered and still led by migration from the western regions of Ukraine. Thus, migration from the Lviv, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Khmelnyts'k, Rivno, and Volyn regions constitutes 80% of all migrants in Italy (Markov et al. 2009). The reasons for such active migration from western regions can be attributed to the particularly devastating disintegration of industries in western Ukraine after the fall of the Soviet Union, which resulted in massive layoffs, salary delays and lack of opportunities for re-employment. Thus, in 2003 the Ternopil and Chernivtsi regions had the highest level of unemployment (15.5% and 16.2%) with Ternopil being listed as offering the lowest average salary in Ukraine (304 UAH) (Khomra et al. 2006:21-2).

Not only national legislations and structures but also transnational networks and local institutions affect the ruptures and new forms of continuity in the course of migration, migrants' individual daily practices, level of incorporation, trajectories and experiences. To avoid generalizations on the basis of research done in a specific location to the national level, it is important to see how different locations provide differentiated opportunities for migrants, determining their income, saving and remitting capacities, opportunities for legalization, communication with other migrants. The importance of the situational positioning of migrants in the specific location, the understanding of its economic, social and historical perspective is important to see not only the opportunities provided differently for migrants in various locations, but to see the active role that migrants play in shaping their own opportunities, changing the face of the city in various ways and changing the position of the city on the national and global maps. The location of migration cannot be discarded as a mere setting but plays a paramount role in the imaginations of migration, situational practices of migrants and the emotion labor invested by the migrants to relate to the place. Thus, Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Çağlar (2009) linking the varying paths of incorporation of migrants to the outcomes of the global neoliberal restructuring of the cities comment on the dual role of the migrant: "contemporary neoliberal restructuring of cities, which change the dynamics of the local governance, the nature and quality of jobs, the way culture is represented and marketed, and the availability of public space, has implications for the opportunities a particular city provides for its migrants" (Schiller and Çağlar 2009:189). On the

other hand, “migrants also bring with them transnational connections that can link the cities to flows of capital, goods, ideas, new ideas [sic] and cultural representations. [...] Thus, migrants may serve as scale-makers in multiple ways” (2009: 189).

Addressing the migration of Ukrainian women to two specific locations in Italy, i.e. Naples and Bologna, allowed me to explore the dynamics of this migration on several levels: a) it allowed me to reflect on the internal Ukrainian migration within Italy and how it fits into the imagination of success in a migration project, b) to position Ukrainian migration in the context of larger Italian divide into the North and the South and to see how migrants’ presence feeds these divides, c) and finally, to see what differentiated opportunities locations can offer to migrants and how migrants’ presence shape these opportunities, the social landscape of the cities and the city’s position on the national level.

The Italian National Statistical Institute (Istat 2008) gives the following numbers on the Ukrainian presence in the regions: North West 38 489, North East 39 256, Centre 31 632, South 41 838 and islands 2 783. Though these numbers - based on the number of residence permits issued to migrants, - hardly gives a precise estimation of the actual number of Ukrainians present in Italy (the estimates of the actual migrants is fourfold), the numbers of those migrants who have managed to legalize their status indicate a rather even presence of Ukrainians in all five main territories of Italy. In fact, following the demand in care and domestic work (which employs about 80 % of Ukrainians (Markov 2009)), it is not uncommon that after the first arrival in Italy a migrant would follow a job offer in a village or a small town (which may be less well-paid than those in a bigger city), and only with time, after obtaining some knowledge of the language, resources and contacts, would move to a bigger city⁵. This factor has resulted in two important characteristics of Ukrainian migration to Italy; 1) high presence of Ukrainians not only in major Italian cities but also in smaller towns and even villages across Italy (Istat 2007a, 2007b, 2008) (also see chapter 4), 2) internal mobility of Ukrainian migrants who follow the differentiated economic and structural opportunities opening up in each of these places, as well as the imaginations about and the objectives of individual migration projects.

According to (Istat 2007a), Ukrainians, - who in 2007 were the fifth largest foreign group in Italy, - were mostly concentrated in the Campania region (Naples) with 22.4 %, of all Ukrainian population with residence permits, Lombardy (Milan) with 17.9 %, Emilia-Romagna (Bologna) with 12 % and Lazio (Rome) with 9.7 % (the rest of the regions have an even smaller percentage of Ukrainian migrants per region)(Gabrielli and Albani 2007). However, if we look at the number of Ukrainians in relation to the other migrant national groups present in the given regions, especially

⁵ From interviews

the female migration, Ukrainians constitute the largest migrant group with residence permits in Naples, and third largest in Bologna, and only the fifth largest in Rome and the tenth largest national migration group in Milan (Istat 2008). Based on the given numbers we can see that while the Lombardy region might have the second largest number of Ukrainian migrants within their national group, positioning migrants in relation to other migrant groups in these regions allows us to see their higher presence in relation to other migrant groups more prominently in Naples and Bologna (see Appendix 1). In other words, focusing on Bologna and Naples is important not only because there is a high concentration of Ukrainians as compared to other places in Italy, but also because of a high percent of representation of Ukrainians among other national migrants' groups. This cross-check against other migrants' groups can be useful to further estimate what opportunities these two cities offer to Ukrainian migrants and how the pronounced presence of Ukrainian migrants alters the cities' social landscapes and positioning on a national scale of Italy.

Structurally speaking, Bologna and Naples seem to provide an interesting case of comparison in terms of labor opportunities, salaries and labor conditions. Bologna occupies the first place in Italy in the level of female employment (among Italians), which is significant in understanding the demand for female care and domestic work, which employs about 80 % of Ukrainians. From this point of view, this explains the high presence of female Ukrainian workers in Bologna (it is the 3rd largest female migration population) (Istat 2008), as the demand for the traditional female occupation of care-work meets the proposition of a largely female migration. This situation also confirms findings of other migration scholars (Passerini et al. 2007; Andall 2000, 1998; Anderson 2006; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004a; Morokvasic 1983; Pessar and Mahler 2003) who claim that it is precisely the presence of the migrant women that allows Italian women to emancipate themselves for the professional labor market and leave behind the care-work in the hands of foreign women.

The high level of presence of Ukrainians in Naples cannot be explained with the same reasons, as Naples occupies fourth place from the end in Italy (Istat) in terms of female employment. Despite the very low level of Italian female employment, Naples has been a historical gateway city of illegal and unregistered Ukrainian migration (Pronyuk 2009; Seleshchuk 2009; Bondarenko 2009) and very much remains a place of the first destination for individuals who come to Italy alone (i.e. not joining their families). Bondarenko, in a practical handbook for Ukrainian migrants, *Navigator of the Ukrainian Migrant* (2009), gives a brief historic account of these tendencies:

Usually Ukrainian migrants in the 90s – beginning of the 2000s, - most of whom would start without a job or a residence permit in the country, - would arrive in the South of Italy, mostly to Naples, where it is easier to find a job (even though worse paid) and the laws of the Italian state are weaker. These tendencies remain until now. According to experts' estimations there are still about 200 thousand – 300 thousand Ukrainians in Southern

Italy. With time, some Ukrainians, especially after receiving *permesso di soggiorno* [...] move to the Center and North of Italy, thus trying to obtain higher salaries, better conditions of work, legal and social rights / protection (Bondarenko 2009:62).

This fact found a two-way confirmation in my interviews conducted during the fieldwork. On the one hand, in Bologna most of my respondents of the older generation indicated that they had started their migration in the South, many times in Naples, and moved North only after obtaining some language skills, experience, social connections, resources and legalization papers. On the other hand, many of my respondents, who expected or have organized a reunification of the whole or parts of their families, made solid plans to stay in Italy for a while have moved North, justifying it by the better conditions for children, more social rights, security and higher salaries, which they believed would guarantee better conditions for reunification of the families, than Naples could offer.

Bologna became a particular place in terms of Ukrainian migrants' community-building with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) in its center. While I will discuss the special role UGCC plays in organizing Ukrainian migrants away from Ukraine in one of the following sections in this chapter, it is important to note that the Bologna church community (Ukr. *hromada*) shapes migrants' cultural and political life in a unique and influential way. Thus, from the beginning of 2002, when the city has obtained its parish, its priest became father Vasyl Potochnyak, a young theology doctoral student, who from 2001 also held the post of Pastoral Coordinator for all Ukrainians in Italy (Pronyuk 2009). The role of father Potochnyak and a number of activists has resulted in shaping a very dynamic, engaging social environment in Bologna, that not only attracted a number of migrants to many forms of activism and creativity but also created strong resonance in the whole Italy and linked Bologna transnationally to Ukraine, creating some of the first transnational institutional and civil networks. To name a few of these networks I refer here to the annual (since 2006) Pilgrimage of migrants and their families to Zarvanytsja monastery, migrants' monthly page in the local Ivano-Frankivsk newspaper *Nova Zorja*, and numerous presentations of collective migrants' photo-exposition "Our people in Italy" in several schools, libraries and community centers across Western Ukraine. Through active church community and father Potochnyak's own close connection to the Italian Church, Ukrainian migrants in Bologna also have very strong representation in Bologna's religious and public celebrations, making Ukrainian migrants visible as a national group and celebrated during festivals of Bologna's patron and other religious events.

The activism of Bologna's UGCC *hromada* surpassed the religious and cultural spheres and was also detrimental in Bologna's role in migrants' political engagement. Thus, Bologna was among the first cities to initiate protests of support with the protesters in Kyiv during the Orange

Revolution in November 2004; within a matter of two days after the beginning of the massive protests in the main square of Ukraine in Kyiv, over 200 migrants formed an unsanctioned manifestation on Bologna's main square (piazza Maggiore). It resulted in a letter of public address "From Bologna's mothers and fathers to their sons and daughters in Ukraine," which was sent to Kyiv, to be circulated among the protesters in the main square of Ukraine. Despite the difficulties with the working schedules in Italian homes and loss of money linked to skipping working hours, Bologna's activists organized voting trips to the Ukrainian Consulate in Milan for all three rounds of elections (in the last round 5 buses with 284 migrants) and in only one week of protests in Ukraine, Bologna collected over 2600 Euro, that was sent to support the protesters in Kyiv (Pronyuk 2009; Lazoryshyn 2007). All these political activities resulted not only in transnational repositioning of Bologna's migrants in relation to Ukraine (e.g. after the elections, president Yushchenko sent personalized letters of gratitude to seven activists in Bologna, including father Potochnyak) but in featuring of Bologna in the Italian national press through its migrants' activism. Thus, for example, the national periodical *Il Resto del Carlino* published an article entitled "The Orange Revolution continues under the Neptune⁶" (quoted in Lazoryshyn 2007).

However, besides the active political and cultural representations that Bologna offers to Ukrainians, the city is not so open for migrants as Naples. Thus, the city has not been able to organize Ukrainian Sunday school for children that exists not only in Naples and Rome but in a number of smaller places, e.g. Brescia. While Naples offers Ukrainian migrants two "Ukrainian" disco clubs, Bologna hardly scores one place ("Valentino"), which has a dubious reputation and is known for offering dancing and dating opportunities for more mature people. Similarly, Naples has two Ukrainian restaurants, a full-size Ukrainian super-market, three Ukrainian – Polish shops that sell food products and a great presence of food products that is supplied by the Ukrainian mini-buses and distributed through a great number of shops run by Arabs, Pakistanis and Indians. In contrast, Bologna has one Russian Souvenir store and provides a supply of Ukrainian goods only through the Sunday mini-van bazaar. Reflecting this greater infiltration on Ukrainian migrants in the city life of Naples, I many times encountered Italians (mostly men) who, - recognizing a Ukrainian in me, - would address me with a few words of broken Ukrainian or Russian, explaining that they had a Ukrainian working for them or a Ukrainian girlfriend. This has never happened to me in the streets of Bologna, where, while the cultural presence of Ukrainians was quite high, the levels of close interactions between the local and the migrant population seemed to be quite low.

⁶ Here the author refers to the statue of Neptune as a landmark of piazza Maggiore, one of the main squares in Bologna.

These observations were supported by a great number of my interviewees. Reminiscing of their move from the South to the North or reflecting on the difference between the stay in Naples and Bologna, most of my respondents described the South of Italy as being an unruly, unstructured space, a perfect springboard into migration, learning the language, adjusting to the migrant life, and obtaining a residence permit. Many respondents attributed the main difference in their experience to the temperament of the inhabitants, describing the Southerners as more “humane,” “treating me as a family,” “warm hearted,” while the Northerners as “too strict,” “snobbish,” “stiff as Austrians / Germans.” Such abundance of ethnic stereotyping reflects not only the experience in treatment but also the degree to which migrants incorporate the all-Italian discourse on the regional North / South differences (Schneider 1998; Herzfeld 1989; Pardo 1996; Goddard 1996; Gribaudi 1996) in which the South dominates the Italian public mind in dichotomous opposition to the North as “rebellious, intensely competitive, [...] unable to build the rational, orderly, civic cultures that, in the North, underwrote the emergence of industrial capitalist society” (Schneider 1998:1).

Indeed, these two regions provide very different social and economic settings, however, what kind of ruptures and opportunities for fixing them it allows for migrants has to be investigated more closely, which I turn to a few examples now (also see chapters 5, 7 and 8). Vira Hrodetska, - a Ukrainian journalist who documents her life in Italy as a *badante* in a series of scandalous articles in the Lviv newspaper *Express*, - sarcastically refers to the North / South differentiated opportunities as “here [North] it is better but there [South] it is more pleasant” dilemma of a Ukrainian migrant (Hrodetska 2010). While many of my respondents invested much money, energy and had postponed the reunification with their families in order to accomplish the move north, perusing higher salaries and more structured opportunities, they would also admit to the fact that life in the South in fact presented at times more of those opportunities than the North; it was easier to find a job, to survive without a job, to develop a personal relationships with employers that could result in legalization and there was less fear of the police. Nevertheless, most of them related to the North as a desired destination not only because of the double-increase in salary that it could secure, but also because the South was seen as “dirty,” “chaotic” and “uncivilized” (see more in chapter 7).

Throughout my research for this dissertation I have encountered many migrant families and individuals whose success in migration depended on a situational ability to mobilize available recourses rather than on regional differences. Thus, I am not arguing for the existence of the South / North divide in the situation of Ukrainian migrants in Italy, but instead would like to draw attention to the following a) the trope of this divide plays a big role in the imagination of the locations in the minds of migrants; the importance of the such mindwork should be taken into

consideration as it plays crucial part in migrants' strategizing and in sacrifices they make in order to reach the migration ambitions; b) I argue for the location scale in which addressing these two places allows me to bring in differences, estimate structural ruptures and opportunities, and situational practices provided differently in two specific locations and to see how the presence of migrants change these locations.

Thus, the choice of Bologna and Naples for my research was determined not only by the high numbers of Ukrainian migrants in the two locations but by the perspective into the historical development of Ukrainian migration to Italy that these cities allow to explore, the significance of internal migration of Ukrainian migrants within Italy, the reference to the infamous North/ South Italian divide and the role it plays in determining Ukrainian migrants' choices and imaginations about migration. Both locations provide two particular sets of structural opportunities defining the life quality, earning and remitting abilities for migrants, thus affecting the types of ruptures and the tools available for migrants to recover them. Naples and Bologna create not only the specific difference in salaries and opportunities but this resonates with the larger Italian divide into different opportunities available in the North and the South of Italy to which Ukrainian migrants respond in order to realize their dream of mobility, upgrading and success.

Overview of the effect of Italian migration legislations on Ukrainian migration

Ukraine featuring for the first time as an independent state in 1992 entered the Italian migration chart with 205 officially registered Ukrainians and, slowly growing to over 14 000 in 2002, skyrocketing to over 112 thousand (5 % of all migrants in Italy) in 2003 (Caritas/Migrantes 2004). This jump is linked to the favorable migration legislations, particularly, one-time legalization Bossi – Fini (2002) that allowed all migrants who could prove their employment and accommodation to obtain residence permits in Italy. From 2001 Italy had the *Decreto Flussi* legislation, which allowed residence permits for work motives, and became the main passage to legality for Ukrainian migrants.

Decreto Flussi, which was carried out on the annual basis from 2001 to 2007⁷ originally was a legislation allowing to request non-seasonal foreign labor for such unpopular among Italian workers spheres as domestic and care-work, agriculture, seasonal and unskilled work. In 2007

⁷ In the light of the tightening grip on migration policies of the Italian government under Berlusconi (from May 2008), it was planned that *Decreto Flussi* will be stopped in 2009 for two consecutive years. The legalization flows were renewed in 2010, with requesting 98 thousand shares for non-seasonal workers, including 30 thousand domestic workers. Based on the national quota, Ukrainians have 1800 secured, while they can apply for other, non-national quotas, and compete with other nationals on first come first serve basis (Salvatore 2011; Camilloni 2008; Ministero dell'Interno 2007, 2011).

colf e badanti (domestic and care-workers) requests amounted to 60 % of all requests (Polchi 2008; Ministero dell'Interno 2007). The request for a foreign work force is linked to the demand in the Italian work place, which right from the start creates a subordinate relation to the employer. An Italian employer thus has to fill out a form requesting a particular worker from abroad, who then, after the request has been processed, can apply for a visa in the Italian embassy in his/her country of origin. However, particularly in the sphere of a domestic work or seasonal unskilled labor, it is very unlikely that an employer would have a request for a particular worker from a foreign country. Instead, the law allows to legalize those migrants who are already working in Italian homes, farms and resorts illegally. Thus, despite its original intention, *Decreto Flussi* became probably the most reliable indicator of the actual presence of migrants in the country.

For Ukrainian migrants, *Decreto Flussi* is not only the most accessible way to obtain a residence permit in Italy (other options being reunification of the family, study permits or a health related residence permits) but also a regulation that through its intrinsic qualities shapes Ukrainian migration. Convincing an employer to file an application requires a particularly close level of trust and communication with the employer, on whose desire to legalize the work force a migrant depends entirely. Thus, in 2007 all the 170 thousand shares have been claimed within 15 minutes after the time for online application was opened at 8 a.m. This means that a migrant had to make sure her/his employer clicked on "submission" button of the filled out package of documents at 8 o'clock sharp, as already in 15 minutes their chances to obtain a permit would be equal to zero (Salvatore 2011). Under these circumstances women working in the domestic sector, especially as domestic live-in workers, have an advantage of the familiarity and informal ways of putting pressure on their employers, while Ukrainian men, employed in more impersonal work settings such as construction or petty seasonal jobs have less connection to their employer and thus both feel more insecure to ask for regularization and are rejected more often by the employer. This often leads to the situation of gender-differentiated dependencies, which most of my respondents described as "in order for a man to survive in Italy a woman needs to support him."⁸ Thus, it is very common that women secure work permits for their sons or husbands by mobilizing their close personal relationships with one of their employing houses, and thus getting a job request for a man who will never work in that house.

With its employer-employee bondage, *Decreto Flussi* has created various ties of dependencies, obligations and a whole informal economy of favors related to obtaining legalization. Some employers willingly seek opportunities to legalize migrants, but many agree to legalization only after migrants' persistent requests, often striking a deal that a migrant will pay taxes related to her employment from her own salary. In many cases in my research, migrants spent years

⁸ E.g. Interview, Volodymyr.

negotiating legalization, refusing to change jobs for better paid or less demanding work places, in the hope of the employer's promise to legalize them. The legalization thus becomes, in a sense, another form of currency, which sometime rates higher than money; the bounds that it creates often constitute the social fields in which the relations and dependencies are negotiated individually and outside of state-controlled legal regulations.

On average, my respondents would spend two to three years in Italy illegally, before they could secure the social and professional networks that resulted in their legalization. Being legal for most migrants means an opportunity to travel back to Ukraine, consequent visits home for vacation or even, after declaring their unemployment and securing benefit in Italy, to return to Ukraine for a few months in a row with unemployment payments being accumulated in Italy. This way, legalization provides a fascinating paradox, whereby the number of those officially registered indicates the number of those who are potentially out of the country, while it is the unregistered migrants who constitute the main cohort, "locked" in Italy.

Even after obtaining a residence permit, migrants run a long and often exhausting marathon with the bureaucracy of the state. Thus, after 700 thousand requests for work permits filed by Italian employers in 2007, by June 2008 Italian embassies had given only eight thousand visas (Polchi 2008). The delays in responses, the need to go back to their home country in order to apply for a visa in the Italian embassy, the need to reapply in a year's time (in the first 3-6 years) puts migrants into some sort of legal limbo, in which their life, work, and ability to visit their families at home are constantly subjugated to the state of waiting, applying and re-applying for residence papers.

Migrants' community? Organizational life and representation of Ukrainian migrants in Italy

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) remains one of the most influential organizations present all over Italy and the single organization that provides some sort of unity for the migrants dispersed all over Italy. Its strong influence stems from its particular positioning in relation to the Roman Catholic Church of Italy, while its sphere of influence by far surpasses the religious role only. In relation to the migrants UGCC has a strong political message both in Italy and in Ukraine: it takes most of the representative functions for Ukrainian migrants in both countries and provides a wide range of practical support for migrants in the sphere of religious guidance, community-building, jobs, food, shelter, cultural programs (also see (Keryk 2008; Bojko 2009).

The unique position of strength that UGCC has in Italy and its quick rise in the conditions of migration can be linked to both UGCC history (its experience as the Church of the Ukrainian

Diaspora⁹) and the patronage of the Roman Catholic Church, in which UGCC is conceived as one of the branches of Eastern Catholicism. Thus, UGCC had its community in Rome already in the 1990s, when labor migration from Ukraine just started picking up. At the end of 2001 UGCC appointed Father Vasyl Potochnyak on a newly created position of Pastoral Coordinator for Ukrainians in Italy (Pronyuk 2009; Bojko 2009). Under his active supervision there emerged 90 UGCC parishes by 2005. By 2009 there were over 120 UGCC throughout Italy (cf. only 16 in Spain), mostly in the North and Center of Italy (Bojko 2009). UGCC has been also creating a number of “migrants” through its own institution; thus, all UGCC priests receive salaries from the Italian Roman Catholic Church, and a number of Ukrainian students study theology in Rome (up to 80 students in 2008)¹⁰ and has a number of exchange opportunities with Catholic University in Lviv. Additionally, during my interviews in Italy I heard several times, that especially in the early stages of migration, it was not uncommon that a priest who was working in Italy as a simple labor migrant could obtain legality papers through the help of the Church, when proposing to take up his priest duties again and to serve masses in the Ukrainian community.

In Ukraine UGCC is a minority church (the two leading Churches being Russian Orthodox Church and Ukrainian Orthodox Church) centered mostly in the Western regions of the country. In Italy however, it has been uniting not only Ukrainians from all over the country but also became the Church of Russian, Moldovan and Belorussian immigrants in Italy, while the Orthodox Church has close to no representation at all.¹¹ UGCC’s sphere of influence thus has been far more than only religious; it became particularly active as a promoter of the Ukrainian national idea after 2004, when UGCC made a decision to change its policies from “calling for return of the migrants home” to “catering to the needs of the newly emerging Ukrainian diaspora in Italy” (Bojko 2009). This would promote the unification of Ukrainian people under one national and religious idea, as it has happened in Ukrainian world diasporas before. Thus, UGCC and its activists became the core of the political protests in Bologna during the Orange Revolution in 2004-5 and was organizing bus trips to Milan for voting in Ukrainian parliamentary and presidential elections in 2006 and 2010.

As in Italy, UGCC has taken most of the migrants’ representative functions in Ukraine. Thus, the UGCC Commission in Migration Issues, as well as Caritas Ukraine produces and collaborates on most researches on migration in Ukraine (e.g. Seleshchuk, Horodetskyj in Shuster Live TV talk show (Shuster 2009)) and takes part in public debates on migration in the printed media and

⁹ After World War II diaspora from western regions of Ukraine brought UGCC to the USA, Canada and other places of migration.

¹⁰ Interviews in Rome, 2008.

¹¹ E.g. in Naples, the Orthodox masses were held on major religious holidays in the church buildings that was regularly used by the UGCC. Otherwise, my interviews with the UGCC clergymen in Bologna, Rome and Naples, suggested that Orthodox churches in Italy are the ones established by earlier diaspora after World War II. They seem to be few and have limited connection to the contemporary labor migration.

television. UGCC organizes numerous readings, public events and conferences and is one of the organizers of the annual Pilgrimage. It has also participated in launching a number of books of migrants' writings (the two-volume anthology of Ukrainian migrants creative writing), and now initiates the construction of the first monument to the Ukrainian labor migrant in Zarvanytsja Monastery, the Ternopil region. A number of migrants' rights activists are associated with UGCC (e.g. *Pieta*, and a monthly newspaper page "Labor migrants' wave" comes out in a UGCC newspaper in Ivano-Frankivsk).

In Italy, UGCC performs multiple functions for migrants. It has been the organizer of many major cultural events and celebrations, one of the most significant being Mother's Day and celebrations of Easter, St Nicolas Day and Christmas according to the Gregorian calendar. Through the choice of these events and the spirit of the celebration, UGCC promotes the Ukrainian language and national ideology celebrating the Ukrainian nation-state with one language, culture and people. Many migrants thus, find themselves connected to the Church not only through religious practice, but through a number of cultural celebrations, through their search for economic, social and psychological support. Thus, UGCC priests often raise the problem of "supermarket" approach to the Church, denoting those migrants who come to church only when they need something (Bojko 2009).

UGCC also gave rise to the proliferation of Ukrainian migrants' press in Italy. *Do Svitla* [Towards the Light], founded by father Potochnyak in the early 2000, became the first and the longest-living Ukrainian journal in Italy. Other sources of financing Ukrainian press come from the profit organizations such as Western Union; their "Ukrainian Newspaper" is another major periodical (23 thousand copies) that circulates all over Italy, and is a part of a similar newspaper sponsored by Western Union in many languages. Many other smaller newspapers and Ukrainian pages in Italian newspapers are supported by the local municipal governments and migrant organizations (e.g. journal *Voce* and Ukrainian page in a Avelino news paper *Otto Pagine*). Most people responsible for these editions are closely linked to UGCC. "European Ukrainian," another newspaper that circulates in Italy is a part of the first attempt to create an all-European Ukrainian press, and it comes out in seven countries all over Europe. Among other media, Ukrainian community has air time on a local Naples television, and a number of internet sites, among the most active being *Leleky.org* (Cranes), UGCC web-site in Italy¹² and "Ukrainian Newspaper" web-site. This proliferation of Ukrainian press is particularly striking due to almost complete absence of migration –representing press in Ukraine (with a rare exception of *Zarobitchanska Khvylyja*, a monthly page dedicated to the issues of migration published in an Ivano-Frankivsk regional UGCC news paper *Nova Zorja*).

¹² <http://www.chiesaucraina.it/>

Besides religious organization Italy boasts a great number of Ukrainian migrant associations of various size and purposes. Most of these organizations are collaborating with and supported by the local municipalities (e.g. *Hope* in Brescia, *Ukraine Plus* in Mestre and Venice, *Kalyna* in Solerno), however, even the most established ones do not enjoy a large popular support among the migrants. As the head of *Hope* association established in 2003, Evgenia Baranova, explains: “Our people are thoroughly distrustful of any association by other Ukrainians. They think that all of these are organized just to trick people out of some money! And in some cases it’s true, but there also other associations that actually work.” The influence of these associations are thus often limited to the number of it’s actively employed in the organization members. The activities of such public associations usually include a range from organizing a cultural activity to free legal support in obtaining residence permits, work disputes, sending bodies of the diseased migrants home, job search, political mobilization of migrants and organizing medical help. One of the probably most successful efforts of such associations has been organization of Ukrainian language Sunday schools, the biggest ones’ of which are located in Naples, Rome and Brescia.

Unlike the skeptical attitude towards the Ukrainian organizations, Italian institutions for migrants are seen as more trustworthy by the migrants. A part of the reason of such trust can be related to the fact that most of these organizations have decades of experience of working with migrants, and therefore have support of the Italian state, professional lawyers and staff. Italy has a number of support institutions of various levels that to a degree address the needs of all migrant groups, including Ukrainians. Many of my informants admitted that “if it wasn’t for Caritas, we would have never survive in Italy.” Caritas plays a major role in providing shelter and food in the first months of arrival to Italy for many of my respondents. Even after staying in Italy for years many of my respondents (especially in Bologna) would still hold Caritas card (*tessera*) and rely on Caritas for getting food packages and even hot meals in times of full or partial unemployment. Other organizations, like *Sportello Immigranti* (Migrant’s windows) run by Christian and workers’ oriented unions as ACLI¹³ and SILSE¹⁴ provide a wide range of services in solving health, legal and work questions, and even involve migrants in voluntary positions within them.

Italy proves to be an incomparably fruitful ground for civic organization of migrants and migrants’ activism in comparison to Ukraine. Olexander, one of the organizers of *Pieta*, an organization for support of the returned migrants in Ivano-Frankivsk have been speaking bitterly about the lack of solidarity of Ukrainian migrants upon their return in Ukraine in comparison to such a high level of civic mobilization in Italy: “In Italy, you don’t need to organize everyone, people are thirsty for

¹³ <http://www.acli.it/>

¹⁴ Sindacato Indipendente Lavoratori Stranieri In Europe <http://www.sindacatosilse.org/blog/>

action, you just raise your voice and our people are ready to act. But try to do something here, in Ukraine! You can't find any ropes' ends! Everyone is for themselves and by themselves! Its here that we need to mobilize, not in Italy! Even those who have been actively involved in UGCC in Italy, when they needed it, here [in Ukraine] stop practicing [religion]...because here they don't need it." The comment points out not only to the differentiated level of participation of migrants in Italy and in Ukraine but also to the instrumental use of many organizations in Italy. The Church (both Roman Catholic and UGCC) even though leads in terms programs provided for migrants, does not attract people exclusively on religious basis, as a number of people taking active part in the Church life in Italy feel free to withdraw from it once they are back home.

Analyzing the roles that civil and religious organizations play in the life of migrants against the conceptual grit of ruptures and continuities it is useful to differentiate between the structural and individual levels. On the structural level, civic associations of Ukrainians in Italy provide a form of organization through which migrants can engage with the municipal governments and tap into resources allocated by the Italian state for migrants. Thus, while an individual migrant cannot ask a town municipality for a space for school or money for cultural event, language training or even money for sending back to Ukraine the body of the deceased migrant, all these resources become available for an officially registered association of migrants. Similarly, UGCC *hromada* (community) gets support in various forms of cultural, spiritual, social and economic activities from the sympathetic Roman Catholic Church. Considering the objectives and main pitfalls of labor migration, both types of organizations often aim to provide some sort of security network in terms of work, housing, legal and moral support, based on the ideas of the need for national solidarity. On an individual level, the engagement with Ukrainian migrant association and UGCC might bring a sense of connectivity to one's country-fellows, or simply fill up the lack of communication in the native tongue at the time of non-work. Taken out of their familial and familiar contexts, migrants often find the need for new ways of filling up their free time, and it is not surprising that in my interviews many acknowledged that it was in Italy that they had started writing poetry or prose, re-discovered forgotten hobbies or had time to "turn to God" or "look into themselves." All these activities, triggered by the initial set of ruptures linked to moving to a different country and leaving behind families and homes, become decontextualized on their return to Ukraine, often triggering a sense of further discontinuities for migrants.

Ethnographic epilogue: Gendered expectations in the context of the mostly female migration

In this final ethnographic part of the chapter I will go over a few cases from my field work which will position migrating and non-migrating men in the picture of predominantly female migration to Italy. "Geographic separation from the family places women's purity at risk" concludes (Parrenas

2005a:37) but the tales of the female abandonment of the family and the consequent frivolity is just one side of the coin; the flip side of it being the men's impotence to protect and provide for their women and families. During my research both men and women seemed to have quite strong, internalized values according to which man was expected to earn a living, and women were forced to migrate to Italy only after their men had proved to be incompetent. Thus, in a short excerpt from an interview, my respondent Raja (47, stayed in Naples over 10 years) explained gendered expectations linked to migration: "When I first decided to go to Italy, I was going for a year...how could I know? For a mother, to leave the family for a year... that was already so much. In general I think it's very wrong that a woman has to leave. But if you have a man, who cannot put together things, and cannot advance his family even a bit, a woman has to take everything into her hands and help her family".

Thus, discussing the cases of female migration speaks volumes not only of the role of women but unavoidably so about the role of men, as migration becomes a project involving both migrating and non-migrating family member and spilling into several generations in terms of its objectives and networks of reliance and dependence. In my dissertation I will argue that the ideas of a 'proper man' and an idea of a 'proper woman' are constructed in relation and often in opposition to each other, thus setting a whole grid of values, according to which migrants build personal aspirations, judge successes and failures of their migration project. Parrenas reflects on the familial roles among the Filipino migrants: "While community representatives convey strict gender boundaries of mothering and fathering, they give greater flexibility to concepts of mothering than they do to concepts of fathering. [...] This means that men cannot cross gender boundaries. In contrast, constructions of mothering encompass a wide range of responsibilities. Unlike men, women can cross gender boundaries" (2005a:45). This however, does not make women's burden any easier; in fact, urging them to take up even more responsibilities while men are expected to concern about maintaining their masculinity. Vianello (2009) and Solari (2008) in their research on Ukrainian migration to Italy both indicated that some of their interviewees turned to migration because their husbands felt too ashamed to transgress into unskilled work that migration offered (Vianello 2009a; Solari 2008).

Several women in my research indicated that the decision to come to Italy was considered after their husband's attempt to migrate failed or proved insufficient for the family. Tonia, 45, who has lived in the North of Italy for the last 7 years, at the time of our interview was just learning to regain the trust of her 19-year old daughter, Zhenia, who had joined her mother in migration some 3 years ago. Tonia recalled me the story of her dramatic break up with her husband over a cup of tea, in their small kitchen, while Zhenia listened to the story told by her mother as a sullen witness to her own family's history. In a way not uncommon in migration histories, Tonia's husband used

their daughter to put pressure on Tonia. After she has learnt that her husband was bringing home women, while their teen-age daughter was in the house, and shouted offenses at Tonia in Zhenia's presence, she decided to bail Zhenia out of Ukraine by paying her husband money. However, Tonia recalled that things were not always so brutal; when they had first discussed on the idea of labor migration, Italy popped up in the first discussion: "My husband then exploded, exclaiming that he will never allow me go abroad to work, never. We then decided it would be more proper for him to go to work to Israel." But Tonia's husband was a "proper migrant" only for a few months; he then disappeared from his family's life for half a year, only to reappear one day in their home, in Lviv, with his suitcases. He then explained that he had been caught without papers and kept in prison. By that time, their debts were growing so fast that Tonia had no choice but to jump at the opportunity to go to Italy.

Even though Tonia is still not really sure whether the Israeli migration story of her husband was true or not, she is inclined to think that he was not in jail all this time, but was probably enjoying a life on his own. She sees his failure in migration not as a result of the strictness of the immigration rules, but of his internal weakness, which then manifested itself full scale in his behavior with Tonia and their daughter. Tonia's story eloquently illustrates the sentiment, which I have otherwise often encountered among my interviews with migrant women, when men's inability to make a good living for themselves and their families was seen not as a structural problem of Ukrainian economy, but as men's weakness and an ultimate sign of a lack of masculinity. Ukrainian nationalist ideology, - which rose in many ways in response to the soviet ideology of a woman worker, - puts forward neotraditionalist model of a family in which a man is a provider and a woman is nurture of the family heath. This model becomes the site of one of the main ruptures of female migration to Italy, where women undertake migration against the gendered images of proper womanhood and motherhood, and in response to men's inability to stand up to the role of provider, especially in the context of the precarious economy of the post-soviet period. While the focus of this dissertation is mostly on women, I turn here to discuss the role of men, as a significant part of migrants' imagination about the "proper" familial and gender roles.

Indeed, the flexible range of a woman's familial responsibilities stretch far beyond just the upbringing and nurtureing of children; after migrating and taking up her responsibility over the familial financial well-being, her obligation to keep marriage intact remains woman's primarily responsibility just the same. Tania (39), whom I have interviewed in Bologna, voices very strong opinion about the way in which women's familial responsibilities stretch over the borders: "Our women make a real circus here [in Italy]; say, she has children at home, has a husband, and then, she finds here [in Italy] some alcoholic man, holds his hand and calls him *amore*, looks into his eyes, because 'he is so special, he helps to get a residence permit, he has the money.' And

back at home, 'my husband is an ass-hole, he drinks.' And I personally think like this; he is drinking because he used to have a family, used to have a wife, home comfort, children, and now he doesn't have anything. [...] Before [we came here] we used to have some values/morals, and here, all our women, *all our women* have a few lovers... but also married ones. But why are you breaking up another [Italian] family?"

Tania's indignation echoes the less direct accusation of media, blaming the departure of women from the families for the ruination of Ukrainian families and Italian media accusations for the ruination of Italian homes (see more in chapter 8). While Tania's accusations stretch far beyond the banal abandonment of children, shifting the responsibility for the failure of Ukrainian men on the women's immorality, Tania herself lives with an Italian man, Lino, who is some 20 years older than her and has several children from an Italian woman. When Tania, who also has a child back in Ukraine, started dating Lino, he was still married but decided to divorce after Tania confronted him with a choice, either her or his family. She has now given birth to their son, but both she and Lino have to work hard to support both their family, and Lino's children.

Just as the departure of women is often framed in the nationalistic language, so the ideologies of masculinity, and the failure of men to provide for the families, are often framed within the fantasies of national pride. In the following quote, Olesia (28, single, came to Italy in her early 20s), in response to my question about the female migration to Italy, reproaches Ukrainian men not only from her own perspective but condemns them from the perspective of the national history: "I am a patriot of my country, and if only all our young people would be patriots, everything would be different. I am proponent of the Cossack era¹⁵; that epoch to my mind has demonstrated clearly that our land does have some real men, the way they should be. But the contemporary men are not like that. If only Cossacks would become alive today, they would probably immediately wish to die again from looking at our contemporary men."

Thus gender roles produce an intricate blaming game, in which economic situation is closely linked to ideas of personal value, pressure being built high on both men and women. However, while the men are mostly commonly blamed for lack of masculinity in terms of failing to provide for their families, it is women who are made responsible for the family as a whole. A woman is seen as a natural protector of the family, installing the right values in the new generation, keeping the family members healthy and relationships strong. With such expectations, it is not surprising that most women depart from their families when they see no other way to provide money for their child's education or to secure their well being. It is also seen as woman's responsibility to

¹⁵ 16-18th century political and militant society of men, who escaped Polish or Russian serfdom in order to become free men. In the Ukrainian discourse of history-long fight for independence, Cossacks stand as a symbol of self-governance, national integrity and military potency.

maintain frequent connections, and even to protect the family members from the stresses and pressures she might experience in migration.

With such a strong link between migration of women and ideas of men's failed masculinity I was not able to conduct any interviews with the husbands of the women working in Italy; my researcher's position as a woman and a Ukrainian made this topic way too sensitive for discussing with men. Thus, Parrenas when describing how stigmatizing of migrant women in Philippines made men also more vulnerable comments: "The operation of gender conventions work against the families of migrant mothers, but at the same time, in the context of the gender elasticity between men and women, these same gender conventions, paradoxically, enable the empowerment of a particular group of women and promote the disempowerment of some men" (2005a:55). In this case, the migration of a woman casts a shadow on her whole family; the transgression of the mother becomes the shame of the husband and gives rise to a bad reputation for their children.

On the contrary, the men who were in Italy with their wives were very eager to discuss this issue with me, often emphasizing their own success and masculinity through the fact that they did not let their women come to Italy alone. My initial assumption was that after experiencing migration to Italy men would condemn or at least have a view different from that of the populists about Ukrainian women in Italy. However, practically all of my respondents re-affirmed existing stereotypes with vigor, thereby allowing them to position their own case as different and as success stories in which they were able to protect their families. The personal value of each man, in these stereotypical accounts was increased by the fact that 'all of it happened, but not to them.' Additionally, most of my interviewees would subscribe to the accusations and stereotypes about frivolous and cheating Ukrainian wives in Italy, prostituting themselves for the minimal pay, and thus emphasizing yet again that it is the men's fault that these women fell so low. Of course the most important message in these stories is that, while all those other men have failed, the men who are in Italy proved strong enough to stay on top of the situation and control both their family's integrities and their women.

To illustrate some of these points I will refer to Volodymyr's (in his mid 40s and has spent 4 years in Italy, mostly in the North) interview. When asked if he was the first from his family to arrive to Italy immediately responded: "No, I came to join my wife, of course... my wife. She has arrived first, because for men, it's difficult to make sense in here (Italy). If a man arrives here alone, he needs to find some woman to help him to find a job, because here everything is only by a reference, any kind of job." Even though his wife has arrived 3 years earlier before him, Volodymyr does not seem to draw a connection between his story and his opinion about

Ukrainian women in Italy in general: “One can say that (president) Kuchma was somehow right saying that many of our women behave indecently, but many of them are forced to behave like that. So you have to be lucky here. It’s not so good for a woman to be here alone. It’s better to be here with the family. Especially if the woman is young and attractive. If I look around and see that our women who are of pension age...even they think about some Italian lovers and so on... Because, I had a case like this... One woman asked me to find her a job. I say ok, I will try. But then she said: ‘Preferably to look after an old man.’ And I am thinking to myself, why specifically old man? Any job would be fine, no? And she goes on: ‘But it should be a kind of an old man, who would want a woman.’ And I am thinking, Lord Gracious, it is probably the end of the world, if a woman is in her 70s and she is still hoping that she will meet some kind of a lover!” Volodymyr then continues by explaining his view that that if a woman is younger and more attractive, she would be very quickly lured into sex slavery and prostitution: “And if a woman is young and attractive she disappears after the arrival in no time [...]. Even though you don’t see our women so much by the roads any more, they are more like ‘call girls,’ in private flats. They just call them, when, what, how and that’s it. Those are the more attractive girls...This is a sad story for Ukraine...”

Volodymyr takes the blame away from the younger more beautiful women, who are “lured or forced” into prostitution and complains about the “old” women’s frivolity. His account creates a clear lore of young-beautiful-innocent ‘angels’ vs. old-lose-greedy ‘demons’ with no space for an average woman with her personal decisions. In Volodymyr’s story there is no reference to his personal and familial situation; however, he subscribes to all the main stereotypes, including citing former president Kuchma, about all women in Italy being whores. Volodymyr also repeats the recurrent linkage between the women in Italy and nationalistic idea of the ‘fate’ of Ukraine as a nation and a country; in his words, it is a “sad story of Ukraine.”

This ethnographic vignette opens up the central theme of my dissertation, i.e. the tension between the idealized trope of the motherhood (heavily embedded in Ukrainian national discourses) and situational practices of mothering that sets the dynamic of migrating women’s lives and the transnational social fields they operate within. The vignette demonstrate that female migration from Ukraine to Italy is embedded not only in the rigid discourses of a threat that departure of women poses for Ukrainian families and by extension to the whole nation, but sets in motion a whole chain of gendered imaginations about the proper male and female roles. The trope of motherhood, thus became a double-edged sword, used not only for accusations of women, but also by migrant women themselves, in order to justify their actions and strategies through their motherly sacrifice. The domination of such trope in public discourses, however, obscures the day-to-day practices of motherhood and dilemmas linked to being a mother within

transnational families. Equally it diminishes the role of other ruptures and opportunities opening up through migration that shape women's lived experiences.

In this chapter I have contextualized female labor migration to Italy in the larger migration flows from Ukraine; the powerful flow of remittances generated by labor migration, has made it an object of political and economic contestations, in which discourses of exclusion from the national community of trust are used to gain control over the resources generated by migration. Attempting to step away from addressing migration as a process characterized only by the relations between the two nation-states, I have further contextualized it as a process that is experienced on local and transnational levels. Thus, discussing the migration of Ukrainian women to Naples and Bologna, I demonstrated the differentiated opportunities available in two places and how migrants' presence alters the cities' social landscapes. I have also addressed the role of location and transnational organizations in the analysis of ruptures and continuities available for and created by migrants in the course of migration. Trying to see the ruptures and continuities migration brings into women's lives on multiple levels, I now turn to discussing some of the theoretical frames which allow me to locate and examine the sites of ruptures, power struggles and emotion work which is done in order to find the ways of bridging them.

Chapter 3. Theoretical frames: Intersection of migration and family roles, labor and space

In the previous chapter I have discussed the politicized use of inconsistent statistics about labor migration from Ukraine. As noted earlier, the failure to come up with a more precise estimation as to the number of Ukrainians working abroad stems equally from the political use of the numbers and the failure of definitions. Terms like *labor migration*, *circular migration*, *return migration* hardly capture the precariousness of transnational practices involving labor and money exchange in which families employ a variety of highly-situational cross-generational strategies in response to the shaky opportunities offered by shifting global labor market. As labor migrants combine migration practices, they often go through a number of failed attempts to use one or the other strategy. For instance, can a young adult male who has joined his working mother in Italy but stayed unemployed for months living off his mother's salary be labeled as a labor migrant? When, after several months of stay in Italy he returns to Ukraine, just to leave for a job available in a Moscow construction site, does that make him a circular migrant? Does a woman who has decided to return from Italy for good to help raising her grandchildren stop being a migrant the moment she crosses Ukraine's border, even if most of her experience of care-work has been professionalized by the years of working in the domestic sector in Italian homes and considering that most of her social connections have been significantly altered by the years of her absence? And does she become a return migrant or stop being one when after a year of staying at home she realizes that despite the hardships of working in Italy she feels much more secure there and much more at peace with her family when they are at a distance?

Challenging such categories is important not only as an analytical exercise. On the one hand, the examples of failure to become a labor migrant, just as the examples of failure to return home, though highly individual, speak volumes of the wider structures and opportunities that affect those who choose to attempt migration. On the other hand, exploring the inconsistency within the lived experiences of migration and its "ideal types" can reveal the power relations and hierarchies that prompt migrants to favor some solutions over others and create situational strategies in the process of carving out their own space in the global and local power relations. Failures and successes, thus, do not function as opposites in my work, but rather, as a continuous negotiation in which migration is imagined, consumed and carried out.

In order to incorporate in my analysis both failures and successes, I use the notion of *migration project*. In comparison to the notion of *migration*, - which presupposes the successful departure of an individual, - the *migration project* allows me an analytic framework in which migration functions

on cognitive, symbolic, and practical levels. By referring to migration projects rather than simply migration, I refer to conceptualizing migration not as an individual endeavor of moving in space, but as a process imagined, enacted and materialized as a cross-generational project in which those who migrate and those who stay behind enable the process equally and share its hardships and benefits. Migration projects are thus written in the familial histories and affect the life-trajectories, choices and opportunities of those who migrate and those who never move. Migration projects also provide opportunities for the common imagination, goals and differentiated obligations. It should not be idealized, as migration projects always entail conflicts of interests among its various participants, hierarchies and power struggles within the same project. The roles, freedoms, opportunities and rewards within such projects are in constant negotiation and making throughout the shifting opportunities and goals of the project.

To analyze not only the ties that keep migrants' families together across borders but also absences, distances and silences, as well as tensions between the imagined and the lived experiences of migration, I refer to the concept of *ruptures* and *continuities* that the migration project introduces into the lives of its participants. Sara Ahmed (2003), in a collective volume *Uprootings / Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, seeking to challenge the home vs. migration relation, often imagined as a dichotomy, refers to the analytical concepts of *uprooting* and *regrounding* as such that allow her to "consider home and migration in terms of plurality of experiences, histories and constituencies, and the working of the institutional structures" (2003:3). In my work, which discusses women's labor migration from Ukraine to Italy as inserted in the complex familial, labor and space-determined networks and hierarchies, I address the issue of failures, dead-ends and their situational solutions by referring to *ruptures* and *continuities*, which I see, similarly to Ahmed's concepts, as "enacted – affectively, materially and symbolically – in relation to each other" and constituting "specific processes, modes and materialities [enacted] in different contexts and on different scales" (Ahmed 2003:3).

In my usage of ruptures and continuities I do not intend to engage in a larger philosophical debate on what ruptures and continuities are but rather relate to these concepts on a very concrete level. Discontinuities and loose ends of unsolved familial, professional and personal issues put on hold for the course of one's migration allow me to look in-depth into the ruptures migration often brings. To name a few of such ruptures, I refer to the loss of intimacy within transnational families, loss of professional qualifications, loss of self-esteem related to downward mobility and lengthy periods of illegality, and loss of opportunities in Ukraine through migrants' prolonged stay in Italy. Here I employ the idea of rupture, as assuming a sense of normality (e.g. reflected in normative discourses or imagined idealized tropes) and the dissonance of the lived experience. Rupture thus, is an order of field or a code of conduct that disrupts expected or perceived normality, a

conflict between the expected “normal” and the chosen practices / situational strategies. Continuities, in this light, signify both newly discovered forms of “normal” in an unfamiliar setting or re-evaluation of the “normal” in a way that presents a situational practice as more attractive than former practices and values. In other words, continuities, thus, can do both: resist and reproduce the normative. In my analytical frame, at no point do I assume that both ruptures and continuities are static or given; my analytical focus rather lies within the tension and negotiations of these contestations, as imagined, materialized and worked out, in various sites that intersect with migration.

As it was pointed out already in my introductory chapters, one of the central ruptures of Ukrainian migration to Italy is happening at the intersection of migration and gender, especially motherhood. Hondagneu –Sotelo and Avila refer to female migration as a “gender –transforming odyssey” arguing that when women migrate they are “initiating separations of space and time from their communities of origins, homes, children, and – sometimes – husbands. In doing so, they must cope with stigma, guilt, and criticism from others” (1997:552). In the previous chapters I have indicated that Ukrainian migration to Italy is often discussed as *motherly migration* and presented in various media, public and political discourses as a tragedy threatening not only the unity of the families but the integrity of the nation. As it will be discussed throughout the dissertation, these discourses are not simply limited to the political or public spheres. Most of my interviewees both formulated their reason for departure as “for the sake of their children’s good” and articulated their deepest pain and hardship during migration as prolonged separation from their children and missing out on years of their growing up (chapters 4,5, and 8). Migrant women’s motherhood thus is played out on various levels; the women are accused by Ukrainian public discourses of neglecting their motherly duties, while they themselves defend their choices by claiming that they have migrated in order to fulfill their motherly obligation of providing a better future for their children, and at the same time struggle with the disruption of their motherhood caused by distance and loss of intimacy with their children.

To make sense of the multiple layers on which motherhood is imagined, discussed, and carried out I turn to the analytical distinction between motherhood as a *trope* and motherhood as a *situational practice*. As a trope, motherhood becomes an organizing principle in; it is a central cognitive, imaginative and emotion pillar around which migration projects are imagined and organized. It also serves as a tool for fixing ruptures, when it serves as an excuse, a reason and a justification of women’s decisions and situational practices (see more in chapters 5, 7 and 8). It is used in migrants’ public advocacy in defending their reputations, in their claims made towards the Ukrainian state for institutional support and recognition, in their negotiations with Italian

employers, in their defense against the jealousy of neighbors, husbands, relatives and accusations of their own children.

Addressing motherhood as a situational practice, on the other hand, allows me to see it not as a fixed role but as a fluid process in which daily practices both reproduce and contest normative discourses on motherhood. In my analysis situational practices of motherhood work at least on two levels; on the one hand, in migration, which introduces a geographical and time distance to the mother-children relations, situational practices of motherhood become the creative reinvention of mothering, a continuity that challenges the ruptures introduced by distance, separation and absence. In this way, situational practices of motherhood allow to accommodate multiple other changes that migration introduces to women's lives or "reformulate their own mothering to accommodate spatial and temporal gulfs" (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997:552). On the other hand, situational practices allow women to have a more praxis-oriented take on motherhood, when their identities of mothers can be brought forward or pushed into the background, depending on the situation (see chapters 4, 5, 7 and 8). Analyzing motherhood from this perspective allows us to address a variety of other identifications (e.g. as a domestic worker, an exoticized foreign woman or an illegal / legal migrant) which become more salient at various points.

Despite the centrality of the motherhood trope within the migration project I do not want to argue that Ukrainian women's migration to Italy is experienced only through motherhood. On the contrary, with my dissertation I claim that migration becomes an experience which brings out new experiential and emancipatory opportunities and challenges on many levels. To see how the motherhood tension reemerges in many spheres of Ukrainian women's lives in Italy, and also to address the multiplicity of experiences beyond motherhood, I identify several rupture sites, which I will discuss below.

In their work on the role of state and social imaginary in gendering transnational processes, Pessar and Mahler argue that gender articulates with migration on multiple spatial and social scales, such as the body, the family and the state (2003:815). Similarly, I argue that in order to understand what the ruptures and continuities are in migration one needs to work them out against the specificity of their manifestation through bodily, familial, spatial and institutional domains. For my analytical framework, instead of *scales*, I prefer to use the concept of *site*, which allows me to pinpoint ruptures at the intersections of various factors and agents. I switch to the concept of *site* as a richer spatial metaphor that alludes to how migration has interrupted the imaginary "normal." In my dissertation I have chosen to focus on the intersection of migration and gender-defined family roles, labor and space. To explore the ruptures and continuities that

develop in these sites and how these spheres spill into each other determining migrants' position within their transnational social fields, means to look into everyday lived migration experiences and to position them within multiple hierarchies of power that operate within these fields.

In migration studies, a number of terms are used to reflect upon the migrants' arrangements, networks and practices spanning across borders of nation states, linking localities rather than states, and changing these localities through these connections in many meaningful ways. Thus, migration literature employs the terms of 'transnational social spaces' (Pries 2001) 'transnational life' (Smith 2006c, 2006a) or 'transmigrants' (Basch 1993; Glick Schiller and Basch 1995; Schiller, Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc 1995; Glick Schiller and Levitt 2004; Glick Schiller 1999). In my research, I choose to employ the framework of 'transnational social field' (Glick Schiller and Levitt 2004; Schiller and Çağlar 2009; Glick-Schiller and G Fouron 2001; Glick Schiller and Georges Fouron 1999) as this perspective holds two distinctive potentials for my analytical framework. One is the possibility of overlapping, multi-layered connections and networks bounded in specific heterogeneous sites that determine migration experience and are affected by the migrants' presence. This focus allows understanding the dialectic relation between the global positioning of localities and the incorporative opportunity they offer to migrants. The other is that transnational social fields (as opposed to, say, transnational social spaces) are power fields in which migrants are positioned vis-à-vis other participants, and all the participants navigate against the often competing interests of other members of this fields or forming various alliances within these fields.

I approach the transnational social field perspective as a framework that provides me with ways of bringing together all necessary actors and conditions affecting the lives of migrants and their families by acknowledging the role of the locality and the power relations driving migration projects. However, this framework does not provide me with tools to analyze the power struggles, which it acknowledges to be central to migrants' experience. In this relation, the transnational social field approach has to be coupled with a more specific focus, which would determine the site in which the power struggles unfold within these fields. Several studies have been combining the transnational social field approach with the question of the city-scale (Schiller and Çağlar 2009), gender and familial roles ((Gamburd 2000; Parrenas 2008, 2005b) incorporation and strength of transnational ties within several generations of migrants (Levitt and Waters 2002; Smith 2006a, 2006c) citizenship meanings and citizenship practices (Schiller and Çağlar 2009) .

Bringing together the analysis of the power relations in migrants' transnational social fields with the question of ruptures and continuities created in the course of migration allows me to specifically address the positioning of migrants within these fields and address individual emotion

work (Hochschild 2003b) and “mindwork” (Pessar and Mahler 2003) put into maintaining transnational connections and making the migration project work.

Gender - defined family roles

Mirjana Morokvasic in her 1983 critique of the role ascribed to women in the migration literature comments that “in important work on migration, the symbolic references to women as migrants’ wives and their stereotypical presentation as wives and mothers has led to a conceptualization of migrant women as followers, dependents, unproductive persons, isolated, illiterate and ignorant.” (Morokvasic 1983:16). Since 1983 much of the migration literature has challenged this perception, putting the woman in the center of the dynamic migration process. To name a few examples, are the works focusing on the central role of women in the ever-more feminized global labor market (S. Sassen 2002; Zimmerman, Litt, and Bose 2006; Morokvasic 1983, 2004; Hochschild 2003b; Andall 2000; Chang 2000) the role of women in maintaining transnational connections and rescaling their home towns through remittances (Smith 2006c; Levitt and Waters 2006; Gamburd 2000; Parrenas 2008, 2005a, 2001b). In these and other works, women are not followers or unproductive dependents any more but the pioneers of migration streams, breadwinners and remitters. However, what still holds true for the above critique of Morokvasic is that even though women’s roles have shifted from passive to active, their position is discussed most and foremost as mothers and wives and their experiences, - whether as scale-shifters, remitters or laborers - is often discussed in relation to their obligations to their children and households.

In trying to overcome this limitation in my research I focus not only on motherhood and the experience of women as leaving their families behind; I look into the migration project as a whole-family enterprise that stretches over borders and generations. Family provides not only a sense of support in migration but can also be a source of an increasing pressure for consumption and demands for maintaining a standard of living. Every member of a transnational family has a place in this project, the positioning within which depends on the complex moralities of transnationalism (Carling 2008) in which the negotiations of roles depend on gender and age but also on whether the person is a migrant of a remittance receiver, etc. The discussion on the moral obligations of migrants from Ukraine and their families soars particularly high in case of migrating mothers. This allows me to investigate the mutual obligation and responsibility of all members of the transnational families, be it women or not, and at the same time, to consider the way these responsibilities are unequally distributed in relation to motherhood and fatherhood, children or further kin, and to see how these roles might change and rotate within the families when one of the family members switches his/her position in family status or migration.

Motherhood and gender roles in flux? Rachel Parrenas, in her meticulous work on Filipino female migration, suggests that women's migration is often "equated with the abandonment of children" (2005b:40). In public discourse in the Philippines, "transnational families of migrant women hold tremendous promise for the transgression of gender boundaries. Women's migration not only increases the economic power of women vis-à-vis men, it also places biological mothers outside of domestic sphere" (Parrenas 2005b:92). This puts enormous pressure not only on women themselves, but also on their spouses and children. Ukrainian public discourse produces a similar framing of the migration of women as a "national tragedy", while "motherly migration" becomes the main trope for discussing female migration (also see (Vianello 2009a, 2009b; Pronyuk 2009; Solari 2008).

Such pressure, I argue, "freezes" intimacy within transnational families, creating an environment of suspicion and shame that is shared by both spouses of migrant women and their children. This, in its turn, interrupts communication, makes migration a lonely unshared experience for women and eventually minimizes the experience of emancipation it might bring to the women. As Vianello (Vianello 2009a, 2009b) states in her research on Ukrainian women who returned from Italy, the returnees often have to diminish and hide the positive aspects of their experience of migration and their personal achievement from the jealousy of neighbors, from suspicions of their husbands and children. Thus, it is "safer" for women to frame their migration only as a pain of separation and a motherly duty to provide for their children.

Parrenas argues that due to the stigmatization of female migration and their families, migrant women often do not seek to change the established gender and familial roles, trying to be "super moms" instead, who perform all motherly functions of emotional and material providers but only from a distance. This, according to Parrenas creates "contradictory constructions of gender" (2005b:119) in which migrant mothers have taken on the role of breadwinner usually seen as a male responsibility without giving up of any of the traditionally female roles of nurturers of the families. Despite the distance and geographical separation, the experience of economic emancipation and personal achievement that women might experience during migration, a mother's responsibilities are not diminishing, her experiences often remain unshared, her personal transformations are hidden if not deviant. In the long run, Parrenas concludes, "the contradiction of gender that embodies the transnational families of migrant women does not necessarily destabilize the gender structure. [...] It also does not necessarily engender the formation of more egalitarian gender relations in Filipino families. Instead, the internal contradictions of gender, [...] may reinforce the ideology of women's domesticity as they could exacerbate the emotional difficulties of children" (Parrenas 2005b:119). For Ukrainian women, the pressure of responsibilities that they take up in the family lies not only in gender but at the

intersection of gender and age, as women take up the breadwinner's role to free their adult daughters for child rearing and fulltime housewife careers (also see (Utrata 2008; Solari 2008).

Like Filipino migrant mothers, Ukrainian women's experience in Italy does not necessarily encourage liberation from normative gender roles. While women might learn from the example of their emancipated Italian female employers, the migrant status of Ukrainian women does not give them the same "start" as Italian women have. Thus, migration opens for them a door to Italy, but is it the same Italy as the Italy of the local women? While Ukrainian women are allowed into the privacy of Italian homes to perform emotional and care labor, they are never to forget that it is paid work. Any transgression from this is seen as a threat to Italian families and homes.

Using the transnational social field and the moralities of transnationalism as an analytical frame I tackle the unevenness and directionality of ties connecting migrant women to both the home and the place of migration, without denying the functionality of such ties. I also hope to demonstrate that women do not always "lose" from geographical distance and that often they manage to utilize geographic distance relating to transnationalism instrumentally, i.e. practicing it in certain aspects of their lives (i.e. daily conversations with children), but locking it away in others (e.g. intimate relationships in Italy).

Labor

Stepping aside from the role of migrant women within their families, the gendered experience of care-work provides another central site for rupture and continuities. John Berger in *A Seventh Man*, comments on the nature of labor migration: "It is not men who immigrate but machine-minders, sweepers, diggers, cement-mixers, cleaners, drillers, etc." (Berger and Mohr 1975:58). I see the centrality of the experience of work in migration as functioning on many levels. For instance, it is a labor market that determines migrants' employability in a specific location of the world, it is a work regime that defines migrants' daily routines and it is migrants' employment that becomes a sole justification for a migrant's presence in the eyes of the state of their migration. On another level migrants' earnings serve as justifications for their often prolonged absence from their homes. However, with over 80 % of Ukrainian migrants to Italy being women and with over 80 % of them employed in the care-sector, what does it tell us about the positioning of this migration in the globally increasing demand for flexible cheap and easily disposable labor?

Mary Zimmerman in the collective volume *Global Dimensions of Gender and Carework* argues that the solutions that women develop in the light of the global crisis of care are deeply entrenched in inequalities among women (2006:202). Paid domestic work overwhelmingly remains a job done by some women in order to uplift the burden of unrecognized, non-prestigious

reproductive labor from other women (Anderson 2000; Hochschild 2003b; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004a; Passerini et al. 2007; Kindler 2009; Morokvasic 2004; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007). It is important to stress that even if the official employer is a man, or, - as in geriatric care, - if the contract is between the aging person in-care (man or a woman) and a migrant, the implication behind this contract is to either substitute the non-existent female or to free a younger female relative who would otherwise have to provide this care.

Marta Kindler, in her article on Ukrainian care and domestic workers in Poland describes domestic work as a “commodification of services that were provided in the past by family members, mainly by women, without payment” (2009:2), indicating thus, that we can talk of a different kind of divisions that such commodification signifies, i.e. division not only along the gender line but also class lines. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila argue that paid domestic work is an occupation relentlessly segregated not only by gender but also by race, class and nationality (1997:552), while much of transnational migration literature has addressed the “triangle” of class, gender and ethnicity (Campani 2007). Discussing the ruptures that occur at the intersection of labor and migration I address the issues of class by discussing the downward mobility that Ukrainian women experience through losing their professional jobs in Ukraine and seeking less prestigious jobs in Italy. The reverse side of this class division that should not be neglected is that using the remittances earned through their low status jobs women maintain the middle-class life styles of their children back in Ukraine (Khomra et al. 2006; Vianello 2009a). The issue of the rupture of downward professional mobility in domestic work is interwoven with the gender aspect; shifting her position from a wife and a mother in her own house a migrant moves to a position of the paid care and domestic worker subordinated to the control of another woman, which brings gender and class in the hierarchies of control. The ruptures related to nationality, in case of Ukrainian women, manifests itself through legalization linked to the employers’ wish to legalize their domestic help and to the pride that Ukrainian women take in distinguishing themselves as “reliable care-workers” as opposed to Romanian, Bulgarian women or care-workers from African countries (see chapter 6). To the class – gender - ethnicity triangle I also seek to add the age and life-cycle factor, as middle aged Ukrainian women remain in prolonged low-prestige domestic work in Italy in order to sustain through remittances otherwise economically unrealistic full-time motherhood for their own daughters and daughters-in-law in Ukraine (see chapters 5 and 6).

In case of Ukrainian migration to Italy, gender coupled up with age, created a national niche for Ukrainian migrants – that of geriatric care. Over 65 % of Ukrainians working in Italy are involved in taking care of the increasingly aging population in Italy. This particular type of work, which often involves work with terminally sick (last stages of cancer or Alzheimer’s disease) and frail people, requires not only the experience of care-work, but a certain maturity of judgments and physical

strength that employers often associate with more mature women. This has created a situation in which Ukrainian women migrating to Italy, - the majority of whom are between the age of forty and sixty, - fitted perfectly the required profile of the geriatric care-giver. This is such widespread practice that it is not uncommon for Italian families to completely entrust their aged parents to the migrant's all day long care, limiting their visits to them, - like in most case in my research, - to once a week or even less. This, on the one hand, has created a degree of monopoly of a certain profile of a worker in this sphere of employment. For instance, in my interviews many young people complained that Italian families did not want to hire a young person for this job, having in mind the image of "perfect care-giver" as a strong, mature woman, "whom they could trust." On the other hand, these trustworthy care-givers, have lifted the burden from the younger generation of Italians to such a degree that allow Italian women not only to join the work force (mostly the case in Bologna, where the level of female employment is the highest in Italy), but also to spend more of their attention and time on care for children, thus allowing orienting themselves towards a more emotionally rewarding care-experience, i.e. towards healthy people or younger generations. The class division in this situation has created not only an economic surplus, i.e. the ability to enjoy better and more rewarding aspects of care, but also to boost one's image as a "good mother/ daughter, wife," leaving the care-giver to deal with the exhausting part of the labor, pain, odors and dirt (Zimmerman et al. 2006; Anderson 2006, 2000; Hochschild 2003b).

In his seminal work *Time, Work-discipline, and Industrial Capitalism* E.P. Thompson (1967/2010), exploring the shifting relations between space and time under industrial capitalism, proclaims the emergence of new work regimes and disciplines. Particularly, he argues that production, which became spatially separated from the home, led to the emergence of free vs. work time, and called for increasing the density of production per time unit, thus introducing rigid discipline among workers. What is the link between the industrial space-time and the experience of care or domestic work carried out within the confines of Italian homes where the home and work collide in one space? How does the relocation of work to the home reflect in the cost of work, the rigidity of work conditions and the negotiations of private/ public and paid/unpaid (Zimmerman et al. 2006:12)? I argue that even within the confinements of flexible unregulated hours and unspecified tasks performed in the privacy of the employer's home, migrants are subjected to the rigid disciplines related to work, power struggles associated with demarcating work and free time, private and work space.

In this dissertation will focus on the "human actuality" (E. P. Thompson 2010) of the work experience while scrutinizing the power relations within migrants' social fields related to care-work. This prism allows me to "avoid reducing migrants to faceless labor" (Schiller and Çağlar 2009:186) and to see labor both as a disciplining factor and a sphere of achievement and

gratification. In my research it was often work and professional achievements that were named as some of the most rewarding and important connections that migrants had established to the place of migration. Addressing specifically the ruptures and continuities emerging at the intersection of labor and migration, I focus on the emerging types of work-related regimes, disciplines and work-related identifications.

In analyzing the nature of the contract and relationship between the care-workers and employers Bridget Anderson argues, “domestic workers are reproducing the status hierarchy which is profoundly antagonistic to their own interests. The relations between female employer and worker are not simply governed by the employment contract but by the relation to status, and the confusion between the two benefits the employer” (Anderson 2000:165-6). It is particularly true in the overlap migrants’ employment with legality status. In this relation the state is backing up the interests of the employers, creating a multiple level of dependencies of migrant on legality status on the employer’s will and satisfaction.

“The power of the state is often used to enforce a worker’s dependence on her employer and to institutionalize master/mistress – servant relationship, so the worker may be subject to her employer 24 hours a day” (Anderson 2000:196). In case of Italian legislations this dependence is two fold. On the one hand, the way to legality for migrants is only through a work contract, which should be initiated by the employer. In this sense, I emphasize again that it is only labor justifies migrants’ presence in Italy, morally as well as legally. On the other hand, part time jobs, such as paid by the hour cleaning jobs in Italian homes, though seen by many migrants as economically more rewarding and much less arduous, rarely allow migrants to establish such mutual ties of dependencies that would allow them to put pressure on their employer to initiate the bureaucratic process of legalization. In this way, many women prefer to stay in the live-in arrangement as long as it takes to obtain their legality papers, but even after, faced with the need to renew their work permits every year for the next 5 years, they have to very carefully consider if the rewards of hourly paid employment can give them legal security (see chapter 8).

However, as my research clearly demonstrates, controlling and disciplining is happening not only in terms of legal status or in a metaphorical sense but also through very real means such as controlling food, sleep, space, language use, appearance (e.g. through the uniform) or use of names. It is also important to stress that controlling and disciplining are processes far from unidirectional, as disciplining can well be directed internally, i.e. by migrant disciplining herself into a certain work regime, or from a migrant to an employer, which is especially common in geriatric care, where the person in-care is frail and depends on a care-giver for basic needs. Such

controlling is not always a blatantly violent process but can take many forms of governmentality, e.g. persuasion, attachments or dependencies of various natures.

The intensity of the physical and emotional labor involved in domestic and care-work, the centrality of work for earning wages, legalization and moral justifications of migration pay into the construction of a certain mode of the migrant self, aimed mostly at presenting a successful marketable image. The demand and need for this construction leads to the frequent commodification of the migrants' body as a resource and a tool, and the whole "personhood that is being commodified" (Anderson 2000:121). However, my research and analysis shows that the commodification process in the context of care-work is not unidirectional, i.e. directed from an employer to the employee. In many cases, achieving the confidence of a professionalized, marketable care-worker who would be redeemed from the fears of unemployment leads the migrant to severe self-exploitation and self-commodification of her body and emotions as resources. Similarly, it is very common for the migrants to commodify their employer or person in-care as a source of income to the degree that the migrant perceives the death of the person in care primarily as a loss of job and income. Commodification of care-work thus, not only introduces the hierarchies of gender, ethnicity and class, but tends to commodify all levels of human relations in this exchange.

Spaces

One of the methodological challenges that had triggered the emergence of the transnational migration literature in the first place was to abandon the methodological nationalism as an approach to researching migration. Ayse Çaglar and Nina Glick-Schiller (2009), in their article on migrant incorporation and the city scales, suggest that it might be just a bit too early to announce the success of the transnational approach as even in the transnational migration literature the "ethnic lens" often remains an intrinsic perspective that generalizes migration experiences. Thus, as the authors point out, even within the transnational migration literature migrants of one national remain the main research unit. This often pushes the researchers to extend their conclusion from the results drawn on the example of one city to the situation in the whole nation-state (e.g. by researching a group of Ukrainians in Bologna we seem to understand the situation of all migrants in the whole of Italy) or from the study of one group to the situation of migration in a larger entity identified ethnically / nationally as one group (e.g. by learning about a group of Ukrainians working in Bologna we make claims about the Ukrainian labor migration as such). Without denying that in both cases we do learn something about the situation of labor migration in both nation-states it is essential though to step aside from the nominal usage of location as a background scenery for generalizations built on ethnic or national belonging (either of the location or of a group of people) and to conduct place-specific studies of sending and receiving localities.

This would allow not only for understanding of the structural opportunities available in specific locations to specific groups of migrants but also reveal how the location responds to the broader dynamics within global economy and what is the role of migrants in shaping the position of these locales nationally and globally (Ayşe Çağlar 2007; Schiller and Çağlar 2009).

I see the relation between my dissertation, - as based primarily on the in-depth research with some forty migrant families mostly from Western Ukraine to two specific cities in Italy, i.e. Bologna and Naples, - and the understanding of the Ukrainian migration to Italy in general as based on two specific points of connection. One level of such essentializing is based on the very concrete nation-state based regulations that in many ways determine the opportunities available for migrants and the choices of the individual paths taken in migration. The visa regimes and the lack of Ukrainian – Italian bilateral agreements as to the quotas for workers, taxation or pension policies affect the choices of all Ukrainian migrants, pushing them to situational practices available differentially depending on the places of departure. For example Western Ukraine has a much more developed informal network of transportation and remittance couriers with Italy than, say, far East of Ukraine or Crimea. In Italy, due to the lack of agreements at the national level between the two states, Ukrainian migrants from all regions might resolve to travel on tourist visa and overstay their visa term in Naples, and not in Bologna, where the salaries are as much as twice higher than in Naples, just because Naples has the opportunities for the semi-legal employment and the informal networks of country-fellows are more available than in the North of Italy. The lack of bilateral agreements as to the quotas for workers is important on another level. Thus, it generates a sense of jealousy and unfair competition between Ukrainian migrants and domestic workers from other countries that have such quotas, intensifying prejudiced attitudes towards migrants of other nationals. Similarly, migrants from the most recent EU accession countries often generate much negative sentiment among Ukrainian migrants who see their ability to move freely across the borders as an advantage making them more attractive for the employer who does not need to care for the legal status of such workers (also see chapter 6).

On another level, I choose to speak of the Ukrainians migrating to Italy as a way of reflecting the identification processes that migration experience often brings out. Thus, in Italy, which in the last decade has experienced significant migration precisely from Ukraine, many migrants from the ex-USSR territories are called Ukrainians by default as it was Ukrainian labor migration, and not the fall of the USSR, that has put Ukraine on the map for many Italians. Similarly, the prominent role of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) in organizing migrants all over Italy continues to be detrimental in shaping a national identity and awareness of migrants, centering such identity around primarily religion but also Ukrainian language, celebrating Ukrainian national holidays and supporting a rather nationalistic perspective on the Ukrainian politics and history (Keryk 2008;

Bojko 2009) (also see details in the chapter 2). In this way, UGCC has become the Church of many Orthodox Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians alike, who attend the church as the next closest to them religious, linguistic and cultural community.

These broader, – pan-Ukrainian, - identifications, are however experienced differently in two specific locations in my research. Thus, in Bologna the national identity formation often happens through a strong nationalist-oriented UGCC core community, national celebrations supported by the Bologna municipality as a part of diversity promoting programs available for all migrants, and political activism (e.g. during the Orange revolution and Ukrainian elections 2009) that due to a number of charismatic activists allow many migrants to act out their “Ukrainianness” in this way. This identification goes to such a degree that some of my respondents in Bologna would speak Ukrainian language in Italy, but Russian with their families in Ukraine, relating it to the fact that in Bologna, being a foreigner in Italy, made them for the first time to speak of themselves as Ukrainian. In contrast, in Naples, Ukrainians are brought together not through celebrating of the national identity but through a number of Ukrainian shops, bazaars and recreation places (see chapter on space) organized (semi-)legally by Ukrainian entrepreneurs. Both Naples and Bologna thus have their own locality specific way of re-enforcing Ukrainian identity in migrants as a contrasting identification of non-Italians.

Migrants’ individual and place-specific strategies reflect the larger conditions of opportunities available differently based on gender, social class and positioning of the locality in the global economy. Thus, in my dissertation space functions in three main roles: 1) space as a locality defining migrants opportunities (positioned in a specific way on the global and national scale), 2) the private / public division of space as reinforced through domestic work, and 3) space as lived experience. I will now briefly discuss these three aspects of space in my work.

Space as a locality defining migrants’ opportunities. This aspect allows me to look into the relationship between locality, global rescaling of localities and the role of migrants in such rescaling (Schiller and Cağlar 2009:184). In case of Ukrainian women migrating to Italy, Bologna and Naples represent a larger Italian North / South divide, each of which have their own pro’s and con’s for migration strategies (also see chapters 2 and 5). Thus Bologna can guarantee higher salaries, more stability through legalizing migrants’ status and work engagements, better opportunities for schooling and in general, what most of my respondents perceived as a “safer and more orderly environment.” Naples, which for many years remained a gateway city for firstly arrived Ukrainians and migrants from many other countries (Nare 2007; Pronyuk 2009; Vianello 2009b) provides much more opportunities for informal employment, which might imply the risk of lower or unfair payment but also allows to enter the job market without language and professional

skills or work references. These factors, though depend on migrants' individual status of legality, financial opportunities, goal of the entire migration project or available networks in migration, often determine migrants' decisions (e.g. such as the decision to move North prior to reunification of the family) and even decisions at home (e.g. for a larger investment project in Ukraine a migrant might decide to risk a move to the north to maximize the income).

For migrants, Bologna and Naples therefore provide differentiated opportunities in terms of jobs, salaries, accommodation, opportunities to keep in touch with home and to remit. In its turn, the presence of migrants shape the cities' socio-economic relations and urban landscape. For instance, an opportunity to hire relatively cheap foreign care and domestic help became particularly important for female employment in Bologna, a city with many middle and upper-middle class families (Andall 1998; Anderson 2000). On the other hand, for Naples, which has a much larger percent of low-income families, employment opportunities for women was effected less, while the presence of the migrants effected more development of small businesses, seasonal business, where the migrants would be employed. Outside of employment opportunities, migrants' presence also effected social relations and the city-scapes.

The visibility of Ukrainian migrants in Bologna is achieved through the structural opportunities such as cultural festivals organized by the city hall, or events organized by the UGCC. However, it is lagging behind Naples in terms of availability of Ukrainian stores, restaurants and services catering specifically for Ukrainians. In Bologna, where Romanian and Moroccan female migrants constitute larger migrant groups than Ukrainian women, the perceived job competition for the same jobs often results in the ethnic and racial prejudice and xenophobia among the Ukrainians. In this light, many of my respondents shared scapegoating attitudes towards Romanians "as the most dangerous migrant group" in Italy (Herzfeld 2007), drawing the border between the xenophobia towards all the migrants and their own migrant status by means of such racialized comments like "Ukrainians are not Gypsies and thus are more clean, trustworthy and cultured" (see chapter 6). In Naples, high level of Ukrainian migrants' presence translated into the emergence of several Ukrainian food shops, availability of Ukrainian food products in many Pakistani- and Indian-owned shops (see chapters 2 and 7). Thus, Italian small shop owners were often able to say at least a few words in Ukrainian, as many of their clients, especially in the central areas of Naples, were Ukrainians who spoke little Italian. However, the high visibility of migrants of other national groups, and especially those from African countries and China disturbed many of my respondents, who claimed that the city is "polluted" (referring to ethnic mixture of people in the streets). Many migrants act upon these prejudices, when they attempt to move North, where there are "less black people" (from my interviews) but in fact, less infrastructure catering for their own needs as well. Ukrainian migrants' attitudes towards other

migrants' group is intensified by the competitions for same work places and inequality in terms of visa regimes (e.g. as compared to Romanians or Bulgarians) and lack of bilateral agreements between the states

Looking into the ways various localities effect the life, opportunities and decision making of migrants and the ways in which migrants' presence shift the economic and social life within the cities allows me to see the impact of migration on the cities, even in the cases when statistics fails to estimate the numbers of migrants. Significantly, it also allows me to see interactions within various groups of migrants sharing the space and the opportunities of the cities and to look into the power hierarchies created by migration within various migrant groups (see details in chapter 7 and (Herzfeld 2007).

Space as a divide between the public and private. Bridget Anderson, in her book *Doing the Dirty Work?* discussing dual, i.e. constructed and experienced, nature of the private / public divide argues on the position that migrant workers and their female employers occupy in this divide: "That the public and the private are not real does not mean that one cannot be caught in the gap between them. Indeed, it is the very imagining of them as two separate spheres that creates the gap. The domestic worker, like the prostitute, occupies the imaginary space between the two worlds, symbolically ordered and imagined in very different ways" (2000:4). Anderson's comparison between a domestic worker and a prostitute is not random and stands from her position on the domestic work as first and foremost sexual contract (i.e. stemming from a sexual division of labor within the family), which through care-work is being transformed into a social one (i.e. based not on the gender obligations but on monetary exchange and status difference between a female employer and a female employee).

Marta Kindler, when writing about Ukrainian domestic workers in Poland, describes work in a private house hold as a "specific locale": "[...] a household is also characterized by specific power relationship, to which migrants have to respond. The presence of a stranger – a domestic worker – in the household, has changed what was perceived as the 'private' sphere of household chores into something 'public' – someone's workplace. [...] under such an arrangement, tension may exist between the fact of employing someone to carry out domestic tasks and the need to preserve the intimate character of the private sphere" (Kindler 2009:2). This situation requires a particular vigilance and skill on the part of migrant, which many of my interviewees indicated as enquired skills, professional growth and a process of self-determination as a migrant.

In my research, the public and private functions in both ways, as a symbolic divide and as a specific space where the work (public) is performed in privacy of Italian home (private). Domestic

work complicates this divide making the spaces of private and public spill into each other, and as an analytic category is hardly useful. However, I chose to discuss this aspect here due to the fact, how this fictitious construction often determines the very real and often rigid regulatory regimes to which migrant workers are subjected to and to which they effectively resist. Entering the space of Italian home creates very different order of subjugation than any other work place; in many of the cases in my research, such control regimes manifested in regulating migrants' use of language, name, food, sleep regimes, sexualizing the body of the migrant (see chapter 6 and 8). Imagining the space of domestic work as private part of the divide also affects the ways in which migrant women discipline themselves in relation to work and their employers and the ways in which they find it effective to voice their demands and needs.

For those Ukrainian migrants who go to Italy alone and especially those who chose a live-in form of employment the space of home privacy becomes a space of their work. In contrast, such public spaces as Italian parks, bus stops, fast food places became the equivalent of the migrants' private spaces, where such events associated with privacy as eating, celebrating birthdays, reading letters from home, etc take place. The details of this overturning of the meaning of private and public space I discuss in great detail in chapter 7, on migrants' embodied geographies.

Space as lived experiences. Here I look into the relation between body and space and what kind of experiential connections link migrants to the various spaces they encounter in migration. Thus, in chapter 7, - entitled Migrants' embodied geographies, - I look into migrants' usage of public spaces in Bologna and Naples, primarily usage of parks as a space to spend time free from the domestic live-in employment and spaces of Sunday bazaars organized on the parking lots of Ukrainian mini-vans that circulate between Italy and Ukraine. By looking into the hierarchies, social relations, usage and imagination of these places I look into the process of the social construction of spaces in migration. To me, this construction involves such social exchanges, imaginations and daily uses of spaces that result in transformation of these spaces and creating new meaning through various interactions (Low 2003; Law 2001; Kitiarsa 2008). This approach to space allows me to look into the heterogeneous social fabric of Bologna and Naples as places in which migrants experience the ruptures brought in by migrating and through finding their place in the social, economic and symbolic canvas of the city, establish connections that allow for new forms of continuities. Through their experiential engagement with various spaces, migrants overwrite local maps, contest the meaning of spaces, create new layers of significance and establish original connections with the places they have migrated to.

In this chapter I have mapped out the analytical frames that will help me to discuss the sites of ruptures and continuities. Reiterating some of the main points, I single out the centrality of

motherhood in the context of this migration that in Ukrainian media and public discourses is often dubbed as “motherly migration.” In the following ethnographic chapters I seek to unpack this tag in order to achieve both: address the significance of motherhood on imaginary, political, practical and experiential levels and, at the same time, to challenge the positioning of women in migration only as mothers and wives.

Mirjana Morokvasic (2004) in her insightful analysis of the transnational practices and cross-border networks of the Central and East Europeans after the fall of the USSR, characterizes migrants as “settled in mobility,” “a result of individual initiatives (rather than household strategies,” and heralding a new phase in European migration, in which “departure no longer implied leaving forever and does not, as before, exclude return” (2004:7). Though I find Morokvasic’s metaphor of “settled in mobility” to be very accurate for the understanding of the transnational practices I discuss in my dissertation, the case of Ukrainian women working in Italy offers some critique of such analysis. On the one level, even though such migration is undertaken due to individual entrepreneurial endeavor of migrant women, who do “act as social innovators and use special mobility to adapt to the new context of post-communist transition” (Morokvasic 2004:7), unlike Morokvasic’s analysis suggests, the trajectories and strategies of the migrant women in my research are thoroughly intertwined with household strategies of the whole family and oriented particularly strong to the needs of the younger generations of children and grand children. In this sense, migration of Ukrainian women to Italy is indeed a familial project, in which migrating and non-migrating family members perform their roles dictated by the transnational moralities and gender. These roles do not imply an equal distribution of obligations and entitlements; the flows of care and support often become unidirectional, i.e. from migrants to the non-migrating family, while the spaces of migration become spaces of women’s emancipation or even escape. This pushes the critique of Morokvasic’s statement to another level; when discussing the opportunity to go and return, a crucial question needs to be asked: “What is there for a migrant to return to?”

In the following chapter, which opens up the section of my ethnography-based material, I start by the discussion of the inequalities within transnational social fields and the emotion work that is put into negotiating these relations. I will discuss how moralities of transnationalism (Carling 2008a) position migrants vis-à-vis their non-migrating family member and determine the directionality not only of remittances but also of care. By looking into the flow of photographs and mini-vans that transport them and other objects, the next chapter looks into the connections between the families separated by the borders, and tries to capture the materiality of transnational connections.

Chapter 4. Materiality of distance and absence: the role of photographs in measuring time and maintaining connections between Ukraine and Italy.

Ethnographic vignette: Two departures

A bus ride from the West Ukrainian town of Ivano-Frankivsk to Bologna can last from 24 to 30 hours, depending on how many people the bus has to pick from their homes in villages and small towns in the area and on how many hours the bus will have to wait at the border with Hungary. Every Thursday hundreds of mini-buses leave Ukraine and head to Italy through Hungary and Austria, returning back on Sunday afternoon through Slovenia and Hungary. On the way to Italy, six to nine women are often crammed in the seats next to and behind the driver. Only a few bags occupy the empty cargo space of the half-cargo/ half-passenger van, even though sending packages from Ukraine to Italy is free of charge. The few packages sent from home usually contain occasional presents for birthdays, but mostly medicine, or homemade food, as well as some souvenirs for Italian employers. Some of the space is taken up by products the drivers bring to Italy for sale; those are most often hair dye, some woman's magazines, Ukrainian chocolate, bread or ketchup, - all to be sold to Ukrainian migrants during the two days of parking in Bologna. On the way from Italy, however, the mini-buses are literally overloaded with packages sent from migrants to their families—food products, household ware costing one euro, children's toys, fruit and second-hand gifts passed down from employers. Fearing being caught with excess cargo by the Austrian mobile border controls, the buses strategically change their route on the way from Italy to go through Slovenia, where there are no mobile border units just yet.

I took a trip on one of these mini-vans from Ivano-Frankivsk to Bologna in October 2008. On our way we stop to pick up a woman from a small village. She is waiting outside of the gates of her newly renovated house; her bags stacked outside the gate though her posture makes me doubt if the house is actually her home. There are only two teenage children saying goodbye to the woman. They are taller than their mother, although appear rather shy and stay behind the woman, as she energetically loads her belongings, which are safely packed in checkered travelers' bags that are popular with migrants, into the mini-van, chats with the driver, says hello to the passengers. The woman offers the passengers the opportunity to use the restroom in her house, but all four travelers get out of the mini-bus just for a minute to stretch. We are one and a half hours behind schedule, so the good byes must be quick. The woman hugs her children, giving them some final admonishments before jumping into the mini-bus with tears in her eyes and a smile that is supposed to cover up the sadness. As we drive away, she waves at her

children until the two figures standing on the road disappear from sight. Everyone immediately picks up a conversation about prices and corruption in Ukraine, partially to get rid of the silence, and partly to distract themselves from the painful scene they had just witnessed—the separation of a mother from her children, trivialized so much by the need to hurry and move on.

For none of the women with whom I traveled that day was this their first trip to Italy; many women have taken this trip with the same drivers for years. In fact, most of the women are already acquainted with one another from previous trips. They know the peculiarities of the road well and are only too familiar with the emotional turmoil of arrivals and departures. After 24 hours trip, when the bus finally crosses the Italian border, the same women, who left their homes with tears the day before, exploded into cheers and shouts “*Viva Italia!*” hugging each other and praising God for finally arriving to Italy. My companions change the SIM-cards in their phones to make calls in Italian, put on their make-up, and are soon much more at ease in another familiar environment, this time in Italy.

The same week on Sunday, the parking lot for Ukrainian mini-buses in Bologna is crowded, but only until noon, as all the mini-vans depart after a day or two in Italy so as to be able to repeat the route once again the following week. A few dozen Ukrainian women carrying huge checked bags queue at the sides of the mini-buses in order to weigh and pay for the packages to be sent home. Those who have “checked-in” their packages, maneuver quickly between the mini-buses to see whether any of the remaining bus drivers have the right hair dye or woman’s magazines for sale. A couple of fancy cars are parked uncomfortably right in the middle of this crowded scene, a few young migrants standing proudly next to them, drinking Ukrainian beer, displaying their cars, their company, their ease. Unlike the older generation of migrants, who come to these places to send money and packages to Ukraine, the younger generation comes here to consume Ukrainian products and forge social ties with their expatriate peers. A few modest Italian cars drive Ukrainian women and their packages right up to the mini-buses; Italians will not drag those heavy sacks and boxes but can help the women to deliver the packages. Only the women who arrive by Italian car have the heart to scold the youth for blocking the driveway. A small group of women huddles around one of the mini-buses, saying their goodbyes to a friend who is leaving. The bus driver urges them to speed up their farewells, as he rearranges a mass of packages in the back of the car, leaving all the unsold Ukrainian goodies to an assistant in Bologna. Finally, he urges his few passengers into salon, slides the side door of his white, decade-old Mercedes closed and hops into the driver’s seat. After a short prayer, crossing himself three times and saying: “With God!” he drives out slowly honking and waving at the people in his way. One of his passengers, a woman in her mid-40s is crying, wiping away her tears, and the bus driver teases her: “Why are

you crying? You will be back to your beloved Italy in three months!” – “In three months I won’t want to go back to Italy!” responds the woman, and everyone nods.

The two portraits of departure that open up this chapter pose a challenge to popular discourses in Ukraine that portray migrant experiences only as a painful separation from their families. Although both departures do involve painful separation, it is rooted in more than just missing family. In the course of migration, the meanings of these places are transformed, as they are contested and negotiated by migrants and their families. The two locations are not equal in their meaning and emotional engagement for migrants but there remain a number of links between the two locations, migrants anchoring their lives in each place in a particular way (for a more detailed discussion of the meaning of migration place and home see chapters 7 and 8). These two locations, – although constituting one social space united mostly by the fragile experiences of individual migrants, - hardly ever intersect, as the migrant is often left alone to make sense of the connections and to negotiate the locations’ shifting meanings.



Figure 1. Drivers reorganizing passengers and packages between two mini-buses in Strij, Ukraine, before heading to the EU border in Chop, and further on, to Bologna, Italy. Many of the travelers know each other from previous trips. For those who wish to travel further than Bologna, it is possible to change mini-buses in a gas station just outside of Udine, the first stop of Ukrainian mini-vans in Italy (Strij, 2007).

As it was discussed in the previous chapters, family and migration become one of the central sites of rupture, and thus of the emotion work needed in order to both heal these ruptures and create new continuities in the course of migration. In this chapter, I look at transnational families separated by borders in order to address the rupture of separation, absence and the loss of the intimate, as well as day-to-day, interactions within the families. To see the mechanisms through which migrants overcome these ruptures, I seek to grasp the materiality of the transnational connections and networks. In particular, I explore the tangible flows of people and material objects that link places of home and places of migration. Figuring prominently in my analysis are

those who provide emotional and other forms of support across borders, the objects of this care, and also the kind of support offered to migrants themselves from their families. This chapter looks into the directionality of care-flows and how responsibilities for providing care are distributed. Migrant experiences indicate that unequal distribution of responsibility within transnational families has created a number of hierarchies of differentiated duties and responsibilities based on life cycles, gender and an individual's position within the familial migration project.

Rachel Parreñas, in her seminal work on the transnational lives of Filipina domestic workers "Servants of Globalization" describes transnational families as "sites of conflicting interests" (2001b:83). Unlike other families, their struggles are intensified by prolonged separation, absences, geographical distance, as well as the often diverging paths of individuals themselves. To understand the dynamics and practices of the transnational ties that keep families together, I look into both the *connections* and *distances* purposefully maintained by migrants in order that migration can succeed as an all-family enterprise. In this chapter I do so by focusing on two empirical cases; 1) the elaborate network of mini-vans that circulates between Ukraine and Italy in order to transport migrants, remittances and objects and, 2) the circulation of photographs exchanged between migrants and their families via the mini-van couriers. The choice to focus on the mini-vans connecting Ukraine and Italy and the photograph circulating between migrants and their families stems from my fieldwork experience and analytical considerations that I explain in the following section.

The role of objects in maintaining transnational connections

In his essay "Commodities and the Politics of Value," Arjun Appadurai shows that "focusing on the things that are exchanged, rather than simply on the forms or functions of exchange, makes it possible to argue that what creates the link between the exchange and value is *politics*, construed broadly. This argument [...] justifies the conceit that commodities, like persons, have social lives" (1986:3). The debate over whether the exchange of the photographs can be classified as a commodity chain or rather an exchange of gifts, in a more classical Maussian sense (Mauss 1989), would take me too far from the main focus on my work, i.e. an exploration of the practices that heal the ruptures caused by separation and absence as well as the unevenness of emotional labor involved on the part of the families and individual migrants. What is central for my argument is the dynamic approach to objects suggested by Appadurai; i.e. the meaning of objects is not only inscribed in them but changes both, with in the course of time and in the course of exchange of these objects. Understanding the differentiated meanings that the photographs acquire while being sent and received by the separated families reveals the social life of the photographs not only as a *means* of connection, but as a practice and a relationship in itself.

Monetary remittances, packages and photographs are often referred to in migration literature as “materialized tokens of love” (Gamburd 2000; Parrenas 2005b; Zimmerman et al. 2006). These tokens have different meanings for migrants and families back at home. Maintaining transnational connections, involves commitment and opportunities (time, money) that have to be present on both sides of the family. In her work examining the relation between the distance and intimacy within transnational families, Loretta Baldassar argues that the exchange of care depends on the “dialectic of capacity (ability), obligations (cultural expectation), and negotiated commitments (family relations and migration histories), which change over the family and individual life course” (2007:392-3). Therefore, relations within transnational families are not just dependent on individual love and care, but on ability of family members to invest time and resources into these connections, as well as culturally shared expectations, which determine “who provides care for whom, how much, when and why” (Baldassar 2007:393). The commitments within these relationships are continuously negotiated throughout the change of the life course and position of the family members within a familial migration project. It is in these negotiations that I locate the situational practices of bridging the ruptures caused by absence and separation.

Analyzing the flow and content of photos, as well as the role of the elaborate network of courier mini-vans that circulate these objects between Ukraine and Italy on a weekly basis, I attempt to unpack the category of transnational family and, while not denying the strength of transnational ties and existing care chains, to look into the power relations within migrants’ transnational social fields. The more specific question that emerges is what kind of representation is required for Ukrainian women working in Italy to negotiate trust and intimacy within their families and the shifting meaning and situational practices of mothering at a distance? In addition to being linked to “proper” gender/familial roles, I argue that another axis of power within transnational families is linked to the position of the migrant as someone who leaves the family behind. Jorgen Carling (2008) suggests that the inequality of the emotional labor put into keeping in touch stems from the differentiated positioning of migrants and non-migrants within the “moralities of transnationalism” (2008a:1457). Thus, it is often the migrant’s obligation to revitalize and nourish transnational connection, and in case of Ukrainian female migration, these obligations are magnified by the fact that it is the mothers of the families that are migrating. Even if women migrate with the family’s consent and for the common good, they are expected to make up for their absence, and often feel guilty for dissonance between the idealized trope of motherhood, and the lived practices of performing motherhood from migration.

As I will demonstrate in this chapter and further in the dissertation, migrant women have very little chance of revealing to their families the multiplicity of meaning in the connections that link places of home and migration. The bus drivers, who have a chance to see migrants in both their

Ukrainian and Italian contexts bear some witness to these lives established in two places. This gives them a more privileged position as compared to the families of the migrants, who are often simply unable to move freely outside of Ukraine, but also forges a particular network of trust between migrants and the bus drivers. Focusing on the analysis of these networks that exist outside of migrants' familial networks allows me to look into deliberate distances maintained within transnational families (also see chapter 8).

For almost two decades, mini-vans have been the most accessible means of transport for regular and irregular migrants, providing a vital, door-to-door network for remittance transfers, socializing of migrants and connecting them with their families back in Ukraine. These networks of mini-buses are much more than just a means of transport and have an important social and economic meaning. Parking lots in Italian towns have become a place of weekly gathering and socializing for Ukrainian migrants (see details in chapter 7), while drivers often serve as first contacts for jobs and accommodation for the newly arrived migrants. Due to their own connections at the border-crossing points, mini-vans drivers can provide useful legal information about border regulations or even facilitate transportations that otherwise would be difficult. Finally, the very trip on the bus itself provides migrants with some 30 hours of communication that results in the exchange of useful information and numbers while also forging contacts in different Italian cities. In analyzing the activities and socioeconomic functions of Ukrainian mini-van transportation practices, I will demonstrate how these networks enable the economic migration projects of individual migrants and their families, thus creating a rare network of trust that extends beyond, and at times circumvents, transnational family connections.

Appadurai suggests that in order to understand the concrete, historical circulation of things “we have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories. [...] Thus, even though from a *theoretical* point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context” (1986:5). My second focus in this chapter is the flow of photographs, which opens up several additional levels of analysis—the powerful expressive potential of photographs, as well as their two-fold materiality/mediality (Hirsch 1997). This will allow me to analyze the photograph as not only an object of transnational exchange but also as a message inscribed in the image, mobilized to connect transnational families through its content.

Addressing the material and symbolic value attached to photographs within a wider circulation of objects among migrant families tackles one of the fundamental questions in transnational migration research. “It is worth asking to what extent the researcher’s focus on transnational processes and practices reflects the concerns and emphasis of the participants in the research,

as opposed to reproducing the particular conditions under which the ethnographer lives and conducts his or her research” (Wilding 2007:332-3). Indeed, during my visits to migrants’ families in Ukraine, I encountered one of the main problems in my research—family members had a limited understanding or little to say about the experiences of their migrant relatives in Italy. However, bringing pictures into the conversation — browsing through albums or showing a few pictures — almost always created a bridge of common experiences that were commented on by both migrants (who sent the pictures) and their families (who received the pictures), thus establishing a space for the discussion of common issues.

Networks of trust and reputation: Ukrainian mini-vans circulating between Ukraine and Italy

In 2007, a bus ride from Ukraine to Italy would cost 80 EUR, while the return was 100 Euro. In any case 20 Euro did not make huge of a difference; however, the symbolism of the gesture yielded an important result—respect and appreciation from the clients. The discount was based on the idea that coming from Ukraine a migrant either had not yet earned enough (first-time migrant) or had spend a lot (Ukr. *roztratylas*) while at home in Ukraine (a time of not earning but spending extensively). This small gesture was recognized and strongly appreciated by migrants, who could not but compare this client-oriented style of business with the behavior of Ukrainian border and customs officials. The absolute majority of my respondents complained that with every arrival home, they would encounter open and shameless bribing demands based on the assumption that making money abroad is just easy. These two styles clashed and cause particular indignation among migrants towards the Ukrainian state, as an abstract institution that through the greed and negligence of its politicians not only pushed people to migrate in the first place but also now seeks to “milk” migrants and their families. This sentiment, although commonly shared and very eagerly expressed in daily conversations, escalated dramatically in 2008, when for the first time in many years, the mini-bus drivers had to rise transportation fees from 80 EUR (from Ukraine to Italy) to 100 EUR due to no other reason than bribery practices on Ukrainian roads carried out by the local road police (DAI).

This blatant extortion was such a common phenomenon on the road leading from Hungarian-Ukrainian border in Chop to Strij, - a three hundred kilometer strip of territory linking the routes from Italy to the rest of Ukraine, - that it even found its way to the news in one of the major Ukrainian TV channels.¹⁶ A journalist investigation resulted in candid camera reportage on DAI police demanding money from a mini-van driver without any explanation in broad daylight and in the middle of highway traffic. When the bus drivers were asked why they pay and do not protest,

⁸ June 2008 INTER TV channel, “Novyny.”

many of them explained that not paying bribes could result in a particularly scrupulous check of the vehicle and the cargo. Even if everything was legal, the search could take up to 3-4 hours, which is something that drivers said they did not want to subject their passengers to, after 24-30 hours of journey in a cramped mini-van. It would also delay the timely delivery of packages, and disrupt a whole routine of established arrangements between migrants and their families. For mini-bus drivers, whose business depends on their ability to provide personalized, flexible and relatively cheap services, such a delay would be a significant blow. One of the drivers commented: "We try to keep prices for our people unchanged for years. I mean, you pay 1.5 EUR per kg of a parcel today, just as you did in 2005. Because we know that your salaries here in Italy have not increased. How can we ask more from people, if they do not earn more? But with this DAI police on the road, it's just not possible to cover our own expenses, even if we carry things to sell in Italy and fruit back from Italy. I won't be surprised if this whole Italy [mini-van] business will only last for another 2-3 years."

While border-crossing practices are often linked with bribing, migrants view the DAI's extortion as further proof of the unbridled greed and ruthlessness of the Ukrainian state and its officials, and their perceived dislike of fellow countrymen, who "shovel money with a spade." One migrant commented with outrage: "Every 2 km, starting 200 m from the Hungarian-Ukrainian border [on the Ukrainian side] there is a DAI car and they wave the van over, and without a word, not even a word, just pushes his hand into the driver's rolled-down window and 20 *hryvnja* [approx. 3,5 EUR], 20 *hryvnja*, 20 *hryvnja*. Each policeman takes 20 *hryvnja* every 2 km! What for?! And is this my state?! I am working day and night, I lose my health and youth in Italy working so hard, nobody ever gives me a cent for nothing, and these fat, strong, healthy men just stand there on the road and get my money, my blood-earned money for nothing!!! How can I live with this?! How can I tolerate this attitude from my own state?!"

Despite the general outrage that these cases of corruption fuel in migrants and the constant clashes between migrants and Ukrainian authorities, these practices are mostly internalized by both authorities, who see migrants as a legitimate source of income, and migrants, who see it as the shortest way to solve bureaucratic routines. The money spent in Ukraine is seen as impossible to regulate, while abroad, the regimes of strict saving and precise expenditures dominates the life of a migrant. While crossing a Slovenian-Hungarian border post, one of the drivers, with whom I took a trip from Bologna to Ivano-Frankivsk, wanted to pay 10 Euro to the border officials to avoid the luggage check. When he finally had to pay 20 Euro, he was infuriated about the exceptionally high price. In comparison to this, the extortion on Ukrainian roads, which was blatantly destructive to his business, was viewed with apathy as part of the insecurity of life in Ukraine. Officials' attempts to rip off migrants reflect the wider perspective of many non-migrating

Ukrainians that the money earned abroad has less value than money earned in Ukraine. The symbolic value of the money earned abroad and received as remittances is that of easy-come, easy-go. This attitude though painful for migrants is also reflected in migrants' families; many women perceive their trip to Ukraine as a money drainer and remark that their children and grandchildren often see them as an "ATM machine."

Flexibility and trust remains the key to the success of the mini-van business. Mini-vans carry packages from migrants to their families in Ukraine, transfer money, and provide personalized services like sending small packages with medicine, letters, news, messages. Most migrants "stay loyal" to one or two mini-buses, whose services they have used from their first trip to Italy or since they started sending packages home. The trust is crucial in these relationships as the nature of the transport arrangements can only nominally be called documented; a driver who receives up to 200 bags and between 100-150 money transfers per trip, merely jots them down in a school note-book for a record keeping. The business and popularity of each particular company depends on the reputation spread by word of mouth among their clients, and the trust, once lost, through negligence, the lack of politeness or flexibility to accommodate migrant's specific requests, is very difficult to restore.

Among the features that are thought to be particularly valuable for business are friendliness, efficiency, precise delivery and the ability to accommodate various personal favors from the clients. For example, Olha who has been in Italy for 8 years now, goes home twice annually on the same bus. Even though it takes her around 30 hours one way, she still prefers this means of transportation to flights: "My bus drivers know me, and they pick me up from my doorstep here in Montalcino [Toscania], with all my bags, and deliver me to my doorstep in Tlumach [a town in Ivano-Frankivsk region]. From door to door, you know, with all my bags. And they never ask what I'm carrying and how much. If this is what I need to take with me, they take it. I can bring food from Ukraine, I can bring furniture pieces and household ware from Italy if I need to, no questions. Even though the road is so difficult, it's still much less trouble than to organize all this by yourself, and then, to pass through customs in Ukraine."

The bus drivers' understanding of the life and work realities of migrants stands in sharp contrast not only with the aforementioned attitude of state officials, but also with the attitude of many migrants' families. During my interviews in Ukraine no family member was able to describe where exactly their migrant relative (usually mother) lives or works. For many drivers, the personal knowledge of migrants' working and living conditions contributes to the success of their businesses. Upon arrival to a destination in Italy, many buses spend another 3-4 hours delivering packages to migrants after sometimes as much as 30 hours of driving. Many migrants start

calling drivers' cell phones on Friday morning asking them, - instead of their family members, - if they have any package or a particular product for them. One bus driver going to and from Bologna commented on this services: "Some women who work here in Italy are locked up in Italian homes twenty-four hours per day. They cannot leave [their work place] to bring the parcel or pick it up. Some of them live in small, remote villages and work for very old people who cannot drive them to Bologna. So we pick up their packages." This flexibility also manifests itself in the cheapest delivery prices available, only 1,5 Euro per kg, and free delivery of any packages from Ukraine. However, my research indicates that this is a symbolic gesture rather than an actual discount; it is quite rare that a family uses the opportunity to send a package to Italy.

Not only are packages from Ukraine rare, families are quite often simply excluded from this transaction of goods. On my way from Bologna to Ukraine, one of the mini-buses had to stop four times in agreed upon locations to pick up four different packages that migrants who could not come to Bologna. At one such stop at a gas stations, a Ukrainian woman, who had come with her Italian partner to send a package to her family in Ukraine, asked the drivers if they bought what she had asked for. The bus drivers then passed her the medication purchased for her in Ukraine but said that they forgot to buy her hair dye. The woman simply paid the price on the receipt for the medication and asked them to bring the dye next week. This small incident is particularly revealing for understanding the directionality of the care-flows within transnational connections; even though she had sent a package home, the woman did not bother to involve her family in buying her medicine and hair dye, relying on the drivers instead, who did not request to be paid extra for these favors. In Bologna, I observed on numerous occasions how bus drivers would take down lists of things from individual migrants, who preferred this trusted *economic relation* over asking a *favor* of their own families. With this level of trust, it is not surprising that Ukrainian women were ready to fight Italian police in order to protect Ukrainian mini-buses in Rome. On March 29, 2009, when the police of Rome raided one of the two parking lots where Ukrainian mini-buses congregate and tried to confiscate them during one of the weekly Sunday bazaars, hundreds of Ukrainian women rushed to protect the mini-bus drivers and their vehicles and, using sheer force ousted the unprepared police from the premises (UNIAN press 2009).

Unlike migrants' families, whose ability to cross borders is limited by visa regimes, the bus drivers have a privileged opportunity to see migrants in both Italy and Ukraine, thus witnessing the complexity of the exchanges between the two locales. Their relationship with the migrants, though based on economic interest, relies heavily on informal networks of trust and reputation, making these monetarily-based relationship easier and preferable for migrants. The examples cited above show a propensity for migrants to exclude their families from simple transactions, such as buying medicine or cosmetics, revealing both the lack of reciprocity within transnational

families and the fact that migrants often place their trust outside these family networks. Looking at examples of photographs circulated between the families and migrants, I will now proceed to a more detailed analysis of the directionality of care flows within migrant families, which reveal gendered and life-cycle hierarchies as well as the differentiated positioning of migrating and non-migrating family members within transnational social fields.

The role and place of photographs in a migrant's family.



Figure 2. The mantelpiece in a room of an Italian home, where a Ukrainian couple works and lives, is decorated with pictures of grandchildren, icons and religious souvenirs from Holy places. There are also two Ukrainian flags, a picture of Ukrainian Prime Minister Tymoshenko and her party's flag, and a symbol of Ukrainian statehood, mace. (Bologna, 2007.)

Like many Ukrainian migrants, who live in their work places in Italy, Anna (49) and Ihor (50) created their “Ukrainian corner”: a little space of remembrance and active association with their homeland (Figure 2). The dwellings of Ukrainian migrants in Italy rarely bear many signs of individuality of the people who live there. Unless it's a flat where a whole family that migrated lives, these dwellings are highly temporal, even if inhabited by the same people for years. Scarcely equipped with borrowed furniture and things given away by Italian employers—all good furniture and valuable presents are sent back to Ukraine—these dwellings are mostly rented shared-room accommodation or simply a room, or a half-room in the households of a migrant's employer. However impersonal, each one of these dwellings has some little shrine composed of icons, family pictures from home, political and religious souvenirs, many times a Ukrainian flag. These shrines come in numerous forms and shapes, and contain various components but are always present and it is always pictures from home that occupy the prominent position in them.

On my visits to Ukrainian migrants in Italy, every home I went to had a number of pictures from Ukraine on display. In contrast, in my visits to the homes of the migrants' families in Ukraine I have hardly seen any pictures displayed of their relatives (often mothers) sent from Italy. Most of such pictures were stored in albums, envelopes, or in the computer, while the pictures on display were the ones from the days when the family was together. In their article on the significance of different framing of photographs in English homes, Drazin and Frohlich (2007) suggest that locations of photos, their public display or absence from visible spaces should not be seen as accidental: "the range of ways of materially contextualizing photos (which we call 'framing') in the home map out a family's collective intention to share memories in future with assorted relatives" (2007:51). Viewing a display of pictures as a materialized intention to preserve certain selected memories for the future recollection leads us to asking: in transnational families, where daily experiences and routines of familial interactions are disrupted, what is intended to be remembered and by whom? I argue that such choices are dictated not only by the differentiated roles and responsibilities allocated within the transnational families in times of migration but from the very goals and imagination of the migration enterprise.

In the context of transnational families, the photographs and their framing in themselves become a form of sharing, which helps to make up for distance and absence (Wolbert 2001; Margold 2004; Miller 2009). For domestic live-in workers whose work and privacy spaces often collide, a display of pictures from home often demarcates an asylum of what is really "theirs." In most migrants' dwellings, the pictures often occupy a limited cramped space of a shelf or a bed-side table, where they share a territory with objects that at home would not be kept together, i.e. family pictures, political leaders' pictures, religious calendars, small flags and icons. However, when the living space coincides with a work place, these pictures together with *all* other objects are placed in such spaces on the basis of one criterion, i.e. they all mean *home*.

Another factor that I found looming large in migrants' choices of displaying certain images but not others was formulated by Drazin: "the motivation behind photographic framing practices does not only lie in the recapturing of the past, but the preservation and realization of possibilities for the future" (Drazin and Frohlich 2007:68). In this sense, to display a picture of the family in a migrant's dwelling enables to imagine the possibility of return and future reunification. In contrast, displaying a picture of a migrant mother who is away is to remind a family of separation. It therefore makes sense that the only pictures of migrants exhibited in migrants' homes are pictures of migrants' visits or pre-migration pictures in which the whole family is together. The pictures thus establish "the right" order of things, giving hope for the possibility to re-establish this disrupted order in future.

Asymmetries of keeping in touch

Asymmetries of keeping in touch within transnational families often lead to neglecting and ignoring of migrants' lived experiences. Very often maintaining connections under the conditions of separation becomes the migrant's responsibility. Most of the times, it is the duty of the migrating relative not only to be in touch through the phone (since they command more resources than their families at home) but to also to constantly indicate their interest in life in Ukraine, and to present their time and experience in Italy as an empty limbo in which time doesn't move, life is not lived but only work, and the pain of separation with the family is present at all times. The unequal distribution of duties is often normalized and internalized not only by migrants' families but also by migrants themselves, who on top of the effort of working abroad, had to pick up the larger emotional and practical share of the family's communication. To illustrate such asymmetry I will describe one of the migrants' (Valentina) story. Throughout my research, Valentina's pattern of communication with her family proved typical rather than exceptional.

Valentina (47) came to Italy 6 years ago and since that time she has brought over her two younger children. Her third and older son, 28 year-old Dmytro, got married and lives in Ukraine. While visiting Valentina in Naples, I saw her making phone calls to Ukraine several times a week; she maintained contact with the wide circle of relatives, i.e. her son, daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law's mother, and even with the Ukrainian girlfriend of Valentina's middle son and the girlfriend's father. She was also controlling the renovations of her new flat in Ukraine and keeping in touch with the care-giver who looked after Valentina's disabled sister. On multiple occasions Valentina discussed details of her older son's life in Ukraine, e.g. relating how unhappy she was that Dmytro had no time to fix his and his wife's room or buy new furniture that was still missing from it.

On my visit to Valentina's oldest son, Dmytro, in Ukraine (when Valentina was still in Naples), I was only able to talk to Dmytro's wife, Olena, who despite the constant contact with Ljubov had very little idea of her life in Italy. She knew that Valentina had a job, but couldn't give any details of what it was, she knew Valentina lived in a flat and that the youngest of Valentina children went to school. Olena, however, did not have any pictures of Valentina in Italy, and when I passed some of the pictures I took of Valentina at Naples seaside promenade, the family looked at them for a brief moment and stuck them into the album in one bunch. Despite all their communication, Valentina's family in Ukraine did not know that she had married and became widowed to an Italian, a fact, which Valentina doesn't like to advertise, but which would not be so difficult to deduce, if only Valentina's relatives cared to know it.

I have witnessed a similar disproportion of knowledge about each other's life among most transnational families I have interviewed. A part of this unevenness can be attributed to the fact that indeed for the family members who have stayed behind, it is very difficult to imagine life in the country of migration (Carling 2008). However, while some of the women I have interviewed in Italy even knew what their children wore on that day in Ukraine, most families interviewed in Ukraine could not even answer such questions as "where does your mother live now?" or "where does she work and what does she do at work?" Carling locates this inequality of engagement in the "moralities of transnationalism" (2008: 1457) differentiated for migrant and non-migrant family members. Migration, argues Carling, often becomes a guilt-inducing process within a moral economy of social belonging and a process shaped by mobility of some and immobility of others. For those who depart, revitalizing and nourishing transnational connection, becomes a form of repaying the "gift of commonality," (2008: 1457) i.e. a combination of a price for maintaining social relations at home and a form of ransom for staying away from it physically. In case of Ukrainian female migration, their expectations of migrants' devotion and involvement in the life of families often go up in relation to the shadow of mistrust their departure in the first places on the idealized trope of motherhood.

Due to the variety and individuality of the images circulating between migrants and their homes, I do not aim to create any rigid form of classification of images or the ways in which they function. However, during my research a lot of images and the ways they were presented to me did fall into several broad groups. I will proceed now by discussing the significance of the exchange of photographs as a part of the larger object exchange described in the literature on transnational migration (Levitt 2001; Parrenas 2005b, 2008, 2001b, 2001a; Berger and Mohr 1975). Subsequently, I move on to discussing two types of pictures: pictures sent from home to migrants in Italy and pictures sent by migrants back to Ukraine.

Photographs: performing migration and family ties

"Perhaps one of the most widespread social uses of photographs is as objects of exchange" write Edwards and Hart (2004:13). They go on to emphasize the multiple layers in such an exchange: "While the image itself is of course central to the act of giving, receiving and utilizing, the materiality of the photograph is equally part of the social meaning of exchanges." Photographs, that just like migrants travel across the borders, can help to get a better understanding of hierarchies, care-flows and emotional labor invested within migrants' families to maintain transnational connections. In their work on family photographs in the UK, Drazin and Frohlich note that "photographs participate in relationships and exchanges" (2007:55), thus emphasizing that photographs are not only the objects of exchange that help *to form* relationships, but through exchange, they *become a form* of the relationship in itself. Therefore, my focus will be not only on

the content of the image but also on the exchange, consumption and framing of the photographs (Drazin and Frohlich 2007; Wolbert 2001; Margold 2004; Berger and Mohr 1975).

Putting photographs in the focus of this chapter can help to “evoke experience of emotion, embodied experience [...] in a way that is untranslatable into written word” (Pink, Kurtis, and Afonso 2004:171). Thus, bringing the pictures to the reader allows making the notion of the emotional price of maintaining transnational family more real, sharp and vivid. While the focus on photographs is rare in transnational migration literature, there has been several groundbreaking works that make use of photographs’ powerful expressive potential. In 1975, John Berger in his book *A Seventh Man* images are equally important to words media for representation of the migration experience. In his words, it is “the photo that defines an absence” (1975:16), which dominates the migration experience for both migrants and their families back home. Barbara Wolbert’s (2001) text on the pictures exchanged by Turkish labor migrants in Germany and their families explores the role pictures play in transforming migrants’ families into transnational families, while Margold’s (2004) text which looks at expressive production of Filipina migrants in Honk Kong focuses more on the migrants’ transforming subjectivities.

Images have recently been picked up by several hypermedia/online projects as a powerful tool of mapping out migrants lives, i.e. their connections with homeland, within families, migrants’ making sense of their past and present, out of the ruptures and new ways that migration has brought into their lives and the lives of their families (Daniel Miller 2009 and Pythagoras project 2004-2007¹⁷). Following these works, I look at the exchange of the photographs within transnational families, not as an accidental collection of snapshots, but as deliberate (if not conscious) representations of home and migration experiences and of life in separation. Such representations, I will argue, are heavily informed by the expectations and obligations assumed within the course of migration differentially by migrants and their non-migrating families.

A special focus on the flow of objects and photographs comes in transnational literature with the development of transnational parenthood, specifically, transnational motherhood literature. Parreñas (2001, 2005, 2008) pays significant attention to what she calls “bridges of constant communication” (2001b:142), i.e. exchange of letters, phone calls, tapes and videos. All these exchanges serve as a way of making separation more bearable, maintaining connection, making up for the lack of intimacy, proving love, reenacting a family at a distance. Gamburd (2000) uses pictures of migrants’ families in Sri Lanka to document visually the absence of the migrating

¹⁷ Narratives and Images from the Lives of Migrants in Greece. Research Supervisor: Riki Van Boeschoten. See the web site <http://gendermigration.ha.uth.gr/en/>

mother. The photos in the text present strikingly contrasting groups of very young children and aging care-givers. Peggy Levitt (2001) describing a village in the Dominican Republic with one third of its inhabitants working in Boston starts her description of the visibility of migration by referring to the villagers dressed in T-shirts with Boston company names and logos, multiple objects like food and drink plastic wrapping produced in the US. To the author, it is the first trace and the first sign of migration that grabs the attention of a visitor; it marks the absence of people through the presence of objects that point to the transnational links of the local village.

Documenting absence and maintaining transnational connections are not the only roles that photographs perform. Talking about female migrants from African countries to Italy Andall (2000) discusses how, in the pictures sent home, migrants pose in front of an object of luxury in the house of their employers, thus demonstrating their own success and access to western goods. Thus, the function of pictures, as described in the transnational literature is not only a way of connection but also a way of representing and performing migration, especially for the audience that stays behind. As I will demonstrate in the remaining part of this chapter, very photographs exchanged in migration are not accidental, but selected and used in a way that allows to capture in image performance of the idealized trope motherhood, dutiful migrant and caring family in separation

Pictures from home: connecting to the “real” life.

Maintaining connections within transnational families between Ukraine and Italy is getting easier due to free internet communication programs (like Skype and various chat programs), relatively low phone tariffs (especially those from Italy to Ukraine) and the availability of cell phones which allows being “connected” virtually at any moment. However, such simplification of communication hardly translates into equal investment in communication; it still remains primarily the responsibility of the migrant to keep in touch.

Printed photographs occupy a special place in transnational communication; they travel between Italy and Ukraine just like people: 30 hours in the overloaded and often overcrowded mini-buses that run in thousands every Thursday from Ukraine to Italy and every Sunday back to Ukraine. The images are sometimes recorded on discs, but more often in paper prints, so that they can be immediately seen. When picked up by migrants from the mini-bus parking lots in Italy on weekends, they are then carried around for a while in women’s purses to be shown with pride at work to Italian employers and in parks and fast food places to migrant’s friends, before some of these images secure their place in the little “shrines” at home. Unlike telephone communication or Skype connection, which is gradually becoming more common among some families, printed photographs possess mediality and materiality, which is crucial for the further circulation and use

of the photograph. When talking of the significance of picture exchange among Turkish guest workers in Germany and their families, Wolbert emphasizes: “in a letter only ideas of the sender can be shared with the addressee. A picture, however, can be held, owned and displayed” (2001:27). Thus, only printed images can be placed on the wall, shelf, or bedside table, demarcating “home,” “something that is truly theirs” for Ukrainian migrants in the privacy of Italian homes, where they are temporary employees. Photographs thus, not only inform the viewer about the addressee; through its material form photographs become a physical media that bridge the distance and fill up the absence in the transnational relationships.

Images of children. Images from home, first and foremost, demonstrate the flow of time, the changes that have happened at home during a migrant’s absence, the updates of the progress the family has made. Such images usually capture most importantly the growth of children and grandchildren. These images, along with pictures of family and religious celebrations, marriages, and the birth of new family members bring the sharp realization of separation but also a sense of “normality” and flow of life in Ukraine. Along with frequent, often daily, telephone conversations such images update the migrant on the changes, allowing them to somehow remain a part of these events, keeping the door open for the possibility to step back into the flow of life in Ukraine.



Figure 3. A picture sent to Italy documenting a present from Italy, i.e. a set of baby clothes, which Nadia has sent for her newborn nephew. The picture jokingly but convincingly demonstrates how wrong Nadia was in her estimates of the size of the baby (Ivano-Frankivsk, 2004).

Figure 2 is a half-joking picture Nadia has received from her brother during her four-year stay in Italy. When Nadia learnt that she had a newborn nephew, she sent him a set of baby outfit. The photo she received back not only acquainted Nadia with the new family member, but also demonstrated gratitude for the present, acknowledging Nadia’s presence in her nephew’s life. It also pointed out to Nadia, a mother of two herself, how she was out of touch with reality and how she could not even approximate the size of the baby. Nadia commented on this picture that it made her laugh but also made her feel really far from her family in Ukraine.

Mothers and children. In order not to limit the role of the circulating pictures strictly to calculated messages of representation, it is important to emphasize their great emotional significance. This holds especially true for the exchange of pictures between children and parents. Children are probably the most vulnerable members of transnational families, and their frustration with the separation often comes through in pictures. However, such images and the messages encoded within them hardly make migrants' burden of separation easier. Such pictures sent from home often provoke a painful longing for the home, a sharp realization of absence and a sense of guilt for making the decision to leave.

The prime significance of the visual aspect of communication between migrated parents and children became clear in many photographs in this research. Thus, in one of the pictures sent to Italy, a 15-year-old Rostyslav (after two years of separation) writes on the back of the photograph: "Mother! What are you like now? Come back!!! I am very lonely!!! Kiss you. Miss you. Rostyslav" In his message Rostyslav does not ask his mother how she is or about her life in Italy. He asks her "what are you like now?" referring to both visual and internal changes that might have happened during their separation, revealing the lack of intimacy that only comes with daily interactions and presence. In the children's world, where physical visible transformations are a part of everyday life, visual images provide closeness that even phone calls cannot provide at times.

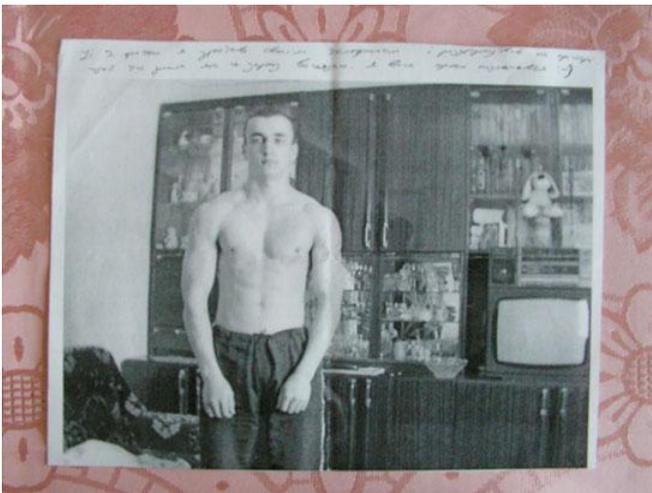


Figure 4. Updating his mother in Italy on his new looks; Andrij sends this picture to his mother after a few years of separation (Ivano-Frankivsk, 2006).

In Figure 3, Andrij, Nadia's son whom she left when he was fourteen, took a picture of himself in order to send it to Nadia in Italy. The inscription above reads: "I took this photo with my cell phone and printed it on our printer, so that you know what I look like now. I have already built up some muscles☺." While formulated in a slightly joking manner, the importance and intimacy of this

image is striking; for a boy whose mother left when he was fourteen, the two years have been a life-time in which he feels he has transformed into a man, and even his body went through some major transformations. The need for his mother to catch up with his new self, his new look, could be substituted neither by emails, nor by daily telephone conversations. Here, the photograph's ability as "*enabler* of the unity" (Wolbert 2001:24) comes through powerfully. Another clear message of this image is that of new acquisitions that Andrij made obviously with the help of his mother's money, i.e. a cell phone and a new printer.

Presents received from Italy. Photographs of presents received from Italy in Ukraine constitute another most common category; these images often serve as tokens of migrants' presence in the life of their families, as they document the material exchange that is already seen as a token of dedication, love and unity of the family. Thus, in the seemingly trivial Figure 4 Nadia's aunt is posing rather unconventionally in her sleeping gown. When I asked Nadia (a migrant to whom this picture was sent) why her family chose to take and send such slightly "indecent" picture, Nadia explained that a sleeping gown was her present sent home from Italy, and that she was happy to see if the gown fits and if it is used. The pictures of the presents received have thus closed the circle in the material exchange chain, documenting the presence of objects that symbolized the presence of the migrant in the family's life.



Figure 5. Demonstrating a present from Italy, - a brand new sleeping gown (Ivano-Frankivsk , 2005).

Lesia (51) stayed in Italy illegally for six years. In the meantime, her daughter graduated from university, got married and gave birth to Lesia's first grandson, Mykhailyk. Lesia talks to him on the phone and when asked, Mykhailyk, - who is three, - says his grandmother is in Italy and

points at the phone. For his third birthday, Lesia sent him an electric car, which cost her over a hundred Euro. For Lesia, such an expensive gift to a three-year-old grandson was important as a way to demonstrate her unconditional love for him despite their separation but also to demonstrate her loyalty and that the family enjoyed top priority for her. Meeting their obligation, Lesia's family was very careful to explain to the young child that the present was from his grandmother, who he already knew lived in Italy. Mykhailyk, however, made his own conclusions and when talking on the phone to Lesia told her that it might be a present from her, but it was the grandfather (Lesia's husband) who brought and gave it to him. This innocent comment of the child's reasoning left Lesia quite sad and, as she confessed, it made her realize how time spent in migration is lost at home and it cannot be made up even through frequent communication on the phone. Lesia added that it was one of the "last drops" that confirmed her decision that it was time to go back to Ukraine.

The pictures of the presents received from migrants and distributed among the family members are however of incomparably greater emotional value to migrants themselves than to their families. Nadia, who returned from Italy in 2006, keeps all the pictures she has sent from Italy and received in Italy in several huge paper bags stored in a wardrobe. She does not display this part of her life in her family house but keeps it privately to herself. After my request, Nadia and her sister Ira (who never went abroad) both went through hundreds of pictures, remembering how it was when Nadia was in Italy. Among them, there are numerous pictures of Ira's wedding, which were sent to Italy. A lot of them focus specifically on the details of Ira's dress and jewelry. Nadia explained: "My sister is the sixth child in the family and she was sure that we will never have resources to give her a proper wedding with a white dress. When I went to Italy, I sent her money for the dress and bought her very expensive jewelry, because I wanted her to have the best. She sent me this and many other pictures from her wedding and I was on the phone with her throughout most of the celebration." Nadia has tears in her eyes as she recalls this, but for Ira these sentiments and memories are apparently less vivid. As we talk over the pictures, she just shrugs her shoulders and says that it was so long ago (three years) that she can hardly remember any of these details.

Material acquisitions: money put to a good use. One more group of images clearly standing out among the pictures sent between members of the transnational families is those of the development of a common project into which a migrant invests money. The progress of the house construction or renovation, a new car acquired with the money sent home, cell phones bought with the migrant's money; all these images reinforce a sense that even though separated by borders, the families work on a common economic and social project, live the same values and strive for similar goals. Importantly, they tell migrants that while they sacrifice the chance to be at home with the family, they shouldn't doubt the importance of their migration for the family; while

the migrant works abroad, the family takes care of the rest, so that when the family reunites, the sacrifice of separation would not be wasted.

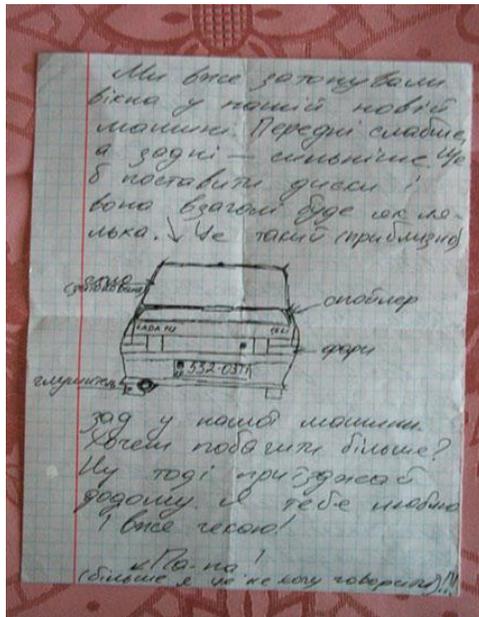


Figure 6. The inscription in a letter sent to Nadia by her eldest son runs: “This is how (approximately) the back of our new car looks like. Would you like to see more? Well, then you have to come back home. I love you a lot and already waiting for you! Bye-bye! -> (I don’t want to say this ever again)!!!” (Ivano-Frankivsk, 2004).

Pictures sent from home, demonstrating the progress made due to remittances evoke not only the migrants’ sense of success but also reinforce their sensation of loyalty to the family; console them that the family performs their part of obligation by making the best out of resources that became available through migration. Remittances and presents sent home from Italy serve as tokens of materialized love (Parrenas 2005b; Hochschild 2001). Similarly, the documentation, i.e. the photos of such exchanges serve as materialized proofs of the unity of the families’ social and economic goals. In a sense, these images capture the success of the migration enterprise and reassure them that their efforts are not wasted and that even while separated across the borders, families still share the same economic and internal values that keep them together as a family.

The value of images sent across the border is not necessarily equal for both migrants and the family. Migrants seem to be much more dependent on these images for maintaining emotional strength away from home. Similarly, it is the picture sent from home that reinforces the “normality” and flow of life in the fullness of familial interactions and daily activities, development, growing up and life circles, while migrants’ life is perceived, as it will be discussed in the following section, as captured in limbo. Olha Kozak, a migrant domestic worker and an author published in a Ukrainian collection of lyrics, poetically expresses this common sense of passing life, so often expressed in migrants’ accounts: “In Ukraine one counts minutes: / Someone has a funeral, / Someone has a

baptism. / And here, the time stands still and wouldn't move: / You live, but there is no life" (in (Vdovychenko 2003).

Pictures sent home from Italy: the “no-story” photographs

Both images sent from home and even more so the images sent home by migrants are burdened heavily with representations. In her auto-ethnography of the immigrant's visiting country of origin, Ramirez (2007) describes how before her family reunions her mother would cautiously select the images which she would later show to the relatives. These would comprise some indisputably beautiful shots but also some very average pictures. When asked why she decided to include those images, she answered “that she was quite aware of not wanting to portray their lives in Australia as perfect and wanted to balance out the good photos with some unflattering and simple ones, to avoid creating a gap between their extended family and themselves” (Ramirez, Skribis, and Emmison 2007:425). Similarly, Ukrainian women who migrate alone have to be extremely cautious not to stir the mistrust and jealousy of their spouse, the gossip within extended families and neighbors or a feeling of neglect in their children (also see (Vianello 2009a; Keryk 2004).

The pictures sent from the migrant to their families at home and those sent in the other direction cannot have the same value or be measured against the same scale (Ramirez 2007). Thus, while pictures from Ukraine have more emotional value, the pictures from Italy have to be much more carefully selected in terms of how they represent the migrants' lives. One of the factors that contribute to this is the fact that these pictures are sent from a more affluent country back to the family, and they should not suggest that a migrant's life is easy. Unlike in the situation described by Margold (2004) with Filipina workers in Hong Kong who send home pictures from fancy malls depicting them smiling and happy in fashionable new clothes, the pictures of Ukrainian women in Italy, to use Wolbert's (2001) analysis, are *not supposed* to tell any story. As a mother of a family, a migrating woman should be careful not to suggest that she has found a new self, a new life or been able to experience something that was otherwise repressed by her situation at home. Finally, it should not feed in any way the dominant Ukrainian public opinion that women who go abroad do it in search of an easy life; it has to have the clear and convincing message that a migrant lives with her Ukrainian family's life, going through migration as a period of sacrifice and maintaining complete loyalty to the family back home.

During the nine-day walking pilgrimage dedicated to the well-being of the families of the transnational migrants organized by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic church (UGCC), father Vasyl, one of the activists of establishing UGCC in Italy, emphasized in each of his daily talks the growing insensitivity and indifference to the lives and feelings of women working abroad as displayed by their families including their children: “It often happens that we stay in Italy for years

[...] sending money home, working days and nights, bearing the separation. Our families miss us, but after a few years, everyone gets used to it, children get used to managing by themselves. And then when we have enough and just want to go back home, it is our families who convince us to stay. How many women have told me that when they phoned home to say they were returning to Ukraine for good, they only heard their families reasoning: 'But what would you do here? There are no jobs here. Maybe you should stay some more.' This is how we get pushed away by our own families."

Father Vasyl, however, partially puts responsibility on women themselves for generating this attitude in their families. He explains that many women are reluctant to tell the truth about their work even to their children and family, because they find it either very undignified or because they do not want the family to get frustrated about the difficulties their mothers go through. Olha, who has been in Italy for over five years, seems to be trapped in the patterns, which the majority of the women I talked to ended up in to a larger or smaller degree. She comments: "I have a great relationship with my sons (20 and 25) but I don't like to tell them that I work five jobs to earn this money. If they knew how hard it is for me, they might refuse to take the money. [...] But even when I start talking about this, my youngest son hugs me and says that he is very grateful for my sacrifice, but he can't stand listening to how hard it is for me in Italy [...] so I don't tell them."

While Olha sees her relationship as perfect, it is obvious that after her sons' denial to listen to her and her speedy divorce from her husband (who, after a couple of years of Olha's stay in Italy, started living together with her former colleague), she has nobody to talk to about her actual everyday experiences and emotions. During my visit to Olha I could see her calling home several times a day on average, discussing minor details of the happenings in Ukraine, but I never heard her discussing anything unrelated to her family in Ukraine. Her position within her family denies her any multiplicity of roles; even if she is divorced and has brought up children and now has two grandsons, her role with her transnational family is that of a mother. Within her family, there is no space for acknowledgement that Olha lives a life in Italy, has five jobs where she interacts with colleagues, that she is acquiring new qualifications as a nurse or that she had moved in with an Italian man; in fact, for anything that is unrelated to her Ukrainian family. The pictures that Olha rarely sends home are those of Tuscany landscapes and historical sites.



Figure 7. The picture is taken during a group tour to Genoa organized by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church for the migrants of Bologna (Genoa, 2007).

Lonely vacation. Probably the most common type of photographs sent home from Italy are from rare vacations or against the background of local historical sites. Migrants' pictures usually present them against a church, or an exotic blossoming tree, maybe against the sea as the background. The purpose of such settings coincides greatly with Wolbert's description of the photographs circulating within a transnational Turkish family (to Berlin). Wolbert (2001), describes the photographs sent by the father of the family (Ilyas) back home over a decade as amazingly repetitive; in most of them Ilyas is standing full height, neutral in his posture, against an unidentified landscape, a scenery or in the middle of a room. All of these pictures carry surprisingly little information about Ilyas' life in Germany. However, as Wolbert analyses, it is not the point of these pictures to give any information about his life or to tell any story, other than that Ilyas is in good health and thinks about his family. Wolbert then refers to the point which is crucial for the intentions of the Ukrainian women migrating away from their families: "Photographs that do not situate the photographed person as belonging to a new group or another place, serve as a proof that the sender has not become a part of an alterneity. For this reason, they are not supposed to tell a story" (Wolbert 2001: 27-8). The "vacation" type pictures seem to serve this aim perfectly. Moreover, they bring out the absence; in such a picture the migrant is usually alone, thus demonstrating the absurdity of loneliness in such vacation scenery. These pictures seem to be suggesting that even though surrounded by the most beautiful landscape, and living in such a romanticized country as Italy they are not enjoying it without their families. Going back to the initial argument of this article on the importance of exchange of photographs, it is not the content of the picture that is important, but the fact that the migrant uses any opportunity to send pictures home, thus demonstrating the effort and good intention to keep in touch.

Ukrainian life in Italy. Another "favorite" topic for migrants' pictures — with a clear purpose — is the images of social activities which are somehow related to Ukraine: usually a celebration of religious or social festivals, maybe a political event. In these pictures, migrants assert their belonging to Ukraine, at the same time reminding families at home that even in Italy, they live a Ukrainian life. In Figure 7 two Ukrainian migrants are depicted in their rare free time (usually one day and one afternoon a week for domestic live-in workers). Though the picture is taken in Italy, there is absolutely nothing to indicate that. It is their activity that is in the focus, i.e. embroidering traditional Ukrainian towels. The meaning of the picture is precisely this non-participation in Italian life. Away from home, migrant women are depicting spending their rare free moments doing activity highly associated with the traditional woman's role. One can be sure that their thoughts are also about home while embroidering the traditional floral design. It is a "safe" picture to send; it allows to dampen the possible feeling of jealousy by some members of the family and to emphasize once again that the best place to be is home in Ukraine, even if they now live in this seemingly affluent place, Italy.



Figure 8. A picture from Italy: embroidering traditional Ukrainian Easter towels in a park in Italy (Benevento, 2003).

Thus, on top of dealing with the stress of downward professional mobility, social traumas of moving away from home and starting from scratch in a new environment, many migrant women have the double burden of dealing with their own hardships and helping their families to deal with separation. For many, the calls of their husbands from home with demand for more money and accusations of prostitution in a foreign land are a part of the migration experience. For many, the accusations of children "you have abandoned us" are also part of the experience. Under these circumstances, the lives of migrants in Italy are followed with a particularly jealous eye from Ukraine and from country fellows in migration. The constant reinforcement of common goals, loyalty and recognition of the differentiated duties and obligations often become rituals called to

maintain ties within a transnational family that might have become too fragile through separation, suspicion and distance.

In many instances the pictures sent home (be it a “lonesome vacation” type, pictures of migrants on the phone with the family or pictures with presents sent from home) are static, and unlike pictures from home, which demonstrate change, these images confirm “non-change.” Migration thus is often perceived as rupturing not only the family ties, but the entire flow of time and space (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997:552) in which life is happening in a “normalized” sequence of family-related life-cycle events. Migration is thus constructed as a limbo in which a migrant puts her life on hold, until she returns to her family and will start a life again. Presenting life in migration as static and not moving without one’s family is also a “safe choice” for a mother, whose departure threatens the morality of the whole family (Vianello 2009b; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parrenas 2008, 2005b).

Transnational families as sites of conflicted interests

Photography is one way of gluing together transnational families, where “close relationships inform their sense of obligation to care for each other and result in the ongoing transnational exchange of emotional support” (Baldassar 2007:393). Although functioning together on certain life-projects, transnational families should not be seen as homogenous units.

Among the tokens of love and care that flow across borders to bond together transnational families, photographs occupy a special place. They strive to fill in the absences, compensate for a lack of intimacy, and serve as a reminder of the “other life” that was temporarily left behind. Unlike migrants themselves, whose transnational movement is often limited by visa regimes, legal status, tight work schedules and economic restrictions, the flows of photographs not only maintain but also constitute transnational connections. The content and the directionality of these flows are thus reflective of the larger composition of transnational ties, speaking volumes about the obligations, moralities and hierarchies within these networks.

The differentiated framing and consumption of images by migrants and their families is heavily rooted in the very purpose and experience of migration. “The motivation behind photographic framing practices does not only lie in the recapturing of the past, but the preservation and realization of possibilities for the future” argues Drazin (2007: 68). Within a migration project, - which is initially undertaken with the idea of benefiting the whole family as a unit, - it is not separation but a possibility of reunification that the exchanged photographs profess. While pictures exchanged in migration carry necessary information and somehow bridge the distance, they are not intended to be remembered or shared together in the future. They carry the memory

of times spent together, and the hope of reunification. Migration must therefore be seen as a temporal occurrence not to be celebrated by the family. Only moments of unity are worth remembering in photographs.

In this chapter, I have looked into some of the central sites of rupture —absences, separation by distance and the loss of intimate and daily interactions. The departure of one family member to migration often intensifies the need for the entire family to perform normative familial roles, in order to secure and reassure the family that separation does not threaten the integrity of their connections. However, for the migrant, migration often brings an abrupt change in lifestyle and a consequent reevaluation of one's life (also see chapter 8), a process that often cannot be shared with the family that has been left behind.

Locating one of the central ruptures experienced by migrant women in the prolonged separation from family and, in particular, from children, this chapter looked into the flow of material objects, - in particular photographs,- as a way of bridging the distance and also maintaining specific silences within families. Examining the directionality of care and responsibilities within transnational families, I have tried to step out of analytically unhelpful discourses of longing and separation in order to analyzing how distances and silences, as well as transnational connections, allow migrants to negotiate the dissonance between normative and idealized tropes of motherhood, and also motherhood, as a situational practice from a distance.

Transnational parenthood cannot exist without careful representation; images of family life cannot be sent without attentive consideration of the effect they will have on the receiver and judgments they might evoke. These photographs often mirror desired representation of migration and home, the “proper” roles of a mother and a child, idealized notions of home, familial roles and linear construction of time, in which migration is a temporal rupture that will end up in a common future. The pictures that flow from Ukraine to Italy measure differentiated time, - i.e. static time in migration and dynamic time at home, - reflecting views of success and failure of a migration enterprise, bespeaking notions of responsibility and obligation that are distributed very unequally within transnational families.

After looking into the hierarchies and relationships that occur in families separated by borders, the following chapter considers the effects of gender, age and the position of a migrant in shaping these intrafamilial hierarchies. Figuring prominently are experiences of reunification of migrant families in Italy, which is often undertaken as an attempt to fix the ruptures of geographic distance and absence introduced by migration or as a stage in a successful migration project. However, I will argue these reunions often introduce additional ruptures into the lives of families, triggering

new forms of negotiation and repositioning of the family members within the dynamics of transnational social fields.

Chapter 5. Second generation in migration: Shifting roles within the transnational families

Rather than relying on transnational networking for improving their condition in the country of their settlement, they [migrant women] tend to 'settle within mobility,' staying mobile 'as long as they can' in order to improve or maintain the quality of life at home. Their experience of migration thus becomes their lifestyle, their leaving home and going away, paradoxically, a strategy of staying at home, and, thus, an alternative to what migration is usually considered to be - emigration/immigration.

Mirjana Morokvasic 'Settled in Mobility': Engendering Post-Wall Migration in Europe" (2004:7)

As I have discussed in the previous chapter, prolonged separation of families in the course of migration is one of the main ruptures in the life of migrants and their family members, and the one experienced probably most painfully between separated mothers and children. It is a small wonder, thus, that a chance to reunite at least parts of the family, particularly mothers with their child or children, in migration is a desired possibility for many families. The decision as to who will be reunited, who has to stay at home and at what point and on which conditions the reunification can occur vary greatly from one migrant family to another but in the case of the female migration, it has to be negotiated particularly cautiously with the left-behind family. Among the factors that most often informed such decisions among my respondents were considerations of what economic benefits the reunification would bring to the whole family; what personal and professional prospects this reunification would bring to the younger generation and if such a reunification would uproot the whole family, thus closing a chance for the older generation to retire in Ukraine?

With over 52 % of Ukrainian migrant women in Italy being between 41 and 60 years old (Markov et al. 2009) a short remark is needed on the social age and life cycle of my respondents; many of the women whom I have interviewed were becoming grandmothers at the age of 40-45, a fact that can be attributed not to the early marriage between their age cohort but to the fact that in today's Ukraine, and particularly in middle- and smaller- size towns, marriage in the early 20s is embraced as a desired norm by the young generation as well. Such a view, however, is not only a matter of cultural preferences, but is also supported heavily by the state's pronatalist politics, which I will discuss later in this text. A short illustration of what I refer to is the fact that, according to the medical norm in Ukraine, a woman who gives birth to her first child after the age of 25 is officially registered as being in a risk group due to the *late* birth.

The available statistics on Ukrainian migration to Italy do not allow us to estimate fully how many reunifications of families occur outside of the cases of reunifications with children under 18 or spouses. This is due to the fact that such reunifications happen within a wide range of means and legality. For instance, a reunification with children over 18 may happen due to mother's negotiations with her employers to fill out an official work force request (*Decreto Fluss*) for their children. Similarly, such reunification can occur through a mother's buying a tourist visa to any EU country from a tourist agency in Ukraine, or, in rare cases, paying intermediaries to transport a family member across the borders illegally. Similarly, reunifications of family can happen not only with children who are over 18, but with close relatives, like brothers, sisters, and in-laws, who do not fall under the reunification of family regulations. Such cases, however, have already amounted to a certain change of the profile of a Ukrainian migrant in Italy. "Today's labor migrant [to Italy] is hardly a ground-breaker; he has information about the labor market abroad and walks the path well trodden by his family or acquaintances," – argues Pronyuk in her book of memoirs of her stay in Bologna in 2003-6 (2009:10). Markov, - in a research project focusing on Ukrainian work migration to the EU countries, - outlines this as new central characteristics of migration to Italy: "New migrants arrive in Italy to join someone (parents, relatives and spouses) and often have prior arrangements for a work" (2009:37).

Markov suggests a "three generation" paradigm of such migration according to the roles each generation performs. Thus, the first generation is a generation that is often treated as an "ATM machine" and a springboard for the second generation to whom Ukraine is a place of a desired but an implausible return and the third generation who will grow up in Italy as will think of it as home (Markov et al. 2009:67-8). I argue that while generational divide plays a significant role in distributing roles within familial migration project, the family objectives are far more complex than the assimilation model proposed by Markov. Migrant families split in ways much more nuanced than just into generational cohorts and go to a great extent to preserve Ukraine as a place of return for the whole family. In such arrangements not only generation but gender plays a significant role in the differentiated familial obligations and roles.

The choice for re-uniting with a family member often stems from the larger family's insecurity to lose the source of income that maintained their standard of life. As I will discuss later in this chapter, migration to Italy which was undertaken by many women as an act of desperation to rescue their families from scrutiny, has long turned into migration that maintains a rather affluent life style of the families back in Ukraine and support such upper middle class aspirations as university education for children, building of houses and buying separate flats for children's young families and sustaining non-working mothers within these younger generations' families (Tymkiv 2009).

In relation to the prospects of the older generation, who have pioneered mass migration in the late 1990s, many women now approach retirement age, and face the lack of opportunities to retire in Italy or obtain a retirement payments in Ukraine. Thus, reluctant to lose an important source of income it becomes an attractive option for the family to reunite with one or several adult children who could pick up their mothers' work and keep the flow of "Italian money" coming into the extended family networks. In the case of my research, the reunification with husbands of the migrant women was hardly ever considered except by my younger respondents who wanted to move their whole family to Italy. Otherwise, Italy, with its work pool mostly in the care and domestic sector, was considered to be a problematic place for men, while many husbands were actually already involved in stable or seasonal labor migration to other countries or even within Ukraine. Therefore, the choice to reunite, with whom to reunite and when to reunite was often a strategic choice involving the consideration of the whole family. This brings out again the fact that migration projects involve all family members who fulfill their part of the "migration deal" not only by migrating but also by maintaining their part of responsibilities and obligations while staying at home.

Pronyuk (2009) indicates that the number of reunifications among Ukrainian migrants' families began to grow significantly after the legalization of 2002. Having a residence permit allowed migrants to reunite with one or all members of immediate family, i.e. husband or children under 18. Thus Pronyuk indicates that in 2003, 95.5% of children of migrants were living in Ukraine, while in 2007, only 87.5 % indicated that their children are in Ukraine. However, the link between the increasing legalization of Ukrainian women in Italy through legalization (2002) and *Decreto Flussi*¹⁸ (once in each consecutive year) and the reunification with their children is not so direct. As Pronyuk (2009) indicates further on, out of the children who have reunited their mothers in Italy, approximately only 4% are between the age of one and five, 25% are between six and fifteen, 27% between the age of sixteen and twenty, and 44 % are between twenty-one and thirty. Thus, a larger percentage children who have joined migrants in Italy were in their late teens or twenties, i.e. everyone who was above 18 had to join her/his mothers via different means than the reunification legislation channel, such as the purchase of a tourist visa, job invitation or, in some cases, crossing the borders illegally.

Arrival of the young family members shifts the existing care-chains, flows of care and remittances, thus shaping different kinds of arrangements within families' networks in both Italy and Ukraine. In the following chapter I seek to grasp these transformations and ask: How does the arrival of the

¹⁸ Yearly quotas calculated by the Italian government opened for recruiting foreign labor in such sectors as low-skilled jobs, domestic and care-worker, agriculture, etc. (discussed in more detail in chapter 2)

new generation changes relations, hierarchies and obligations within the migrants' transnational fields? What new forms of ruptures and what continuities does the younger generation's arrival bring into the biographies of the women who have pioneered this migration? How are the objectives, experiences and decisions of the younger generation fit into the intergenerational migration project undertaken by the whole family?

Interested in the shift of the obligations and mutual responsibilities experienced with the arrival of the younger generation, in this chapter I focus on the interviews with young adults who have joined their mothers as teenagers or young adults. In exploring the changing positioning of the family members in the family's transnational social fields, I employ the notion of "transnational moralities" (Carling 2008a) as a concept that, in case of the younger generation, allows me to look specifically into how the experience of being left behind and migrating creates a number of symbolic and material bounds that differently position migrating and non-migrating family members.

This chapter will proceed by discussing the following aspects of reunification of mothers and children in migration: the blaming discourses in Ukraine on failed mothers and abandoned children, the choices that migrant mothers make as to who will join them in Italy, experiencing a switch from remittance receivers to the earning migrants by the younger generation, reunification of mothers and children in the context of the intergenerational familial migration project. These focuses allow me to map out the dynamics within migrants' transnational social fields and the workings of transnational moralities in negotiating the actors' positing within these fields.

To discuss the experiences of reunification and shifting positioning of the younger generation of migrants in greater detail, I will now briefly turn to introducing some of the dominant discourses in Ukraine on the issue of distance motherhood and children left-behind, as a setting that will help me to unfold the mounting pressures of expectations of reunification within the families. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, migrant mothers were often prevented from communicating their experiences about their lives in Italy with their families at home due to blaming discourses. The same discourses, I argue, built up the expectations of the younger generation about the moment of reunification, obscuring their understanding of the economic and social reality of such reunifications and their changing position within their families.

The trope of separation of families, so often employed by migrants themselves and in public discourses, is not particularly instrumental for understanding the social, economic and personal factors that have a say in the choices, strategies and experiences of the second generation in migration. Without denying the real pain that separation of children and mothers brings into

experiencing prolonged migration, I seek to look into the economic and social factors that shape experience of the children left-behind as well experience of the reunification in Italy. I address that not only mother-child separation, but also the loss of friends, change of linguistic environment, accommodation conditions, ability to continue life-styles maintained in Ukraine, all were the crucial factors that affected the experience of the younger generation in Italy. Therefore, in order to avoid reducing the experience of reunification to the level of dichotomy of separation vs. reunification and to understand the ruptures the younger generation experiences in relation to the social and economic possibilities that they miss or inquire while moving to Italy, I focus on their shifting roles within the transnational social field and the transforming responsibilities and entitlements within the transnational families.

Migrating mothers and “Euro orphans:” national concern vs. maintaining transnational family

Ukrainian discourses on the threat migration poses to the family's and national unity are not an exception but rather yet another case in the long list of examples of stigmatization of mostly female migration which occur in many countries with a strong female migration. Parrenas, in her book *Children of Globalization* (2005b) draws a remarkably similar picture of the discourses surrounding female migration from the Philippines. All of these examples stemming from glorification of the normative gender roles in which the father is the breadwinner and the mother is the nurturer of the family, thus discarding women's contribution outside the familial role as irrelevant. In Ukraine the glorification of similar normative gender roles comes paired up with nationalist project of constructing Ukraine as an independent state with traditional, pre-soviet values in opposition to its history as a part of the USSR.

Patrizia Albanese, when commenting on the link between nationalism and the rise of traditionalism, argues that “...under nationalist regimes in Europe there have been attempts to re-traditionalize and re-patriarchalize gender and family relation.[...] This re-patriarchalization [...] is often accompanied by a glorification of the past and renewal of religious traditions and includes the reinforcement and / or (attempted) renewal of traditional roles within the family” (Albanese 2008:6). I find this description particularly true for Ukraine, where “family values” have become a part of its rediscovered Europeanness and an attempt to to differentiate contemporary Ukraine from its historical Soviet counterpart. One of the examples of the prominent role that motherhood plays in constructing the nationalist mythology of the Ukrainian state can serve a symbol of *Belehynja* – a female protector, who is often associated with Ukraine, protecting its citizens, mother protecting its children and the nation, Mother Mary, protecting all Christians. Its symbolism is used widely in statues and images, one of the most prominent one is the statue of Berehynja, -

a figure of woman holding a branch of guelder rose, - erected on a 62 meter-high column in the central square of Kyiv.

Tania Rands Lyons (also see (Ashwin 2000; Ries 1997; Utrata 2008) summarizes the shift which abrupt withdrawal of the state from the child-care in the post-soviet countries created: "The Soviet ideals of sexual equality and the importance of paid work to personal identity have suffered from a strong backlash, and currently with widely appealing rhetoric of women as protectors of the hearth, spiritual centers of the family, and deservers of economic support from their husbands" (Lyon Rands 2007:35-6). In Ukraine, where the adjective "national" is applied in social, public and educational discourses to almost anything (e.g. national idea, national education, national thought, national mentality, etc.) re-establishing of the "traditional" family roles with a man as a bread-winner and a woman as a full-time, non-working mother became associated with true Ukrainian values. For Ukrainian women, the pressure of the responsibilities that they take up in the family lies not only in gender but at the intersection of gender and age, as women take up the role of the breadwinners to free their adult daughters for child rearing and fulltime housewife careers (also see Utrata 2008, Solari 2008). This often pushes migrant women to make gendered choices in which daughters are preferred to stay separated from mothers and stay in Ukraine in order to start their own family, while sons are reunited with the understanding that they should experience earning money before getting married.

On the daily life level, the shifting of responsibilities for the emotional, social and economic well-being of children from the state to the individual families often creates economic and personal strains in the families. Parrenas, while discussing the trap that fetishizes normative gender role division can bring into transnational families, warns: "The idealization of the nuclear family and the public conformity to such an ideal hurt women, since they hide the dysfunctions of the economy at the same time that they deny the nation's dependence on women's labor migration" (2005b:39). She continues that public pressure from states, schools and churches to uphold the nuclear family "enshrine(s) this type of family at the cost of ignoring the different needs of other types of families" (2005b:30). Such a rigid division of family roles not only condemns transnational migrants' family arrangements as deviant, dangerous and unwanted, but also ignores all those practices that can allow us to understand migrants' choices, strategies and decisions, denies any flexibility of the whole family unit. Parrenas reminds that an overemphasis of the motherly aspect solidifies not only the role of mother but also the role of father as a provider, which in case of female migration stigmatizes both as non-normative.



Figure 9. Poster produced by the Ukrainian Ministry of Labor and State Center of Employment and displayed at Ivano-Frankivsk railway station: “Don’t look at the work abroad through the pink glasses” (Ivano-Frankivsk, 2008).

Similarly, Ukrainian public and political discourses, media and even academia most often portray migrants’ departure as having devastating effects on their families and the integrity of child’s upbringing. Thus, in a handbook on studying and researching contemporary labor migration from Ukraine, - published by the Ukrainian Academy of Science, - one can find the following glossary of terms:

“Distant family – is a family which is characterized by the lasting absence of one or several family members; a family with the defects of upbringing, most typical of which are conflicting relationships between the parents, lack of time to spend with child, mistakes in upbringing, etc.” (Kychak 2009:5)

Though all of the problems listed in the definition can be attributed to some degree to any family, the definition uses strong blaming language to portray these problems as rising from migration and migrant families as inherently flawed. Other rather strong blaming terms that were adopted in Ukraine specifically in relation to the migrants’ children are “social orphans” or “Euro orphans,” both of which imply that in migrant families, care and social support has been substituted with money. Thus, in 2006, the Greek-Catholic Church of Ukraine (UGCC) in Lviv organized round table debates on “Children of Labor Migrants: New Types of Social Orphans,” which gathered media, schoolteachers, and local government representatives. Among the issues discussed there was a suggestion to remove parental rights from labor migrants who left their children in Ukraine for a longer period of time. The term “social orphans” or “Euro orphans” has been picked up and used excessively in media and press ever since; in January 2009 Ukrainian national radio had a news report discussing the problems of children whose parents have left for abroad,¹⁹ while STB TV channel, in an episode of a program “Behind the Windows,” indicated that Ukraine might have

¹⁹ National Ukrainian radio, 2009

two million officially registered, and probably twice as many unofficial, “social orphans” (Kutjepov and Franchuk 2009) Migrating mothers and their children particularly often come under the fire in the full-fledged war between the Ukrainian media, press and migrants (voiced through Ukrainian migrants press abroad and migrant activists). Thus, many local and national TV programs and newspapers often shock the audience with the titles like “While Mother was Serving Italian Signor, her Son Shot Himself.”²⁰ In another example, the Ivano-Frankivsk radio station *Vezha* in a program called “Children of the labor migrants, who are they?” took the blaming discourse to a new level, arguing that mothers in “distant families” often develop “Italian Syndrome,” i.e. a form of psychological dependency on the country of their migration, which might cause them to neglect their children left in Ukraine (Babij 2010).

The significance of Ukrainian female labor migration often becomes bigger than itself; acquiring national and religious overtones, migrant women often become equated with Ukraine and their departure with the national tragedy. However, the same symbolism is easily overturned in order to serve against the accusations, as migrant women pick up the same rhetoric to dress their decisions in the form of motherly sacrifice. One of the pronounced example of such discourses appeared in June-July (2009) issue of the *Gazeta Ukrainska*, sponsored by Western Union and published by a Ukrainian team²¹ in Italy, the front page of which covered 2009 celebration of Mother’s Day in Rome. The front page text ran: “This holiday has come back to us from the non-existence, to reestablish an ancient tradition of celebrating woman-Mother, Mother of God and Ukraine – three-in-one symbol of the all encompassing love, faith and hope. For Italy – a country with the largest female, maternal migration, Mother’s Day carries in itself a symbol of Christian unity” (Soronevych 2009). Similar to the discussion of gendered nationalism addressed by Yuval-Davis (1997), -when women’s bodies become the boundaries of the nation, - the headline advertising Mother’s Day celebration generously compares women to both, Mother of God and Ukraine. Though a non-religious newspaper, *Gazeta Ukrainska* refers to this unity with an easiness that suggests a common culturally shared trope; however generous and evocative, it is rather binding as on the one hand it glorifies women, while on the other, reminds women that it is their migration that disrupted the unity of the family and the nation. With this gracious parallel, a woman can hardly carve out space for her private experiences outside of motherhood, without dubbing a shadow on to the images of Holy Mother and Ukraine.

Sarah Horton, in her essay on experiencing childhood in transnational migrant families, suggests: “Normative Western discourses on the family have long portrayed the fate of women and children as inseparably interlinked (Malkki and Martin 2005: 220). It should not be surprising, then, that the

²⁰ Full reference note is needed.

²¹ *Gazeta Ukrainska* is published with the initiative and support of the Western Union.

discourse of “lost childhood” travels in tandem with the feminization of migration, as women – many of them mothers – are increasingly migrating in large number” (2008:926). Children of migrants, remaining in Ukraine among these highly stigmatized discourses seem to absorb these notions of “lost childhood” mixed with national patriotic lexicon. Thus, in an international competition in writing among children of migrants “Children of migrants about themselves: confessions, thoughts, judgments, pain” (Anon 2008), - a project that was supported by Fund Open Ukraine²², - among 27 contributors varying from age 11 to 20, majority address equally the separation with mother and motherland. Among examples too many to mention in this chapter, the common tropes, so strikingly repetitive, run in the following pompous manner: “Today my lips praise Ukraine, because this is the best land in the world” (Khamardyuk, 13 years old, 2008: 19), “One cannot express the love for motherland in words, one can only feel it, and only then when one leaves his native land...” (Dashko, 18 years old, 2008: 78) “Ukraine is everything, everything that there is, that there can be, everything that is the best, the dearest, the most wonderful and... the most miserable. [...] Life is not a life if I am not in Ukraine and not with it! [...] My dear Ukraine, be with me! My Motherland, be strong and proud! My native Land, I respect, love, adore and praise you! For me, you are above everything in the world! You are a little sunray in the darkness, you are a drop of water in the desert, you are air on the Earth, and you are my Water and Sun!” (Rebrova, 20 years old, 2008: 87-89). Without questioning the sentiment behind these lines, the examples vividly demonstrate the familiarity with which children of all ages use the vernacular of nationalistic imagery in which Ukraine, motherland, mother, nightingale and *kalyna*²³ (guelder rose) all merged into one pastoral idyll of the national dream.

Thus, besides the very real pain of separation that exists between transnational mothers and the children, their relations are also strongly affected by the high-soaring expectations of idealized notions of childhood and parental sacrifice. Among such imaginations the particularly high appeal has “traditional home” in which normative gendered roles position mother at the heath of the house, providing love, nourishing, care and national education to children, and father as a strong figure of the provider. Though failing to fulfill these traditionalist ideal praised through religion and nationalist education in Ukraine, this ideal still finds its way into transnational family. Thus, migrating mothers, who initially go abroad because of scrutiny, choose to stay there for many years in order to maintain an affluent life-style and ideal of traditional family in their children’s homes, supplementing insufficient income of their daughter’s husbands and supporting their daughters / daughters-in-law as full time, unemployed mothers.

²² *Open Ukraine* is a non-partisan international philanthropic foundation established by Arseniy Yatsenyuk and Zbigniew Drzymala to support public diplomacy and raise the profile of Ukraine internationally.< <http://openukraine.org/en/about/mission> >

²³ Guelder rose is a floral symbol widely used to represent Ukraine in public, pop culture and media contexts.

I bring here two examples that illustrate my last point. In one of them, Anna (49) left Ukraine after losing her job as a technical engineer in a plant in Ivano-Frankivsk. She decided to go to Italy because of the illness of her grandson, whose medication was too expensive for the family to pay. Sick worried over the health of her grandchild, Anna left Ukraine eight years ago and since then went a hard way to achieving stability and legalization. She is now an active member of Ukrainian *hromada*²⁴ in Bologna, takes most active part in both religious and political life of the Ukrainians and with pride refers to herself as a patriot. It has been now several years since the immediate danger for the health of her grandson has passed. Her daughter, a mother of two, is married but is still a full time mother, while Anna, working in Italy as a domestic live-in worker (one of the most strenuous forms of care-work) has been able to invest over 80 thousand Euro over the last 8 years into her daughter's new house, including the purchase of such luxuries as a 3000 Euro worth marble mantel piece. Like in many cases in my research, migration which started out of pressing immediate needs like illness of a family member or hunger or debts, Anna's migration did not need to last so long and be so strenuous, if not the pursued ideal of the "traditional" home and family, which Anna's family can enjoy, while being separated from Anna.

In a similar example, Lesia (51) has spent six years without legalization working as live-in worker and in hour-based employment. Due to the lack of the legal status she has not had a chance to go home even once. In her absence her daughter got married and gave birth to Lesia's first grandchild. Lesia lives through this separation very painfully, frequently talking on the phone to her daughter and grandson, whom she has never seen. Among the remittance that she has sent home mostly for renovation of her house, Lesia also sponsored the purchase of cell phones for her entire family. She likes to speak very proudly that her husband and daughter both have two cell phones. In the meanwhile, her older son, bought a 500 Euro worth iPhone, which was stolen from him before he even paid out the debt for it. Lesia, without hesitation, sent home 300 Euro that she had saved for herself, just to cover this loss and the purchase of new but cheaper phone. Knowing that Lesia has been considering going home for a while now and wondering how she thinks it will effect her family's financial status, I asked Lesia when she wants to go home, and she responded without hesitation: "In a few months... I even have my old position, a theatre director's position, waiting for me... but then if my oldest son will get married soon, and will have a baby, I will have to go back to Italy, as somebody needs to support their young family." Consumption drive and the aspiration to reach the gendered ideal of the traditional family are resolved through involving several generations. While the practical realization of such families, with only one male member working and a full time mother, is economically unsustainable for most middle-class families in Ukraine, it is often resolved through the generation of grandparents

²⁴ Ukrainian church community.

sustaining the façade of this myth by invisibly pumping remittances earned at low-paid jobs abroad.

The traditionalist family roles in Ukraine are often reinforced by the pronatalist politics of the state²⁵ which includes three years of maternity leave and monetary subsidies of 12 240 UAH (app. 1750 Euro), 25 thousand UAH (app. 3570 euro) and 50 thousand (app. 7150 euro)²⁶ for consequently the first, second and third child, which is quite a considerable sum compared to an average monthly salary, which in the western regions of Ukraine was about 200-300 Euro. Many businesses, especially smaller ones, maintain an implicit policy not to hire young female graduates or professionals who have not had their children yet. These complementing factors multiply pressures of responsibilities on mature mothers and grandmothers in relation to their motherly duty to sustain and support their children and their young families.

Additionally, traditionalist familial dreams have generated a number of businesses that thrive on migrants' money. For years, education has been one of the most booming industries, which, without guaranteeing many employment prospects, generate huge incomes. Thus in 2006 Ivano-Frankivsk (a city of 200 thousand inhabitants) had over 40 higher educational establishments, majority of which required fees of up to several hundred Euro per year. During my interviews in Italy, the reason to "pay for my child's college education" was second most important reason (after purchasing flat) and number one reason in the research conducted by Correspondent (Tymkiv 2009) magazine in 2009 among Ukrainian labor migrants to various countries. At the same time, for young women especially, diplomas guarantee close to no prospects for employment, as entering a labor market before having children is a luxury that often has to be either purchased or negotiated through personal networks. Paid colleges and universities thus often serve young women as a social platform to find a marriage partner, start having children already before graduation or soon after, and continuing as a full-time mother, often thanks to continuous support of a parent working abroad.

²⁵ Here and throughout the text, I refer to pronatalist politics of the state in reference to considerable unity on this position of all political parties. Thus, the "payments for the children," initiated by Yulia Tymoshenko during her first term as Prime Minister of Ukraine (February to September 2005), since then have survived the turbulent political changes, including when the two largest political forces "the Orange" and "the Blue" have swapped their places in the President's seat.

²⁶ The legislation for a one-time support given for children was first introduced in April 2005, when each child born after this date was entitled to one-time support of 8 500 UAH (app. 1200 euro). This law has been changed into much more pronatalist version in January 2008, when, as described in the text, more children were rewarded by significantly larger compensations. Coupled up with unfavorable employment market and global financial crises, the law resulted in many women's decision to postpone their attempts to exit maternity leaves and instead giving birth to the third, - "golden," - child <<http://news.finance.ua/ua/~1/0/all/2008/01/04/114981>

>. From December 2011 the compensation has been increased even more; 1800 euro for the first child, 3700 euro for the second child, and 7800 euro for every following child (which coincides respectively to 22, 45 and 90 times the minimum income calculated by the state) <<http://i-law.kiev.ua/?p=130>>.

Stigmatization of migrant women at the political level as mothers of “Euro orphans” created a convenient void that allows the state to neglect the needs and the contribution to the state economy done by migrant women. This often blocks the possible emancipation, - coming through women’s acquired ability to earn living and building a new life in a foreign country,- and rarely improves or emancipates their position within their families and their communities in Ukraine, and even less frequently transforms into a gender-role shift. Instead, migrating mothers try to become “super moms” who perform all motherly functions of emotional and material providers but only from a distance. This, according to Parrenas creates “contradictory constructions of gender” (2005b:119) in which migrant mothers have taken on the role of breadwinner usually associated with a male responsibility without giving up of any of the traditionally female roles of nurturers of the families.

Tough choices: who gets to go to Italy?

Before I move on into discussing the experiences of reunification and the shifting position of the older and younger generations within the moralities of transnationalism, a word of caution needs to be said about generalizations drawn on such cases. In my research, the choice to bring someone from a younger generation to Italy depended vastly on many individual factors that shaped migrant’s familial and financial situation. Such factors as availability of a partner in Ukraine, age and gender of the child, occupation, education or the family status, all made crucial difference for the individual decisions. Additionally, the decision to bring one or the other child in migration was often based on the gender understandings of proper family roles, the social age as applied differently to young men and women and a role attributed to men and women differently in migration and at home. Thus, daughters were often preferred to stay separated from mothers in Ukraine in order to start their own families, while sons were reunited with the understanding that they should experience earning money before getting married. Such a noticeable gender switch between almost all-female pioneer migration and predominantly male following migration, and the experienced shift in gender privileges, will be discussed in a greater detail later in the chapter.

My research indicates that financial and legal status of a migrant parent (most often mother) often determined the opportunities and resources required for the reunification. Legalization was thus a significant factor that increased job stability and provided more social and economic guarantees necessary for supporting a newly arrived, non-working and family member with irregular legality status. Financially speaking, being a lonely, full – time domestic worker in Italy often generated too little income to support another non-working member of the family, and left close to no time to spend with the child-care of a younger child. Thus in my research, younger children (especially

pre-school age) would come to Italy mostly when both parents and one or two grandparents were working in Italy as well. Only such extended kin networks available in Italy allowed families to generate enough income to provide security for a possible temporal job loss by one of the family members and to guarantee free or inexpensive child care.

At the same time, my research has indicated that children over 18 were most likely to be sons summoned to Italy by mothers, who single-handedly worked in Italy while maintaining transnational families²⁷ in Ukraine through their remittances. In such cases, the reunification would be achieved through informal channels; either a mother would provide a start capital for paying a tourist visa to a Ukrainian agency, which will bring the new migrant to Italy and allow him/her to stay as an irregular migrant; or a mother would make an informal arrangement with one of her employers to fill out an application during the *Decreto Flussi*, in order to invite her child as a domestic worker. In most cases in my research, both of these methods would be combined; while migrant's adult children would enter Italy on tourist visa, during legalization period it would be often not their own employers who would apply for legalization of their status but their mother's long-term employers. In such a case mother's regular legal status allowed her to approach her employers with request of a formal job request for her child, which provided a year-long residence for the child who just entered the country, opening up much better employment opportunities from the start, saving much time that would otherwise be spent in an attempt to obtain legalization.

Mothers making choices: pro's and con's. Idealized nationalist discourses, looming so large in the public debate and minds of separated mother and children, was important in determining migrants' motivations and strategies; however, they are hardly instrumental for understanding the challenges experienced by the children staying behind or joining their mothers in Italy. In Italy, Ukrainian women are facing more pragmatic obstacles and choices, i.e. how to reunite their families, which child to bring to Italy first and whose interest will they feed when they uproot their children from their home in Ukraine and bring them to Italy. While the decisions of whether to bring children or not, who gets to come and who gets to stay depended a great deal on various individual circumstances, migrant mothers always felt an enormous responsibility for the well-being of the invited children, especially in the context of the overall precariousness that marked their own migrant's status.

Asking questions about reunification, I found that both migrants who invited their children and those who did not had a strong opinion, which basically split the respondents into two passionately conflicting camps, both of which justified their position on their understanding of the

²⁷ Here I use term "transnational family" since most of the remittances generated by migrant women often go for the needs of their children even if the latter have started work or their own nuclear families.

proper role of a mother. Those who were *for* the reunification often quoted the fact that they had no reliable care-giver in Ukraine or that separation, too hard to endure was damaging for the children. Those who argued *against* the reunification most commonly referred to the downward social and economic mobility, change of conditions and social environment that children usually experience upon their arrival in Italy, accusing the mothers who bring their children to Italy of selfishness.

Thus, one of my respondents in the Naples passionately argued against bringing children to Italy: “They [migrant mothers] torture themselves here in slavery, and bring children into prison here. Because life here is a prison here for children.” Many women are very keenly aware of the changes in the life style that expect their children. Valentina, 47, describes such a change in the following way: “How can you compare what our children feel here? Let’s take my Sasha’s example. She grew up in a village; that means streets, garden, forest, freedom...Here, in Naples, she is 12 and I still have to walk her to school, as it is not allowed for her to be alone in the street. I sent her to girl scout organization, so that at least she has some freedom outside of home, but how can it be compared to her life in Ukraine?” Another respondent argued passionately: “You know why they [migrant mother] bring children?! Only one woman told me the truth, because they all would not...she said, *Because I am bored here without them!* They treat children like toys, like puppies without whom they feel sad but for whom they don’t have time.” Thus, with most of my interviewees admitting that the decision to come to Italy was made by a mother with little or no regard to the opinion of a child, it is small wonder that these decisions weigh heavy on the women’s shoulders, while with idealized notions of “proper” motherhood adds strain into these decisions.

Gendered decisions. Many interviewed women considered that daughters are more reliable and able to take care of themselves than boys, who were seen as much more likely to get spoiled living off mother’s remittances. Thus, Dima (19), while telling the story of his arrival in Italy comments on the way the decision was made: “Who has ever asked me if I want to come to Italy? My mother came back when I was 16 and she told me that I am going. Like that. No one ever asked my opinion. [...] When I asked my mother why she did it, she says that if she would leave me I would start drinking, smoking and, God forbid, making babies or would turn alcoholic. She said it was safer this way.” Unlike sons, daughters were considered to be more reliable and being able to take care of themselves by many of my respondents. Social age of a young man and a young woman, on the other hand, is constructed differently and played a major role in the decision which child to bring to Italy. Thus, marriage and the need to start a family “on time” were considered important factors that made many mothers decide to reunite with their sons and not daughters.

Thus while marrying at the age of 20 for a woman is considered to be a proper age for a man it is often viewed as too young by many Ukrainians, especially those residing in smaller towns and villages. Thus taking a girl at her late teens and early twenties out of her social environment may take her out of “marriage market”, while for the man; this situation is seen as beneficial as it keeps a young man busy with not earning money and from having the responsibility of the family too early. Young girls would not get married in Italy either; while they might have a boyfriend or even fiancée, it is not uncommon for Italians to remain engaged for a decade or so. Bringing a daughter to Italy to see her married only after 30 was definitely seen as a risk, which most mothers preferred to avoid by encouraging daughters to start a family in Ukraine. Thus, mothers’ decisions were informed with gender differentiated dreams about an ideal life for their children; the decision of who had to come to Italy and who needed to stay enforced prolonged separation of mothers from their daughters and privileged reunification of the male children with mothers. The effect of Italy on the male children was considered to be two-fold; on the one hand, the mothers felt that they had more control over their sons and on the other, the sons were pushed to start earning money and learning the value of money, instead of carelessly spending the remittances at home.



Figure 10. Only two (siblings) of these five young people have joined their both parents in Italy, the other three young men have joined their mothers who had pioneered labor migration to Italy in the 1990s. This situation reflects a larger tendency towards gender shift in the generation of children who are chosen for reunification and continuation of the migration project within their families (Bologna, 2007).

While they usually have to start working to earn their own pocket money and share living expenses, children of migrants rarely feel such hopeless suffocating burdens of paying off debts or supporting a transnational family as their mothers usually felt or had experienced at some point. Instead, the younger generation chose work more carefully, since they had an initial, if limited, safety net provided by their mothers (a place to stay and food). One of my respondents,

Stepan, 21, who has been unemployed for a few months ever since he has joined his mother in Bologna comments: “I won’t go to work at the construction site. C’mon I am too young to kill my health over such work. I didn’t come here to ruin my health, I have a whole life ahead of me.” Another respondent, Marta, 39: “Young people shouldn’t work as domestic live-in workers. Its sucking out the life of you... no, young people, if they want, should work with children, but not looking after a dying or elderly person. Let older people deal with it, even though it’s hard enough for them too.” These interview excerpts stand in drastic contrast with the accounts of desperate attempts to get any job at the arrival of the older generation (see chapter 6).

Therefore, many mothers felt sorry for exposing their children, especially daughters, to the hardships of labor migration which were often described as “wasting / absorbing youth and health.” Thus, in one of the heated arguments that I observed while visiting a family where several kin migrant women had brought over their sons to Italy, Raja, 47, who pioneered this family’s migration argued: “Only a grandmother should go to Italy. A young daughter has nothing to do here, she has a life to live, family to build. What will she see here? Old people to wash? No, only grandmothers should come to Italy...what do they have to lose?” Many women, realizing that they cannot provide a chance for education and social mobility for their daughters in Italy felt sorry for them, arguing that the young women would be better off at home, studying and starting a family of their own, while their mothers would back up these families with remittances. In many cases, older generation significantly sees the way of correcting the “wrongs” of their lives, and building a *proper* family in the generation of their children at the expense of their own sacrifice, as the testimony below eloquently shows: “Maybe she [migrant woman] has sacrificed herself to prevent her daughter abandoning her own child, as she had done it at some point. Just the way the tens of thousands of migrant women do it, just the way I have done it. Because when my daughter has already decided to go to Italy, and little Halynochka with all her strength hugged her mother’s knees and with pain and horror tried to catch her mother’s eyes, begging on her knees that her mom would not leave her[...] then I told myself that only not her, not my daughter will have to go through this horrible experience away from her child. Only I will ever know it, and will ever do it. And my girls, they will stay together” (Reznyk et al. 2010). In this pained testimony, the decision of who will have to make the sacrifice of separation stays with the grandmother of the family, while she seeks to break the circle of abandonment by providing, as long as she can, a sense of security within her daughter’s family. Thus, the combination of gender, age and life cycle becomes crucial in defining the whole family’s strategies, determining the next migrant within the family, causing further shifts in the family’s care-chains and shifting the responsibilities of each family member.

As it was discussed in migration literature on remittances, a migrant's money sent home often turn out to be a mixed blessing, which may foster distance between migrating members of the family and those left behind, and enhance unequal expectations within transnational families (Parrenas 2005a; Carling 2008b; Stephen 2007; Smith 2006c). Leah Schmalzbauer (2008) conducting her research on Honduran migrants in the USA, comments on the disparities of the life-styles that separate the children left behind and their migrant parents: "Youths are developing middle-class lifestyles and expectations while their parents are living in poverty, working low-wage, unstable jobs, often without documentation. In the context of unequal global development in which Honduras is situated among the poorest of all countries, the growing experiential and class divide between immigrant parents and their children is eroding the potential for family reunification and well-being" (Schmalzbauer 2008:331). As Schmalzbauer has rightly pointed out, the disparities between migrants and their children enjoying the benefits of remittances are deeper than just a life style; a large part of it is rooted in social opportunities and status available for migrants and their children separately.

The switch between being a remittance receiver and a remittance generator often entails a change of quality of life and social lifestyle. Thus, while back at home children and migrants can access the level of consumption that firmly situates them in middle class (creating the so-called "remittance bourgeoisie" (Smith 2006c), but while in migration, the "saving money mode" on which most migrants live, often prevents them from enjoying even small and affordable pleasures like eating out, or movies, etc. Additionally, while remittances sent back home open up doors for education and thus create some upward social mobility, migrants usually remain locked in the underpaid, low-prestige jobs, from which there is hardly a chance to advance in education or career growth. All the transformations experienced during the move to Italy, I argue, are also gendered, as the social positioning and opportunities available for young men and women differ significantly in both Ukraine and Italy.

Looking into various social conditions of mother-child separation (availability of a reliable, familiar care-giver, a stable social environment like familiar school and house, and economic well-being) can help overcome stigmatization of the departure of women from their families as a betrayal, and ease the motherly responsibilities. It can allow one to look into more feasible problems of childrearing – like absent fathers, the negligence of teachers at work, the lack of access to basic economic resources that these children usually feel even more directly after the departure of their mothers, whose presence and support might have softened these factors in a child's life. It can definitely help both mothers and children to maintain trust in the period of separation, bridge the gap of fear and guilt that both mothers and their children often feel under the conditions of highly stigmatized and silenced issue of mothers leaving their families to earn a living abroad.

Never the same again: Younger generation experiencing the reunification in Italy

Robert Smith (2006), in his study of several generations of transnational Mexican families in New York, defines second generation's engagement with racial, gender and class status hierarchies in the US as one of the fundamental factors shaping their experience in migration (2006c:146). Similarly, the issue of social mobility and prestige, as well as various economic and social opportunities became detrimental in the ways Ukrainian teenagers and young adults experienced their migration to Italy and often determined their firm decision to return to Ukraine. The disillusionment of the younger generation with the reunification was also intensified by their parents' strenuous position in migration, especially lack of resources and time to invest into regaining familial intimacy.

In following part of this chapter, I present several stories of respondents who have joined their mothers in migration in their teens and all are now facing the time of switching from school to work or have started working.

Disappointment with reunification. Olena, 17, who was left at the age of 8 in care of her grandparents in a village in Ternopil region recalls she was so devastated with her mother's, and consequently her father's, departure to Italy that on occasion was hospitalized with nervous break downs. Her mother brought Olena to Italy after 3 years of separation, at the age of 12. Olena recalls her first arrival in Naples: "Mama brought us to the flat in piazza Cavour; we arrived at night, and as I looked out of the window of the bus and saw these piles of trash, dilapidating buildings. 'Mom,' I said, 'where have you brought us?!' (laughs softly). When we just arrived, she lived in piazza Cavour, and she brought us into he flat... you know, into a house full of people, full of strangers. The four of us [Olena, her younger brother and both of their parents] shared a room, and there was another family in another room... Back at home, ok, it was a village, but it was a house, you know, a whole house, full of everything, everything in place. And here, small flat, full of strangers, everything is falling apart... I don't know [pauses shyly] of course it was good to be with parents but I was so upset with all this life that I wanted to go home, back to my grandma."

In fact, almost all of my interviewees noted that the re-uniting with their mothers/ families did not meet their expectations. Similar to Olena's experience, despite the joy of reunification, the conditions of life they faced in Italy so much diverged from the setting to which they were used to in Ukraine, that very soon, most of my interviewees confessed, they pleaded for their return home, even in the face of further separation with their mothers. Adding to the highly contrasting

level of living conditions between Ukraine and Italy, children soon had to realize that most parents could not afford spend time with them; thus, instead of 'catching up' with their family time, many children had to stay long hours alone at home, or accompany their mother to their work, cleaning houses, deprived of freedom of movement and bored by the cramped accommodations. Thus, another of my interviewees, Zoriana (15), who arrived to Bologna at the age of 13 recalls, that after arrival she had to stay at home all day, just waiting for her mother to get home: "It was very boring and I was missing my friends a lot. But then, finally my mom bought me a computer and then it was a bit easier. In any case I was very glad to go home (to Ukraine) after a month."



Figure 11. A room of a 13-year-old girl, Asia, who came to join her both parents working in Bologna. Her family rents a flat allocated to them in a half-floor of a building in return for providing cleaning and fixing services for the whole building. In a small, three-room, low ceiling apartment, which hosts a family of four, Asia's room does not have any windows. Asia says that she does not mind, as she spends most of her time in a music academy which she has entered advance of her age, due to her superb violin playing skills (Bologna, 2007).

School turned out to be another source of unexpected adjustments for Olena: "At home, school was like our second home, you know, teachers, everything... and here, when I first entered the school, I told my mother, *Mother, you brought me to some kind of prison, no?* There were graffiti everywhere and gates on the windows." Therefore, in children's disappointment with reunification other forms of uprooting often become the last drop, after which children feel rather compelled to go back, instead of staying with their parents.

I interview Olena in her room in Naples, which she shares with her 13 year old brother, the few things that decorate it are a poster of Ukrainian football player and some pictures of a wedding of Olena's cousin who lives in Rome. The flat where Olena lives with her family is an upgrade from the one to which she has arrived and still they share this three-room space with another family. Olena's family won't stay long in Naples; like many families that I have met in Naples, they want to move North to provide better opportunities to their children. Olena, who studies really well, is to

enter a University in Venice, and her father has already departed to try to find a job in Mestre six months in advance of the beginning of Olena's school. However, she is only mildly enthusiastic about their move. She tells me that having an Italian degree will open vast opportunities for her in Ukraine, where she will be able to find a really good job with her knowledge of Italian. She also speaks of particular fondness about her cousin who just got married to another Ukrainian man, from her village, whom she had met in Italy though. Olena seem to be fascinated with this story; she herself, at the age of 17, got engaged to a Ukrainian man, Serhiy, who is 21 and has joined his mother and father in Naples just a year ago.

With Olena's family plans to move North, and with Serhiy's constant unemployment I do not see how their marriage can happen, but at this stage for Olena it seems important that she hold on to this connection to Ukraine and to her plans to go back. When I ask her to be more critical and evaluate how big are the chances to get back to Ukraine, and use her degree, when Ukraine does not even recognize EU Diplomas, she reflects: " I don't know, I have never tried to look for a job in Ukraine... but I miss Ukraine...or maybe I just miss that time when I was as home there more than I miss that place."

Due to the abrupt experience of separation and highly stigmatizing discourses of migrants' children failed childhood, both children and mothers seem to embrace the fatality of their separation. It is small wonder than, that reunification of the family in Italy often fails miserably to meet high-soaring expectations, and the mothers, despite all their effort, cannot be soft-smiling and singing, while having to maintain themselves and their children on a salary of a domestic worker. Other factors start gaining great importance – the lack of familiar social context, the need to face new classrooms, form new friendships and succeed in a foreign language. Therefore, despite the call for re-uniting family, children do not seem to enjoy being uprooted; the "lost" childhood is thus hardly restored by a reunification and remains "lost" forever and often idealized, as a time before mothers left. This idealization often spreads to idealizing the image of Ukraine as a place of return, but often with little practical plans made for the return, as if will be discussed later in this chapter.

The majority of children who joined their mothers, however, stayed because of their mother's decision. This emphasizes both the mother's responsibility (after making such decision they often feel responsible for the success of their children, motivation and opportunities they can offer them, not to mention financial burden of maintaining children in the period of unemployment) and reinforces the position of the younger generation as "second generation." Even though they join their parents as teenagers or young adults, their decisions, trajectories, employment opportunities, living conditions are often determined by the position of their mothers in migration.

In this sense, “the second generation” follows the paths that their mothers have prepared for them, only seeking to gain the independence that will allow them to make their own decisions and choices. Thus, Zoriana (15) comments on her sense of being trapped in her transnational family’s cross-generational trajectories “I didn’t like it here [Bologna] from the start. But finally I got used to it, you know, if you have to, you have to. But my only question is ‘why do I have to?’ ... I am not working [earning] here, just study. But I could have studied at home just as well.” Migrants’ children, often remain strongly dependent on their mothers even after years of staying in Italy, especially when dealing with issues of legal status, interaction with state bureaucracy, securing accommodation and making long-lasting strategies. In this sense, I am inclined to talk of differentiated practices of social life and spending money in the second generation as compared to the older generation, but not about the shift in larger migration patterns. Migration remains a cross-generational project in which each generation has to perform its role in relation to the interests of the other generation, which generates tension, conflicts and power struggles within transnational families.

Shifting from the position of remittance bourgeoisie in Ukraine to the position of irregular migrant in Italy. Dima, 19, whose story I refer to on page 15, recalls his realization of the fact that Italy is not a ‘paradise’ which he fully realized only upon arrival, even though his mother, father, older sister and brother had lived in Italy for years by the time he had arrived: “When I first came to Italy I was thinking about it like most people still think about it back in Ukraine. That there are golden mountains here, that you just come here and they give you money, you take it and can go back home. It’s not like that. You have to work really hard. The only good thing here is that you work for 8 hours, you finish, you leave your work and don’t have to worry about anything; you have the money. In Ukraine you have to snoop around, adjust, and work for 24 hours to get the same money.” Upon arrival in Italy, many young people in my research soon realized that their parents both are not willing, and not capable of ‘just giving’ pocket money, unlike in Ukraine, where just a phone call was usually enough to receive some extra for expenses. Young people for the first time witness the strain with which the money is earned, and face the fact that their parents / mothers cannot afford ‘extra’ expenses in Italy.



Figure 12. Hands of a 19 year-old apprentice in a marble factory (Naples, 2008).

One of the first features of the experienced switch from a position of a remittance-receiver was the need to start working. Thus, in my interviews, most children who have joined their parents started working on average at the age of 15/16, which is an unusually early start for paid jobs in Ukrainian context: Zoriana, 15, took up a job at a pizza delivery; Zhenia, started working 10-hour-long shifts as a waitress at the age of 16; Vasja, at the age of 15, was selling fruit in a vegetable stall; Ruslan became an apprentice at a marble factory at the age of 16; and Dima, at the age 16, started work as a butcher. When I asked my interviewees about their peers back in Ukraine, they all admitted that they know no one who started working as early as them. Thus Dima (now 19) comments: “If my friends in Ukraine work?! Please, give me a break... they are all 3-4 years older than me, and they all study to get a profession...like, Stiopa will become a priest... though really, I cannot imagine him being a priest! Petro just finished lawyer’s school and is looking for a job as a lawyer... I don’t know if he will find it any time soon... None of them have worked yet.” Dima, speaks of his friends with fondness, describing how they all grew up together in the same street. However, his life trajectory is now different from theirs. Even though Dima also went to school in Italy, his educational goals are not like his friends’ (to become a priest or a lawyer). He attends vocational training school to become a barman or a waiter, and when I ask him why he has chosen it, he replies: “My mother stuck me in there, since I had to study something.” Similarly, most of my interviewees in the second generation have chosen to study something which involves very practical targeting for an available (or possibly available) work niche. Tourism, hotel management, care-work, bar-tending all these jobs were seen as bearing the potential of bridging life in Italy with migrant origins or the potentiality of a transnational business.

Additionally, with the drastic “cut” of their pocket money, many children upon arrival face the need to participate in the household economy, i.e. chip in with their mother in paying bills and even for food. In most of my interviews, children who lived with their mothers and did not yet have a family

of their own paid bills, while in case of adolescent sons, their mothers took all their salaries, giving back small allowance for daily use and investing in projects which were discussed and agreed together in advance, such as purchase of cars, scooters, computers, etc. However, while stay in Italy for the younger generation may have provided earnings, and such luxuries as scooters, computers and cars, it did not provide a higher social status, which particularly effected the young men. Not unlike Dima's example described earlier, young men in migration often realize that the middle-class life style that was available for them in Ukraine is often unattainable for them in Italy. Their position in relation to their peers in Ukraine, however, remains ambiguous; their earnings in low paid jobs often remain higher than their friends' in professional jobs in Ukraine. In this light, the encounters and presentation of an affluent life-style during the visits to Ukraine continues to be an important ritual for balancing out the downward class mobility.

Reversing gender privileges. Gender-related social position contributes to another even more visible transformation that the young adults encounter upon their arrival in Italy. Thus, during my research I have met only one Ukrainian man dating an Italian woman, and plenty of Ukrainian women dating Italian men or other nationals. Majority of the second generation men in Italy would either date another Ukrainian (or from the ex-USSR) woman or maintain long distance relationships with their girlfriends back in Ukraine. When inquiring into why Ukrainian men do not date Italian women, all of my male respondents indicated lack of finances as the main impediment to the development of these types of relationships. Thus, Andrij (28) voiced probably most typical response: "To ask an Italian girl out you need what? Money, of course! Just to ask her for a dinner you need to have a car, and then, in a restaurant you need to leave [pay] at least 50 Euro, and then drinks afterwards or a disco.... I mean which of our [Ukrainian] guys have 100 Euro to spend over night? But without this, Italian girl won't even look at you!" Andrij's summary reflects some of the existing financial restraints, but what it also demonstrates is his own, quite normative, understanding of gender roles in which a man has to offer a woman resources, impress her with his financial capacities and build a relationship on this initial superiority. In this sense, going out with Ukrainian girls allows migrant men to exercise exactly that gender model, in which they are able not only to get some romantic thrill but to boost their own self-esteem as a financial provider.

In relation to these social impediments and the lack of interest on the part of Italian women, Ukrainian men often develop a discourse about Italian women as being "worse" than Ukrainian ones. Vasja, (15) comments: "I honestly prefer Ukrainian girls... they are more modest, well-behaved... You know, once we invited an Italian girl into our [all migrant] company, and she just left in half an hour saying that she doesn't like the people. See, a Ukrainian girl would never be so direct... she would be more modest, even if she wouldn't like it she would stay, and maybe admit

later, one-on-one, that she didn't like something... but maybe not even that. A Ukrainian girl would have some respect to all of us, she would be much more shy. That's why I like Ukrainian girls more." In what Vasja, already at age 15, clearly outlines as a most attractive for him difference between Italian and Ukrainian women is Ukrainian girls' docile behavior. In a similar way, many younger men develop very negative view of the Italian dating pattern, which involves a longer period of dating as opposed to early marriage, becoming rigorous proponents of the "Ukrainian" way, as in the following example, where Dima, 19, explains with spite his vision of life in Italy: "I don't want to be here... don't want to be like those Italians here; living with and off their parents till they are 35 and studying all life long. I don't want that. Only after 35 they start a family...have children... and what kind of children can you have at the age of 35?! Then they are surprised that their children are all imbeciles!"

The rage that comes through such commentaries helps us to understand the degree of the transformation of the social environment young Ukrainian men experience during their migration; from a position of "remittance bourgeoisie" (Smith 2006) and related admired male figure in Ukraine, they find themselves with limited resources, turning into socially unattractive low-skilled workers at the very bottom of the social ladder in Italy. Dating Ukrainian women thus, becomes a matter of reestablishing social, personal and masculine pride, in which a man can exercise familiar roles of masculinity and femininity. Many Ukrainian men (in their late teens and early 20s) maintained transnational relationships with their girlfriends; while unable to see them more often than once a year or so, they re-vitalize these relationships through daily phone calls, masculine assertion of their will as to how and with whom the girl should spend her free time in Ukraine (sometimes controlled through friends or even girl's parents) and sending excessive gifts, like cameras, computers, jewelry, etc.

Dating options and choices look rather different for young Ukrainian women, and here age becomes another important factor. Younger women (in their early teens) would often prefer to date Ukrainian young men, while among women in their 20s, it is already quite common to date Italian or other national men. This factor might be explained by the younger women's lesser familiarity with Italian context or with the fact that Ukrainian men present a more familiar division of gendered roles in the relationships for younger girls, who lack confidence and experience. Dating a man from Ukraine, on the one hand often holds a promise of an early marriage, which is considered to be closer to the family norms, and on the other, allows more opportunities to engage with and even put a pressure on a young man, based on the cultural intimacy about the gender roles of both partners and their families. It is important to note that on the part of Italians we can also see gendered differential attitude; thus Ukrainian migrant young men are seen as

unacceptable dating option for most Italian women, while Ukrainian migrant women, with the same low status, are seen as perfectly acceptable for dating Italian men.

The positioning of Ukrainian migrants cannot be explored apart from the presence of other migrant groups; even though Ukrainian migration has been so far able to avoid scapegoating and vastly negative connotation that migration from Albania, Morocco and recently, Romania has, younger generation has to compete for jobs, resources with other migrants, and often to respond to the stereotypes and opinions attached to other migrant groups. In a sense, the younger generation interacts with migrants from other countries more often than the older generation, as they spend more time in public places, share places for leisure, and often compete for the entertainment venues and hang out spots.

Kolya (26, in Ukraine enrolled in a medical school but lives and works mostly in Italy) comments on the constant encounters with other migrants and the competition it presents: “What I really miss is just normal relationships with girls: you go to the seaside with friends, you meet a nice girl, you maybe have a drink with her, and then you get her number. You call her in a week or two, to invite to a club and just dance. Not like here, where just to invite a girl somewhere you need a car and loads of money... Discos are also not fun, as they are full of Moroccans and Albanians who always ask for a fight and you need to beat the shit out of them before they start listening to you.” Kolya, thus refers to existing competition of other ethnicities, who claim common spaces and compete for women’s attention. In a masculine way, Kolya complains that he always “has to beat them first” before speaking to them, thus, assuming that he always wins, and is just tired of this competition. Ethnicity and race and social status thus intertwine in the position of the young Ukrainian males restricting their social opportunities and afflicting their self esteem.



Figure 13. “No-rules” boxing match advertised as a special event for the opening of the first “ex-USSR” disco club. Organized symbolically between a young tall migrant from Russia and a 53-year-old Neapolitan man,

the match however finally drew some blood as the boxers took the match as a matter of pride and representation (Naples, 2008).

Coming from Ukraine with a relatively homogenous population, coupled with the loss of social status and opportunities for social life related to the status, many Ukrainian migrants develop a highly racialized discourses and set out to distinguish them from other migrant groups and Italians themselves. Thus, derogatory nick-names for various nationals and ideas of Ukrainian ultimate superiority, due to supposedly higher education, level of “culture,” whiteness or Christianity, is not uncommon among the migrants of both generations. In my interviews, thus, even though both generations of migrants admitted to having occasional non-Ukrainian and non-Italian friends, they often assured the superior position of Ukrainians as being much more educated than their Italian employers and foreign co-workers. Highly racialized comments like “Italians should be happy because at least we give birth to white babies in Italy,” are not uncommon among younger and older generation, while several respondents of both generations commented that they would not want to stay in Italy, because it is too full of “blacks” and migrants.

Staying a migrant? Strategies and decision-making as to the future of the younger generation and the whole family

With experienced downward mobility, it is not surprising that the idea of return home looms large in the imagination and future plans of the younger generation, with Ukraine often becoming an imagined and idealized place. The discussion about the return of both generations however is hardly ever individual; it is often considered within the larger intergenerational impact that return might entail for the whole family. However, to understand the return strategies and planning among migrants one has to ask what a migrant can expect and what will be lost in such mobility. These promises of things gained and lost are constructed differently for men and women of different age and life-cycle again plays an important role in framing the difference in the ways in which the older and the younger generation explain their motivations for a return.

While the older generation of migrants would often vaguely comment that “we will stay in Italy as long as our health permits,” the younger generation seemed to be more determined and specific about their return; among forty young people that I have interviewed for this research only five said that they will probably stay in Italy. Among those who did not study in Italy, but came just to work, the sentiment was to earn enough money for some project (a car, a part of the flat, for starting a business). Their argument for not staying was the lack of opportunities for social advancement; “I just can’t imagine I will be doing this my whole life” would be a typical answer.

For many young people working in Italy, long-term residence permit was an ultimate goal and the reason for postponing their return. Thus, Dima, 19, would voice a typical answer for many young

people interviewed during my fieldwork: “I want to earn some money and then go home. I want to stay here to get a *permesso di soggiorno* for 10 years... you know, just in case. This is the plan for now.” Many would tolerate difficult work conditions and low-salary just to secure the permit, which they saw as a personal insurance against all sorts of precariousness and instability that they might encounter upon their return from Italy. Thus, when I ask Dima why he needs a permit if he wants to go back to Ukraine anyways, he replied: “Well, it’s always good to have... you never know when life will turn around. This kind of things is good to have.” Similar to Aihwa Ong’s (1999) account of migrants who see multiple citizenships as a guaranty and an insurance against insecurities of global economy, young Ukrainian migrants try to make sure that they have their options for free movement open, thus securing themselves against their unspoken but existing distrust about their future in Ukraine. Many of my respondents also indicated that after living for a while in the EU they could not imagine themselves going back to the suffocating visa regimes in Ukraine, and thus, securing a long-term residence permit in the EU country, was an issue of maintaining dignity and freedom of movement.

As to my respondents who were obtaining college education in Italy, many of them have chosen a profession that could be of use both in Ukraine and Italy. Thus, Zoriana, 15, who is in her 2nd year of vocational high school, explained why she has chosen to study management of tourist business: “I have chosen this specialization by myself...I thought that this way I will open up a way back to Ukraine. If I finish studies, I can try to open a business agency in Ukraine, and we [my family] will move on like this.” However, realistically Zoriana recognizes that these options are not so open: “I was thinking about continuing my studies in Ukraine. But in tourism there is only one decent college in Kyiv, and since I am not from Kyiv it’s not going to work. I would need to rent a place in Kyiv, it’s money after all... then, I would also need to pay for college. Here I practically don’t pay, just 85 Euro as a fee, but there it would be too expensive.” This long-term planning “to return to Ukraine with a valuable European degree” was expressed by many respondents and while seemed logical, in fact lacked practicality. Thus, on the one hand, Ukraine does not automatically recognize degrees from the EU, while on the other, migrants’ children, after finishing school in Italy, usually miss the social networks and contacts that are important for employment in Ukraine.

The cross-generational, gendered and life-cycle oriented nature of Ukrainian migration to Italy designated a special role for the third generation, or the grandchildren of the migrant women who pioneered this migration in families’ strategies as to their return home. It was the families who have brought young children (third generation) to Italy who seemed to have made the most concrete plans of their return back to Ukraine. In the following example, Volodia (27) who, together with his wife and a 3-year-old daughter, came to join his mother in Italy explains his

family trajectory: "We will stay here for another three years, you see. In three years my daughter will be six and she will have to start school and it's important that she goes to school in Ukraine. She learnt to speak in Italy, she speaks more Italian than Ukrainian by now, but its not a problem...only once she goes to school here, in Italy, that's it, we will lose her, we will never be able to go back to Ukraine. So we still have some years." Third generation thus is often seen as a key holder to the whole family's future; raising the third generation children in Italy can split the family into Ukrainian and Italian, and in some cases, close the doors for the return of the first generation. The idea of preserving the place to return is, thus, another central issue that influences the decisions and strategies of Ukrainian families in Italy.

The issue of young children's education, i.e. the opportunity to harmonize and make competitive Ukrainian and Italian systems of education that would allow for switching schools from Italian to Ukrainian, is probably one of the most burning and problematized migrants' issue. While Ukrainian children and young adults find Italian schools much less strenuous and relaxed, after some years spent in Italian school catching up with Ukrainian school curriculum becomes problematic for the children and thus sets an obstacle for a possible return in the second and even more so, in the third generation. Such issues of coordinating school curriculum in Ukraine and Italy has been brought up by teachers of Ukrainian Sunday schools in Naples, Brescia, Rome and Mestre. Ukrainian schools in Italy usually focus on language skills (mostly writing and reading in Ukrainian and Russian), singing, history and geography of Ukraine. Organized by migrant volunteers (a lot of them have both formal education in pedagogy and years of practical work in schools) none of the functioning Ukrainian schools have any official recognition from the Ukrainian state. Thus their aspiration would be to provide such a level of education, that children could step back into Ukrainian schools after their parents return to Ukraine. In an interview to Ukrainian magazine in Italy *Holos* [Voise], representatives of the Naples Ukrainian school suggested that the most urgent help that their school would need is creation of a unified / standardized Sunday-school program, which would be confirmed and recognized by the Ukrainian ministry of education, as well as standardized tests after the 4th , 9th and 11th grades that would allow graduates of such schools to enter Ukrainian school system after the years spent abroad (Horodetsky 2007). Therefore, in addition to the believed inferiority of Italian schooling system, the lack of a testing system in Ukraine prevent Ukrainian children re-integrating into the Ukrainian school system, making the schooling decision a threshold at which a family needs to put their whole possibility to return at stake.



Figure 14. Ukrainian Saturday school in Naples provides classes mostly in Ukrainian and Russian languages and literatures, history and geography of Ukraine. Attendance in school fluctuates and many times the classes consist of children of different ages (Naples 2008).

Migration such as that of Ukrainian women to Italy cannot be seen as a whole by looking into one country or into the experience of one generation. The triggers, objectives, experiences and goals include migrants and members of extended family across the borders and within several generations, just as well as cross generational care-networks allow, facilitate and sustain migration projects. Introducing the generation of children into migration shifts everyone's position within the familial care-chains, revealing a great deal about gender related expectations within the families. Motherhood features prominently in these tensions, both as a situational practice that allows women to make choices as to who should join migration, and as an idealized trope that is used in the case of family tensions for explaining the choices. Having said that, it is important to acknowledge that navigating various forms of motherhood does not diminish the emotion work done by women to make and to explain such often painful choices to themselves.

The migration by the younger generation brings new types of continuities and new ruptures into the whole family. For Ukrainian migrants the decisions like to bring or not to bring children to Italy and to put children through schooling in Ukraine or in Italy can bear long-term consequences for the whole family, even closing down the opportunity for a return to Ukraine or splitting a family in two. These cross-generational considerations change dynamics and long term strategies within the migration trajectories of each generation. The decision to stay or leave Italy often incorporates not only the immediate convenience of the younger generation; it takes into consideration long-term ideas of who will provide care for the older generation as well and where "home will be."

Defining the second generation?

“The question of generations represents a long-standing tradition in migration research although attention has predominantly focused on the *second* generation,” argue the editors of the special issue dedicated to migration and generations in the *Journal of Intercultural Studies* (Skrbis, Baldassar, and Poynting 2007:262). A question that arises with introducing intergenerational approach into migration studies is often linked to the questions of formation of new diaspora, who, - within generation of two, - might assimilate completely or to a degree in the receiving country (Levitt and Waters 2002; Smith 2006c, 2006b; Gans 1992b; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, and Waters 2006; Kasinitz et al. 2008). The majority of such research comes from the USA and focuses on belonging, the degree of incorporation of the second generation into the receiving country and the persistence of the transnational ties (Gans 1992a; Portes 2001; Zhou 1997, 1998; Karakayali 2005). Looking into the cases of reunification of Ukrainian youth with their mothers in Italy, I diverge from the “classic” scope of questions that I pursue with discussing the experience of migrants’ children. In my analysis I employ a) a category of migration project that, as was discussed in chapters 3 and 4, spills over generations, involving grandparents, parents and children in migration in various ways, and b) to the transnational social field approach that undermines the possibility of clearly cut distinctions between the first and second generation of migrants and rather focuses on the networks and tensions within family members involved in migration in various ways.

Can the children of Ukrainian migrants, joining their mothers in migration be considered a second generation? Skribis et al. suggest that migration literature has three main approaches to defining generations in migration, i.e. statistical (children born to immigrants), social (those foreign born but spending their formative years in the country of their parents migration) and subjective (those who identify with both countries). Other scholars refer to “1.5” (Levitt and Waters 2002) generation in order to include into discussion those children of migrants who are foreign born but have joined their parents at some point. Nedim Karakajali, in his article on the autobiographies of the immigrant children argues that “children of immigrants can neither be defined as a class, nor as an ethnic group, nor even as an age group” (2005:327). However, in order to draw some boundaries around this group I favor Skribis’s argument that “while it is important to consider the heterogeneity within each migrant “generation”, it is also to acknowledge similarities, defined by key historical events across the group” (Skrbis et al. 2007:264). In the light of these definitions, Ukrainian youth, that in my research joined their mothers in Italy, is the second generation whose lives both heavily depend on migration-generated remittances and who consider and embrace migration as a stage of their lives, a necessary, if temporal, strategy of building up family’s capital and one’s career.

In this sense we can speak of “children who comprise a transnational generation” (Schmalzbauer 2008) and experience lives within a transnational social field both as children left behind and as migrants. Transnational generation is more likely to join migration for a shorter or longer term, while migrants themselves might choose to rotate migration with non-migration periods, relying in their non-migration periods on remittances from other migrating kin (Stephen 2007). Thus, they might be considered as a second generation of the transnational families in reference to both; the relation to the pioneering migrants (they are their children, and not just a younger cohort), and to their heavy dependency on their migrant parent for decision to come to Italy, choice of the location, available resources, employment patterns, legal status. In this sense, they can be referred to as second generation within one family’s history; they inherited migration as a long-term life project that will further influence their position back in Ukraine as well. They are the second generation that builds their lives around migration as a central economic activity.

The fact which I, at first, found rather paradoxical, - that the younger generation that has more capacities to incorporate has much more specific plans of return than the older one, - makes sense when one looks at the migration project not “as a result of individual initiative” (Morokvasic 2004) but as a familial, cross-generational project in which all members have their roles and places irrespectively of the fact whether they migrate or not. Looking at the return from a perspective of a transnational familial project, rather than from the degrees of incorporation allows also understanding the losses and gains in such mobility; the younger generation has an obligation to securing a place of return in Ukraine, while the older generation, through their work and remittances provides an opportunity for the younger generation’s options of mobility or settled family life at home. Looking at the return from the position of transnational social fields established in the course of migration and the negotiating of positions within it, conflicting interests of its participants and their shifting roles allows us to step aside from dichotomy of “return” vs. “assimilation” or “home” vs. “migration” and see migration as a process that is enabled and carried out both at home and on the move.

The older generations’ reluctance to return has to be explored from the position of highly limited opportunities available for them in Ukraine; they are most unlikely to find an employment that would provide an income, close to that in Italy and after the years of being a bread-winner many find it very disturbing to fall into the dependency and mercy of the family, with whom the contacts might have been damaged by the years of separation. Therefore, for the older generation, their mobility is “a way to stay at home” (Morokvasic 2004:7) and I would argue a way to “preserve the home” to which to return to, preventing scattering of other family members throughout the world in migration. Women who have pioneered migration to Italy maintain their role of a provider and

allow for the generation of children to have a flexibility of stepping in and out of migration thus keeping doors open for their own return.

Therefore in this chapter I did not seek to focus on the experience of the younger generation in migration per se, but to see how the arrival of the younger generation sets in motion the hierarchies, obligations and claims within transnational families. To continue discussing the site of intersection of migration and family, this chapter stepped aside from analyzing the families separated by borders. Instead, I looked into ruptures in differentiated generational experience of migration within one family, and the ruptures introduced by the rotating of obligations within the families, once the family members shift their position from the remittance receivers to the remittance generators. I have demonstrated that while joining mothers in migration has resulted in healing some ruptures of separation, the close presence of the family members in one space has reduced the possibility of maintaining the trope of idealized motherhood, and resulted in frequent cases of disappointment with the reunification outcomes. Reunification of the family members thus triggers a whole new set of dynamic negotiations of responsibilities and practices within and new forms of migrants' transnational social fields.

Chapter 6. Narratives of the care-work: exploring construction of a migrant self through care-work regimes and work-related disciplines

“The immigrant worker, [...] experiences his body as a way of being present in the world. It is a way of being present in the physical world and the social world, and a way of being present to the self.”

Sayad, The Suffering of the Immigrant, (2004:189)

“The domestic worker is not being equated socially with her employer in the act of exchange because the fiction of labour power cannot be maintained: it is ‘personhood’ that is being commodified.”

Doing the Dirty Work? Bridget Anderson, (2000:121)

This chapter will step away from looking into the migrants’ transnational fields through the prism of migrants’ families and look into the site where individual experience of work intersects migration. A number of ruptures, - such as drastic downward mobility, lack of linguistic skills and entering the intimate space of Italian homes, - is linked to the labor and make it one of the most central and immediate experiences of migration. Learning to cope with the challenges of new job, the position of a paid care-giver (as opposed to a non-paid position of mother and a wife in her own family) and mastering new language often involves disciplining oneself to the labor- related regimes, inherently aimed at construction of a marketable care-worker. Discussing the centrality of the bodily and emotion work done by migrants, as well as the instrumentalization of the body and emotions within such regimes allows me to capture the construction of a new migrant self, which often reflects the demand in flexible gendered work-force. To open up the discussion of work-related disciplinary regimes and construction of a migrant self through these regimes, I start with the story of Ljuba, which exemplifies many of the processes I discuss later in this chapter.

Ethnographic encounter: migrants’ regimes

Ljuba and I shared a room with a third migrant in Bologna in the fall of 2007 when she has returned to Bologna after almost a year at home. She is among that ever growing number of migrants who have tried to leave Italy and return home to Ukraine but after about a year, - and for various reasons, - had decided to come back to Italy again. I met Ljuba for the first time when she has moved into our 15 m² room, already inhabited by my roommate Lesia and me. From the very first glimpse I could not have mistaken Ljuba for a new-comer. Ljuba had had a *permesso di soggiorno* (residence card) before; however, when she decided to leave Italy for good she

canceled her contract with the employer. After about a year in Ukraine, and right before her residence card would have expired, Ljuba decided to go back to Italy.

Unlike the new arrivals, who often look lost and suddenly quite, as if inability to speak Italian has made them numb, Ljuba eliminates a sense of determination. *Discipline* is the word to describe Ljuba; not the discipline that can control circumstances but discipline over herself, her emotional and physical efforts and ways of behaving and presenting herself. She is unemployed but she almost professional in her role of a migrant who has to start anew; she is full of determination to force the circumstances into the favorable outcome. Ljuba's identity as a labor migrant goes beyond the actual work or employment, as the regulatory regimes linked to the migrancy take over many other aspects of her life in Italy.

Unlike those who travel for the first time (arriving to Italy with minimum luggage or no luggage at all), Ljuba arrived with a huge suitcase. She placed the suitcase in a wardrobe out of our way, keeping a typical checked bag outside, by her bed. That bag contained some of her washing utensils, as well as instant noodles and bread. Everything about Ljuba was organized in a way that made it possible for her to leave the next day – there was a clear sense that she is not aiming to get comfortable in this flat; she would not allow anything to hamper her movement into a new job. On the very first night of her stay in the flat Ljuba asked us very officially: “Is this flat a lucky one? I mean, do people stay here for long?” Lesia and I said that it is very lucky, and we enumerated all the people who have stayed in this room before moving on into new jobs.

In a sense a return to Italy is even harder than the first arrival; one cannot just put hopes high and be delusional that “things will just work out.” Ljuba knew exactly how much hardship it will be to start anew, searching for jobs in parks and for shelter and food in Caritas. To make oneself knowingly go through this again is times harder to just face it unexpectedly, and it takes immense will power. Ljuba is full of such determination; her every move and effort is directed towards quick overcoming of this painful but unavoidable stage of migrancy. She has a whole routine of being a migrant; she invests physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually into finding her job quickly. Routine is crucially important for someone who is unemployed and is searching for job. Ljuba would get up everyday at 7:25, right after Lesia would leave for work, thus leaving the latter a space for maneuvering in a tiny room occupied by the three of us. She would wash herself, then eat her own food (which she has brought from Ukraine), get dressed modestly but smartly, put on a little make up and leave the house by 8:30- 9 a.m. She would make a circle visiting very similar places every day; parks, job addresses, but also visiting certain churches for a talk with *Padre*, certain icons for a prayer. Sometimes she would come home for lunch, other days not, but she will be home in the evening, immediately changing into her home-clothes (a bright red silky gown)

and then eating her own food, always offering Lesia and me some, but always reluctant to eat ours. In the evening, at around 10 pm she and Lesia would have a common prayer “Materi v molytvi” (Mothers in Prayer). This is a project that is going on in all the Ukrainian migrant churches, when mothers get together at certain time and pray together for the good health and fortune of their children, asking for themselves only strengths and patience to carry on. Lesia and Ljuba have not announced in the church that they are taking part in this prayer; thus, rather expecting support and protection from God than acknowledgement from the church community.

Ljuba is obviously a church goer. After her arrival she volunteered for the UGCC in Bologna to clean the candle holders, which allows her to seek help and support both spiritually and practically. She has received a blessing from the UGCC priest; both spiritual and practical act, as declaring her need for job in front of the church congregation puts a certain responsibility on all the members of the church to let her know about any job vacancy. Ljuba would also attend various Italian churches combining her conversations with priests (asking for jobs) with prayers, small offerings, candles, etc. She would make numerous small donations very willingly (e.g. giving away food that she received from Caritas to other women, buying us, her roommates, small presents, etc.), thus, with her symbolic readiness to give, triggering the reward.

Unlike those migrants who have arrived recently Ljuba is confident in her role of a migrant, which for her is not only a work, but a whole professionalized life-style organized in a way to achieve the realization of migration goal, i.e. employment, earning and remitting money. However, being a migrant is not limited to the state of employment and work, as it spills into people’s daily routines, performativity of self, values and appearances. Thus, as Ljuba’s case demonstrates, even as unemployed she practices a whole set of regimes, performances, moral and physical disciplines that show her particular positioning as a labor migrant. While her whole behavior directed towards creating a marketable entity, her target profession of a care-worker calls for incorporating certain moral values, ideas of reliability, trustworthiness, neatness, and ability of emotion care, thus push migrants to certain performativities in a way that would inscribe these values into their appearance. This overlap of marketable, moral, and bodily allows Dawn Lyon to talk about “moral boundaries drawn on the body” (2007:217-8) of migrant domestic workers. Ljuba’s story demonstrates that the disciplinary regimes for migrants start before entering the employment and that the transformations by migrant’s status go beyond learning new skills required at work, but involves a whole new regime of performing, acting and thinking of oneself. Similarly to E.P. Thompson’s analysis of the changing idea of time in relation to the work discipline in industrial complexes, I argue, that labor migrant experience leads to different account of time in migration, different disciplines which are often manifests into quite strict divide between home and migration places that came up in migrants accounts parallel with their transnational practices.



Figure 15. “Job search is the bitterest experience in the life of a migrant” (Pronyuk 2009: 159). A lamp post near the Ukrainian mini-vans parking lot advertising migrants’ most essential services, i.e. accommodation and jobs (Bologna 2008).

Once employed, a migrant has to go through another intense stage of adaptation to the new regimes and work conditions, intensified by the fact that the work has to be performed in the privacy of other’s homes. However, domestic work, especially the geriatric care-work that employs a great percentage of Ukrainian women in Italy, triggers disciplining practices that are not unidirectional and transform not only migrants. Such practices create multiple mutual dependencies and intimacies within social fields established in the course of work. In the following part of this chapter I move on to discuss the emotion work done by migrants to position themselves in the privacy of Italian homes as paid workers and explore how domestic and care-work creates multifaceted emotional, bodily and moral regimes. By looking thus into various aspects of migrant’s emotional and physical actuality of labor I analyze ruptures triggered by such regimes that discipline migrants and continuities emerging from migrants’ acquired skills to create professional marketable identities.

Centrality of the work regimes in migration

Being a migrant involves not only the material realm of geographical distance from home, visas, residence permits and employment, but a whole mode of disciplining one’s behavior and even body into certain regimes. Centrality of the working body in care-industry, especially geriatric care (where about 60 % of Ukrainian migrants are reported to be employed (Markov et al. 2009; Khomra et al. 2006; Pronyuk 2009) prompted me to focus this chapter on the care-work as a

particular bodily experience, inscribed in appearance, daily routines, and positioning of the migrant in the privacy of Italian homes.

Ukrainian word *zarobitok* [earning], from which the term for labor migrants derives, can literally be explained as “[payment] for work.” In most of my interviews conducted in Italy, work was often defined as a reason for staying in Italy. “We are here to work and earn,” was a ready-made answer to my question “why are you staying in Italy?” Considering such centrality of the work in migrants’ motivations, justifications and day-to-day experiences, I ask: What new regulatory regimes and work disciplines emerge from the conditions of migrant care and domestic work performed in the private space of the Italian homes? How does the status of a migrant reflect in their work regimes and professional identifications? What does work and work regimes of care-labor tell us about imagination of migration project as such?

Much of the transnational migration literature has been focusing on the prominent position of labor in migration and particularly the role of gender in performing care and domestic work (Anderson 2000, 2006; Pessar and Mahler 2003; Morokvasic 1983, 2004; Zimmerman et al. 2006; Andall 2000). However, most of these researches were done in relation to child care and domestic work (Parrenas 2008, 2001b, 2005b; Hochschild 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004a). With majority of Ukrainian women providing care for the elderly people, there is a need to revisit these works and to understand the very specific power relations created in relation to migrants, their subjects-in-care and the employers who hire them to provide such a care. Also, how the nature of this particular work with elderly, frail and terminally sick creates particular emotional and bodily burdens, affecting the forms of disciplining in place in such a work.

To understand the disciplines that allow distance, professionalism, abstraction from the highly intimate labor this chapter will explore the “human actuality” (E. P. Thompson 2010) of the work experience in migration focusing on the mechanisms of the particular regulatory effects that shape identity of a migrant worker. In using *regulatory effects* I refer to a) to a very concrete set of labor regulations in place by the Italian state in relation to employment of foreign *colf e badante*²⁸, and b) to a rather broad use of this term by Aihwa Ong as: “the *regulatory effects* of the particular cultural institutions, projects, regimes, and markets shape people’s motivations, desires, and struggles and make them particular kinds of subjects in the world” (1999:5-6). To use Ong’s statement, I am interested in looking into what kind of a *migrant subject* or a *migrant-self* is constructed under such regulatory regimes of work and migrants’ status and how this construction happens.

²⁸ Ital. “domestic and care workers.” This is the official term used to define all spectrum of domestic work by the Italian legislation.

Analyzing the ways in which migrants utilize, contest and overturn various regulatory effects in order to make their migration both profitable and tolerable, I talk about a construction of a certain *migrant-self*, i.e. a summary of various bodily, performative, and value transformations. Looking at the construction of a migrant-self allows me to avoid discussing migrant identity (which I would rather locate in various identifications with national, gender and familial roles) but speak of a construction and identification emerging as result of various external and internal disciplines caused by migration and by the utmost importance of work/employment/earning in migration.

Importance of work is intensified on the dependence of legality status on the employment status of a migrant. Their marginal position of fluid legality (i.e. various stages at which migrant either applies for legalization or depends on the employer for obtaining, prolonging or renewing the legal status) puts them in a precarious situation when they not only exploitation by employer is more likely, but when migrants themselves lower their standards and willingly put up with violation of work regimes, in order not to lose the favor of the employer. Additionally, the idea of temporality of migration project, the separation between “home” (where life happens) and “migration place” where work and earning is the sense of being becomes an internal disciplining factor that pushing migrants to commodify their own bodies as resources, settle for poor accommodation conditions, extremely long working hours, multiple parallel running job, and pushing one’s body beyond limits of exhaustion and safety measures.

Sayad, emphasizing the superior importance of the working body for migrants’ identification suggests a migrant: “[...] is also the only worker who, not being a citizen of a member of the social and political body (the nation) in which he is living, has no other function but work” (Sayad 2004:204). While this statement ignores migrants’ growing contribution to the receiving nation-state (e.g. there is a growing tendency among migrants all over Europe as well as the USA to pay taxes, civic organizations of migrants, involvement through the joint church activities, political participation on mostly municipal level), it emphasizes the centrality of the body of a migrant for the whole migration enterprise. Despite Ukrainian migrants’ growing involvement in participating in civic activities in Italy, such as diversity celebrations, organizing Ukrainian migrants’ press, running Ukrainian language schools, volunteering for migrants’ labor organizations, the main battle for migrants’ interests is still carried on more or less one-on-one at migrants work places, where the nature of the employment in the privacy of Italian homes leads to negotiating the power with the employer on day-to-day basis, manipulating available tools, professionalizing care services for more effective and controlled work environment.

Care-work, as a specific labor regime that creates gendered demand for workers and reinforces gendered and ethnic hierarchies, thus leading, on the one hand, to a construction of a specific migrant-self among migrants and, on the other, changes the homes of employers through migrants' presence. To capture these negotiations of power through the human actuality of work I will proceed by discussing: 1) how employment in the domestic sphere and the private space of home triggers new forms of commodification of care services, but also migrants' emotions and body; 2) entangled power struggles: disciplining of a migrant into performing a care-work in the privacy of the employer's house and disciplining of the employer into the presence of the migrant and the mutual dependencies and intimacies emerging from such arrangements; 3) constructing of a marketable migrant self, as a way creating new continuities and gaining more control over the earnings and work conditions.

On the empirical level this chapter will discuss the experience of the migrants involved in geriatric care mostly. As I have mentioned earlier in the text, transnational migration literature does not often deal with geriatric care, focusing rather on child care (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Yeates 2009; Parrenas 2001b, 2001a, 2008). On the one hand, the job requires certain strength, stability and experience, i.e. Italian families often feel insecure to trust their aging parents to a migrant youth, fearing that they might be irresponsible or unable to deal with the stress and tension that this work often implies. On the other hand, among migrants themselves the care-work for elderly people is considered to be the most strenuous and depressive, as it often involves providing care for bed-ridden people in terminal stages cases of diseases, such as Alzheimer and multiple forms of sclerosis. These factors contributed to establishing a "typical" profile of a geriatric care-giver sought by the Italian families and embodied by care-givers eager for jobs; a woman in her 40-50s, willing to maximize her profit by striking a live-in arrangement with the employer (chapter 3). In draw my ethnographic examples from similar case. However, I also bring in a few examples of a younger care-givers and a male care-giver; my inclusion of these cases will help me to sharpen some of the power struggles that a care-worker might encounter while working in the privacy of Italian homes, and how age and gender induce these power struggles.

Introduction to the care-work: disciplining the body

In this part of the chapter I seek to discuss the processes of migrant women's positioning themselves in relation to their paid duties in the intimate sphere of Italian homes through the concept of *emotion work* (Hochschild 2003b) that is carried out on the part of migrant women in order to voluntarily, sincerely and cheerfully provided the care-work. I refer here to Hochschild's definition of "emotion work," as "acts of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling" which she argues "...refers broadly to the act of evoking or shaping, as well as

suppressing feeling” (Hochschild 2003: 94-95). How do migrant women (who are used to idea of care as a solid, undisrupted bulk of various responsibilities and duties in the familial context back at home) learn to divide the idea of care and intimacy into tasks, put it in paid-labor context and to utilize it as a resource? Where are the boundaries of the paid work and what does a care-giver sell? How does charging for services, including intimate and sexual services, not only helps women to benefit from these services materially but also gives them a choice to perform some services but not the others? In this section of the chapter I will address several cases of harassment at work, not only as an experience that is rather frequent in care-work but as a case that allows me to position migrants presence in Italian homes and see what power negotiations it involves.



Figure 16. Domestic live-in worker performing the daily cleaning of the flat (Bologna, 2007).

On a Sunday morning I was invited to have a coffee and to interview several members of one Ukrainian family living in a shared flat in Naples. There were three generation of close family and in-laws who lived there; two sisters who migrated almost ten years ago and since that time have invited to Italy their sons with wives and little children. Marta, (24, married and a mother of a 4-year-old boy) had arrived to Italy only 2 weeks ago, with the help of one of the sisters (Raja) who is Marta's Godmother. Raja helped Marta to collect money for the trip and with finding a job upon her arrival in Italy. Marta has come to the flat to spend her only free day, as she works as a live-in domestic worker for a 68-year-old Italian man and his wife. Sitting in the kitchen full of older women, Marta confessed that the old man for whom she works was staring at her and if she was close enough he would try to touch her breasts or buttocks. She said she was disgusted and

terrified but she did not know how to react fearing she might lose her job. Marta then said that because she could not speak Italian, she could not even say anything and did not know how to react. The women jumped into the conversation, telling her that she should not be shy and that she should react but in a way that would turn the situation into a joke: “Just slap his hand and tell him ‘*Non toccarmi! Non mi piace!*’²⁹ You won’t lose your job, but if you don’t teach him that he can’t do it, he will only get worse.” Marta then complained that because of this, she could not force herself to eat anything in the house of her employers, and Raja then responded that in fact, she was very worried that Marta had stopped eating, explaining: “I know these people Marta works for. They are super-nice people and they already told me that they really worry that Marta doesn’t eat.”

This small episode of a Sunday conversation is striking on several levels. First and foremost, there is Marta’s first traumatic encounter with care-giver’s work, which is not only carried out in other peoples’ intimate sphere, but also violates migrants’ own intimate spaces and often makes them vulnerable to various forms of harassment. The stress of the situation is conveyed by Marta’s bodily response to it; she cannot force herself to eat in the house of her employers, which is so much linked *their* privacy and her dependence on and vulnerability to this seclusion. These traumatic experiences of the first encounters often get lost with time and experience, as is clearly seen from the response of the other women, who at no point try to console Marta in her worries, but rather try to tell her it is not a big deal and that she should just learn to “take it easy.” I would like to emphasize this initial traumatism of such experiences, as it is often dismissed by migrants themselves and only comes out when recalling the emotions from the time of migrants’ arrival. These initial experiences are then transformed and buried so deeply under the transformative attempts to trivialize them in order to move on that, after a few years of migration, they are dismissed. However, I would like to emphasize them, as I see them essential for further transformation of self, emotion work done on re-evaluation of personal situation, justifications in constructing spaces of work, migration and home.

Another level to Marta’s story is that of the harassment itself, which as it turned out in many of my interviews comes hand in hand with the experience of the care-work, understanding of paid and unpaid services, job skills and ethics. I choose to discuss harassment here not only because it is so prevalent in migrants’ accounts but also because it is never limited to emotional stress alone, but involves a whole regimes that always reminds a migrant of her legality status, her foreignness and inability to handle the situation (speak) properly, and is commonly linked to the threat of loss of the migrant’s job and her right to stay in Italy.

²⁹ Don’t touch! I don’t like it!

The reaction of the women who stayed in Italy longer than Marta is also quite telling: Marta's emotional account was trivialized with a therapeutical purpose by the women starting telling their own stories of harassment experienced in the years of working in Italy. Thus, Raja started telling her story about the old Italian man who used to touch her breasts and try to watch porn movies with her. Intercepted with lots of salty jokes, comments and laughter Raja concluded her story: "He was a very kind old man. We were neighbors, and I worked in the flat opposite from his. But he was a kind man and used to invite me to eat lunch at his place. But you know, an old man, he is like a baby. You've got to let him do what he has to do." Thus, none of the women tried to console Marta or reveal their sympathy for her situation. The women's reactions put Marta's experience out of the private and intimate emotions of shame, fear and disgust and transferred it to an utterly professional sphere of learning to manage the situation. They advised her to stop the harassment before it gets worse but in a way that would "turn it all into a joke," trivializing Marta's experience to an average care-worker's experience. What the women were truly concerned about is the fact that Marta stopped eating, and thus could grow weak and even become sick, unable to work any more.

I don't think that Marta received the reaction she really expected; instead of sympathy and indignation women responded by urging Marta to adopt certain gender and migrant performance. More experienced women reminded Marta that her role as a care-giver and the role of the old man in-care are given, and Marta has to detach it from herself and learn to think about it in a right way and perform it in such a way that will neither disturb Marta, nor disrupt the peace in the house of her employer. Marta's challenge is not only to learn to *act* properly, but also to learn to *feel* properly about her new position in that house, thus engaging in what Hochschild describes as two types of acting "the direct management of behavioral expression and the management of feeling from which expression can follow" (2003:92) "Turn it all into a joke" and "You got to let him do what he has to do," are the key phrases that are dictated by both gender roles and the position of a migrant woman in the privacy of her employer's home. Marta's older colleagues suggest that her employers are "super-nice people" so if Marta learns to manage her attitude, to feel the right thing, to redirect her attention on the objectives of her migration, she will reap benefits. As Hochschild (2003) indicates, it is not exactly an emancipation, nor it is a complete subjugation to the system – its a negotiation between the self and the rules, a process involving managing of one's feeling, learning to feel in a way that will allow to perform the roles with the most conviction, and to benefit from this. In the next part I will proceed to explore, how women learn to feel right about their gender and migrant roles and how they learn to benefit from such situations, finding certain emancipation and strength in learning to "play by the rules of the game."

Commodifying the body of a care - worker

In the context of migration, working body becomes migrants' most valuable, primary asset, which enables the whole migration enterprises, i.e. earning and remitting the earnings back home. The state of migrancy, often coupled with legality status, makes people virtually invisible in the places of their migration, allowing them visibility only when they perform their duties (Berger and Mohr 1975; Law 2001). Sayad, in his the *Suffering of the Immigrant*, accounts for the centrality of the working body for migrant in the following way:

To the extent that he [migrant] is an individual whose sole *raison d'être* is work and whose presence is therefore legal, authorized and legitimate only when it is subordinated to work, the immigrant worker experiences an existence that is reduced to the body that materializes his existence, and which is therefore its instrument. His existence is therefore the existence of a body. Both his existence and his body are completely dependent upon work (Sayad 2004: 204).

Agreeing with Sayad on the centrality of work in migrants' status, I also seek for the spaces for migrants' empowerment and sense of realization in work and migrants' ability to control and regulate work regimes. In care-work, the body of the care-giver has a particularly pronounced role; it performs the job in the intimate sphere and in immediate proximity to the bodies of their employers and *in-care's*. In my interviews, many women spoke of their experience of live-in worker as a very bodily, while the need to regulate their bodies and mind into the regimes of Italian homes as their work places was one of the main challenges, especially in the beginning of their migration careers. In which ways the body of a migrant is regulated into the working regimes of care-work? What kind of attachments and dependences such regimes generate? I will turn now to discussing a few examples in my interviews which highlight the bodily experience of the care-work, and learning to instrumentalize one's body in this work.

Tania (49, a former technologist at a large plant) came to Bologna seven years ago to earn money for a better medical care for her grandchild. She ended up getting her first job only a month after her arrival in Italy: "They told me that it would be a job in a mountain village, and I had to pay 100 US \$ for it. I said I don't care, as long as it is a job; I was so cold and exhausted from walking all day long through all these churches and parks in search of jobs. So an Italian man came and picked me up, and as I was trying hard to learn Italian during these months I understood that I would work caring for his mother. The day we arrived at his home I prepared dinner for them, and since the *granny*³⁰ was lying in bed I didn't really see her. Only in the

³⁰ Babtsja - Ukr. for granny is one of the most common way among care-worker to refer to their elderly person in care. The other most typical way would be using an Italian word *signora*, coupled up with possessive pronoun "my/mine." Just as *babtsja*, *my signora* thus creates a term breaking the hierarchies of

evening did I realize that she only had one arm and one leg. My heart sank! I started crying and crying but I couldn't refuse the job. It was a nightmare job; the *granny* could neither speak nor see and I had to lift her up from the bed, put her into the wheel chair, take her to the bathroom and wash her every day. I had to put her on the toilet, pick her up, and change her diapers. I just cried and cried all day. I did not have to cook food, just to clean and to feed my *granny*, but I myself couldn't swallow even a piece of food. I tried but I couldn't. Finally, on the seventh day I dropped the *granny* on the floor! She was so heavy and I was trying to pull her up so hard that my hemorrhoids protruded. My employer came and saw me crying and that's when I told him I couldn't deal with this any more. I begged him to take me back to Caritas from where he picked me up." Her employer sympathized with Tania and found her and "easier" job; she was to look after his friend's mother, a woman in the terminal stage of brain cancer. From that time Tania has never really been out of work; she moved from job to job on her employers' recommendations, and even helped her husband to come over to Italy as well.

Seven years after her arrival, Tania still recalls her first few months in Italy as a very bodily experience; the cold of the parks, the fatigue and exhaustion from walking all day without a chance to get a proper rest. When she picks up, as many migrants, the first available job, the shock of her new situation finds a very physical response, i.e. she cries all day and cannot force herself to eat. The shock of being forced by circumstances into an intimate sphere of providing care for a severely crippled body, the very closeness to this body through touch, odors, presence, feeding and cleaning becomes a challenge which Tania cannot handle. Tania's account of her first days stands in sharp contrast with Tania's confident professionalism in dealing with people with such serious diseases as Alzheimer and brain cancer. Tania's ability to turn this into "her job" is drastically different from her former self, unable to control her body impulses in the proximity of a sickness and disease.

In another examples, Ira's (51, former economist) story, demonstrates centrality of the working body in respect not only to one's job, but also to the regulatory regimes. After arriving to Italy with no knowledge of the language some 4 years ago, she ended up taking a job in a mountain village in the north of the country: "...The old woman [Ira provided care for] was so difficult...she wouldn't sleep for a minute, and I had to be beside her all the time. Her children treated me nicely and tried to teach me some Italian, but after a whole day of work and all those sleepless nights next to my *granny* words just wouldn't stick in my head. I had a 2-hour break each day and one day off per week, but I had no place to go and for about two months I knew no one. So I found a spot by the river, where I would always go. I had my routine there; every day I would cry for 30 minutes,

power and making them more domestic-like, impersonal and closer to family links than to the class reference.

study Italian for another 30 minutes, sing for the remaining 30 minutes and go back to my work. This is how I saved myself from insanity. My employer thought I would run away, but where would I run to with no money, no ticket, and not knowing the language?" Ira stayed in this job for a year and three months.

Echoing Berger (1975) and Sayad's (2004) centrality of the working body in migration, Ira's account demonstrates the centrality of work-related regimes not only for work-time, but for free time as well, thus revealing the profound influence of work for migrants' new self. Both Tania's and Ira's accounts indicate how outside of work place they had no place to go and nothing to do, so that they could neither enjoy, nor afford a proper rest. Many of my interviewees shared a similar understanding of non-working time as unproductive while in migration. It is this logics that pushes many women who have a domestic live-in arrangement, to get additional jobs during their days off instead of taking their rest. Many women insist on regular hours off from their live-in employment, however, secretly from their employers, they would often use these hours to clean someone else's flat for additional money. Those who did not have such an arrangement often expressed weariness that they were "wasting their time," that is taking a two-hour daily break from otherwise seven-days-a-week unregulated domestic work, which live-in arrangement often implies. For many women, these hours spent in Italy *not working* were often perceived as a "wasted time". Similar logics, of Italy as a *work* place and not *their life* place pushes many women disregard safety measures at work (like gloves and masks), wearing themselves out for achieving a better and quicker performance of daily tasks.

On the emotional level, especially in the case of live-in care-workers, the much-awaited Sundays and hours off while do bring an opportunity to break away from monotonous and controlled life in Italian homes, do not necessarily bring the expected relief. Though willing to leave the work place, a migrant often has no other place to go to except for the streets and parks, which becomes an issue if the weather is cold or if it is raining (see a detailed discussion in chapter 7). These hours off work, often become the hours of sharp realization of separation from home, displacement and wasted time. This logic also separates the space of migration, as a place for work, where migrant's life is often put on hold, even if for years, while contributing to the idealized imagination of home as a place where real life is happening.

The care-work and especially live-in arrangements often dissolves boundaries not only of the regular working hours, but also often turns the very body of the care-giver into a commodity. The attempt to objectification of the body of the migrant as a work force by the employer is often paired up with a determination of a migrant to "work hard" and treat her own body as a resource, which has to be used in migration for earning money that can be remitted home. In an open letter

written in response to an article about Ukrainian women in Italy (Hrodetska 2010), a migrant woman from Bologna describes her work experience in the following way:

I had all sorts of jobs and the circumstances made me “wander” Italy in search for employment many times. That is why that sharp feeling of despair [experienced first] is already gone, but so is my health. I have left my health where I worked. Because I have worked with the bed-ridden, the cancer patients, the Alzheimer patients and with those, who could not speak, and with those who would speak 26 [sic] hours a day. Sometimes I would get out of bed 22 times per night...[in this job] I would put aside matches and draw a tick on the door, and wrote down on a piece of paper after how many minutes I was made to get up and take *signora* to the bathroom, because she always felt she needed to wee but she didn't. At some jobs I had to answer 28 absurd questions every 5 minutes (in desperation I took notes of them), and at some jobs I was held by the hand 24 hours. I had no time to go to the toilet and even there I was accompanied and watched. I did not belong to myself (Reznek et al. 2010)

To reflect the intensity of such experience, when depending on the circumstances, needs and demands of the person-in-care migrant needs to offer work, emotions or their own body as a part of services, I refer to the process of commodification as a complex and multidirectional process. It is by no means limited to the commodification of the body of the care-worker by the employer; migrants often first and foremost need to learn to commodify their own bodies, emotions and care, and often prefer to commodifying their employers as a resource of income. The ability to separate working self in such networks of dependencies and intimacies becomes an invaluable skill and an achievement that was estimated very high, with a sense of professionalism and personal success by many of my interviewees.

Thus, to illustrate the multidirectionality of commodification I refer to a brief discussion of the death of the persons in-care in one of my interviews. Since great percentage of Ukrainian caregivers provide care for terminally sick patients, the death of the person-in-care was a part of migrant's career of many of my interviewees. Since many jobs are 'sold' even when passed on from one relative to another,³¹ the quick death of an employer can also mean a serious financial burden. In the northern part of Italy, depending on the employer's family and the working conditions, a job can cost from 250-400 €. This money must be paid by the migrant to the previous employee or to an intermediary who recommends the family. It is common for this money to be paid during the first few days of employment; thus it becomes a practical concern for a migrant to ensure that they are not sold a job with a person in-care who is about to pass away. The worst-case scenario for a migrant would be when they start a job, pay their dues and then

³¹ Selling jobs is becoming more and more rare as Ukrainian migrants develop more and more personal networks. Thus during the time of my research in 2007-2008 a few people were still paying for a job, while many stated that they would not pay for a job. In late 1990- early 2000 paying for job was an overwhelming practice, which involved not only migrants, but also employers who would usually borrow money to the new care-giver to make the down payment.

have to move on within a few weeks because of the death of their employer. In this way some care-workers can lose up to several employers per year.



Figure 17. Afternoon coffee. A young Ukrainian *badante* giving his bed-ridden patient a sip of coffee through a straw (Naples, 2008).

Considering such practical concerns and the fear of unemployment, death was often calculated as a cost to the migrant. This perspective was usually developed by migrant even despite the possible emotional connection with the person-in-care. Thus, Andriy, 28, came to Italy to work as a live-in *badante* for a bedridden Italian man, who died after several months: “I couldn’t believe the old man would die on me... I did everything to keep him going and when he finally passed away I cried...cried not so much for him, but for the fact that I will have to leave this family, which I felt was my home now. But I had to move on...” Even though Andriy admits his emotional response to the death of the person for whom he provided care (Andriy cried), his reasoning is much more rational, as he admits he cried for the loss of the working environment where he “felt at home.”

When I met Andriy in Naples, he was in the middle of a job search, which resulted for Andriy in another employment, i.e. providing care for a 90 year-old bedridden man. However, before accepting the job, Andriy asked an advice from his mother, Anna, who in her turn invited her two colleagues (all of them came from the same village in Ukraine) to discuss the issue. As I was present at this discussion, I was amazed at the professionalized and detached manner in which all four participants were talking about the matter. First Andriy had to describe in details the condition of the old man, and then women, - one of them used to be a village nurse in Ukraine, - gave their predictions as to the real condition of the man. The main concern was if the job was worth taking, as all four of them were afraid that the man will soon die, leaving Andriy unemployed yet again. Finally, Andriy decided to take the job, despite the mistrust of his mother and her colleagues who predicted that “the man will not make it another month.” As we left

Anna's house, where she works as a care-worker too, Andriy told me: "I know how to be a good care-taker... I will massage the man, talk to him, cook for him. I make sure he lasts for a long time... They pay too good of a money to lose this job." Even though Andriy was prepared to provide extra care for the person he was hired for, in his language he referred to the man as a resource, commodifying the body of the person-in-care as a source of income which if taken care of in an extra good way, will yield benefits for longer.

Due to the uncertainties that come with unemployment, the death of the employer fades away in relation to one's own gloomy perspective of searching for a new job, new accommodation and employers. On top of the exhaustion that comes with providing care for a terminally ill person, and the fatigue of the final days of care, the death of the person in care makes clear that, no matter how close a care-worker might get to the family, his/her position in the family is that of a paid employee. Thus, one of my interviewees, Ira (mentioned earlier in the text), spoke to me only one week after she had attended the funeral of her *seniora*. Ira had a close relationship with the woman who passed away, as well as with her family, however, her mourning could not last longer than a few days, as the employer – in accordance with Italian employment regulations – is only required to keep the care-worker in his/her home and pay a full salary for two weeks after the end of the contract. Therefore, though grieving over the death of the person who had treated her so nicely, Ira was forced to look for new accommodation and a job; she had to visit potential employers and appear cheerful and smiley, so that they would want to hire her. Commodification can be also seen in relation to creating the most marketable image of oneself, which would convince the employer of the migrants' professionalism and suitability to work, from the first meeting or interview. As it was discussed in the examples above, commodification of the body in care-work is not a unidirectional process; the precariousness of migrant's position often pushes migrants to enter care-work as a sphere where both migrants' own body and the body of the person-in-care is professionalized and commodified.

Entangled power struggles: disciplining migrant and employer through names, food, sleep, and language

In her "Doing the Dirty Work?" Bridget Anderson gives an acute interpretation of migrant – employer power relations: "In the materialistic idiom, relations of dependence are concealed, the power relationship is depicted as power over commodities rather than power over persons. The employer of the migrant domestic worker exercises both forms of power: the materialistic because of the massive discrepancy in access to all kinds of material resources between the receiving state and the countries of origin of migrants; the personalistic because the worker is located in the employer's home – and often depend on her not just for her salary but for her food, water, accommodation and access to the basic amenities of life" (Anderson 2000:6). However the

negotiation of rights and power in the privacy of employers' homes does not happen in one direction. Many women in my interviews used acquired professionalism, in order to meet their employers half-way, dictating their rules and organizing their own routines within Italian homes. Especially this holds true for the case of geriatric care, in which the physical fragility of the person-in-care often leaves a care-worker in charge. In such situations, it is not uncommon that a migrant can develop her own regime, and even can enjoy such freedoms as earning extra money by getting extra cleaning jobs in the neighborhood during the hours free from care-giving, or hosting other migrants in the flat for the night, without the knowledge of the employers.

Since most of such struggles are clearly pronounced in (but by no means limited to) live-in domestic workers' arrangement, I draw most of my examples here from my interviews with migrants who have experienced this type of employment. The live-in arrangement is often just a footstone in a career of a Ukrainian migrant, a temporary stage from which many of my interviewees moved on once they acquired more skills, confidence, resources and once they could see better opportunities. Those who chose to stay with this type of employment usually have developed a great deal of firmness and practical skills on how to negotiate their space, time and work under the ever pressing demand from their employers. It is also most commonly that older migrant women (who live in Italy alone) chose live-in arrangement, often in order to be able to remit all of their salary. For younger people such an arrangement is considered both, too difficult and unpractical, as the young people are considered to have a lack of experience that can help them maneuver between the everyday negotiations of power with the employer.

However, irrespectively of age almost all of my interviewees had experienced live-in work arrangement, but only a few have chosen to maintain it for years. While in the beginning, the limited universe of an Italian home provides for an inexperienced migrant a shelter and a rather limited number of coordinates to which to relate, with time, it proves to become claustrophobic with dependency on the employer's mood swings, whims and expectations that often soar very high. For many of my interviewees domestic live-in arrangement became dramatic experience of immense psychological and physical strain, first shock and realization of their new role as a migrant, their position in Italian homes and families, new language, social rules and a whole different set of working skills.

In the following part of the chapter I go over some examples from my research on means and ways of establishing disciplines related to the presence of the care-worker in Italian homes. Without denying the inequality of power positions between a migrant and an employer, I view *disciplining* as a two-directional process to which both employers subject their domestic and care-workers to their disciplines, and in which migrant workers, with more or less success, gain

grounds for their needs, rules, and regimes. As most of my interviews have indicated, these power struggles are not happening at the level of complex psychological or legislative metaphors; it is often exercised on the very basic level of controlling migrant's consumption of food, usage of space, work hours, sleep hours, language use and even name of a migrant.

Names. My first interviews struck me with a fact that many of my interviewees had a Ukrainian and an Italian name; “*Io sono Anna*. In Italy I am Anna,” starts her account one of my interviewees, Halyna, who lives in Italy for some 8 years. The need for the change of names was always explained to me in pragmatic terms; i.e. “because my *signora* could not pronounce my name,” but the choice of names was rather creative. Some women take the names that resemble the sound of their name in Ukrainian, e.g. Hanna / Halyna (Ukr.) - Anna (It.), Svitlana (Ukr.) -> Silvana (It.), others, translate their names into an Italian equivalents, like Svetlana (Rus, *light*) -> Lucia (It.). In two cases with young Ukrainian men (in Naples and Bologna) their bosses called them completely unrelated Italian names. In both cases the men told me about this with a laugh, implying that they do not mind the change. One man, whose name, Slavik, was abandoned by his boss for *Michele*, comments: “He [the boss] is just too stupid to remember my name. He calls me Michele! It's fine with me. I figured it's safer like this for the police and for phone conversations, since I am here illegal. He can call me whatever, as long as he gives me a job.” While the change of the name seems in many cases a matter of convenience for both migrants and their employers, it does symbolize most vividly the change of migrant's identity, a creation of a new migrant self, separated from the life back in Ukraine in a way which allows a migrant to say: “*In Italy I am Anna.*”

On the part of the migrants, naming an employer/ person – in – care often showed a relational aspect of the work. The most common way to refer to an elderly person in-care was either *babka*, *babusja*, *babtsja* (female) / *ded* (male) or *signor/ signora*. The first row of terms literally means “grandma (granny)/ grandpa”, thus indicating a tendency among many migrants to frame their work in the Italian homes in terms of familial and age hierarchy connection of a migrant with the person in-care. *Signora / signor* often used during the conversation even in Ukrainian and point to a more formal, employer/employee relation, would often be coupled up with possessive pronoun “my/mine,” making it thus more casual. In both cases, however, the employer/ person in – care is rather depersonalized, as both terms refer not to the individual (with name and personality) that could indicate a personal ties of friendship, but to a relational status of migrant in this situation.

Food. Lisa Law, in her work on Filipina migrants in Honk Kong, names the consumption of Filipina national food by migrants, the very taste and touch of food, as an important factor in embodying Filipino women as national subjects (Law 2005: 238). In my interviews about the

experience of working as a live-in care-worker food constantly re-appeared either as a reminder of the first traumatic experience of being a servant, or as a reminder of one's position in the house of the employer. Many of my interviewees not only had no option to cook their national food or chose food, but many times, they were deprived of almost any food. Many of my interviewees recalled that they starved at first places of their live-in employment; others mentioned that they were allowed to eat only very basic foods. On the one hand, for my interviewees, food would almost always become a part of regulatory regimes, when time, frequency and quality of food was regulated by the employer according to their habits and regardless of migrants' needs. At the same time, the cases when a migrant could get enough food, were always remembered with particular gratitude. For instance, one of my interviewees, Raja, spoke with particular warmth about a Polish neighbor, who lived next door to her work. Like many of my interviewees, Raja lost much weight after her arrival to Italy; at the age of 47 and an average height, she went down to 48 kg. It was Raja's first job and she recalls that she only managed to make it through because of a Polish worker who would give her food.

In many of my interviews, learning to negotiate food (either through open claims or through various tricks), signaled a break through in migrants' careers, and indicated their ability to negotiate their position in the houses of their employers. In many case, migrant women would chose a subversive strategy of eating secretly from the employer's storage, in others (like the following two examples) negotiating the food became a matter of larger power struggles. Thus, Olexandra, (43, living alone with an elderly Italian woman for whom she provides care in the vicinity of Bologna) comments: "Sometimes my *signora* can get furious and then she calls me *sciava*³²! We [people from Ukraine and ex - USSR] are not even used to such words! So I don't take this from her! If she says something like that I just tell her 'Wait until I won't give you any food for lunch, and then you will see who is *sciava* in this house!' She immediately gets quite!" Olexandra's power struggles with her *signora* are not masked with niceties; an aging Italian woman is not shy to spell out that Olexandra's place in her house is to serve. However, Olexandra, is also not afraid to be direct; using her physical fitness and solitude of their lives, she defends her grounds and her dignity, unsupervised and uncontrolled by the old lady's children, Olexandra's actual employers.

³² It.: slave.



Figure 18. Several Ukrainian *badanti* meeting up at the park while doing their daily walks with the Italian women they look after. (Bologna, 2007).

In another case, Andriy, (28, a graduate of Ternopil Academy of Finances) but already a caregiver with over a year of experience, describing his adaptation path into his new job in Naples, refers to his ability to regulate his food as his professional achievement: “It’s a good job; they pay 800 Eur per months and I don’t have to do much. Plus, I have a whole flat to myself... but the last job I had was [sighs regretfully].... It’s just hard to start again, you know. Here I have to start all again to teach them [employers] how to treat me. At my last job, I gradually trained them [employers] so well, that they knew all my habits. They knew that for lunch I have to have a desert and that on Saturday I also like to have a beer. Here, I still have to slowly explain these things to them. But its all right, I am working on this.” In case of Andriy, in both cases he managed to secure his relatively comfortable position not only through his dedicated work, but through positioning himself as a young person, a “grandson” of the person in care. In both cases, he negotiated his position with middle-aged (his mother’s aged) daughters of the men he was providing care for. Being the approximate age of these women’s children, he appealed by his hard work and his gallant manners to these women, as their “son.”

Sleep. Regulating or simply disrupting sleep and rest hours of a migrant often becomes one of the more exhausting shortcoming of the live-in arrangements. Thus Lesia, who started out in a small town in the North of Italy, though remembers her *signora* with warmth, however recalls: “My *granny* would always keep me up at night; she would sleep during the day and at night she would make me play cards with her (laughs softly). Of course, she was bored! But I had to do all the work during the day! I would just fall asleep and she would keep waking me up and complaining that I am not focused.” Even though in my interviews such examples as Lesia’s would often be the result of the sickness of the person-in-care, the positioning of a migrant, as a sole care-taker who without breaks or shifts provides care for such a person would result in most sever cases of

disciplinary control over the bodies of the domestic worker. In this case, even though the harshness of the work is triggered by the deteriorating condition of the patient, the migrant's positioning is maintained through unregulated work regimes, manipulation with promises of legality and migrants' status as a foreigner who shares a roof with the employer / person in-care.

However, it is not uncommon for migrants to make use of such deteriorating conditions of their person in-care. Thus, one of the most well functioning "tricks" is the flourishing business of *posto letto*, i.e. providing sleeping places for migrants paid per night. These arrangements were particularly numerous in the late 1990s and early 2000s. A live-in care-giver, working alone in a house of a bed-ridden or a very sick person would open up some rooms of the house every night for other Ukrainian migrants (sometimes as many as a dozen), from 10 pm till 8 am, charging five-seven Euro per night. Sometimes, such accommodation included shower, but most often, the rule was that the tenants could enter the place only after the agreed hour and had to leave the house with all their belongings by 8 am. The domestic worker then would clean up all the traces of the presence of the night tenants. In fact, many of these places could run for years before accidentally discovered (if at all) by the families of the person in-care. These examples of migrants' entrepreneurial activities show that even within most regulated conditions of live-in domestic arrangements abuses of power are not unidirectional; migrants, just as their employers, equally seek to maximize their benefit from their status in migration.

Language. Linguistic aspect, - that is migrant's entering the work with a inferior knowledge of language that becomes the main language of negotiating rights and duties, - plays an immense role in controlling a migrant and establishing hierarchy within the spaces of employment. The lack of language often causes not only verbal, but also general impediment to demanding one's rights, defending oneself against accusations or a willingness / confidence to negotiate such rules at all. Mastering the language, at the same time, often marks migrants' ability to negotiate better conditions for themselves and also serves as source for migrant's sense of achievement and accomplishment. Thus Lesia, who in Ukraine is a theatre director, recalls her particularly humiliating language lessons at her first job: "Once, I recall how I brought a wrong plate to my *signora*. She got so furious, my little old lady! She made me take out all the dishes from the cabinets, place them all in front of her, and go over all of them, and only then could I put the dishes back." At the same time, learning the language presents a particular important step in an advancement of migrant career, obtaining voice, learning to make claims and to negotiate.

Along with gaining strength through learning Italian, a native Ukrainian or Russian language was often used as powerful tool to create migrant's own space in the place of employment, distance from the duties and absorbing routines and simply to vent out frustration and anger. Thus, Yulja

(29, a professional painter who has been working as a day-care for an 80-year old Neapolitan woman for more than a year) recalled that she was very worried about her lack of Italian when she has first started the job. Yulja, in whose nature it is to be humorous and sarcastic, explains with a laughter that language skills turned out to be overrated in her particular job; in about a year's time, when Yulja leaned more Italian signora's health deteriorated so that she could hardly speak any more. However, Yulja would often entertain her friends with stories about her communication with signora:

Yulja: I was doing my exercises [aerobics] today in the living room, and my *signora* was dozing in her chair, when all of a sudden she woke up and started shouting at me '*tu sei cretina!*'

Me: What did you say?

Yulja: Well, I told her, in Russian, that the only *cretina* in the house is obviously herself (laughs). But you know, it's amazing... she [signora] can't really speak any more but then all of a sudden she just says '*tu sei sciava*'³³ or '*tu sei nerra*'... I mean, out of all words these are the only ones she remembers. Sometimes I feel very hurt... I don't think I deserve this after spending a whole day with her. But then I just tell her everything I think about her in Russian (laughs)."

In general, on multiple occasions I have seen *badante* leading parallel conversations with their employers in Italian and Ukrainian/ Russian; the polite and cheerful talk for the employer in Italian would often be paired up quite openly with words of frustrations and anger in the native tongue. Even if it did not change the situation in favor of a migrant, it would clearly create the much-needed space for release of high pressure and stress. Similarly, cell-phones became a major improvement in the conditions of life of the domestic workers for many reasons, one of the main being the opportunity to be connected with family in Ukraine at all times, in any free moment that can be spared even under most rigid work regimes. Thus, conversations on the cell-phones in Ukrainian / Russian disrupted the mono-linguistic space of Italian homes, interrupted migrants' routine and solitude, providing a good source of energy, stress relief, introducing a bit of migrants' lives in Italian houses.

Work and employers, regimes and rights were among probably the most vital and most discussed topics among Ukrainian migrants I lived with, interviewed or met in the parks and bazaars. Unlike my interviews conducted with migrants in Ukraine, which rotated predominantly around their families, in Italy, most of our conversation rotated about daily work routines, relationships with employers and negotiating rights and space in the job. Many migrants would refer half-jokingly to the need to "train" employers into migrants' presence in the home, the regime of the domestic work and their lives which migrants have to combine living in the homes of their employers. These accounts pointed to me to the shifts that are happening in Italian homes; not only

³³ Sciava (It.) slave.

Ukrainian migrants have to get used to their new jobs and roles as domestic workers, but many Italian households had to learn to share the space with a domestic worker and a foreigner. In fact, it was not uncommon among migrants to complain about the “new rich” Italians and how they had no experience of having a domestic help. In opposite, the affluent families who had a history of domestic workers were considered to be a better employer for the migrant due to the fact, that the rules and space within the family were already quite clear and organized, which gave a migrant a sense of clarity of their position in the house.

In many cases (e.g. examples of Andriy and Oleksandra mentioned above) migrants preferred to stress the informal side of their position and to personalize relations with employer in attempt to secure their rights. Even though recognizing that as a migrant (legal or illegal) their rights are protected by the Italian legislation (e.g. in 2007 the right for the 13th salary, vacation, regular days off), all of my interviewees considered it to be vital to have enough personal skills to negotiate; even the way in which to confront the employer with the awareness of their rights was crucial for the outcome of the dispute. Informal negotiations therefore were a matter of vital necessity and personalized migrants’ skills become a major guarantee of their success. One of my interviewees, Sveta, 47 comments on her level of constant awareness while at work: “After I was back in Ukraine for two weeks and returned to my elderly couple in Bologna, they were kissing my hands, that’s how much they missed me! They call me ‘*signora*,’ they say that I am a real *signora*! (laughs) And I tell her that she is *signora*, and I am *just* Sveta. But of course, it all depends on how you present yourself! I never let my mask, my professionalism slip away, never let myself down in front of them. This is how they know me, and I never let myself be shaken or disrespected. It takes time to build that.”

In relations to these circumstances, migrants often develop a strong sense of pride and professional achievement related to their worker’s identity and their ability to negotiate the turns and conditions of their work. Many women commented that even though they had a professional carriers in Ukraine prior migrating to Italy, their life in Ukraine was sheltered and that it was Italy that made them strong, understand themselves, and not to fear circumstances. As one of my interviewees eloquently summed up her achievement in migration (Valentina, 47): “Now I just know, that if you drop me anywhere, anywhere in the world, just like that, like I am standing here now... I know I will survive, I will make it. This is what Italy taught me.”

Undesired intimacies

The proximity of the body of the person in-care is intensified through the presence of objects, odors, and noises that remind a live-in care-worker about her job, not letting a migrant to take a break from this presence, even if the migrant is not actually working. I was struck by he actual

physically of this overlap of the privacy of the care-worker and employer/ person in-care during an interview with Andriy (28), who worked for a bed-ridden Italian man, and in whose house I have conducted an interview. Andriy and “his *grandpa*” lived alone in a 7-room-flat that occupied half of the top floor of a house on piazza Cavour, Naples. As we spent afternoon discussing Andriy’s current situation, an Italian nurse came in to change the bondages on the Italian man’s back. Even though it was not Andriy’s job, he went with the nurse to help him. As I stayed in Andriy’s room, 3 rooms away from the bedroom where they changed bondages, I could suddenly hear the man’s painful moaning, and the flat filled up with the smell of excrement and medical spirit, an odor that immediately made me drop my conceptual abstractions about the life of the care-workers and just wonder if I could do this kind of job. I refer here to my own sensations, to bring out the bodily lived experience of a migrant’s presence so close to the employer’s privacy. After all, Andriy and I spent an hour or so discussing his experiences, but it was the odors and sounds that made me fully realize where I was and realize daily realities of Andriy’s daily routines.

In one way or another, the body of the care-worker often becomes a part of the personalized service in care-industry. Zimmerman in her edited volume on migration and domestic work makes the link between the new demand for paid domestic labor and the character of the relations established within this seemingly professionalized area: “Commodification of care has profound implications for the level of control that care-workers have over themselves, their bodies, and their work” (Zimmerman et al. 2006:12). Carework performed inside homes is concealed from the external control and regulations by the very definition of home as a private domain. Bridget Anderson goes further in her analysis and tries to capture the difference between the non-paid work women perform in their homes vs. the hired help by other women. Referring to the text by Carole Pateman (1988), *The Sexual Contract*, she locates the difference in sexual contract vs. social contract. Thus, the housewives, - claims Anderson, - are bound into their obligations of care by the sexual contract in which in return for care, they receive protection and status / honor (2000:164-6). A migrant woman, who enters a house, is excluded from this equation and supposedly positioned under the laws of an employment contract, i.e. social contract. However, argues Anderson, the fact that a migrant woman is subordinate to another woman disrupts a possibility of a proper social contract, as

The relations between female employer and worker are not simply governed by the employment contract but by relation to status, and the confusion between the two benefits the employer.[...] It is thus true that the employment contract cannot capture female relations, to the extent that domestic work is about status and status reproduction and hierarchies between women (2000: 166).

My research, which generally confirms these conclusions, provided me with several examples of such status struggles. At times subordination of the hired worker to her female employer took

more or less overt sexually degrading behavior on the part of the female employer as a way to exercise power over their domestic workers. To give an example of such forms of power negotiations I refer now to two pronounced examples of objectification of a body of the caregiver as a part of their presence in the house by their female employers.

Yulia, 29, (who provided day-time care for an 80 year old woman in Naples) had to sit immobile on the sofa while her *signora* was taking her afternoon naps with her head resting on Yulia's breasts, which she [signora] would sometimes poke with her finger or squeeze. When in the beginning, Yulia found this sitting for an hour, immobile, with an elderly lady on her chest a rather disturbing practice and tried to protest, *signora* just hissed at her "Don't move!" Finally, Yulia found this situation both, comical and appalling, and interpreted it as a part of her work experience. In this practice, Yulia's very body, though in not obviously sexualized way, becomes a part of the services, which Yulia provides as a care-giver, as she is not always able to control how much she gives. Yulia, who is a professional artist back at home, often repeats that this is just a job and she is fine as long as she remembers that this is what she had agreed to do. However, this statement hardly reflects the depth of the emotional work that needs to be done to accommodate such experiences. Rationally, Yulia does not let herself be fooled even for a moment that her life in Italy is, so to speak, all that it is to her life. She explains to herself that she came to Italy to work and earn, so she does not allow the job she performs in Italy ruin her self-esteem.

In one of the more drastic examples, Lida (39) recalls her first job as a *domestica* in an affluent family of four, where, when going with the family to their summer house on one of the island in the Bay of Naples, she had to sleep in the living room. She recalls that the 15-year-old son would often come down into the living room at night, to watch TV, while she was trying to get some sleep on the sofa in the same room. Sometimes, he would masturbate in front of the TV, even though conscious of Lida's presence. Faced with such situation for the first time in her life, having no linguistic skills to tell off the boy, she would just hide herself under the blanket, and try not to look or hear, as she was ashamed and repulsed by the situation. She would never tell this to the boy's parents, again, lacking the language and afraid that her interference into the privacy of the family, her very witnessing of this privacy, would infuriate her employers who might even fire her for this. However, the other Ukrainian house-worker employed in the same family, who was younger than Lida but has been staying in Italy for longer and spoke Italian, would openly discuss this problem of the boy's behavior with his mother. After one particular incident, which involved the women fighting off the teenager with a broomstick, she shouted to the mother of the boy that she would have to kill him if she does not intervene. However, the mother ignored the whole incident turning it into a joke. In this case, just a like in a previous one with Yulja, employer did not

chose to ally with a migrant worker along the gender lines, enhancing (in Yulja's case) and ignoring (in Lida's) sexualization of the body of their domestic worker and thus, re-enforcing the status gap between them and their hired help.

Migrant domestic worker, even if not exposed to the direct harassment, often becomes objectified as involuntary participant or witness of the private life of the household and its members. Employers' familial dramas, moments of intimacies and betrayals unfold with little concern for the care-worker's comfort as the house of the employer remains his/her private domain. In this sense, migrant women as workers are positioned in a different mode of moralities as alien hired bodies in the privacy of Italian families and homes. Unless a migrant develops the skills and strength to make his/her own space in her work-space, it often turns into a traumatic experience, and the one, which triggers transformation and professionalisation of a migrant in her new role.

Such overlapping boundaries between work space of a migrant and a private space of an employer result in often unwillingly established intimacies, creating a complex multidirectional systems of dependencies of migrants on their employer / person-in-care and vice versa. However messy and unclear such dependencies are, they often open up a space in which a migrant, while lacking institutional protection (due to socially, legally and emotionally vulnerable situations) can negotiate their space, freedoms and benefits. One of my interviewees, Nina (53, over 7 years in Bologna), commented on the uneasy balance in her work place: "Before the death of her husband, my *granny*, Izotta, has been unbearable! I've been working for them for three years now but only after the death of *signor*, Izotta started to be more attentive and sensitive to me. Because she knows that I am the only person she has. Her son comes for dinner maybe once a week, maybe less. Her son doesn't need her. Only I need her... but only because I need money. She knows this, so we maintain a fragile peace. Once she told me 'I know I've treated you bad, Nina.' And she gave me 2 salaries in advance. I have invested it in buying heating system for my house in Ukraine... Sometimes I also know that I treat Izotta bad... I just don't have any patience any more. I just want to be at home with my son." Learning to navigate, utilize and manipulate such personalized dependencies and undesired intimacies often becomes the only space for migrant's to assert some control over the circumstances and conditions of their employment.



Figure 19. Finding the make –up she had done for her *signora* too bright for the daily walk in the busy street of Naples, *badante* fixes the rouge by wiping it away with a napkin which she has moistened by licking it. (Naples, 2008).

Modes of visibility: construction of a migrant self

In a documentary film (2007) done by the request and with the participation of Ukrainian politician and prime-minister (Jan – Sept 2005 and Dec. 2007 – Jan . 2009) Yulia Tymoshenko, she narrates: “If in the busy streets of Naples you happen to see a little blond woman, be sure, she must be a Ukrainian.” The visibility of Ukrainian women in Italy came up in various contexts during my research. Thus, the younger generation of migrants often commented on the generation of their mothers’ habit to dye their hair strawberry blond. Other times, I was addressed in the streets of Naples in broken Ukrainian or Russian by Italian men, who had no doubts about my nationality. On some occasions, I was told that “I don’t look Ukrainian” but rather German, as the sporty clothes I wear and relaxed body postures were not like the feminine reserved gestures of my compatriots. However subjective and stereotypical those judgments might be, they all pointed to a certain established idea of an image of a Ukrainian migrant in Italy; an image describing which both Ukrainians and Italians spoke of migrant women’s concern of controlling their appearance, performativity and representation.

Significantly, all of these comments bring out the possibility of various visibilities and ways of manipulating and utilizing them. Be it dyeing your hair blond to attract attention of the local men or wearing neatly pressed clothes to perform an ideal of a neat and clean care-worker, appearance is a part of transformations that Ukrainian women both undergo involuntarily and employ consciously while trying to positioning themselves on the labor market, streets of Italy and among other migrants in Italy. Visibility can also include *invisibility*; e.g. avoiding places patrolled by police or controlled by rivaling migrant groups, avoiding places in the houses of employers, which employers use for themselves. Ability to become invisible and visible to the employer was a part

of successful learning of the profession of a domestic and care-worker for many of my interviewees.



Figure 20. Common view in many Italian cities; a Slavic woman accompanying an elderly Italian woman on her walk (Siena, 2008).

Cinzia Solari (2008), in her work on Ukrainian care-workers in Rome, while describing a crowd of some five thousand Ukrainians attending a Sunday Ukrainian bazaar gives a description, which suggests an almost unified type of appearance of: “mostly middle-aged women whose winter coats cover straight, solid-colored skirts and button down blouses with busy prints” (2008:1). Dawn Lyon’s research on the attitudes Italian women have towards their east European *badanti*, demonstrates how appearance plays a huge role for employability and trust among employers and employees. Thus one of the interviewed Italian women, comparing a Ukrainian domestic worker (Raissa) with South American one explains: “... she [Raissa] wears a skirt that I would never wear, not even my mother, [...]. But she is always nicely dressed, very neat, in the way that the Colombian isn’t, it isn’t that she doesn’t dressed neatly, she does pay attention, but while Raissa wears a little bit of make-up, not too much, just right, the other one I saw last Sunday was completely painted up. [...] yes, I think Raissa is more formal, refined not vulgar” (Lyon et al. 2007:217). In this short episode shows what a significant role an appearance of a domestic or care-worker to their employability. An Italian woman catches every aspect of her employees appearance; even outside of her employment hours, on Sunday, a Colombian *badante* is being judged critically by her employer. Clothes and make up all become the basis of preferences and

judgments which can increase or lessen employability, and while Raissa is labeled as “old fashioned,” she is definitely judged more suitable as an employee.

Many of my interviewees commented that they could always tell a Slavic woman in a crowd. It was a re-occurring observation among most of my Ukrainian interviewees, and a common source of pride, that Ukrainian women always look “taken care of” or groomed. As one of my interviewees in Bologna, Kateryna (53) commented: “We always wear clean clothes, a little bit of make up, always ironed and neat shirts and jeans... even if we dress from a second hand shop, we look neat and womanly and that’s why Italian men prefer Ukrainian women to Italian, who look so sloppy. Even if we clean bathrooms and toilets we always have our nails clean and polished.”

However, despite the significance of the appearance, the interpretation and meaning of such visibility can vary. Enrica Capussotti (2007), in “Modernity vs. Backwardness” essay gives an example how Italian women attribute different meaning to the very same images of “neatness” and “sloppiness” that they similarly observe as differentiating them from East European women. Thus, one of Capussotti’s interviewees, an Italian woman in her early sixties comments: “They have lighter skin, and they are well-groomed, neat – like our mothers were in the 1960s, after the war, they have their hair styled, how can I explain it? Their hair is all in place, [...] they might wear a bright blue top, but with a skirt, or jeans, clean and pressed” (Capussotti 2007:206). Capussotti then analyzes that such comparison assures Italian women of their self image, allowing expressing their emancipation and confidence through a degree of neglect to their appearance. In contrast, Ukrainian women see their neatness, and controlled feminine appearance not as a sign of backwardness (“like in the 60s”) but with a sense of superiority over Italian women who “do not know how to take care of themselves.”³⁴ Thus, both Italian and Ukrainian women utter most identical observations about each other’s appearance, however, both groups seem to attribute a different meaning and misread each other’s signals to a great extent.

One of my interviewees in Bologna, who have lived in Italy for over 11 years summarized this sharp awareness of the self and representation: “You can always tell a Ukrainian woman from Italian, even if she has been living in Italy for 10 years, even if she is dressed head to toe in Italian clothes. It’s her eyes... her eyes always give her away. She is never happy to the level of carelessness.”

I read the last quote in the light of two main concerns. On the one hand, the quote speaks of the precariousness of the migrant women’s positioning in migration, the fact that even if she managed to position herself well in the place of migration, her *situatedness* never allows her to let

³⁴ A common judgment expressed in many of my interviews in both Bologna and Naples

herself completely go, as she is still subjected to various precarious conditions. By situatedness here I refer to Iris Young (2005) analysis of the bodily existence and body experience of women, when in her “Throwing Like a Girl” Young clarifies that: “Every human existence is defined by its *situation*; the particular existence of the female person is no less defined by the historical, cultural, social and economic limits of her situation” (2005:142). While Young discusses positioning of female body, I extend this idea to the positioning of the migrant women, who respond to their status of foreigners, women and care-workers by cultivating certain appearance, modes of acting, speaking, behaving that would allow women, responding to their situation, to find the best possible way to achieve their migration goals.

Both Passerini (2007) and the earlier mentioned quote, speaks of the profound sense of discipline and control, that undertaking a migration enterprise requires. Construction of a migrant self is a process going on at the various level of self, and often involves conscious effort on the level of attitudes, emotions, behavior and body postures and appearance. Control, the need for controlling, the need for awareness of were the constant theme for discussing migrants’ lives in Italy. On the one hand it was a sense of a particular scrutiny that migrants find themselves in while their migration in Italy. As one of the male migrants, who spent in Italy over two years described in an interview: “In Italy, there are all kinds of people, just like here in Ukraine, there are good and bad people. But in Italy, we are all as in a spotlight, as if we are standing on a palm of a hand... we are visible, everything that is in us is magnified and visible.”³⁵ On the other hand, this particular positioning as a labor migrant, as a person who starts all anew in a foreign place, makes an ability to control one’s situation an achievement.

Thus, this chapter has addressed the centrality of the work, work regimes and working body in the migration and the human actuality of labor as experienced in migration. I have looked into the “constriction” of a migrant self, as a whole regime of bodily, emotional, professional and spiritual disciplines that allow migrants to make sense of their separation from family, professional downward mobility and experienced hardships. Interested in success of their migration, migrants thus eagerly respond to the global need for the disposable, flexible domestic labor by shaping their images and bodies into marketable entities, leaving the negotiations for their rights, wages and conditions to their person skills and informal interactions.

Geriatric care, which like other types of care and domestic lies within the female domain, (Anderson 2000, 2006; Chang 2000; Zimmerman et al. 2006; Andall 2000) not only perpetuates the division of the male vs. female work, work in public domain vs. work in private domain, labor vs. reproductive work, but brings about a further divide of status between women as those who

³⁵ Olexader, January 2008, Ivano-Frankivsk

enjoy the private domain and those who “do the dirty work” (Zimmerman et al. 2006; Anderson 2000, 2006; Hochschild 2003b, 2001). The frailty and age difference of a person in-care and a relatively small control of the Italian family often however provides a possibilities for migrants’ own regulation of the work regimes and schedules, while the immense physiological and physical challenge that arises from taking care of terminally sick and old creates power relations within the care-regimes drastically different from those in domestic work and child-care. Focusing of geriatric care allowed me to flash out the multi-directionality of disciplining practices happening within Italian homes, mutuality of dependencies and established intimacies within these social fields in migration.

These specific challenges created a market for a specific type of employer, in which age and gender overlap to create most wanted profile for this job; a neat woman in her mid 40-50s, familiar with the responsibility of the care-work and still strong enough to manage physically strenuous care-regimes. Ukrainian migrant women often chose to professionalize their behavior and appearance to match this profile in a demand, thus, taking a special pride in their acquired professional transformation which secures them employment. While the majority of the work is done in the confinement of Italian homes, women’s behavior is often a subject of the scrupulous observation by Italian employers and public, as well as Ukrainian and other migrants and even their families at home.

Unlike in the two previous ethnographic chapters of this dissertation where I have discussed the intersection of migration and family, in this chapter I have looked into more individual experience of migration and explored the ruptures and continuities introduced into migrants lives at the junction of care-work and migration. Downward professional (and linked to it, social) mobility, linked to employment in domestic sphere and abandoning of the previous professional experience becomes one of the central ruptures and is particularly hard-felt in case of Ukrainians migrants, who, - as I have discussed earlier in this text, - over 85 % have college and above level of education (Markov et al. 2009) and often a significant experience of working professional jobs. Thus, “cleaning the toilets,” – a phrase that is commonly used by migrants to describe the type of occupation in Italy, - becomes a serious individual rupture that is rarely shared with the families to avoid upsetting them (chapter 4) and involves much emotion work on the part of the migrants in order to recover their professional and individual dignity. However, work is often the sole reason for migrants’ presence in Italy, and the only justification that is given by the Italian state for such presence (i.e. *permesso di soggiorno* based on work) thus becomes a primary role and function of a migrant in the receiving country. This chapter has discussed that, despite the disparity of downward professional mobility, the sites of work and the relationships established in the context of employment constitute most meaningful and durable connections within migrants’ transnational

social fields. The continuities that migrants thus manage to find in the site of work and migration constitute some of the major achievements in migration, i.e. learning the language, creating a marketable self, ability to negotiate blurred boundaries of the domestic and care-work and the ability to earn and provide for their families through work.

After discussing the regulatory work that is done in order to discipline migrants into their roles within the privacy of Italian homes, in the next chapter I switch to discussing migrants' use of public spaces in Bologna and Naples and the scrupulous representation that usage of such spaces requires on the part of migrants. I will argue, that regulation of migrants' presence in Italy is not limited to the power struggles within the Italian homes. Appearance of migrants in Italian streets, - outside of work, - triggers a whole new set of questions about the legitimacy of their presence in Italy, while their representation has to become even more scrupulous under the scrutinizing eye of the Italian public, other migrants and families back at home.

Chapter 7. Migrants' Embodied Geographies: the use of public spaces in Bologna and Naples by Ukrainian migrants

“The inequalities of global capital, and the dislocation of Filipino [migrant] women, are inscribed in a spatial relation.”
(Law 2005:230)

Discussing space in migration literature

When speaking of space, migration literature often provides an insightful bird's-eye-view analysis of economic factors that sustain migration over borders. Such a perspective can be found in writings on the relation between globalization and the ever-increasing demands in the care-work sector (Saskia Sassen 2006; Parrenas 2001b; Lan 2006; Yeates 2009), on city scales and the re-scaling of locations due to the circulation of material and symbolic capital generated by migrants, as well as the effects of remittances (Levitt 2001; Schiller and Çağlar 2009; Stephen 2007), and also in the writings on citizenship and incorporation (Ong 1999; Ayse Çağlar 2001; Çağlar 2002). The transnational migration literature, exploring primarily transnational social spaces and fields formed through migration, rarely focuses on spaces as lived experiences of migration or the processes of place-making and the situated practices that allow migrants to establish a meaningful social and sensual connection to the places they migrate to.

The migration literature that looks particularly into the *social construction of space*, understood as the “experience of space through which people’s social exchanges, memories, images and daily use of the material setting transform it and give meaning” (Low 2003:20) often focuses merely on the spaces given to care-workers in the homes of their employers (e.g. (Parrenas 2008; Hochschild 2003b; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004a). This dearth of literature could be seen as an indicator for an implicit assumption that power relations and struggles in which migrants engage during their migration do end outside of the confinement of their employers' houses. While in my previous chapter I have addressed the relations and power negotiations in which migrants engage in their work places, in this chapter I step out of the privacy of Italian homes, and look into the “inscription of difference and belonging in urban space” (Ayse Çağlar 2001:601).

Two texts that specifically focus on the lived spaces in migration – as well as on how these spaces shape the very experience of migrants – are Lisa Law’s “Home Cooking” (2005) and Pattana Kitiarsa’s “Thai migrants in Singapore: state, intimacy and desire” (2008). However,

despite the engaging ethnographies and analysis that both texts provide, they have their drawbacks. Law's article idealizes the meaning of migrants' social gatherings and fails to bring out the ambiguous feelings that belonging to such places might give migrants, while Kitiarsi's article, focusing on the role of the state in *othering* migrants through spatial exclusion, hardly acknowledges the active processes of place-making with which migrants add meaning and transform the function of such places. Additionally, these texts stand out in one more sense when compared to other transnational migration literature: while they do imply the transnational connections that migrants have, the authors at the same time manage to situate migrants outside of strictly family oriented relations as well, and look at different directionalities within migrants' transnational fields. More specifically, they explore the meaningful connections migrants build with the place that they migrate to, both outside of work and their family networks.

In their writing on the relation between places Fergusson and Gupta suggest that marginalized groups like those of migrant laborers experience the "partial erosion of spatially bounded social worlds." The authors emphasize that to understand these processes one must "focus on the way space is imagined (but not *imaginary!*) as a way to explore the processes through which such conceptual process of place making meets the challenging global economic and political conditions of lived spaces"(Gupta and Ferguson 1992:11). Looking at the process of place-making and the production of meaning and imagination related to that, I continue to explore the ruptures and continuities that migration triggers, this time through exploring the spaces that Ukrainian migrants use outside of work and outside of the immediate regulatory regimes of domestic care-work. Following Gupta and Ferguson, I intend to explore the following: "With meaning making understood as practice, how do special meanings [get] established? Who has the power to make places of spaces? Who contests this? What is at stake?" (1992:11). The centrality of the productive working body and the primary identification with the role of a migrant worker, as well as the displacement from familiar social, familial and professional milieus pushes migrants towards the use of spaces outside of work – usually Italian public spaces – in a way that allows them to go beyond their role as migrant workers and make a different experiential connection to the places they migrated to. The interactions outside of work trigger the emergence of new social spaces with their own hierarchies and negotiations and bring both new ruptures and new forms of continuity to migrants, which I will discuss in more detail in the following section.

Embodiment and lived spaces

More specifically, this chapter seeks to map out *migrants' embodied geographies*, i.e. migrants' social relations expressed through their use of space in migration. I use the term *embodiment* as a process that "considers the interrelationships between bodies and senses in the city" (Law 2005: 225). Following Ukrainian migrants through their use of public spaces in Naples and

Bologna, I hope to grasp the situated practices that constitute meaningful maps of these cities for migrants. These mental and lived maps, which often diverge in form and meaning from the map of locals or tourists, reveal a great deal about the positioning of Ukrainian migrants in Italy in their relations with Italians and other migrants, while also giving us insights into issues such as legality and work regimes and the imaginations attached to the migration enterprise itself.

Adopting Lisa Law's active approach towards embodied experience as something that both "takes place" and is "produced" (2005: 226) allows me to see how some spaces enable migrants to challenge the hierarchies in which they are embedded as labor migrants, foreigners, or domestic workers by activating situational identifications and performativity of the self in different spaces. For instance, leaving the house of an employer and spending a break among the country-fellows in a park allows women to step out of their role of a "servant" and a foreigner and engage in the familiar linguistic setting and in a non-subordinate company. At the same time, being seen in some places can automatically label participants as *the* migrant for the local gaze. Using the same example, a migrant woman can be concerned that by being seen spending time in the park in the company of other women she might be associated with unemployed migrants or migrants of other ethnic group. The question "how space/place might help constitute embodied subjects [...] "(Law 2005: 225) is at the center of this chapter, as it will allow us to understand how migrants deal with the ruptures of displacement brought on by the experience of migration. Therefore, the focus of the chapter is on the intersection of body and space, where body means "lived body" and "space is humanly constructed space", while at the same time "remembering however that the one not only occupies the other but commands and orders it through intention" (Tuan et al. 2001:35).

Migrants' geographies overwrite the local geographies of Italian cities, but migrants' appropriations of such public spaces as city parks, squares, bus stops, railway stations, street markets and fast food restaurants put them under the particular scrutiny of the locals, as well as their compatriots and families back at home. The migrants' presence in Italian public spaces challenges the locals' imagination about the purpose and usage of these spaces, creating dissonance and disturbance amongst Italians and putting additional pressure on migrants for collective and individual justification and representation. Finally, exploring the usage of spaces by migrants can help us understand how migrants contribute to creating new cityscapes, that is, contested and fluid spaces of social relations that alter the face of the city.

Migrants' visibility in the streets: voices vs. noises.

The presence of migrants in the streets of the cities they migrated to leads to different levels of visibility. Thus, Paul Stoller, when describing the life of African street vendors in New York City,

states that a migrant “has multiple invisibilities” (2002:6), that can even be explored when talk comes to migrants who, like the African traders, spend day in and day out in the streets. Berger and Mohr, in their 1975 ground-breaking book on migration from the South of Europe to the North often speak of similar multiple invisibles. While their *A Seventh Man* (1975) tries to capture the visual aspects of migrants’ lives and experiences through photography and text, this book often proclaims the factual invisibility of a migrant in the destination country. For whom and when do migrants become visible and invisible? Migrants’ voices, muffled and obscured due to the fact that to most pedestrians walking down the streets of Naples and Bologna they are unintelligible, are often interpreted as noise by the occasional passers-by. In order to map out this bodily presence of people coupled with the absence of their voices, one needs to understand the power hierarchies, embodied geo-politics and disciplinary regulations and internal self-disciplines that govern the lives of migrants in Italy.

Domestic workers, especially those performing their work 24/7 in the privacy of homes, have a particular mode of invisibility. Lisa Law (2005), who links migrants’ visibility with their work regimes and schedules, ascertains that Filipino migrants’ daily presence in the streets of Hong Kong when performing their daily tasks – such as shopping for groceries, taking their employers’ children to and from school – remains unnoticed and uncommented upon in the public discussion. However, Filipina women’s presence on Sundays in one of the central quarters of Hong Kong, where they gather weekly during their hours off, immediately catches the public attention and is seen as problematic and unwanted (Law 2005:230). What we see here is the case of the *right* versus *wrong* visibility, which is related to the roles that migrants perform: on week days their visibility as workers is justified and tolerated, while on the week-ends, when migrant women enjoy their own national food and engage in familial social and linguistic interactions, they are seen as a threat to both the national and city integrity.

Our maps: migrants’ geographies

Locations on city maps that have immediate use for Ukrainian migrants are often referred to as “our” [*nash*] places. In Italy these places that migrants use are surprisingly uniform regardless of the specific city they can be found in. As a researcher, I often made use of these places to get initial contacts: when arriving in a new town or city in Italy where I did not know anyone, I could still unmistakably find a congregation of Ukrainian women at major parks, or sometimes at the central or railway station squares, at specific bus stops, at call centers and fast food places, at Lidl shops and open-air flea markets. The location of *our places* would often be designated not only in *space* but also in *time*. During the work days the migrants who were gathering in parks were mostly the ones searching for jobs and apartments, or otherwise they were pushing a wheel-chair and taking an afternoon stroll with their dependents. On Thursday afternoons and

Sundays (which both can be the days off for domestic workers in Italy), however, the streets, squares, parks and bus stops would be flooded with Slavic women.



Figure 21. A group of domestic workers on Capri island spending their only full day off (Sunday) on a bench at a bus stop, a place of arrival of Ukrainian mini-buses. (Capri, 2008).

Both days off and working days have their own schedules as well. On Sunday mornings most parks, which otherwise serve as regular gathering places, are empty, as most women hurry to send packages and money home from the Sunday bazaars organized on the parking lots of Ukrainian courier vans. The trail of women carrying heavy loads, invariably packed into strong checkered bags, is a usual sight on Sunday mornings in most Italian cities, but it is probably most pronounced in Naples where in fact these women changes the whole dynamic of the area located between piazza Garibaldi and Via Benedetto Brin. Since all Ukrainian couriers depart from Italy at noon, it is common to see many women at this hour spending time in secondhand street markets, stopping by call centers, and making their way to the parks. Sunday morning can alternatively be dedicated to attending *our* church, i.e. a Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which in 2006 numbered 114 across Italy. On Sunday evenings, around 8 pm (the time when the free day ends) Italian public transport is full of women returning to their work places.



Figure 22. Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) in Naples during one of its religious celebrations (2008).

On some occasions, migrants' maps of *our places* overlap with Italian spaces provided and designated for migrants' use, e.g. the office of an Italian doctor or dentist providing some services for migrants, a migrant information and legal support center, or spaces such as those provided by the ACLI³⁶ where a migrant from Ukraine or any other country might volunteer and provide help. Caritas can also be called *ours*, when in some places (like in Bologna) it has established a network of centers organized to provide cooked food every day of the week. On different occasions, *our places* might be identified quite unexpectedly or simply in opposition to *Italian places*; e.g. a Pakistani-run shop in Naples, which sells Ukrainian beer and vodka, pickles and frozen food left for sale by the Ukrainian courier vans, is usually referred to as *ours* among migrants, even if the owner of the shop is a rigorous Muslim, handing alcohol over to his Ukrainian female customers with visible displays of contempt. There were also *our places* for leisure: in Bologna, there is a dance club which is rather notorious amongst but well-attended by Ukrainian women in their 40s (and upwards) who use it for dancing, celebrations and meeting Italian partners. In Naples, there are at least two disco clubs catering to the needs of the pan-Slavic population: one is run by Italians and the other one, conspicuously called "ex-USSR," run by a group of young Russian, Ukrainian and Tajik migrants.

³⁶

ACLI – Italian Christian Workers Association

The migrants' map of the city hardly ever coincides with those of local Italian dwellers and tourists. Even the places for rest and leisure are clearly separated from common places of rest for Italians. Thus, in Bologna, my interviewees who were in their 20s would never venture into the Bologna University related entertainment areas for fear of police raids and expensive prices, even though the university district, full of students drinking their own beer bought from small shops and sitting right on the pavements would be the last place to be raided by the police. Similarly, none of my informants would consider traveling from Naples to Rome unless it was with a tour agency or a car full of Ukrainians, even though the train ticket to Rome was only 10 Euro. None of my informants knew of the cheap possibility to stay overnight at youth hostels, or knew how to get cheap standing tickets for the theatre or opera; they would all rely on their Italian boyfriends and partners to arrange tickets for performances like these. The Italy of Ukrainian migrants is not the Italy of Italians; it is a map drawn around different places that are filled with differing meanings, and adhere to different regulating regimes of otherness, legality and visibility. While this holds true for any migrant group as well as for various social strata of Italians, looking at the maps established by Ukrainian migrants reveals a great deal about their positioning among various Italian of migrant groups, and hints at what regulatory regimes and imaginations that impact Ukrainian presence in Bologna and Naples.

Significantly, the nature of *our places* often goes beyond the usual national or ethnic boundaries. Be it an Italian health clinic, a Pakistani call-center or a Syrian 24/7 shop, these places provide different types of service for Ukrainian migrants, thus both transcending and redefining the significance of the national in migrants' definitions of "ours." On the one hand, they provide services and products coming from as well as communication with one's own nation (e.g. Ukrainian food, cheap phone rates for Ukraine, etc.), while on the other, they connect migrants to Italy, allowing them to relate to it outside of their roles as maids and migrant laborers.

Considering the diversity of these meaningful places for migrants, the question remains what constitutes the "our" in all of these *our places*? In Italy, where migrants' otherwise transient selves are misplaced from their familiar social, professional and familial contexts, *our places* allow them to overcome this transient state, serve as anchors that link migrants to the place they migrated to, make it meaningful by allowing for a sense of connection, if not comfort. However, the meanings of these places for migrants should not be idealized; they often remain ambiguous and influenced heavily by migrants' status and stereotypes. The migrants' presence in these re-defined spaces, their creative engagement with and usage of the place make them particularly visible among the other users of these spaces. This magnified visibility leads to a particular scrutiny of migrants, forcing them into self-conscious strategies to handle and address the various stereotypes voiced about them (both in Ukraine and in Italy). This constant dialogue with multiple discourses about

them makes the migrants' performativity a matter of both individual and collective responsibility. Different spaces, to sum up, allow migrants various levels of visibility, and provide a setting for playing out different modes of performativities of a migrant self.

With meaning making of a the place understood as a practice (Fergusson 1992:11), I will now focus on the use and production of meanings related to two particular types of *our places*; 1) migrant gatherings in Italian public parks and 2) the weekly Sunday bazaars organized in parking lots used by Ukrainian courier vans / mini-buses.

Parks: the rhythms of uncertainty

Since the mid 1990s (which marked the beginning of more numerous Ukrainian migration to Italy) Italian parks have been providing an important multi-functional space for the gathering of Ukrainian migrants. The accessibility and openness of parks were particularly beneficial to migrants; in the parks one can spend hours without being judged as "inappropriate," one does not need to pay to enter or stay in the park, and anyone can bring in their own food and drinks. Throughout the years parks have become a standard place of gathering not only for Ukrainians, but other migrants as well, and throughout my research, every town I visited (Rome, Naples, Bologna, Verona, Milan, Ferrara, Brescia) had a park that had a central social function for Ukrainian migrants.

There is a certain rhythm and logic to the way parks are used by migrants. The most obvious rhythms, those of work days and week-ends, are regulated by work regimes to which migrants are often subjected. More subtle rhythms result from the recurrent use of parks by migrants who find themselves in a precarious position in Italy. Many people return to hang out in parks after losing a job or accommodation, with one's reappearance in the park marking a migrant's unfortunate turn of luck, one's inability to control life circumstances, and the sliding back into uncertainty. The usage of park space indicates and brings out of the existing disparities among migrants, which usually remain invisible to and overlooked by the Italian eye. To an knowing observer, however, parks can reveal much about migrants' work regimes, their legal status, the length of their stay in Italy and even the success of their migration project.

In Naples, two parks were particularly popular as places for Ukrainian migrants to go to; Park Vittoria by the seaside, and *Piazza degli Artisti* in Vomero, located in one of the better-off districts of Naples. One of the migrants told me about the emergence of Piazza Degli Artisti as a gathering spot: because this is a place that rich inhabitants of the Vomero district occasionally use for a stroll, migrant women would flock there hoping to be hired on the spot as a domestic worker in this better-paid district. In the late 1990s / early 2000s it was still a common practice that

Neapolitans interested in hiring a domestic worker would just go to this park to choose a migrant woman of their liking. However, at the time of my research, most of the jobs were distributed through the elaborate personal contacts of migrant workers instead. Nevertheless, Piazza Degli Artisti still remained to be a place that allowed people to look for jobs and accommodation, only nowadays, the job offers circulated among closely-knit networks of acquaintances or were offered by “job sellers.” The women who were “job sellers” had turned collecting information about available jobs into their full-time or part-time occupation and were generally highly despised among other migrants for several reasons. For one, they reminded them of the situation a few years ago when the overwhelming majority of jobs were bought and sold among Ukrainian migrants, even if only exchanged between relatives. The prices varied greatly from 100 Euro to as much as 700 Euro, which allowed for much fraud and manipulations. The most common scheme was to sell a job which would not last long; for instance, people made it a habit to quit their employment contracts a few months in advance before the person to be cared for would be moved to an elderly home. This allowed a migrant to earn some extra money before moving on to a new job. At the same time, it put the new employee in a rather desperate situation, when after paying the equivalent of one monthly salary, she learned that she could only work in her new job for a few more months and had to start looking for different employment soon. Even now that these schemes are rather well-known even amongst newly arriving migrants, the “job sellers” still tend to offer particularly difficult and unwanted jobs, which only migrants with few other options or in quite difficult circumstances do consider.

Today, with Ukrainian migrants’ relying on well-established and elaborate networks of personal connections, parks still remain tremendously important for job hunts. Thus in Bologna, two main parks have remained meeting places for Ukrainian migrants; *parco della Montagnola* and *Giardini Cassarini* on *via Saragozza*. Along with the regular greetings exchanged, it is common for migrants to simply approach each other with the standard phrase: “Have you heard anything about jobs?” The phrase is so frequently used and standardized by now that it serves as a starting point for most of the conversations taking place in parks and in the streets between strangers who recognize each other as being of Ukrainian or of Slavic origin. The parks provide not only a good entry, but also a good information point for inquiring about the current situation on the job market. Thus, while spending my time in Bologna parks, I have witnessed many times a similar situation: Some unfamiliar Ukrainian woman would arrive and join the bench that I would be sitting on together with a group of migrant women. After opening a conversation with the standard “Have you heard anything about jobs?” a woman would then confess that she knew about a job offer from someone, which she still has not checked out (i.e. did not go to see for herself). The woman would then tell the address and the rest of the women would double check it in their booklets or from memory. It happened many times that they were familiar already with the

job offer. Most of the time they would come to the conclusion that the job was not worth checking, because it was either too hard for the money offered or too likely to last after just a few months (meaning that the person in care was in a bad health condition and likely to die soon). The conversation would then – in an indifferent and professional manner – move on to a discussion of how much longer a person who needed care-work would last, and whether it was worth paying money for this job. One of the women would typically know many others who had tried to work there before but quit after a short time, another woman might have gone and checked it out herself. First I was very surprised by this informal “data-base” of information and the casual way it was being accessed; over time, however, I realized how often job offers that trickle down to the park level are being circulated around, and after a while I found myself taking part in these discussions and passing on the informal info just as well.

Additionally, parks serve as a meeting point for migrants during their daily walks with their Italian respondents; particularly in Bologna, the Giardini Cassarini and Montagnola parks nowadays feature a group of (not only) Ukrainian women who communicate with each other during their daily walks, while wheel-chairing elderly Italians around who are taken daily to the same parks and thus get to spend time in the company of other Italians who are also brought to the same park by their Ukrainian *badanti*. Due to the fact that parks attract unemployed migrants, men are often visitors of these parks, too. In this respect, parks are indicative of the bigger picture of Ukrainian labor migration in Italy; migrants’ usage of parks often reflect the periods of employment and unemployment, the rhythms of stability and instability. Alternatively, the migrants’ presence in parks would reflect the rhythms of their domestic work regimes; live-in workers, whose schedules in Italy are often the same (Thursday afternoon and Sunday day-time off) go to parks for lack of other places where they can spend their time off, with parks offering both a space to hang out in and the company of migrants in similar situations.

In both Bologna and Naples, many of my friends and interviewees would turn to the parks only when in need of jobs or apartments. When it comes to finding accommodation, parks usually attract those migrants who either have a live-in arrangement or have a *posto letto* and thus are allowed to use their living space only for sleeping purposes. Besides for exchanging information on accommodation and work, parks serve as meeting points for those who cannot invite people to their homes for celebrations and thus are forced to take their private feasts into public spaces. This in its turn usually indicates that a migrant is new to Italy, his/her situation is not very stable and s/he has not developed deeper social contacts yet. At the same time, it almost always means that a migrant does not have immediate family in Italy, as those who have brought their families try to rent a separate flat or room, which then can be used for rest, privacy and social events.



Figure 23. Domestic workers having lunch at Montagnola park, Bologna (2007).

Despite the accessibility of parks and their general openness, the use of parks most heavily depends on migrants' work regimes and their types of employment and can also be indicative of migrants' status in Italy. However, despite the fact that parks would serve as places for important social interactions and the exchange of news and food, at the same time, hanging out in the parks "without a reason" was considered to be either "not cool" among younger generation migrants, or was associated with unemployment, drinking and homelessness by the older ones. Migrants' ambivalence about the parks was also explained to me by their fear to be associated with other migrant groups sharing the park; in particular to be seen as "the same kind of people" as Roma or Romanians, both group being on a particular negative wave of Italian public opinion and political discourses since Romania's entering the Schengen zone in 2007 (Tommaso and Claps 2010; Picker 2010; Herzfeld 2007). While my Ukrainian respondents would argue that they spend time in the parks due to the necessity or lack of employment, they would often express an opinion that other migrant groups are there due to their lack of interest in work or laziness. Therefore, it was important to draw the boundaries of otherness against the most negatively stereotyped groups.

Mini-buses: overturning hierarchies

In almost two decades of rising Ukrainian migration to Italy, a rather unique and elaborate system of communication has developed there. This communication network to be described below, together with telephone (cell phones) usage, is the most crucial channel through which transnational connections are kept up that are put under pressure by highly regulated visa regimes, strict border controls and a significant geographical distance to cover.

During weekends, many Italian cities and towns have so-called *Sunday buses*, that is, gatherings of dozens of mini-buses and courier vans that transport people and goods from Ukraine to Italy and back, and which use the time they spend parked in Italy to turn the actual lots they inhabit into major bazaars and places for migrants' vibrant social life, exchange, job search and leisure. In Rome there are two competing parking lots (located at the metro station Garbatella and Ostiense), in Milan, Ukrainian mini-buses share a huge parking lot with Moldovan and Romanian mini-buses nearby Cascina Gobba metro station, in Naples more than 50 mini-buses and a few large tourist buses block a significant chunk of via Brin, while in Bologna, Moldovan and Ukrainian mini-buses (sometimes up to 30 altogether) share space, but divide their days of operation (Saturday primarily for Moldovans, Sunday for *Ukrainians*). In any case, Sunday buses become a visible, colorful, and vibrant event every weekend all around Italy.



Figure 24. Via Benedetto Brin, Naples; Ukrainian mini-bus parking lot and bazaar. The trunk of the car making its way very slowly through the crowd is filled with parcels, which are packed into typical checkered bags in order to be sent to Ukraine (2008).

Cinzia Solari (2008), in her article on Ukrainian migrants in Rome, indicates that at one of the two parking lots of Ukrainian couriers in Rome alone, around 5000 migrants gather every Sunday between 8 am and noon. One can only estimate the number of people coming and going through these places between early morning and noon. However, if I had to produce a number I could calculate that an average mini-van in Bologna would have over 100 packages (usually 120-140) registered for delivery, indicating that around 100 people used the services of that one courier. On an average Sunday there would be 20 vans standing in the Bologna parking lot, indicating that if each of them registered 100 packages, around 2000 people had to go through the place. This would only include the people who have used the courier services for delivery, leaving out many more who come to the parking lot in order to buy some Ukrainian food, meet some

acquaintances, spend the free time, exchange some books, DVDs and news. These calculations, however crude they may be, can still give a sense of the fundamental importance of these places for Ukrainian migrants. On Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings, each of these parking lots serves not only those who want to send or receive packages and money but they turn the entire area into a proper bazaar and provide the time and space for major gatherings, the consumption of Ukrainian food and drinks, and crucial information exchange (also see (Pronyuk 2009; Solari 2008; Vianello 2009a).

Courier vans, usually white, app. ten-year-old Mercedes vehicles, provide a rather cheap (100 EU one way) and elaborate network of transportation between Ukraine and Italy, driving people and delivering packages, and making money transfers directly to the migrants' families all around Ukraine (see also Chapter 4). Migrants' packages sent back home usually contain all types of food and home necessities, but can also hold such extravagances as flowers from Italy for someone's birthday, or exotic plants to be used in Ukrainian gardens. From Ukraine, migrants mostly receive much smaller-sized packages often containing pictures, medicine, Ukrainian chocolate and souvenirs for Italian employers. The role of the mini-buses goes far beyond mere transportation as they often provide differentiated, personalized services like delivering certain news about the family, bringing over a pet from Ukraine, or buying medicine and cosmetics requested by a migrant. Mini-buses that commute between Ukraine and Italy have for years been almost the only means of transportation available for migrants and even nowadays, when one can get a flight from Naples to Lviv for only 150 EUR, they still remain a harsh but rather flourishing business.



Figure 25. Goods that Ukrainian mini-buses bring from Ukraine weekly. Many courier vans, besides transporting people, packages and money, also make profit by selling some Ukrainian goods in Italy and bringing products from Italy to Ukraine. The range of products is very similar all over Italy. From Italy, mini-buses usually carry a few boxes of seasonal fruit. From Ukraine, they bring canned food, bread, sausage, ketchup and mayonnaise, chocolate and candy, soft drinks, beer, as well as press and hair dye. Despite the common belief that the couriers deal with illegal products, the “illegality” of these products usually has a limitation. While none of the buses have a license to sell any of these items, most of the mini-bus drivers would not sell cigarettes, hard liquor, or medical drugs. These goods are considered to be “properly” illegal, and bring a higher level of risk and penalty if discovered, say, at a border crossing. However, the bus drivers would bring individual orders (like certain drugs, cosmetics, cigarettes or alcohol) if requested personally by migrants who use their services (Bologna, 2007).

The courier business is highly competitive but at the same time surprisingly unified in its standards and offers all over Italy, considering that this commercial enterprise is carried out by probably hundreds of small-size Ukrainian entrepreneurs. It centers around one owner of three to four courier vans; one or two drivers with multi-entry Schengen visas would then drive the vans from Ukraine to Italy, all of them leaving every Thursday from Ukraine, arriving in various locations in Italy on Friday and Saturday, and invariably leaving Italy on Sunday around noon. Several more vans and drivers would on Monday morning pick up those packages from Italy and spend two more days delivering them to the doorsteps of migrants’ families. The price for transportation, for sending a package and money delivery is unified all across Ukraine and Italy, so there is no actual competition in that. What matters is trust; the nature of arrangements is personal and can hardly be called documented. The business or popularity of each particular courier depends on his reputation spread by word of mouth by his clients, and trust, once lost, is very difficult to restore. The ability to remain open to migrants’ needs and understanding to work realities and schedules remains probably the key to the success of their business, as many women prefer mini-buses over the airlines particularly for their flexibility.

Unlike in other Italian cities (e.g. Bologna or Milan), in Naples Ukrainian mini-buses do not share space with vans from other countries (Romania or Moldova). Even a couple of Belarusian mini-buses that come to Naples only every second week park separately by the Garibaldi train station. However, every Sunday, the Ukrainian bazaar on the parking lot in Naples is an event that attracts not only Ukrainian migrants. Thus the mini-bus bazaar is commonly referred to as *our buses* by migrants from Russia, Moldova and Belarus who come here regularly to swap books and DVDs in Russian, to buy food, medicine, cosmetics, to eat some hot *shashlyk* that is cooked right there on the sidewalk, or even to get a hair cut. Migrant women are often accompanied to the mini-buses by their Italian friends, employers and partners; those who want to impress others get a car ride to the very doors of the mini-vans. The car takes forever to make its way through the crowd – people barely making way for it, cursing the drivers – but the satisfaction of stepping out of the car right in front of the bus is obviously greater than the wasted time.

Women who are not as lucky and have to carry their heavy loaded checkered bags that they will send home without the help of a vehicle, walk for about a kilometer from Garibaldi train station to Via Benedetto Brin, and attract Neapolitan men who park their cars along the way or cruise up and down this road signaling and offering sex, money, coffee, romance or eternal love to any woman they find attractive. Even during my four-month stay, this route from Garibaldi square to Via Benedetto Brin transformed greatly; the small cafes became increasingly filled with women stopping by for a coffee with more persistent and lucky Italian men, businesses started having Cyrillic signs advertising cheap flights to Ukraine and Russia, touristy and religious trips all around Italy and to France, hairdresser's and lawyer's services were now on offer everywhere. The seemingly endless string of women that could be seen every weekend in this area has gradually turned the whole street into a bazaar; Chinese vendors spread out 2-5 EUR underwear on big sheets of plastic right on the pavement, Indians and Pakistanis sell silver jewelry, and Italians line up hundreds of second hand toys and fur coats along the busy road.

One Sunday, one such stall with a Pakistani man selling silver jewelry was surrounded by some five women. I could hear the women ask questions about the quality of silver and the stones and as the man explained in broken Italian what these stones were, one of the women told him that the stone is called birjuza [turquoise] in Russian: "B-i-r-ju-za, remember it or write it down. So that you know. It is important for your business, if you stand here selling things, you should know the name in our language, not Italian!" This space and time, created by the presence of Ukrainian vans and the make-shift bazaar overturns the usual roles, making the whole district cater to the needs of migrants, who otherwise spend the whole week catering to Italians. In this place and hour, the migrants are not employees; they are clients who can choose and determine the price for services. In her article *Home Cooking*, Lisa Law accounts for similar place-events by describing how Filipina migrants gather on Sundays at the Central square of Hong Kong: "Along with music, letters and photographs, food helps to transform Central into 'Little Manila' each week, and allow women to disrupt the social and economic geographies that attribute them with a stable (and marginal) domestic worker identity" (Law 2005: 239). Similarly, during Sunday morning on Via Benedetto Brin and the surrounding streets migrant women would wear their better clothes, walk proudly with their Italian partners and dictate their rules to the street vendors hungry for their money.

One particular encounter stands out as a good example of such appropriation of space in Naples. One Sunday morning I went to *our buses* with Serhiy, a 21-year old Ukrainian man who had come to Italy a year and a half earlier to join his mother and father. Serhiy, who ever since he arrived to Naples had held only sporadic jobs, was completely without papers, and had close to no money, which often left him full of bitterness towards the locals. While I stopped to talk to

some acquaintances among the courier vans lining up on both sides of Via Brin, Serhiy waited for me standing in front of an Italian man who was selling the big square checkered bags which most migrants use to pack their parcels for home. Even though, as usual, the passage between the vans was over-crowded, after a while the Italian told Serhiy to move away and not stand in front of his goods. Serhiy moved reluctantly and started answering the man in broken Italian with a distinct Neapolitan drawl, but then slid habitually into swearing at him loudly in Ukrainian, so that the seller would not understand but the others would: “F...off, stupid f..., you stand here on our territory, you are making money out of us, and you still open your mouth!” Similar to Law’s comment that in places of such gatherings migrants “become embodied subjects that exceed - rather than merely resist – their denigrated role as ‘maid’” (2005:228), Serhiy in this instance superseded his role as an illegal migrant, feeling not only the entitlement of being a potential customer, but also that of being one person amongst a large entity, i.e. someone in control of this space. In a sense, Serhiy was right by claiming the territory as *his*, as even the municipal police have little control over what is going on there.

The reach of the Italian police in such spaces is indeed insignificant; in March 2009, when the Italian police conducted a raid at one of the parking lots in Rome (near metro stop Ostiense) and intended to confiscate some of the vans, hundreds of Ukrainian women (in their 40s and 50s) attacked the police, forcing them to withdraw from the parking lot and start negotiations which resulted in no actual confiscations (UNIAN press 2009). I have once witnessed a police “raid” at the Sunday mini-buses bazaar in Naples. A police car appeared at one end of the Via Benedetto Brin and tried to make its way through the crowd. The word spread through the crowd like a prairie fire and the mini-buses next to the exit at which the police car appeared hastily put away bottles of alcohol and food displayed for sale. However the crowd did not move a bit and the police car could only progress a few centimeters per minute through the crowd. With the police moving so slowly, the bus drivers were so unimpressed by the raid that they only cared to put away their goods when the car was already less than ten meters away from them, while the buses that the police car had already passed immediately put their products up for sale again. The police car left within half an hour, barely making its way through the crowd and scoring only a few sticks of Ukrainian salami confiscated and thrown into the trunk of the police car.

The important functional significance of such places as weekly Ukrainian bazaars for the lives of Ukrainian migrants, their significance as spaces where it is possible to overturn existing migrant-local hierarchies create much ambiguity over the meaning of these spaces for migrants themselves. I will now turn to a more detailed discussion of the meaning of these places for Ukrainian migrants.

Home away from home? The meaning of *our places*

Our places, despite their actual functionality, occupy an ambiguous position in the Italian cities and in the minds of Ukrainian migrants. The fact is that these places that are called *ours* are both attractive and repulsive for migrants: on the one hand, they provide the desired familiarity away from home, but on the other, they highlight migrants' otherness in the local context even more sharply. For an outsider / non-migrant observer, these places tend to lump migrants together into a anonymous group where individual stories and internal hierarchies are being overwritten. Paul Stoller, in his writings on the media response to the presence of African migrant street vendors in New York, comments on how their presence is often interpreted as bringing the Third World, characterized by chaos, filth, and informality, into the order of the First World of Manhattan that is imagined in clear opposition, with associations such as order, cleanliness and regulation (Stoller 2002: 138). Similarly, Lisa Law (2005) comments on how Filipina migrants' presence in the public spaces of Hong Kong is addressed in the press as a "disorder" and as creating "dirt" and "stench" in otherwise orderly and safe areas of the city.



Figure 26. The making and selling of shashlyk in the street, in the middle of the Ukrainian mini-bus parking lot and bazaar (Naples 2007).

Italian press is frequently raising the issue of what is the actual legitimacy and status of such presence of Ukrainian buses and the disturbance they cause to the city. Thus one of the Neapolitan newspapers in an article entitled "Via Brin: Going to the East fair: the street "stolen" from the city" highlighted that not only that this area has been turned into a place where people get drunk, block the whole traffic and leave great heaps of trash after their departure. The newspaper also pointed out that the place violates all hygiene standards by cooking food right on the street, while hair cuts are made just a few meters away. However, the article goes far beyond raising simple concerns over hygiene; by demonizing the very presence of these gatherings, it

voices the fear that a piece of Italian territory may be lost for good, with its Italian inhabitants living under a looming threat:

Come here during the market day and you will discover another station in the invisible city. The Naples to which we were used to, it no longer exists. Puff, just disappeared. Invisible. With all its smells and colours, its chaos, illegal commerce, folklore and death. Alcohol flows like river, beer and other liquors, from the early morning on: to be sipped directly from the bottle. "If it only was the alcoholics!" says the carpenter [one of the four families inhabiting the street], "if you walk around the trucks you will see much more. Especially around 2pm". What do they do? "They do what they need to do and they fuck, they fuck hard. I personally don't care, but I have a young daughter" (Treccagnoli 2007:25).

The article goes to the very extreme, proclaiming the virtual disappearance of the "Naples we know," and giving space to barbaric, beastly beings that not only drink all day but also "fuck hard." To topple the effect of this description, the article mentions the "young daughter" of the carpenter, who obviously can fall victim to one of those illicit activities. The author of the article then completes his exoticizing (eroticizing?) trip to the "land" of the Sunday Ukrainian bazaar by suggesting: "You made a jump of thousands of kilometres and 50 years back in time. [...] To travel through the market, put your headphones on and play Goran Brekovich in your iPod. You will be projected into the Slavic atmosphere of Emir Kusturica." Evidently pulling together all of his knowledge of the "east," the author proclaims that Neapolitan Via Brin on Sunday mornings is a different space/time dimension, a street "stolen" from the city and moved somewhere else, where Kusturica, Ukraine, and vague notions of "the" East all mean the same, i.e. *the other*.

Ukrainian migrants create a whole non-Italian social setting, which brings unfamiliarity into familiar public spaces for the locals; foreign languages, social interactions, tastes and smells. For Neapolitans "besieged by thousands of Ukrainians" (Treccagnoli 2007:25) migrants' voices are unrecognizable; they are mere noise that pollutes the familiar order and organization of space. Lack of understanding and knowledge make room for crass imaginations of otherness. I can see how drinking hard liquor and having food in the street can evoke the indignation of a local observer. However, the reference to sexual intercourse in the Neapolitan newspaper seems to be the production of a rather creative mind: anyone who has been on Via Brin on Sunday would have to admit that in order to engage oneself in sex there at noon one would have to be exhibiting oneself rather proudly to some hundred witnesses.

Lisa Law (2005), while describing weekly gatherings of Filipina migrant workers in one of the central parts of Hong Kong, mentions very similar demonizing discourses in the Hong Kong press: "Each week it disrupts the hegemonic space of Central Hong Kong, and local perceptions of this gathering as a disorderly crowd of unruly foreign women call attention to multicultural tensions in the city's urban fabric (2005: 225-6). However, Law proceeds by commenting on the

meaning of such gatherings for migrants: “When experienced from inside, however, Statue Square and its environs become a home away from home for migrant women, a place of remembering and forgetting, and a lively place full of laughter, songs and home cooking. [...] Little Manila is where domestic workers recover from more subtle forms of sensory reculturation that occur in Chinese homes, and in the process they create new ways of engaging with city life” (2005: 225-6).

Though I agree with Law’s analysis of the significance of such places for migrants and their utmost importance to migrants for the re-writing of urban geographies and the establishment of new experiential links with the places they migrated to, I see Law’s description of these places as “lively places full of laughter and songs” or “home away from home” as a rather idealized and simplified picture. Similar to Law’s account, Ukrainian Sunday bazaars provide an important place with familiar tastes and smells for the migrants. However, I would argue that they cannot be mistaken for a place of “home away from home” (Law 2005: 225-6). I am rather inclined to follow the interpretation of Pronyuk (2009), a former migrant to Italy herself who discusses in her book how the gatherings of Ukrainians at the courier vans symbolize the realization of the migrant’s purpose, and stand for the fulfillment of migration project: “The parking lots of Ukrainian courier vans in Italy are the most wide-spread and most numerous [mass] places for the migrants to meet in. Here, the most important events in a migrant’s life take place; arrivals, departures, seeing others off to home, sending packages, receiving mail, searching for a job. Here, the very essence of the migrant existence is fulfilled: to earn money and send it home” (Pronyuk 2009:53).

This interpretation of the significance of the Sunday bazaar does not evoke a sense of *home* for Pronyuk; instead, it speaks of a sharp realization of one’s position as a migrant. The meaning and significance of these places in the migrants’ minds are ambiguous and cannot be separated from the judgmental gaze of the locals or from an urgent need to break free from their often suffocating work regimes. Thus, one of my interviewees suggested: “Italians are complaining that we are drinking alcohol and eating at the Sunday bazaar in Naples. Well, we know why we drink on Sunday mornings. Because we spend our lives day and night locked up with their (Italian) crazy and sick and old! So on that one day we are out of their homes, we are free and we have things to celebrate. And they (Italians) are simply jealous that we can get drunk already on Sunday morning.”

To the Italian gaze, the visible and tangible differences received through the senses, the interactions and loud sounds at the Ukrainian Sunday bazaars differentiate them from an ordinary Italian neighborhood, and create what the Italian magazine *Voci* has called “*Piccola Kiev*” [small Kiev], a place that is “not Italy” (VOCI 2007). Thus, parks and courier vans’ parking lots function in

a similar way to what Loic Wacquant has called “branded spaces” (1993), i.e. spaces so inevitably associated with otherness, disorder and chaos that they brand anyone who is associated with this place with the same tag of otherness. Along similar lines, Ukrainian migrants are acutely aware of the stigma attached to their gatherings in parks and vans’ parking lots. Thus, on many occasions the migrants who would regularly go to the Sunday bazaars said to me that they did not enjoy going there because “it’s crowded, noisy, like a bazaar, and all these people are drinking and being loud and barbaric.”³⁷ My interviewees did not want to be associated with this crowd and many times said that they were highly ashamed that Ukrainians behaved in such a manner. As Valentina (47) put it: “How do those poor Italians have patience with us? I mean, just come to the buses and you will see, all these people are so loud, they leave piles of trash behind, block the roads, drink in the streets? Who would tolerate that? And then they (Ukrainians) say that they are treated badly. But how can you respect people who do that?”

In Valentina’s opinion and in similar testimonies made by many of my interviewees, despite all their functionality and practical use, the spaces of migrants gatherings such as parks and Sunday bazaars would to them always stand out as a stark reminder of their migrant status in this country. In an article published in a Ukrainian Christian magazine in Italy, a migrant woman writes: “I am hurt to see our women, who spend their free time in parks, behind the laid tables [benches] and very often with some alcohol. In Ukraine, we are ashamed of and try to avoid people who drink in parks. This is how the normal Italians perceive us, when they see us [doing this] here” (Prevarska 2005:49).

Similar sentiments and an awareness of the local gaze upon the migrant community were reflected in debates about the representation of migrants. UGCC which plays a particularly strong role in mediating relationships between Italians and Ukrainian migrants, openly criticizes migrants spending time in parks and at the Sunday bazaars. UGCC, furthermore, seeks to provide an alternative space for migrants’ gathering, a space which would not only provide a community building space, but which in their view would also result a much more coherent and positive image of Ukrainian migrants and Ukraine amongst Italians. On several occasions, the Church goers of Bologna expressed similar attitudes about the usage of parks and the Sunday gatherings at the courier parking lots as quoted in the magazine *Do Svitla*. They suggested that if Ukrainian migrants want to be seen as part of a respected nation, they should stop going to the parks, and instead gather in the church. Lydia, for instance, said: “The church provides us with a space. Around the church there will be no drinking, no job frauds. And this way, the Italians will see that we are not some homeless drunkards, but a God-fearing nation and a nation with values and pride.”

³⁷

Common interpretation of Sunday bazaars in my interviews.

Such comments point to the significance that is added in migration to individual morality and morality of migrants as a group, in which national belonging becomes a major attribute of defining the group boundaries. Morality here features prominently in the discourses of worthy / unworthy migrant, providing an excuse for shifting migrant groups along the hierarchies of (usually) the least wanted (also see Herzfeld 2007). The link between morality and tense competitions within such hierarchies echo in the attitudes expressed by many of my respondents that Ukrainian migrants are “better for Italy” due to their whiteness, and Christianity then migrants from African countries or Asia. The same respondents, though denied their comments any racist connotations, supported their arguments on the bases of what Herzfeld calls “collective notion of high civilizational standards” (Herzfeld 2007:255). These “trappings of normalcy,” according to Herzfeld, accompany hand-in-hand the process of globalization, and while the latter is often presented in a positive light of circulation of knowledge and goods, the former point to the growing forms of discontent, which more and more often manifest themselves through racial and cultural prejudice (2007:256-7). Ukrainian migrants, who themselves often become the objects of such prejudice (e.g. Herzfeld 2007), often become most vigorous proponents of such norms, thus attempting to draw the boundaries between themselves and the other migrant groups, emphasize Ukrainian Europeanness and exaggerate their the contrast with other groups in a hope to win a few points in the ethno-racial hierarchies of worthy / unworthy migrants

Thus, locations which according to Lisa Law can function as places of “remembering and forgetting” (2005: 226) and allow the migrants to feel “at home” (2005:239), in my interviews often only reminded migrants of their status in Italy, of their decreased social position in relation to their families, their former education and their professional careers. These spaces, similar to what Wacquant has described as “branded places” (1993), only mark the participants as *the migrants*.

The particularly ambiguous relation of migrants to places such as parks and Sunday bazaars – places so functional but also so unsettling – is more complex and calls for a deeper analysis. Homi Bhabha (1989), describing the “uncanny of cultural difference” argues, “It is the strangeness of the familiar that it becomes more problematic... when the problem of cultural difference is ourselves-as-others, others-as-ourselves, that borderline” (1989:72). The effect of recognizing oneself in the other and the other in oneself seems to me a particularly good way to describe the ambiguity of such places for Ukrainian migrants. Attending these places means admitting to one’s position as a migrant, an “ultimate other.” Acknowledging one’s position as a migrant also involves admitting that one is like the other migrants, i.e. admitting to the experience of marginalization and its legitimacy. In my interviews, many Ukrainian migrants recognized their own life back home in Ukraine in the lives of the Italian families for whom they worked. At the

same time, in their own positioning as maids and migrant workers, they recognized their new positioning in the lower strata of Italian society. Thus, it is not surprising that a number of times my respondents would express their concerns that “Ukraine will become like Italy, i.e. overrun by migrants.” On other occasions, some migrants told me that they do not want to stay in Italy because there are “too many migrants here.” My interviewees seemed to be unaware of the inherent tensions in such statements. Similarly, when in 2010 Lviv experienced street protests under the slogans of “Illegal migrants – a threat to everyone” and “Illegal migrants – bring ethnic criminality, exotic diseases and lowering of the life standards,” the main Ukrainian migrants’ internet portal in Italy fully supported the protest without even mentioning that the Lviv region tops the list of Ukrainian regions sending migrants (undocumented ones as well) to Italy (Soronevych 2010). According to this logic, illegal migrants in Ukraine are the threatening other. However, appearing in Italy in spaces associated with migrants such as parks or squares or Sunday buses marks one as the *migrant*, and thus brings the uncanny feeling of recognizing oneself as the other.

This unsettling feeling can also account for the lack of solidarity between Ukrainian migrants and other migrant groups, which is also a result of existing rigid ethnic and racial hierarchies in Italy that establish the superiority of Ukrainian migrants over others due to their perceived whiteness and education. Old Soviet and socialist block hierarchies are being revived with a passionate vigor during migration, according to which, in the words of many of my interviewees, “Romanians are gypsies,” “Bulgarians are as bad as Romanians,” and “Moldavians are not all bad; some of Moldavians are actually normal, but most of them are unfortunately true Moldavians.”³⁸ Similar sentiments that aim at divorcing Ukrainian migrants from the category of other migrants can be traced in the above mentioned call of the UGCC, which seeks to demonstrate that Ukrainians “are a nation that stands with God and a nation with values and pride.” The strong relation between places of gatherings and the meanings attached to them are embedded in a larger ideological and economic struggle over the representation of migrants, and ideas of “worthy and unworthy” migrants, as well as the concept that migrants stand as representatives of their nations.

³⁸ Comments in quotation marks are taken from interviews conducted with Ukrainian in Bologna and Naples in 2008.



Figure 27. Ukrainian domestic workers having lunch and overlooking the week-end multinational bazaar in the middle of Bologna (2007).

By looking into migrants' embodied geographies, this chapter aimed to capture the hierarchies and power relationships inscribed into the usage and meanings of spaces that Ukrainian migrants in Naples and Bologna utilize. Various places make visible different regulating regimes related to questions of otherness, the legality and visibility of migrants. Through their experiential engagement with various spaces, migrants overwrite the maps of the Italian cities, contest the meaning of spaces, create extra layers of significance and establish new connections with the places they have migrated to. Migrants' gatherings in Italian public spaces, besides providing an accessible forum for the exchange of news, often serve as the sole source of information on jobs, accommodation, legal and medical matters. Such gatherings redefine migrants' relation to the place they have migrated to and allow them to engage with the city in ways different than just through the usual experiences of being a migrant worker, an il/legal migrant or a stranger. Such places connect migrants to the city beyond or even despite the local usages and intentionalities of these places, creating contestations over varying social maps between different actors in the cities.

However, larger concentration of migrants in one space, which makes their collective difference more visible and difficult to ignore, often gives rise to a systematic prejudice (Herzfeld 2007:265) about both the migrants and the spaces. The meaning of these spaces for migrants is therefore far from being a straightforward matter. Belonging to and using the spaces frequented by other migrants on the one hand brings the much needed relief from the pressing conditions that come with the regulatory regimes of work in Italian homes (especially the live-in arrangement). On the other hand, it also labels the users of these spaces as *the migrants*. Therefore, these places, despite continuities they provide through familiarity of interactions, do not become a "home away from home", but rather serve as reminders to migrants' manifold displacements from their familial,

social and professional lives in Ukraine. These places also bring out the uncomfortable comparison with other migrant groups and become stark reminders of their own status as migrants in Italy.

“The idealization of the local body and the fear of invasive presence” (Herzfeld 2007: 264) in Italy results in numerous contested hierarchies of the less and more deserving migrants. These hierarchies bear salience not only for the Italians but also among migrants themselves, who internalize these attitudes under the stress of economic competition with other migrant groups. While the judgments about the worthiness of different migrant groups are often done on the basis of race, ethnicity and religion, they are instead discussed under the ideas of universalist or European moral values that are to a greater or lesser degree present among various migrants groups that are grossly essentialized on the basis of the national belonging. Moralities of transnationalism, which until now have been used in this dissertation in the sense of positioning migrants in relation to their non-migrating family members, now acquires a new level of meaning, in which the scrutinizing gaze applies differentiated standards of morality to migrant groups. In the following chapter I will continue addressing the issue of the split space of moralities and the high salience of motherhood as a trope in constructing an image of a worthy migrant. In this context transnational moralities also stand for the differentiated set of values and situational practices that are applied differently in the places of migration and places of home.

Chapter 8. Beyond motherhood: developing new subjectivities and intimacies while maintaining transnational families

The practices of sexual intimacies among transnational labor migrants from less developed economies inserted into the complex economic and social textures of the global city are far from exemplifying cultural transformations toward gender equality and liberation.
Kitiarsa (2008: 606).

Possible links between paid care-work, intimacy and sexuality in migration

In my work thus far I have looked at the ruptures that migration brings into migrants' families, the positioning of women within the moralities of transnational families, spaces of work and migrant women's experiences with professional downward mobility and finding new professional identities. In the previous chapter, I explored the meaningful connections that migrants establish in spaces outside of work by using, appropriating and contesting varying social maps between different actors in the cities. Passerini suggests that migration is "marked, enabled, motivated and realized through [...] social, personal, professional and intimate relationships that the migrants establish and maintain" (2007:3) in the course of migration. This chapter attempts to bring together the elements discussed in the previous chapter through an exploration of the intimate connections established by Ukrainian women in Italy, as shaped by their position as women, migrant mothers, care-workers and foreigners. I refer to intimacy not only as emotional and physical closeness, but also the connection with families that dealing with the ruptures resulting from prolonged separation, and connections establishing a new sense of intimacy with places of migration through work, familiarity with space and closeness to other people, which help migrants cope through the years of being away from home.

As mentioned in several places throughout my dissertation, transnational migration literature discusses intimacy most often in the context of relations between migrants and their families focusing particularly on their roles as mothers (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Andall 2000; Gamburd 2000; Long and Oxfeld 2004; Lan 2006) -or in terms of the redirection of care and love from the families of migrants to the children in-care in the places of migration (Parrenas 2001b, 2005b; Hochschild 2003b). When migration literature discusses migrant women's sexuality and sexual intimacy outside transnational families, it often relates to establishing a new family in the

place of migration or the issue of sex-work (and trafficking). What falls in between is the widest array of intimate, romantic or/and sexual relationships in which migrant women engage during migration and while simultaneously maintaining their transnational families. In this chapter, I attempt to map out these relationships, and link them to the nature of the care-work that is in demand in Italy, gendered ideas of proper womanhood and tropes of motherhood, as well as an organizing principle for Ukrainian female migration to Italy. The chapter seeks to explore an intricate pattern of pragmatic and emotional decisions that shape migrant women's choices and better understand how women negotiate loyalties and responsibilities between home and places of migration.

In describing the effect of growing gap between the global south and global north, Hochschild (2003) emphasizes that widening distance exists not only in terms of money and material goods, but in terms of love and care. Love and care are new rising commodities, argues Hochschild, which allows her to talk not only about global care-chains but also a global "care drain" (2003b:186) from less developed to more developed countries. "Most care requires work so personal, so involved with feeling that we rarely imagine it to be work," suggests Hochschild (2003: 214), but when it becomes a resource, the employer wants to buy a real "love" and "care" for money without further non-material obligations and responsibilities. Employers increasingly find migrants' care-services convenient and rewarding (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004a; Parrenas 2008; Passerini 2007) with little, if at all, interest in the migrant's own family (Lan 2006; Ramirez et al. 2007).

Similarly to care, "sex work emerges as a crucial arena of negotiations in globalizing processes" (Kitiarsa 2008). In his article on Thai sex workers and labor migrants in Singapore, Kitiarsa (2008) suggests that "sex in transnational labor migration must be understood in the context of the emerging powerful process of the informalization of the economy in the globalizing world." Thus Kitiarsa links sex work to the ever-increasing need for care-work in more affluent households where previously familial duties of household work, child rearing and care for the elderly are now increasingly seen as services that can be purchased from outside the family networks, more crucially from less affluent economies. For my research, which did not focus on sex work per se, the link between sexual services and care-work is particularly instrumental; it allows me to explore the commodification of the body of the careworker and the justification of engagement in sexual activities as a part of resources available in migration. Can such relationships at least to some degree cater to migrants other, non-material needs? I argue that many women engaging in such relationships are not necessarily victims of larger economic forces, but they seek to benefit both economically and emotionally in such engagements, while these relations, established outside of women's transnational families, often play a major role in the discovery of a new self,

the transformation of migrants' perceptions of themselves, their social age, gender and familial roles.

In this chapter I focus on the relationship between Ukrainian female caregivers and Italian men (usually an employer or person in care) in which—as in previous chapters—the triangle of gender, age and specifics of the care-work shape the position of the women. Even though *badante*³⁹-employer relationships is not the only type of encounter that can lead to establishing emotional, intimate or / and sexual relations during migrant's prolonged stay in Italy, the positioning of migrant women as care-givers, as foreigners carrying out work in the privacies of Italian families and homes, often becomes a crucial factor for establishing and maintaining personal relationships.

These relationships are located at the intersection of economic and personal interests, emotions and sexuality, the care industry and mutual dependencies and issues of legality surrounding migrant status. The directionality, quality, and gender balance in these relations vary significantly from one life-story to another, but they remain largely under-discussed in migration studies.

Experienced and constructed against the rigid public discourses of blame which dominate in both Ukraine and Italy, these relationships are commercialized and romanticized by migrant women themselves; I argue that on the one hand they are “instrumentalized” by migrants as a way to gain access to resources, build a secure position in Italy, and ease the burden of being a migrant. On the other hand, I seek to question and critique the perception of migration as an exclusively financial enterprise and explore how the possibility of such relationships often stand as a symbol of fairytale-like transformation, a chance to “start anew,” which migration always carries as unspoken potential. Finally, while I do not claim that every migrant woman engages into sexual relationships outside of their families, I choose to focus on these instances in this chapter because these kinds of relationships do happen and because the existing, rather rigid discourses of blame in both Ukraine and Italy do not allow any space for discussing the nature and the meaning of these engagements. By looking into the emotional work done by migrant women to accommodate and make sense of their engagements during migration, I hope to uncover how these decisions are made, what needs they meet and what ruptures or continuities they trigger.

Finally, through understanding relations emerging during migration and the emotional work done to accommodate and explain these new relations I hope to develop some insight into the imagination of the migration enterprise as a whole and the nature of migrants' transnational

³⁹ Ital. “care-worker”, “care-taker”, “care-giver”. In Italy, it is however a very loaded term, usually meaning a hired help, most often a migrant woman (as opposed to say a family member), who is taking care of elderly or sick (less often children).

connections. This will allow me to take Ukrainian migrant women outside the rigid box of nationalistic discourses on mothers of the nation in order to see migration not only as a lived experience of separation with migrants' transnational families.

Extended vignette: A Case Study of Three Marriages

Two articles serve as something of an extended epigraph to this chapter: "The Boom", published in April 2008 in *Corriere della Sera*, and "Simply Maria," published in a Ukrainian online newspaper *UkrTime* in November 2007. Both articles discuss weddings of older Italian men to their younger foreign *badanti*.

The Boom. A wedding that was supposed to happen on the 25th of April in Bologna's Town Hall, was blocked *in extremis* until the Bologna prosecutor, together with the police, could verify that the future wife, a Romanian *badante* of 44 years old, was not trying to take money from her employer, an 83 year-old man from Bologna, for whom she has been working a long time and whom she now wanted to marry. The investigation was initiated by one of the man's grandsons, who was concerned about his inheritance. According to the family, the old man went to a real estate company, accompanied by the *badante*, to put the apartment where he lives up for sale. Many times, he went to the bank to make withdrawals from his account, not only accompanied by his "little wife" but also seemingly absent and not altogether lucid. The article then proceeds to a larger concern that "in the past 10 years there has been an increase in thirty thousand weddings between elderly man between 70 and 85 years old, single, widowers or divorced, with very young foreign women." The article concludes by stating "this boom of weddings between elders and foreign *badanti*" is producing serious inconveniences with inheritances. "Many times these elderly men are devaluing their properties and pensions, harming their own families, with the ambition of rekindling their youth."

Simply Maria. Named after a Mexican TV soap opera that was very popular in Ukraine in the early 1990s, *Simplemente Maria* (1989), the article tells the story of a Ukrainian woman, whose life "was a horrifying labyrinth" until making a "dramatic turn: the migrant lady has celebrated her wedding." In her mid 40s, Maria is divorced, the mother of one son, and also a grandmother. Utilizing passionate language, the articles proceeds to tell the story of the woman, who because of unemployment and a lack of opportunities for herself and her son had to move to Italy, where after a prolonged period of unemployment, fear of deportation, poverty and psychological pressure, she found a job with a 67 year old Italian widower, Salvatore. Maria was afraid to work for a lonely man, but "her first tears were caused not by the offense but by the humane kindness; when Salvatore placed his food on Maria's plate. The Italian felt sorry for the woman exhausted

with labor; he didn't know how else he could express his support and gain the trust of this foreign woman." The article goes on in detail, describing the development of their relationship—Salvatore's help in getting Maria overtime employment, his encouragement for Maria to sing Ukrainian songs at his home. When after 3 years of work, Maria announced that she was returning to Ukraine, Salvatore blocked the doorway with his body and exclaimed: "I won't let you go! If you want to go back, I'll come with you. I've never met anyone like you, Maria. Without you, I won't live.' The same day, the Italian man asked the Ukrainian woman to be his wife."

The striking similarity of these two stories contrasts markedly with the differences in the way they are told and the interpretation of motivations, actions, and events. "The Boom" discusses the case as a threat to the very institution of the Italian family; the "extremely young *badante*" is portrayed as a manipulative "little wife" for whom the old man was willing to sell his flat, take out cash from his bank account under conditions when he "seemed to be absent and not so lucid." The wording clearly suggests that the "old man" was in danger of being exploited by the "extremely young *badante*," who poses a threat not only to his money and property, but his own lucidity. In "Simply Maria," although the age difference between the couple is also quite significant (some 25 years), Salvatore stands out not as an "old man" "absent and not so lucid", but as a "signor Salvatore" whose marriage and consequent move to Ukraine is presented rather as an inspiration, his support to Maria and her family in Ukraine as an act of humanity, manly strength and dignity.

On the one hand, both articles shroud the motivations and life-stories behind the thick layer of interpretation and judgment; the language of the articles does not give reader enough information to make an opinion about the motivations of either Italian man or their *badanti*. On the other, the articles point to the existence of highly-contested interests and conflicting interpretations that play a major role in the scarcely discussed issue of personal relationships between foreign caregivers and their employers. In fact, both articles introduce their stories at the point when they step out of the privacy of Italian homes and care-work and enter a public domain of matrimony and inheritance. Would these two cases ever make it to the papers if not for the weddings? Would the Italian press ever be concerned about a "little woman" from Romania who gives a "spark of youth" to an "old Italian" man without any attempt to marry him, or would that just classify as a good care-work? Would a Ukrainian newspaper ever dare to tell about Maria's Italian lover (as opposed to a husband) coming with her back to Ukraine from Italy to share a home with Maria's son and grandchild?

Almost a wedding. To complement the two newspaper excerpts I look into a case of marital arrangements encountered in my field research. Valentina (47), - one of my respondents, who

hosted me for two week after my first arrival to Naples, - has a friend Irina (50), who would often stop by in the evening for a chat. Valentina, whose ex-husband in Ukraine was an alcoholic, would take out a bottle of red wine for these occasions and chanting “we are not really drinking and red wine should be good for us” would pour each of us less than a quarter of a glass. Irina would always stay for a long time and would bring lots of gossip; it is not that she knew many people, in fact she hardly had any friends but Valentina, but Irina was on her way to marry a 75-year-old Italian widower, Gianni, whom she met a few years after her arrival to Italy. All her gossip would be about the intricacies and lapses of her own relationship, and Valentina and Irina would spend evenings strategizing and laughing about it.

Valentina, who has been a witness of their relationship for a long time, would keep me up late after Irina’s visits, going through the stories again: “Irina is such a direct person [laughs]! Once Gianni told her that she should scream during sex. And she called me that evening asking me, ‘Valentina, but what should I scream?!’ So, she had to come over here and we had to practice how to scream! [roars with laughter]!... And, imagine, there we were, two women in our 50s practicing how to scream! [laughs] Now I told her, she should tell Gianni that he also should scream as well, to make her happy! And you know things work well for them; she is getting used to her role as a bride, she is calm, just waiting for their wedding and her papers...and he is very happy that he can satisfy a much younger woman. I tell Irina to think about her current situation as if she is a secret agent and she needs to achieve her mission: ‘Act!’ I tell her... act as if you are a spy or an actress! It will be worth it! You’ll get the residence permit; you’ll get all those things you aim for.”

Irina often would say that Gianni was like a child; he used to call her, and ask “do you love me? Do you think of me, my star?” and while Irina was appalled by what she thought was a sign of infantilism, Valentina consoled her: “You should be like that too...It doesn’t cost you anything to call him ‘love’ or ‘star’ but it makes him happy and that’s it.” Valentina continued: “He tells her: ‘I am such a man in your life...you’ve been married but I made a woman out of you again after all these years.’ I mean! He thinks he was the only man in more than 10 years since Irina got a divorce?! He is such a child... but let him be!”

At this point I ask Valentina what if Irina does not love Gianni, or perhaps even finds him repulsive. Valentina, however, does not seem to understand my question: “What do you mean repulsive? I mean, listen, we are almost 50...what are we doing here, in Italy? We work, but how much more can we do it? With all this rushing from a house to a house, cleaning all day, hands bleeding from chemicals and detergents we use daily and who knows what kind of chemicals we are inhaling! Don’t we deserve something better, something what we need [for ourselves]? Irina

will get her papers, she'll get the support. Otherwise, should she just go home now after all these years in Italy and do what? Start all anew? She already cannot work so hard [as she used to]. She had a surgery... what kind of prince should she be waiting for? Who else would like to spend his life with her? I tell her to think about all this as a role, as if she is an agent. And she enjoys this attitude too. When he is too demanding or whining, she thinks that it's all a task of an agent and she has to deal with it."

Referring Irina's case back to the news-paper articles opening this chapter, her story seem to perfectly echo one of the most prominent stereotypes, described with such concern in *Corriere della Sera* "The Boom": an East European migrant woman who is trying to marry a significantly older Italian man for benefit of papers and money. However, I have got so used to Valentina and Irina's frequent rituals of getting together and discussing this relationship that I started sensing no more plotting and strategizing in them than in the gossip many women share about their husbands, especially after years of marriage. Thus, while Irina's prime concern was indeed a residence permit she also clearly cared about the daily routine of their relationships, their sex life and the emotional side of their engagements. However, Irina's position as a migrant put her in a particular precarious situation; her primary concern to obtain papers, seems to me not so much an attempt to benefit from Gianni, but due to the fact that at her age, she wanted to have some security, so that she would not be fearful of becoming illegal from year to year, but can have the security of a residence permit and a choice, whether to stay in Italy or to go back to Ukraine. In case of Irina, she did not seem to be madly in love with Gianni; however her relationship was not only about materials benefits; she discovered multiple facets of intimacy, like screaming during sex or at the age of 50 being called "love" and "my star." What was clear for me was that Irina and Gianni were *not* starting their relationship on the same footing: while Gianni could focus wholeheartedly on the emotional and sexual side of the relationship, Irina (who unlike Gianni did not have a pension or a secure job) still had to work intense hours cleaning houses and had to make sure that every year she had a full-time contract that would give her a chance to apply for another year of residency. Under such pressure, she simply had no choice to let herself go and dedicate herself a free, "no-strings-attached" relationship with Gianni, as her failure to secure her status would make her very presence in Italy and closeness to Gianni impossible.

About a year after I finished my fieldwork, I made another trip to Naples where I met Valentina again. When I asked her how Irina's wedding with Gianni went, Valentina replied: "Oh well, there was no wedding! One of Gianni's children prohibited him to marry. They already had all the papers, everything, but he finally said that he 'cannot get married.' Probably his daughters didn't allow him to, because of the flat. And Irina, she is still with him, she just got used to him ... she is

with him because at least he is paying for the flat, but if he stops, where will she take money from? And what will happen later, if her residence permit expires? Nobody knows...”

In Irina's story, her justification seem to acquire a simpler but deeper meaning in the light of her prospects in life; she has been in Italy for several years, she feels that she lost her connection with Ukraine and family, she feels too old and weak to work the demanding hours of cleaning and care-work, and she seeks some stability and guarantees for her future in Italy. Meanwhile, Irina's very pragmatic objectives do not seem as hideous as those mentioned in the articles cited above. As she fails in her search for legal security, she does not leave Gianni but stays, attached emotionally or through habit. However, with Gianni's retreat from his initial engagement, Irina's own prospects were not bright and it is unclear whether she will have to leave Italy or become “illegal” again, with the very nature of Gianni and Irina's relationship hanging in the balance .

The questions that *Corriere della Sera* does not address, insisting that care-workers should do their job, without the threat of getting too close to Italian families touch upon crucial aspects of migration, i.e. women's future prospects, aging and inability to perform intensive work load due to health conditions. What will happen to the women who cannot work as many hours as they need in order to secure residence permits? Can they afford to lessen their working load? Will they have to leave Italy immediately upon doing so, even if they have spent 5-10 years of their lives in Italy, and if so, should these women be thrown out of the country or do they have a right to choose to stay and age in Italy? In the following section of this chapter, I will look into the ways in which women appeal not only to the limited legal resources made available to them by migration legislation, but also their own personal resources, in order to secure more stability.



Figure 28. Inscription in an elevator of a house in Naples (2008).

What does the future hold?

In a recent scandalized string of articles entitled „Mafia, pizza and sex” which appeared in a popular Lviv-based newspaper *Express*, journalist Vira Hrodetska, - who claims she has undertaken labor migration to Bologna partly as a professional experiment in order to write these reports, - wrote: “Last Saturday had an argument with one of our migrant women who was trying to tell me that life is not so nice in Italy. [...] I asked her how old she was, she answered that was 75 had been slaving away in Italy for 11 years. [...] and I just wanted to ask, why it is impossible to send our old hags of 70-75 years old back to Ukraine, even if you promise them a reward for that?” (Hrodetska 2010) In an indignant letter that several migrant women from Bologna wrote in response to this article one of them comments: „What right does Mrs. Hrodetska has to kick out our women from Italy? Why didn't she ask the woman what forces her to continue working at such an age so far from her home and her family, and what kinds of problems keep her so far away. Maybe this woman, God forbid, is saving her husband or her grand-child from death. Or maybe, maybe she has sacrificed herself just to prevent seeing her daughter leaving her own daughter, which is why I did this” (Reznyk et al. 2010).

For an absolute majority of the women in my research, the initial plan for migration was to stay in Italy for a year and then come back to Ukraine. However, they found that they could not leave Italy after one year, their life trajectories developing in ways that the women often discussed as “fate,” or “the way God directed.” Many women, in addition to the difficulties of migration, find themselves carrying the triple burden of earning money (often under the conditions of severe

physical and psychological stress), maintaining contact with the family, and taking care of the unity and psychological peace of family members back at home. There is, thus, often very little space left for women to discuss their experience with family. For fear of being misunderstood, or of disturbing the family, many women choose not to share any information about their lives in Italy with family members. A part of this unevenness in exchange can be attributed to the fact that for the family members who have stayed behind, it is very difficult to imagine the life in the country of migration. In the case of Ukrainian female migration to Italy, these obligations are magnified by the fact that mothers of families are migrating, and even if they are doing it with the family's consent and for the common good, they are expected to make up for their absence, and often feel guilty for leaving behind their parents, husbands and children.

While most women take up this burden willingly, some women also realize that there is very little left for them personally beyond their sacrifice. Valentina (47) comments: "When a woman arrives in Italy, it doesn't mean that she immediately starts 'going around', because when she arrives she has one thing on her mind – her debts with growing interest in Ukraine. Next, she needs to buy a flat or pay school for her children, because we are all here for that reason. So then, they say she is 'going around' here, but tell me please, when do you have time to do that? When do you have time to even think about love, and even if you meet love, you have so many problems on your mind, you can't even realize it is there, or think about it. And then, maybe with time, you manage to solve those problems and you happen to meet a nice person, it doesn't mean you are 'going around'? Why can't we believe that this person can feel love? Otherwise, what has she seen back there in Ukraine, when her own husband has sent her abroad, 2000 km away, to earn money? Just imagine this! A mother, and the protector of the household, is sent away, and what will she have to go back to? Does she have anything to go back to? So I am not surprised that women here build their own lives, try to love... because, what do they have to go back to indeed? Maybe to her life in ruins..." In her account Valentina mixes together the feeling of solitude magnified by the need to earn money and, also, to defend herself in the eyes of others, even family members for whom the woman is earning money.

Very often even if women choose to stay out of romantic relationships while in Italy, this does not necessarily allow them to maintain the trust of their families and particularly of their spouses. Vianello, (forthcoming) in her research conducted among Ukrainian returned migrants and their families, suggests that husbands are often suspicious and doubtful of their wives, while friends and neighbors are often envious of the "paradise" which they imagine Italy to be. Thus, few Ukrainian women can hope that their hardships in migration will be over after their return; what they usually experience upon the return to Ukraine is "re-adapting and suffering in silence the neighbors' disapproving look and distrust within the family" (Vianello 2009b). Two women (in their

early 50s) whom I interviewed in Bologna for this research spoke bitterly that during the year of their migration (5-7 years) it happened a few times that upon calling home, instead of words of support, they would hear their husbands shouting in the phone accusations of prostitution, swear words and even threats. Both women however consider their relationships functional and do not think of their husbands abusive. In fact, both of these women vigorously abstained from any romantic engagements in Italy, considering such behavior below their moral and religious ideals. I conclude from these cases that women are often left on their own with a decision whether to stay out of such romantic engagements, while public pressure and family distrust condemns them anyway.

It is not coincidental, then, that many women feel trapped by migration. As a popular Ukrainian migrant proverb goes: "In one year, there is nothing to go back with, and in two years, there is no where to go back to." This feeling, though in part described as 'inbetween' in migration literature, has a gloomier undertone. Not only do women realize that an "at home" does not exist in either their country of origin or the country of migration, it is also that they do not see how they could abandoned their often exhausting life style of a labor migrant. Thus Raja, who spent in Italy last 9 years comments on how she sees her perspectives: "What can we count on in Italy? A broom and a bucket? I don't think it's a real prospect. We work 8 hours cleaning, with chemical stuff, with detergents ... and in Ukraine, also, no prospects.... We just live, we don't have any prospects." A lot of times, after long absences, relationships within families erode due to lack of intimacy, distrust, and suspicion; to return to a family under these circumstances, and to fall into patterns of dependency from family members who might have mistrusted the woman for years is a situation that is particularly precarious and unwanted for women, who were used to earn their own money in Italy and using it (even if sending it all back to the family) by their own discretion.



Figure 29. Entrance to the Ukrainian mini-vans' parking lot and bazaar in Naples; many women dedicate mornings on Sunday, - the only free day for most domestic live-in workers, - to sending parcels to their families back home (Naples, 2008).

Learning to set the price

Going back to the accusations voiced by Italian newspapers that migrant women pursue only monetary and material interests, I now refer to the issue of commercializing emotion and intimacy under the conditions of care-work. Though many aspects of instrumentalization and commodification of careworkers' emotions and bodies have been discussed in my earlier chapter on labor regimes, I turn here to a closer study of cases of sexual harassment, and the role that the commodification of care-work plays in making claims and defining boundaries of the permissible. Since migrant women are often accused of caring for only material benefits, it is essential to explore the role of money and paid sexual services through the encounters of everyday care-work.

As mentioned, most Ukrainian women are completely unfamiliar with the care-work they have to perform in Italy as a profession. However, the majority of women are seduced by the option of working as a care-giver precisely because "at home we do this job for free anyway."⁴⁰ Vira Horodetska, - a labor migrant and the author of the scandalous series of articles "Mafia, pizza and sex,"- exemplifies this initial assumption: "Honestly speaking, I perform here regular house work, for which at home in Ukraine no one pays. In northern Italy for this work they give from 800 to 1200 euros." However, many of my respondents admitted that they had to realize the difference

⁴⁰ Common phrase in the interviews

between the unpaid household work for their own families and the need to perform care-work in the privacy of the Italian homes for money, and learn to professionalize their relation to work. In fact, *paid work* became one of the main frameworks for understanding, justifying and moralizing the experienced harshness of the care-work (and even harassment) and imagination of migration experience in general.

To illustrate this connection, I turn to the story of Sveta who is 53, and in Ukraine has a degree and considerable work experience as a school psychologist. Sveta, - herself a mother of two sons (28 and 25), - is an energetic, sporty woman with short hair, who lives together with her elder son in Bologna in a rented flat. The fact that she had managed to rent a whole flat, which she now sublets to other migrants from post-Soviet countries, places Sveta among the ranks of the emerging elites of Ukrainian migrants. The fact that she managed to bring over (illegally) her 28-year old son to Italy, especially to Bologna, indicates that she is a determined woman who knows how to use the system and achieve her goals. Sveta tells me her story while eating ice-cream in the kitchen of her flat, to the audience of myself and her son, interspersing her story with many jokes and a lot of laughter.

She was in Italy for some time already when she bought a job for 700 Eur (the job paid 900 / month) from an acquaintance of hers (Stefa). However, soon enough she recognized that the job was a fraud, i.e. the elderly signora who was bed-ridden was about to move to *casa di riposa*⁴¹, which meant that after paying 700 EUR for a job, Sveta could only stay there for a month or so. Additionally, the 70-year-old husband of the bed-ridden signora, asked Sveta's acquaintance to find him a *badante* who would "take care of his wife during the day and sleep with him during the night." When he told Sveta about this arrangement, she felt so cheated that her acquaintance had set her up like in this way that she ran into her room, locked the door and cried. However, she soon recovered and decided that she would not waste her tears on her employer but would also never give in to his wishes. She instead started developing strategies that would allow her both to maintain her job and avoid harassment. "Within just a few days I realized that he was very stingy, and he started cutting on my food, or throwing food at me, wanting me to pick it up. He was going crazy, watching me walking around and not having access to me. And I was going crazy too; first of all, I lost so much money when I paid for this job. Second, I was not going to lose my dignity on top of that." The pressure was not only physical but also psychological: "He would start scandals at 2-3 am. He would pick up the phone and tell me that he is calling the police if I am not sleeping with him. I would push the phone closer to him and say 'go ahead, call! The worst thing that will happen to me is that I go home for free. But you, you will have to pay the fees for hiring an

⁴¹ Ital. Retirement home

undocumented!' He would storm out then and continue storming for some time. It's just... it took so much energy from night to night to deal with this. I could only bear this for 5 weeks."

The pressure was building up when the old man changed his strategies and instead of threatening Sveta with illegality tried to accuse her of theft: "He used to give lots of presents to Stefa who was sleeping with him. He bought and sent to Ukraine bicycles for her children, he gave her his bed-ridden wife's fur coats and some 7-8 sets of golden jewelry. I knew about it because the women who worked in the same village, they saw Stefa showing off these presents. So when I moved in, the old man would take out the empty jewelry boxes, throw them on the floor and call me to pick them up. I would then put on gloves and collect them with the gloves. I knew that he wanted my finger prints on the empty boxes, so that he could then pressure me with reporting to police as if I had taken them."

The other form of pressure, a bit more subtle but no less stressful and destructive, was creating a public image of Sveta as her employer's lover: "I was looking after his wife, taking her down for strolls in a wheel chair and he would come along with us. And then, he would take me by the hand, leave his wife by the house and take me for a coffee, walk me around, buying me coffee and parading me in front of his friends... Do I need this? He shows everyone that I am so young and fit and that I am with him! But do I need this fame? It was a village, they would definitely say I am a prostitute."

All these forms of coercion could have easily made a less strong and experienced woman give up or emerge totally paralyzed from the experience. However, Sveta turned the situation into a personal challenge and discovered her own capacity to deal with it.

After Sveta had realized that her employer was hiding the phone from her and was de facto trying to keep her under house arrest, Sveta recalls that she simply snapped at him: "You think that you bought me? No, it's me who bought you and your wife, from Stefa, who worked here... I paid for the job, she sold you and your wife to ME!" Soon after this Sveta changed her strategy and started telling the old man that if he wants her to sleep with him he should pay her another 900 EUR per month: "He then told me 'no, what you do here for my wife, I can do just by myself!' 'Wonderful ' I say, so I tell him to go ahead, and I will sleep during the day and have sex with you at night, and you cook for and clean and wash your wife.' But then he started whining 'But then what will I be paying you for if you won't do anything?' So, since he was so greedy, I was insisting that he should pay for sex but since he would always refuse I was safe. It's just that to live through his night attacks and whining was very exhausting."

Going back to Hochschild's concept of emotion work, there are several observable stages Sveta's story of resistance. First is the traumatic realization of Stefa's betrayal, which at first debilitates Sveta, as she locks herself in her room and cries. However, very soon thereafter, she decides to take over the situation and begins by learning to feel comfortable with the situation. She sets her own distance from the employer by referring to her professionalism and her position as a caregiver. On the one hand, she does not give up, because she needed to make the money she paid for the job worth it, on the other hand, she did not give in, because she is a care-worker who came in the house to look after a bed-ridden signora, and not a lover who is doing a favor. By learning to feel right and strong about her position, she learns to perform her role in a way that does not leave her suitor a chance.

Additionally, the role of the paid care-work is crucial in this situation. Because Sveta positions herself as a paid house worker, she does not hesitate to set a price for her other services, i.e. one more monthly salary for her sexual services. The Italian man tries to destroy this boundary by merging all her services into one, i.e. "then what will I be paying you for?" but Sveta clearly demarcates every task as a job operation and sets a separate price on each. Thus, Sveta comments on her perception of the issue: "I have a principle: either I clean a man's house, or I fuck him...but to do both for one salary – never!" She also speaks with a sense of empowerment about a friend of hers, who has several lovers and makes them all to pay for sex with her: "She sees it like this; you had sex, you take out money and put it on the table. And *vai via*⁴², till next time. You are busy, I am busy, we all have our things to do and lives to live...lets just get together and have sex when we both feel like it, but lets continue on with our lives. After all, she is here not to just have sex; she is here to earn money."

In a sense, Sveta tricks the logic global capitalism that brought her to Italy in the first place; while a more affluent Italian household bought her intimate care services, she refuses to give anything away for free; she separates her love and care and emotions that were bought into each distinct task, and sets a price for them, thus gaining control over both, her reward and her own choice between tasks that she will perform and those that she won't. She completely reverses power-relations when she screams into her employer's face: "You think that you bought me? No, its me who bought you and your wife, from Stefa who worked here, I paid for the job, she sold you and your wife to *me!*" Just like Sveta's care and emotions have been "bought" so she herself instrumentalizes her employers, turning them into a resource, access to which can be bought and sold. Sveta's creative approach introduces another central issue into discussion; what is it that an employer pays for when hiring a caregiver?

⁴² Ital. "Get out!"

Barely present boundaries between work and private life, as well as often unwillingly established intimacies create cycles of dependencies of migrants on the person in their care and vice versa. However messy and unclear these dependencies are, they often open up a space in which migrants, although lacking official protection (being in an economically, legally and emotionally vulnerable situations) can negotiate power, freedoms and benefits. As I have discussed earlier, in Sveta's case two factors seem to help her to have an upper hand in her situation; one being successful emotional work and the other is her own understanding of the migration enterprise. By successful emotional work I mean Sveta's ability to embrace her position as a migrant, keep in mind her initial set of goals (earning) and thus, taking a job as an opportunity and a professional challenge. By her understanding of migration I mean Sveta's separation of life ambitions in spaces of home and spaces of migration. Symbolically, Sveta does not let herself be fooled that her life in Italy is, so to speak, all that it is to her life. She knows that she came to Italy to work and earn, so she does not allow the job she performs in Italy ruin her self-esteem.

In their attempts to maintain control over their services, work, care, and their bodies, many women in my research had to learn to set a price for something that prior to migration was seen as just one monolithic idea of intimacy or of a familial domain. By breaking up these domains and separating them and attaching to them a name and a price, women have undergone what is often seen (especially by Ukrainian men) as a descent into cynicism, the desecration of motherhood and the feminine ideal of a gentle, nurturing woman, and ultimately, sliding into prostitution. In my own research it becomes clear that negotiating payment for various intimate services, including sex, helps women not only to get paid *for* it, but first and foremost, to make it possible to *choose*, whether she wants to provide the service in the first place, whether the payment and the service are comparable, and whether she can do only one type of work but not the other.



Figure 30. Ukrainian mini-vans parking lot and bazaar. The add runs: "Looking for your half? I am under 33, pleasant, good looking. Only for serious relationships. Help with work and housing" (Naples, 2008).

This idea of staying in Italy for money and not pleasure, as well the translation of sex into a valid resource in migration, will be discussed in greater detail below. During my fieldwork, it was a recurrent theme even among women who had never practiced having sex for explicit material or monetary benefits. But the idea of big money that comes this way came up in many conversations; i.e. whether one would do it if someone offered 1000 Euro, or with a man who was good looking and very rich, etc. Once, a woman of 25 who worked in Italy for over one year told me how she dreamt of a man in a luxurious car who offered her 3000 Euro for sex. She said she woke up then, jumped from the bed and starting running around shouting: "Where are you? Where are you?" She then continued laughingly: "Why not? I mean, I would like to have sex anyway, and for 3000 Euro for one time I would do it all for him!" Even though this dream was discussed with lots of laughter and jokes, the persistence with which such jokes have been told, suggested an established migrant lore. In this lore, the mirage of a fling that would bring both money and pleasure seems to be an ever-present potentiality in the migration experience.

Italian men as gate-keepers; the keys to which Italy do they hold?

While "The Boom" article in *Corriere della Sera* warns Italian families against lurking East European women seeking to snatch Italian men, the position of Italian men in pursuing East European women requires lengthier treatment here. In Naples, a route between Piazza Garibaldi and Ukrainian mini-bus parking lot on Sunday mornings is full of Italian men cruising around in cars, offering a chat, a coffee, or simply 30 Euro for "*fare amore*" to Slavic women who flood Via Benedetto Brin on Sundays. Many Italian men accompany Ukrainian women; Ukrainian women in their 50s and Italian men in their 60 – 70s, chatting, flirting, laughing, drinking coffees in street bars and checking out each other. Many Italian men come by in cars bringing Ukrainian women and their heavy packages prepared for home straight to the mini-bus. The nature of the arrangements between these Italian men and Ukrainian women is impossible to decipher without knowing every particular case. In fact, many of the migrant women I knew would get a ride to mini-buses with their heavy packages from their employers or acquaintances with whom I knew they had no romantic or intimate relations. However, what is obvious on Sunday mornings on Via Benedetto Brin is the abundance of Italian men and virtual absence of Italian women.



Figure 31. A view familiar on Sunday mornings on Via Brin; an older Italian man accompanying a Slavic woman to the Ukrainian mini-van parking lot (Naples, 2008).

Indeed, in many of my interviews women suggested that it was the Italian men who were most eager to meet migrant women outside strict work relationships. Thus, one of my interviewees, Marijka (46), commented: “Who else would try to make friends with a Ukrainian migrant woman? An Italian woman is usually not interested in becoming friends with her cleaning lady; she can be nice and kind and understanding, but would rarely find time to drink a coffee with her *badante* and to talk about her life. Italian men, they are curious and interested because they are attracted. They find more time and make more effort to meet a woman more informally, maybe just for coffee, or a romantic adventure.” Another migrant, Lina (33), is more categorical in her analysis: “Of course it’s only men who are interested... because in one way or another we help them realize their vulgar ambitions.” Seen one way or another, indeed, Italian men often engage in more informal, unstructured interactions with migrant woman, e.g. a trip by car to the sea side, a dinner in a restaurant, an evening in a disco bar, etcetera, thus providing opportunities for leisure activities, if not a romantic fling. These encounters, after the stress and shock of arriving to new country, hard work and often illegal status (experienced at least for a while), become important steps towards integration in Italy and in some way give a sense of ‘normality’ of flow of life.

The relationship between Italian women and migrant women seems to be a matter of different registers; while describing their relationship with Italian women, migrant women spoke sometimes with admiration by style, sometimes with criticism for inability to perform “womanly duties” like mothering or taking care of the house. Many migrant women were very grateful to Italian women for their support with papers or understanding, when Italian women would treat them with respect or allow flexibility with hours/ longer holiday breaks, etc. or even helping migrant women to bring over to Italy their children. However, very few migrant women suggested that they are friends with

Italian women. When I asked those migrant women who said they are friends with Italian women for more details of their friendship, it turned out to be limited to friendly conversations during the hours of cleaning, sometimes staying longer for a coffee and even more rare visits to the house after the employment relationships were over. None of the migrant women ever indicated that they meet with an Italian female friend to go for a coffee in a bar, even though several women mentioned that they used to visit some of their employers at home for a coffee or dinner after they have stopped working for them.

Even rarer were relationships between the Ukrainian men and Italian women. In fact, during my stay in Italy I met only one man (a 25 year old University student in Rome) who dated an Italian woman, and I have only heard of some other similar cases. When I asked my interviewees why Italian women do not fall for Ukrainian men, the majority of Ukrainian women indicated Ukrainian men's lack of skills to flirt and court women, high expectations that a woman should take care of men, and limitations of migrant status. The majority of Ukrainian men whom I have asked similar questions firmly indicated the financial considerations as the sole reason for the lack of interest. As if they had given it a lot of thought, men almost unanimously answered that a migrant man cannot afford as much money on courting an Italian woman, as an Italian man can. Ukrainian men, therefore, also perceived economic power to be the main attraction and contribution in a relationship, completely excluding from the equation a possibility of a relationship in which they would be economically weaker than a woman (for more discussion on this see chapter 5).

Repeating patterns in these interactions, as well as migrant's strong opinions about the reasons for them, point to mechanisms beyond personal preferences and emotions that would seem to determine these relationships. To position these relationships into hierarchies of ethnicity, gender and migrant status that underlie these asymmetries of engagement, one would have to conduct a study that includes Italian men and women as well as Ukrainian migrant women and men. Such an analysis is outside the scope of my project, but to illustrate some of my more impressionistic observations, I refer to a study conducted by Luisa Passerini et al. (2007) on women from Eastern Europe migrating westward. In one of the essays in this volume, Enrica Capussotti conducts interviews with Italian women about their perception of migrant women from Eastern Europe. Capussotti notes that many of her respondents showed unease and uncertainty while talking about the subject, a reaction which Capussotti herself refers to either discomfort with the tape recorder, or a fear of losing control over the testimony or an understanding that their answers can have some strong implications. Since most of the respondents presented themselves as educated, affluent and insightful women, it was important for them to demonstrate their ability to be open-minded and culturally sensitive. However, as the testimonies themselves demonstrate, there is a strong discrepancy in judgments that Italian women pass about

themselves and about migrant women; while Italian women attribute their behavior to education, emancipation and Europeanness, the behavior of female migrants is judged on the basis of national features, economic disparity, or a lack of experience.

One of the Italian women Capussotti (2007) interview formulates particularly acutely such gendered hierarchies while defining romantic choices women make. Angela, a wife of an Italian soldier comments, that “Italian men like foreign women”, while “Italian women really like American men.” She then concludes with her analysis of the hierarchies: “So by my own calculations Italian women like American men, while Italian men love women from Eastern Europe, Central America, the women who are in more desperate circumstances, so we women go with those who are better off [more laughter]” (Capussotti 2007:171).

Even though Angela seems to realize (as she laughs at her own daring analysis), that her explanation might come across as unflattering to women and a bit superficial, she is not too far off from internalizing these views, as she continues to explain her point of view. “Italian men haven’t really been able to follow the women; the Italian woman liberated herself while the Italian man has been left a little bit behind. When an Italian meets one of these women who has come from a country where women are still women they fall in love more easily. [...] But what happens to these poor women? They adjust more to the man. Italian women are too emancipated, they are free woman, they have really an open mind.” (Capussotti, 2007:171)

Angela’s hierarchies reflect the gendered perceptions of the global east and south; women from Italy are emancipated, women from the east and south are less emancipated, in a more desperate situation and thus seek to adapt to men more. Woman from the east are “still women” as opposed to Italian women, who are “too emancipated, free women.” This kind of categorization points to the stiffness and inflexibility of gender roles; emancipation is taking Italian women almost beyond womanhood, making them less womanly, while the desperate situation, women’s dependency on men, makes East European and African women more feminine. However, Angela quickly steps back from her emancipated perspective as she unifies all women from east and west under one goal, i.e. “so we women go with those who are better off” (Capussotti, 2007:171). That is why, in Angela’s account, Italian women like American men, who are even more West and better off than Italian men who are a bit behind.

Thus, in her explanation why Italian men “fall in love more easily” with women from the east and south, Angela draws a entire map in which economic development, gender hierarchies and imagination of modernity play major role (as opposed to simple romance and linking). In Angela’s account women still strive to be with a stronger, better-off partner. This indicates a certain

dependency of women on men; it reproduces the gender models in which women should be inherently weaker than men. This perspective explains to a degree the infrequency of relationships between Italian women and migrant men and indicates that romantic and intimate relationships are often based on gendered and economic power struggles. In this sense, Ukrainian migrant women not only respond to these power struggles, but in a sense fill a niche created by global inequalities.

While many of my respondents seemed to echo Angela's gendered geography of attractions (i.e. many migrants indeed perceive Italian women as less womanly, and attributed the interest of Italian males particularly to the fact that Ukrainian women are more caring and feminine) it is important to look into what is gained in these relationships. For various types of relationships that Ukrainian women establish in Italy (romantic or not, involving sexual intimacy or not), it is Italian men (and less so women) who can provide an important informal network of support. A friendship or acquaintance with a local can make life incomparably easier for a migrant woman who does not know the city or the language well, and lacks other social networks. In one of the informal discussions I had with a migrant woman in Naples, she explained to me how important such alliances are, and how 'natural' its gender and nationality division. Olechka (37, separated, a mother of a 13-year-old son): "What can our [Ukrainian] men give you in Italy? And an Italian man, he can take you everywhere... restaurants... give you a ride if you have heavy packages, give you an advice[...]We all arrive here without any help. What is a 'girlfriend'? A girlfriend is like nothing... who can help us here besides the citizens of this country where we all are now? [Italian] women don't come to help you, because they are jealous, only men try to help you because they adore all women, their women and our women." Olechka's comment seems to echo Angela's and reflect not only quite normative patriarchal mode of relationship, - i.e. a male provider and a dependant woman,- but also bare a strong nationalistic undertone: "what can *our* men give you in Italy?" Both of these judgmental comments however, are brought out by Olechka's view of relationship migration enterprise and by the migrants' status. Both "our men" and "in Italy" are key words here. In Italy, as an immigrant, she needs a protection and advice. "The citizen of this country," i.e. a person who *has* rights in Italy is an only adequate partner for Olechka. In a sense, she implies that both women and men have been brought to the level of 'nothing-to-give' through their migrant status in Italy. The only difference between migrant men and women is that women can offer something thought by Italian men in a system of relationships that are always about some sort of benefit.

While Italian men thus might appear to be the 'gate keepers' for migrant women, to what exactly do these men hold the keys? As it was discussed earlier, migrant women often have no chance to enter romantic or intimate relations as equals or as Italian women. Numerous limitations in terms

of migrant status, lack of resources, dependence on legal papers and earnings push women to limit their choices, create cases of those “more desperate situations” about which Capussotti’s interviewee, Angela speaks. However, as I have shown earlier, this does not mean that such relationships are only a matter of calculation or that migrant women have no choice but to play their part in the existing hierarchies. While understanding the hierarchies can reveal a great deal about the existing inequalities and factors that determine migrants and local’s choices, personal accounts and testimonies of my interviewees reveal a great deal of ‘unexpected’ and ‘uncontrolled’ in such encounters.

Therefore, in this last section, I focus on what is discovered by migrant women in such relationships and what part such intimate and romantic relations play in the imagining of the new self that is experienced through migration. What do these experiences teach women about themselves, about their family and gender roles? What kind of perspective do they give women on their lives in Ukraine and on their future plans?

Motherhood and money: “we came to Italy to earn”

A poignant letter from migrant women in Bologna written in response to the series of articles “Mafia, pizza and sex” (Hrodetska 2010), - speaking about the sexual and intimate encounters during labor migration to Italy, - closes with an accusation aimed at the migrant/journalist who wrote it: “We are very sorry that these kind of women [like the author] have forgotten about their dignity, honor and familial duty. They have forgotten that a woman is a protector [Ukr. *berehynya*] and that her priorities should be her family, her child, her parents, her Ukraine” (Reznyk et al. 2010).

As it was discussed earlier, public discourses in Ukraine and Italy vigorously observe migrant women’s behavior in migration, often bringing strain into transnational families and casting suspicion and shame on both migrants and their families. According to Ukrainian public discourse, the very trope of motherhood, as a primary role and fulfillment for women, is undermined already by the women’s decision to migrate. However, in the case of Ukrainian migrant women, motherhood has also become a double-edge sword; on the one hand, migrant women are often seen as the transgressors of the ideal of motherhood, on the other, most migrant women defend their choices precisely by citing the fact that they are mothers and therefore, migration is their sacrifice that can secure a better life for their children. In her work on Ukrainian female migration to Veneto district in Italy, Vianello (2009b) observes: “Motherhood characterizes many migrants’ discourses, because it is one of the strongest justifications a woman can rise in order to defend her decision. The sacrifice rhetoric is an alibi that hides a process of emancipation developed during the migratory experience” (2009b:12).

To avoid the well explored path, in migration studies, of discussing migrant mothers and practices in transnational families I turn to the practices that disrupting the 'ideal' mode of 'virtuous mother' and see how women negotiate establishing romantic and sexual relations in Italy while still performing the idealized role of a sacrificing mother. In these cases, I am not denying or questioning women's lived sacrifice of separation from their children or the painful dilemmas that face women engaging in relationships in Italy. What I am looking into is the performativity of gender roles, necessary for maintaining both relations in Italy and transnational families and the emotion work that is required to achieve successful performance of these roles as well as to justify and bring to peace lived experiences in migration and the role within the transnational families. I argue that it is on the success of balancing of all these roles and performances, as well as skilful managing of emotions and justification lies the peace within transnational families, women's public image at home, as well as success of migration project and security of women themselves.

Among majority of my respondents (both men and women), the most criticized Ukrainian women in Italy were those who would engage in relationship with Italian men without benefiting from these relationships materially in one way or another. Thus, on several occasions I have heard stories told about such relations as shameful and in which woman has lost any control over herself and neglected all the principles for the sake of personal pleasure. Thus, one of the migrant women (Sveta, 53) told me a story about a friend of hers, who lived with an Italian man who did not give her any money: "He saves his entire pension and they live on her money. They go to restaurants, she pays, they go here or there – she pays... What is this?! Love?! What kind of craziness has got into her?! To hell with such a man! I am so happy that God gives me wisdom not to let any of such an Italian idiot into my life! I live for my children, and our common problems and that's it...I appreciate my freedom... I am interested in a man for a month or two, and then, enough with it."

In her judgment of the woman's actions, Sveta, completely discredits the possibility of strong emotional feeling, in which economic benefit would be less important for a woman than being with her partner. She in fact describes it as madness, mental disorder, in which the woman is not capable of controlling herself. Sveta then continues, setting the "right" priorities: "You know I could have tried to arrange my life differently. In my age and with my looks I could have worked less, maybe find a man who would support me so that I don't have to work so hard. But I won't do it, until my sons (28 and 25) will get married and thus settled [...] I am not sure that if I go and live with some Italian man he will allow me to help and support my children."

In my analysis, Sveta's reference to motherhood seems to play two roles; on the one hand, it is a justification for gaining material benefits in a relationship with Italian men. In fact, it can justify a woman to engage in such a relationship as it can provide more stability for woman's status, reduce her expenses and increase remittances, provide additional benefits, like travel money home, presents for her and children. On the other hand, motherhood is a "stop-factor" that does not allow Sveta to just seek romantic engagements; she has responsibilities towards her adult children and thus, has to choose carefully so as not to restrict her ability to provide for them. This fear of falling into dependency seems to go against the image of careless emancipated woman who easily turns intimacy into an income; thus, Sveta seems to be unsure whether she will be able to maintain her free mind and independence when faced with an intimate relationship. Thus, I see here a discrepancy between an image that Sveta tries to present, and her actual carefulness. This discrepancy is a hint that even if presented as relationships for economic benefit, those intimate engagements might not be happening so effortlessly and without deeper significance for migrant women, a meaning that they might want to mask putting forward both discourse of motherhood and an image of a tough migrant woman.

Similarly, one could phrase Sveta's fear to be incapable of providing for her children as a fear of falling into general economic dependence on a man, but Sveta chooses to frame it in terms of her motherly duties. Another migrant woman, Nina (53) puts forward a similar argument: "I have a man, but my main man is my son. You should never show a man you love him. When my man asks me if I love him I tell him that I treat men like a pineapple, if I want one, I will work hard until I can buy one. Men are the same, when I want one I can get one." One could say that the shift of the gender roles, the privileges of the bread winner are played out in the new emancipatory perception of intimacy for Stefa. However, there is also a shadow of fear and disrupts in Stefa's account. She cannot trust any man but her son. Nina chooses to present her vision of men as a commodity, fruit that she can buy. She emphasizes her own achievement in this, as she says "I will work hard until I can buy one." Her money, her opportunities are not given to her by anyone; she is herself meeting her needs and prefers to pay money for men and their intimacy than become dependent on anyone but her son.

The role of motherhood in women's discourses brings us to the very core of Parrenas' "contradiction of gender in migration", when a traditional rhetoric of motherhood is utilized to compensate for the "transgression of lived transnational motherhood-at-a-distance" (2005b:119). Vianello also hints at the two important issues for this chapter, i.e. instrumentalization of motherhood, and the need to provide alibi for the experienced emancipation. Hochschild (2003), in her work on commercialization of intimate life warns the reader, "The decline of patriarchy has not eliminated instrumentalism. It has recast it into a new, commercial mold" (2003:25). Female

migration, which ultimately answers the global demand for commercialized care, love and emotional work brings forward these new forms of instrumentalism of gender roles, drawing the divide not only between men and women but between women from more and less privileged economies. Thus, it allows some women to enter a male-tailored unisex gender paradigm (Hochschild 2003:27), while other women have to return to their highly feminine gender image as a resource. In this re-casting mode, not only women / care-workers that become instrumentalized, but the men and employers become a resource to be used and exploited by the care-worker.

However, there seem to be more levels to Nina's testimony. Even though Nina also focuses on her motherhood, there is a deeper, and perhaps somewhat more selfish concern – the independence gained through migration could be lost, if a woman whole-heartedly joins in a union with an Italian man. Thus, the prism of motherhood can provide a needed alibi, – a point raised by Vianello (forthcoming), - for the experienced emancipation, or in this case, for the opportunity of romantic engagements, new personal and sexual life. It can also serve as an excuse to stay more or less unattached in intimate relations. Several times during my research I encountered stories of women who moved in with Italian men or even married them and afterwards could not work full hours, thus limiting their capacity to earn and remit money. These stories were always told with a sense of a danger for a woman who follows her personal interest, neglecting the needs of her children, but at the same time, such dependence make women very vulnerable to the success of her relationship in Italy. Thus the inability to remit, to invest financially in the place of home, might have a devastating effect on a woman's reputation, even making her chances of returning to Ukraine very slim. Concluding this point, I quote Valentina (47): "I would recommend to everyone to have their pride... If someone wants you, why not? But you need to clearly understand what is the nature of this desire, that is if someone just wants to use you for one day or to make you really special, needed, to be loved and to give you a chance to love. [...] So I would advice everyone to listen to their heart...but sometimes, you can get a better understanding not with your heart but with your reason. I think, one needs to harmonize them, but if its doesn't work...maybe still better to listen to your reason. Yes, I follow my reason rather than my heart, because I am afraid to get hurt."

While reasoning over their choices, all of the women quoted seem not only to evoke the trope of motherhood but also emphasize that Italy is not a place to *fall in love*, or let yourself go emotionally. The emotion rule which applies to Italy is to remember that they have migrated because of the money and their family, as opposed to searching for a better life or excitement. "We are here (in Italy) to earn and send money back to our children," would be one of the most common responses of the women, when asked about many aspects of migration life, personal life including. Thus, while Italian men often accuse Ukrainian woman of being insincere and only

staying with them for money, Ukrainian women do not deny their interest in the material, but frame it in the sense of their mission and motherly duty. Parrenas (2005) notes that the contradiction of gender in transnational families pushes women to “overact their performance of gender, as if to compensate for their physical absence from the family,” while the vigilant control of the country-fellows in migration causes women to adjust to the strict rules of the performed migrant self.

Worlds apart: “in Ukraine they are all decent”

The very space of migration thus often creates an alternative, migrant “commercialized mold” (Hochschild 2003: 25) in which gender roles are constructed differently than they would be at home. To illustrate what I mean I refer to Valentina’s story. Valentina, 47 (widowed, a mother of three) went on a date with a retired widower, a hospital nurse Francesco (in his early 60s). After the dinner with another Ukrainian-Italian couple, Valentina agreed to stop by at Francesco’s place. When she entered the living room, the first thing she saw was a Bible in Russian language, lying on the table. It turned out that some time ago Francesco has been dating a Ukrainian for three years. Valentina recalls that Francesco spoke rather bitterly about his previous relationship, suggesting that even though they had lived together for so long “she only sold him her body, as a hooker.” He said then that he was her *badante*, as the woman worked but she sent all her money back home without contributing anything to the household. In the meantime Francesco was cooking and cleaning for her, giving her rides everywhere. Valentina recalls she was appalled by Francesco’s interpretation of his previous romance: “...I asked him what exactly did he expect?! I told him didn’t she come to Italy to work?! And what did he mean that she sold her body as a hooker? Didn’t she love him, give him away her love and emotions while they were together? What does money have to do with any of it? If she didn’t have him in her life, she would do the same, just work and send all money home, so why does he think she was plotting against him and benefiting from him?”

In the above mentioned example, Francesco and Valentina clash in an attempt to divide the ‘sacred’ - emotions, relationships, intimacy, from the ‘profane’ –money. Hochschild comments on these attempts in daily life: “we tend to disassociate our ideas about family from our ideas about commodity frontier” (2003: 42), to keeping the two spheres “safely separated” and often in opposition to one another: “At home we act out of love. And contrariwise, in the market, we say, we judge people on the professional grounds. [...] Each image is used as a foil, as a negative, as the “not” of the other – as in the ego defense of splitting” (2003:42). Hochschild concludes that the division however is rather illusory as two spheres constantly spill into each other. The nature of the labor Ukrainian women produce in the very intimate sphere of geriatric care-work,

childrearing in Italian households brings out to the very surface the commodification of the familial and home domain.

In the example above, Francesco questions his ex-partner's loyalty on the basis that she "sent all her money home" and in fact, used him, highlighting Hochschild's division as "paid employee vs. unpaid relative" (2003:43). Valentina who defends the woman by trying to take money out of the equation, does it for only a brief moment. "What does money have to do with any of it," asks Valentina and immediately moves into a more significant divide, i.e. Italy vs. home: "If she didn't have him in her life, she would do the same, just work and send all money home." In this sense, Valentina suggests that Italy is not a space for familial engagements. She already has a home, in which her work and emotional input is unpaid and a part of responsibility. Italy, on the contrary, is a place of a paid work, where the fact that the woman has a lover does not change her obligations to her home.

When asked about intimacies established in Italy while still being married or a mother in Ukraine, migrant women that I interviewed were often able to clearly delineate the space of migration and the space of home. Becoming a migrant in Italy involves not only the construction of a new self, taking up new gendered roles, but often a new paradigm of values, which can coexist peacefully with the set of values in Ukraine, but only through a clear separation between the space of migration and the space of home. This does not mean that the spaces of home and migration are not interconnected; as I have discussed above, migration objectives, judgments about the success or failure in migration often lie in the values developed at home, linking the two spaces, making them mutually constitutive of one another. Thus, the decision to enter or stay outside of intimate relationships in Italy is often taken with a close consideration of the benefits for or the possible threat that these relationships can bring to the family of the migrant. At the same time, there is a certain serration of two spaces, as some women would never take up a lover in Ukraine just to help out their family, while in Italy, in the space of migration, this seems to be an option. "What happens in Italy stays in Italy," runs another migrant proverb, while women are trying to work out their personal and familial interests across the borders. In the following part I will proceed by looking into how the shifting between these various regimes of gendered migration roles allows women to increase their flexibility and maintain a level of emancipation achieved through stepping out of family bond and through their economic independence.

One of my interviewees, Valentina (47), seems to be amused by what can come across as a simple arrangement of a double life: "Every Sunday, if you go to our buses, (in Naples) you will see that there are numerous Italian cars standing there, meaning that there are numerous Italian men accompanying our women to the buses. And I am asking, are there so many widowers in Naples or divorced men? Ok, but anyways, we are not interested on what is there family

status...but still [...] Many of our women say 'no, no, I don't do anything in Italy'... but what do they mean 'do not do anything'? Say, what I usually see at the buses...a woman is leaving home and an Italian guy is seeing her off, and they are kissing and all that, and then, she gets on the bus and she is 'decent' all of a sudden. Where would this 'decency' come from? This is what I don't understand at all." Even though Valentina seems to not understand the need for such double-life, she herself is a widow of an Italian man, for whom she worked as a *badante* before they got married. Even though she has been married and widowed since then, she has not revealed even to her family any of these facts, preferring not to stir gossip and attitudes in her village back in Ukraine.

It is not uncommon that women choose to stay out of announcing their private lives in Ukraine, as long as they strictly keep the rule of providing for their children. In the following example, Valentina (47) discusses the relationship model she seems to admire: "Once, I met a woman on the bus, and she told me her story, that she lives with an Italian man, they bought together a shop in a regional center in Ukraine, but she doesn't want to get married because she has her goal, she bought a flat, and she doesn't need to legalize their relationships. But they love each other, and he came to pick her up and it was nice to see their relationship. [...] Let's say every woman would be happy if an Italian would marry her, but of course, that happens quite rarely and depends on circumstances. So a lot of people simply live together. [...] Sometimes it's not even necessary to legalize your relations; say, I can live 5-7 years together with an Italian but I am still returning to Ukraine, say, to my husband."

In another interview, Raja (47) who has lived in Italy for some 9 years spoke very openly and with a lot of respect about her older Italian partner Salvatore with whom they have been together for years. Both of Raja's sons lived in the same flat with her in Naples; they had a chance to meet Salvatore and knew him very well. Several times in our interview Raja referred to how much of a help and support it was to have Salvatore around, especially when she needed help with papers, and inviting her two adult sons to Italy. In Ukraine Raja is married and still keeps investing money into a house which she started building together with her husband. When I asked Raja if she planned to divorce, she looked surprised: "I am not going to divorce. We lived together [with her husband], we built that house together, and everything that is inside that house belongs to both of us. How can I divorce?"

In such responses, I have seen yet another split, not only that between the space of migration and home, but also a different paradigms of moral values. What is proper and improper seemed to be different for the space of home and the space of migration. One of the migrant woman, whom I met by chance on a train from Italy to Ukraine, contemplated how she has learnt to enjoy

the liberty which the separation of life in Ukraine and Italy brings: “If someone would tell me a few years ago in Ukraine that I will have a lover, I would spit in their face with disgust. But here I am, in Italy, just a few years later, and I have a lover, and it is so nice and beautiful. My husband is my husband. He is in Ukraine, and in Italy, it is Italy. These things don’t have to meet.” In this short statement, the woman indicates how having a lover in Ukraine is different than having a lover in Italy; in Ukraine it is a shameful thing for her own self, but in Italy, it is “nice and beautiful.” Thus, she does not associate her shift in moral judgment with the fact that *she* has changed but with different register of norms in different places. In Italy, according to the quote, it is different; it is a different space with a different set of the rules, and the two worlds of Ukraine and Italy exist in their own parallel realities that do not have to intersect.

However, those borders are not always so clear, and women’s husbands in Ukraine naturally fall behind or do not share such transformations. In the following example, Olha (49) arrived in Italy 8 years ago and picked up a job of a live –in *badante* for an elderly signora. When the signora died after a couple of years, Olha made a decision to remain in the house and started living with signora’s son (Luca), who is some 20 years older than Olha. Meanwhile, after 5-6 years in Italy, Olha went back home to discover that her husband wanted to divorce her: “I was shocked when he suggested divorce. Ok, he might have met this woman; he might have fallen in love...but to divorce? It was such a blow for me, I did not expect this.” For Olha, her set of priorities was absolutely clear; even if she had lived in Italy with an Italian man for a few years by then, she worked 4 jobs at the same time in order to be able to buy flats for her two adult and married (but unemployed) sons. At the same time, even though, during my visit, Olha’s life with her Luca looked to me as quite fulfilling relationship - Olha often accompanied Luca for walks and to coffee shops, Luca often cooked for her, - Olha commented that she only started living with Luca because she could stay there for free, and thus save more money which she could then send home. About Luca she commented that he is a very kind, generous and wise man who always helped her with moral support, advice and, occasionally, money. What was more important for Olha was that he did not “chain her to himself” and did not mind her working 4 jobs in order to be able to help her family. However, she said she never felt at home at his place, as she knew that it was her duty to clean the house, make the dishes, and not when she wanted it but when it needed to be done.

Olha’s story reveals the complexity and messiness of such relationships. On the one hand, Olha preferred to separate her life in Ukraine, with her husband, from her life in Italy, where she earned money for her sons and lived with Luca, presumably to maximize her income. On the other hand, throughout the years of migration her husband provided very little support for her, and it was Luca who always helped her with advice, moral support and encouragement. Paradoxically, her

relationship with Luca, which presumably was an economic decision for Olha, is much more meaningful emotionally than the relationship with her husband which became simply nominal. However, while Olha did not mind her husband being in love with another woman, Olha saw her divorce at home as a major shock; in a way it symbolized the crash of her life at home. At the same time, the meaningful, supportive and quite full relations with an Italian man did not have the same value for Olha, and she felt a *badante* in his house, where she needed to perform the same work that she would have performed at home but for her family. I conclude from this that it is the misplacement of home and migration that disturbs Olha most and prevents her from letting herself enjoy her supportive relationship in Italy; in Italy she is a migrant mother, and her personal relationship cannot have the same value as they would at home. At home, she has sons and a husband with whom they had very limited reciprocity in communication for the last 8 years. But it is the official divorce at home that seems to shatter Olha's sense of fulfillment.

Cinderella's tough choices: what is discovered in migration?

In a way, it has already become a cliché to compare Ukrainian migrant women in Italy to Cinderella. In a 2006 documentary on the contemporary situation of Ukrainian migration to Italy, then the Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko referred to Naples as a city of Cinderellas; there is also a theatre play of a Volyn Drama Theatre that has the same title. However, the very persistence of this comparison suggests us to have a closer look at the metaphor of a 'success story' in Ukrainian women's migration to Italy. Thus, Cinderella's story involves a number of transformations, which echo some of the stages that Ukrainian women experience during their migration: there is a deliberate reducing of a worthy and beautiful Cinderella to a servant, and then there is her timely transformation from a servant into a princess which happens only due to her meeting and marrying the prince. Cinderella's downgrading by her step-mother echoes symbolically the downward mobility which Ukrainian women experience while stepping down from their position of mothers and wives in Ukraine into position of a servant in the houses where there is already a wife and a mother. Similarly to Cinderella's story, 'prince' plays an important role in migrants' women opportunities to rise to a level of a princess. So, under what circumstances can the magic transformation occur and what exactly this transformation brings will be discussed in this final part of the chapter.

In the interviews I have conducted, 'success' in migration was rarely framed in terms of 'making it through hard work;' hard work and achieving goals was seen as admirable, but not as a real 'luck' or "fortune." Lida (37, single) who lives in Italy for 3 years now comments: "Women come here [to Italy] as if to the field of miracles... as if it's a land of endless opportunities...as if here they can find real happiness... many have such a hope in their eyes. So she is waiting for it, waiting but every year the hope is getting smaller and smaller. And here they are... in the mid 40s, and then,

if some man pays attention to her, she simply melts, like a little girl.” Lida’s comment the ‘right man’ is a part of such transformation that can turn migration into a success story. However, the picture she paints is not of a resourceful shrewd East-European woman searching for the best profit through men; she portrays a woman as stepping into migration with a chance, if not hope, to get a new better start. Lida’s migrant woman is hopeful, lonely and vulnerable, craving for support, which she cannot hope to get from home. In this sense, migration imagined not only as a financial enterprise, but a possibility, a chance for some unpredicted transformations of the whole life, especially personal life.



Figure 32. Corso Arnaldo Lucci, a street leading from Garibaldi train station to Via Brin, used by the Ukrainian couriers as parking lot in Naples. Ukrainian women drinking coffee with an Italian man on Sunday on their way home from the Ukrainian bazaar. (Spring 2008).

This potentiality of migration enterprise opens up a much less discussed triggers for migration; i.e. that of escape from the unsatisfying family conditions, depressing monotonous life-styles, exhausting unrecognized labor and housework. Migration, thus, is not only a solution for economic problems, but also an individual quest, a chance for becoming someone else, to transform those aspects of self and life, that otherwise seemed to be in the dead end due to obligations, responsibilities and various circumstances. Ultimately, migration is a chance to start all anew. However, the lived experiences of migration difficulties, a watchful eye of country fellows and Italians as well as the internalized burdens and guilt make the decisions harder, while the potentials of migration ‘success stories’ sustain hopes. In the end, each Cinderella has to make tough choices to make her story work out.

Transformation of the social age. One of the most notable transformations that Ukrainian women experience in migration to Italy is the shift in the social age. In the article “The Boom,” quoted earlier, the *giovannissima* (extremely young) *badante* was a 44-year-old Romanian woman. In Ukraine, this is the age at which many of my respondents who were already grandmothers with

one or even two grandchildren, while in Italy, 40 can be the age for the first child. In a sense, crossing a border creates a time machine for many Ukrainian women, through which they find themselves shifting from the role of a grandmother, and an aged woman in Ukraine, to the position of a woman attractive and young enough for enjoying clubs, walks, and romantic adventures.

When I asked one of my interviewees (Olechka, 37) to comment if her neighbors back in Ukraine thought that Italy has changed her, she enthusiastically confirmed: “One of the neighbors who knew me for a long time asked me if I have had plastic surgery! [laughs] She said ‘You look so much better!’ I don’t know why but she kept on bothering me with this surgery...In fact, I want to say that even people younger than me at home, they look older and worse...the reason for this...first of all climate, economical situation, everyone at home is in some state of shock...there is no moral support at home... everyone is dead, gray. Here, although we work hard, but somehow, here, there is a certain relief in something or someone...There, you are nobody without money...even with money you are nobody, but without money you are worse than nobody. People are just dead there...gray faces, gray existence...all of this effects health and beauty...the face is a mirror of your soul, no? Here [in Italy] we are killing ourselves over this work, this stress of dependency...but here...you step out of your work...and you have some kind of *schifoso*⁴³ Italian, who tells you ‘*bella*’ and bla bla, ...and even if he is lying or not lying, but you feel better...You see?”

Olechka therefore quotes Italian men, even if with cliché comments, as a part of making migrant women feel more attractive and even look younger. Age and new self are, thus, strongly linked to the attention migrant women receive from the local men. These new relationships, which in public discourse are often dismissed as vulgar and adulterous often lead to a thorough re-evaluation of women’s self; their roles in family, and chances that life granted them throughout the life. Even though strongly romanticized and idealized, attention from Italian men unexpectedly opens a door, which in Ukraine is closed for the women due to their familial and social role as grandmothers, their daily duties and obligations in the family.

Age seem to have major significance also on another level; Olechka (37), “as to the intimate relationships, only those women have more chances who are not so young, even not 40, but more like 50. Because she will not start a new family...she will only get together with a man who is older than her. But older men here also have more opportunities...they can afford more... only an older man can afford to do anything he wants. [...] I have been observing so much already, that these women in their 50 get so *fortunate*... but we are (in our 20s, -30s), we are abandoned,

⁴³ *Schifoso* lt. – disgusting, good for nothing

have no support... whom can we date? Only some married guys, only to become their lovers. Only those women who are 50 get lucky, with someone whom they work for, there they can get both limitless support and official marriage.” In this quote again, age, gender and migrant status form important hierarchies that often determine the choice of relations, expectations and evaluation of their success.

A shift in social age holds true not only for the private sphere but also for professional life. Nadia (43 upon her return to Ukraine), after spending 3 years in Bologna, decided to return to Ukraine in 2006 on the wave of hope that Orange Revolution brought in Ukraine. After return, Nadia applied for various jobs and even went to a couple of job interviews but was refused on the basis that the companies she applied for did not hire people in their 40s. Until now, Nadia, who has a degree of a computer programmer could not find a job related to her profession and had to confine herself to the position of sales assistant in a nearby village, where her husband runs a small goods shop. Nadia speaks with extreme pain about her experience: “In this one place that I went to I was interviewed by a young man who was probably just 18. He was as if programmed, you know, as if reciting questions that he has learnt by heart. I told him that what if I don’t fit into those categories? And I told him...40 years old it is a person who has such a potential, such an experience... and this person is usually free from the little children and young children care. 40 years is exactly that time when one can even learn from a person! And you just throw them out, like trash.”

Indeed, the category of Ukrainian migrants who seem to cling most to their positions in Italy are the women in their late 40s-50s, who know that when they return to Ukraine, they will hardly be able to get employment and definitely not for the same money as in Italy. They are presented with limited choices; i.e. either they return home, usually after quite a few years of absence, to the families who got used living without them. Without a job their position will be even more vulnerable, as they will not only stop bringing income to the family, but in a little while will be economically dependent from their families. Many women whom I have met in Italy thus summarized their situation: “We are staying in Italy as long as our health permits us.”

Italian men vs. Ukrainian men. As it was discussed in the first part of this chapter, many Ukrainian migrant women, and majority of young Ukrainian men in Italy that I have interviewed, spoke derogatory of the Ukrainian women’s behavior in Italy. The ‘urban horror legends’ genre is full of stories (for which I personally was not able to find any factual confirmation) about women who stand on Garibaldi train station of Naples waiting to be picked up by Italian men even for just a cup of coffee or a slice of pizza. Younger Ukrainian men (in their 20s) tend to make fun of the older women, joking that they all dye their hair blond to attract more Italians, and when women

hear *bella* they already think that they are young and beautiful. However, women seem to have their own thoughts about the meaning of the attention that Italian men dole out so generously:

Lena (29, married, mother of a one-year-old) “They say that all our women look like hookers. But they [Ukrainian women], poor things, they go to their wits ends to somehow attract our men, to look at least somehow attractive in their eyes. And what do they get? ‘Your legs are not straight’, ‘your ass is too big’....to hell with these men. For the first time in my life I felt not crippled when I went abroad.”

Lida (37, single) also comments on the difference in approach to demonstrate attention to women in Ukraine and Italy: “Just to compare our guys with Italians... When I am passing by a group of Italians they are all staring at this one spot [buttocks] and say: ‘*Che bella!*’ and when I pass by our boys they stare the same place but they say: ‘Look at that fat ass!’ ...Do you feel the difference? And why are you wondering? Giacomo Casanova was from Italy, they know how to emphasize in a woman whatever she has, whatever that one single trait that she has, they know how to bring it out. Here is the difference for you... Here is culture for you. Of course our women melted.”

In both of these quotes, Italy features not only as a place to earn and remit money. Here Italy is a place of the romantic myths of a great lover, a place, where both women suggested they experience certain easiness, an experience that helped them to feel more beautiful, more precious. Some of these experiences contrast sharply with lack of opportunities and dull perspectives that women were facing in Ukraine. Thus, when I ask Valentina (47, widow, a mother of 3 children) why do Ukrainian women like Italy she immediately replies: “But what do they see in Ukraine? Work, and household, and children. And here, Italians [men] know how to court, how to look into your eyes, know how to make you special. A lot of women have not expected to find this in such an age. And I also think that Naples attracts me so much because of the sea...and I have never lived next to the sea, only once in my life I have been to the Black Sea...When I am walking along the seaside, I feel something magical, something dark rising... It feels so alien to me, but even so, its mine.”

In her self-reflective statement Valentina admits the benefit from migration that is usually omitted by many migrants, the personal, individual, experiential difference, that women experience in migration. Thus, Inna (53) who in Ukraine has a flat which she bought with her Italian money, lives in Italy in a tiny hall way of a flat where she provides care for an old Italian man for a few years now comments on her feelings about Ukraine and Italy: “In Italy I live, back at home I simply exist.”

These accounts seem to echo a protagonist of a theatre play *Naples, the city of Cinderellas*, staged by Volyny theatre in 2006. One of the comic characters, Han'ka, refuses to feel sad and lament her migrant fate together with the main character of the play, Maria. Han'ka justifies her lack of sentimentalism: "Can you imagine, me, Han'ka, eats kiwi! Me, Han'ka, swims in the sea! What have I seen in my life? Just a field and an endless row of beat roots to weed, and work, hard work from morning till night! And now, me, Han'ka, eats kiwi!" This quote echoes Valentina's acknowledgement of her attraction for the Naples, and like in Valentina's response, men are a part of the "package" that Italy offers generously to the non-expecting women, who have maybe given up on their hopes and expectations of romantic relations; like Valentina, the theatrical Han'ka ends up marrying an older widower in Italy.

These experiences, transforms the place of migration from a zone of an economic interest into a place where women's subjective perception is set in motion. Such experience can both, trigger certain transformation in women's behavior and set the previous experiences, gender and familiar roles in perspective. Vera (47): "Italy has changed me a lot. It taught me that I have to know a price for myself... I've learnt how to be a woman here, that a woman is not a mule for carrying heavy things. A woman is priceless and fragile, and it's a man who needs to take care of the woman and not vice versa. No, now I know, that if there will be a man in my life, it has to be only an Italian man. No more Ukrainians! Even for my daughter. Of course, I'd like to have a Ukrainian son-in-law but I know that for her it's better to have an Italian man. You should see how her boyfriend treats her, as if she is a porcelain doll."

Inspired by both attitudes (or imagination about them) of Italian men and emancipatory examples of Italian women who hire them, Ukrainian women seem to re-think priorities in their family roles. However, the translation of these internal change into actual transformation of gender roles, even in Italy remain problematic. Vera (47) "Even a small fact; all Italian men cook. When I was with my Ukrainian man [in Italy] all my friends used to tell me that I was in the kitchen all the time. And now I see why. Recently a friend of mine here got herself a Ukrainian man and even though I didn't want to tell her anything, you know, but she is already complaining herself...This is what it means to have a Ukrainian man: you cook him breakfast, food to take with him to work, dinner in the evening and on the week-ends - varenyky!⁴⁴ And there you go, after work, after running to clean from one house to another, at home you all the time cook and bake, and not just anything, but every time something special, home made. In Ukraine, it somehow wasn't so noticeable. But here, in Italy, it is as if you are carrying a cross. And what for? Just to have a pair of pants⁴⁵ in the house?!" In my analysis, these passionate testimonies speak not only of the discrepancy of the

⁴⁴ Dumplings stuffed with potatoes, cheese or cabbage.

⁴⁵ Meaning just a man.

roles the men take up in families in Ukraine and Italy, but rather of the migrants' women evaluation of what these roles *should* be. Through their migration, women seem to reconsider what is it to be a caring man and woman, what are the ideals of a home and familial roles, but the shift is happening within women themselves, but not so easily translated into the shift in actual roles.

One of the main advantages of Italian men is a strong belief among Ukrainian women that Italian are much more engaged with and dedicated to their families. The frequency with which Ukrainian women mentioned this feature, and the unanimously positive evaluation of it, indicates that it speaks to the very heart of the familial values that Ukrainian women share. Ukrainian women's admiration does not thought speak of the real level of engagement of Italian men with their families but rather of the fact that Ukrainian women observe Italian men's behavior in public and read in it symbols of dedication and involvement with the family, symbols, which Ukrainian men seem to demonstrate in a lesser degree.

Valentina (47): "When I see how men here in Italy walk with their babies, and push the strollers, and carry their babies on their heads, I am melting ...I always wanted so much to see my husband with our baby in his arms. Always dreamed of taking such a picture! But empty hopes! Our men don't even know from which side to approach the baby."

However, many women have expressed a mixed feeling of bitterness and actual doubts of whether there is there a place for a migrant woman in the stronghold of the Italian family life, or she would always have to stay in the background and be reduced to a position of a domestic worker and occasionally lover. Daryna (53) comments: "I hate Italians. All good Italians care about their women, and those who have no money, no pants, all sorts of scum in fact, they are the ones that our women pick up. And our women pick up everything." Again, Daryna's comment reminds that no matter how long a migrant woman stays in Italy, she cannot expect to enter the relationships as if she would do it at home; in Italy, no matter how liberated and emancipated she might feel, her migrant status excludes her from the same value system deprives her of the mechanisms of social and legal control available for Italian women, and thus, reduces a migrant woman to a position outside of the Italian family privileges.

Flirtatious and flattering behavior of Italian men, the idealized dedication of Italians to their families and especially children, all of these factors contribute to that idealized potential of life-transformation of a woman in migration. Like in a Cinderella fairy tale, if she only manages to meet the right prince, all of his kingdom can be hers, and she can be a part of this world. However, as time pass disappointment also creeps in and many women realize that Italian men's

dedication is only for Italian women, who are, unlike Ukrainian migrants, protected by the pressure of the Italian society and Italian law.

Afterword.

Valentina (47) was divorced in Ukraine twice; she is a mother of three and last year she has become a grandmother. In Ukraine her ex-husband has turned alcoholic and keeps stealing furniture and even gas and water pipes from the flat which Valentine has bought for their son. In Italy Valentina got married for the third time; to a 70 year old man Pasquale, for whom she used to work as a cleaning lady. When I stayed with Valentina in Naples, she insisted on showing me a DVD of her wedding, filmed in spring 2005 by the sea, next to Castel del'Uovo. On DVD which Valentina fast-forwards for me, I can still see that she looks very happy in her baby-blue long dress, against the background of the sea and fishing boats. She holds flowers and Pasquale is dressed smartly in suit. They walk hand in hand by the ocean, hug and kiss. Sometimes, when the camera turns its back to the sea, one can notice groups of people, passers by, who stop and openly stare at the wedding. The nearest bus stop is full of Slavic women, whose gazes are impossible to read because of the distance. In less than a year after the wedding, Valentina went home to Ukraine, where she stayed for three weeks and where she received a message about Pasquale's death. Valentina finds the spot she was looking for in the recording and comments: "Look here, you see how he blows me a kiss from a distance? How he smiles at me, a bit sadly? I have a feeling he knew that he won't stay for much longer. Later on I told his children, that it was God's mercy that I wasn't here when he died, because I know they would blame me for his death. Nowadays, I sometime think of Pasquale... not only he gave me that legal status, and papers and 600 EUR of pension that I receive now after him... He also gave me that wedding, those romantic moments by the sea, the dress, the flowers, and tenderness. He always called me his last love."

In this chapter I tried to go beyond the image of a 'migrant mother' and explore the complexity of the lived migration experiences and shifting regimes of identifications of Ukrainian women in Italy. Stepping away from portraying migration project through the trope of mothers who are concerned exclusively about the economic benefit for their children I sought to bring forward the formation of new subjectivities and capture migrants' re-evaluation of previous experiences, gender and familial roles. Bringing forward the mechanisms of dependencies and exploitation in the relationships established in migration, I reflected on the grip of the national, gender and age hierarchies and various means with which the actors negotiate them within migrants' social fields.

Migration as such of Ukrainian women to Italy is often framed in rigid national discourses about purity and control over sexuality. However, most of migration stories in my work present a mixture of most sincere involvements and discoveries that run parallel with cases of clear calculations

and abuses. Unlike the way it is often presented in the media, migrant women are neither victims nor demons. Instead, what we can observe, is how women daily shift between various regimes of performativity and identification, which enables them to maximize earnings, maintain personal integrity, keep harmony in the transnational families, feel strong about themselves, protect themselves from the pressure of the public opinion and various forms of exploitations. A great deal of emotion work goes into maintaining the right feeling and right attitude to various aspects of migration life. Migration, thus, even though often presented in terms of economic enterprise, becomes a journey that leads to re-evaluation of past experiences, gender and family roles and one's own position in these complex relations.

Chapter 9. Conclusions: Expanding understanding of the female migration beyond ‘motherly migration’

While conducting life-story interviews in Italy in 2007-2008 I could not help noticing how the narratives by women from the most varied backgrounds, different lengths of stay in Italy and dynamic migration trajectories would often follow a similar plot of migration line as if it was a TV show that everyone had seen and was retelling in familiar key terms. Most of my interviewees would even start their stories with a phrase “I came to Italy in the same way as everyone else.” The anonymous “same way,” that was irritating the researcher in me, soon became the puzzle of my fieldwork, i.e. how to account for similarities of perceptions, judgments and visions of the migration experience among such diverse contexts and trajectories? In my analysis, migrants’ narratives pointed to the larger need for coherence that could bring together the life “before” and “after” their departure into migration and explain their position in relation to places of “home” and “migration.”⁴⁶

In this dissertation I have addressed the issue of discontinuities and newly found coherence in migration by referring to the conceptual framework of ruptures and continuities. Ruptures feature here not only in terms of abrupt changes in personal, professional and familial biographies. Significantly, I refer to ruptures as dissonances in migrants’ positioning between Italy and Ukraine. They include, but are not limited to, the dissonance of the high soaring expectations put on migrants by those left behind, the scornful attitude of Ukrainian political and public discourses, the scrutinizing gaze of the Italian public, structural limitations and obstacles of the Italian legislative system, the lived experience of a foreigner, a woman and a care-giver. Transnational social fields which emerge from migrants’ simultaneous engagements with various spaces and actors of home and migration do not however resolve the dissonances of positioning migrants in these two regimes. The ruptures that are emerging through positioning migrants in these differentiated modes of obligations, expectations and moralities need to be made sense of and redefined in terms of continuities. Migrants build new meanings and significance within these separated spaces of moralities, identities and performativities.

The key concepts that help me to analyze the processes in which ruptures acquire coherence and give rise to new continuities are the *moralities of transnationalism* (Carling) and *emotion work* (Hochschild 2003). Referring to moralities of transnationalism in his work, “The human dynamics of migrant transnationalism,” Carling defines them as migrants’ differentiated positioning vis-à-vis

⁴⁶ I use the terms of “before” and “after” migration, “home and migration” to reflect of the perceived dichotomy or the opposition of these terms in migrants’ accounts. In my dissertation I do not use them as a dichotomous pair but rather see the continuation within them and their transformation.

those who stayed behind. Those who migrate, argues Carling, carry a certain “debt” towards those who stay behind which makes it their obligation to invest emotionally and financially in keeping in touch, remitting money, supporting those who stayed and not vice versa. This stands particularly true for the cases of female migration, migration of mothers and wives. As I demonstrate in chapters 4 and 8, positioning of women as mothers who leave their homes puts them almost by default into a position of a moral debt, intensifying the unidirectional flow of care from migrating women to their family, enhancing the gaps in intimacy within the families. Equal importance to positioning migrating and non-migrating members within moralities of transnationalism allows seeing the tensions, flows, silences and negotiations that reinvent the migration project as it changes in time and spills across generations (chapter 3 and 5). Moralities of transnationalism also function on a different level in my research, i.e. I employ this concept to denote the differentiated mode in two places that allow migrants to redefine themselves, shift between regimes of performativity and identifications.

To capture the accommodation of these multiple roles, the ability to shift between them and carry on with them simultaneously from their position in the transnational social fields, I refer to emotion work as deep reflexive work done on one’s own feeling in order to convince oneself of the rightness of the situation and then act upon this conviction (Hochschild 2003). I find this mechanism a particularly good way of capturing the processes in which migrant women have to find coherence between their departure from their families under the blaming Ukrainian public discourses and their mothering from a distance, which they have to redefine under conditions of geographical distance, financial constraints and strenuous work regimes. My work shows how under such circumstances motherhood becomes a central organizing trope, justifying the decisions both at home and in migration.

To analyze the dynamics of these negotiations I introduce the analytical distinction between motherhood as a trope and motherhood as a situational practice. Such distinction however is only an analytical one; the trope does not exist outside situational practices, relations and interactions. In the case of Ukrainian female migration to Italy, it is around motherhood that most of the emotions work is done. However, motherhood as a trope often unveils multiple ruptures and dissonances in many other spheres in women’s lives. Their lived experiences within these other spheres usually find no space for discussion within their families or the nationalistic state discourses. Therefore motherhood often both obscures and diminishes women’s often emancipatory experiences in migration. Not wanting to limit my dissertation to the experiences directly related to the practice of mothering, my empirical chapters look into how intense regimes of care-work trigger reinvention of the self (chapter 6), how migrants re-appropriate Italian public spaces, thus reshaping socio-scapes of Italian cities (chapter 7) and how women enter new

sexual and intimate relationships in Italy, negotiating motherhood, care-work, money, emotions and personal emancipation under the umbrella of the familial migration project (chapter 8). Looking into spheres outside the family allowed me not only to explore migration from a variety of experiences, (like labor, experiences the spaces in migration or establishing intimate relations outside of transnational families) but also to see how motherhood works in all these spheres, structuring choices, bouncing off accusations, making sense of liminality of the migrants position between the places of “home” and “migration”.

I see the contribution of my dissertation in capturing the dynamic role of motherhood in imagining, organizing and carrying out migration projects like those of Ukrainian women to Italy. On the one hand, the migration literature that focuses on mother-child relations, while doing a thorough job on capturing the strength of such ties, tends to obscure the shifting situational importance of motherhood, thus neglecting those aspects of migrants' life when other migrants' identities become more prominent and are acted out. On the other, the literature which focuses on migration's emancipatory effect liberating women from gender norms and familial obligations tends to exaggerate women's empowerment, downplaying the experienced and often suppressed pain of mothering at a distance and neglecting migrant women's role in reaffirming normative gendered familial roles through their remittances or attempts to compensate for their absence.

For over 15 years Ukrainian migration to Italy has been a dynamic and quickly changing process sensitive to the global demand of flexible, feminized and easily disposable labor and the Ukrainian turbulence in economics and politicals. The diverse, highly situational and quickly changing practices that involve earning and spending money across borders can hardly be captured by terms like *return migrant*, *circular migration*, or *labor migration*. I would like to conclude by emphasizing the need for more research of the dynamic transnational practices and processes that involve extended families in transnational economic activities across the globe, making migration a part of life-cycles, gendered expectations and new forms of professional careers. Looking into the ways in which such extended families that trigger and sustain such migration in different settings react to the shifts in the global labor market may give a wider picture of how they respond to the promises of the flexibilization of the work force (Morokvasic 2004; Hochschild 2003b; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2004b) and cope with its consequences.

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Appendix 1

Table 1.

Ukrainian presence in five groups of regions in Italy in 2007, based on the residents permits. (Istat, La popolazione straniera residente in Italia al 1° gennaio 2007)

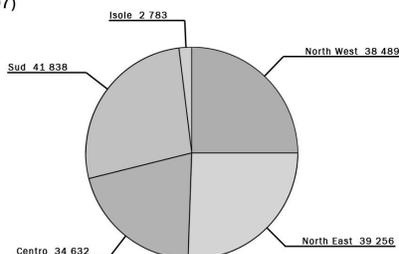


Table 2.

Diagram 1. Distribution of Ukrainian migrants by regions in 2008, based on the residence permits. (Istat, Dataset: Foreign resident population)

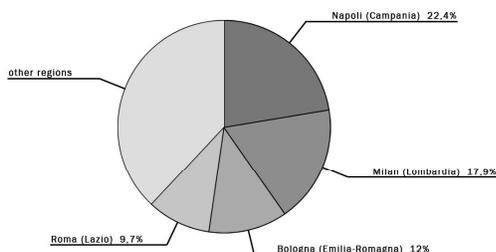
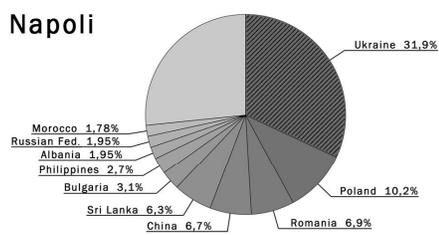
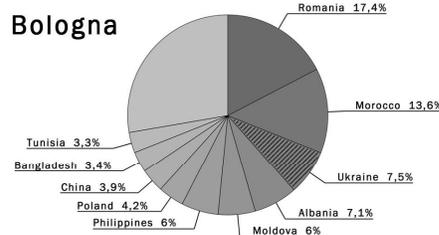


Diagram 2. Percentage of Ukrainian female migrants in comparison to female migrants of other nationalities in Naples, Bologna, Milan and Rome, based on the resident permits. (Istat, Dataset: Foreign resident population)

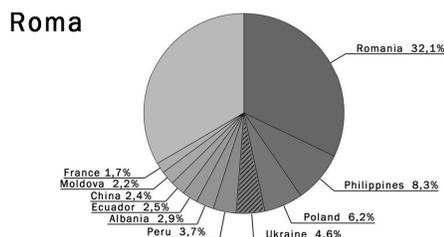
Napoli



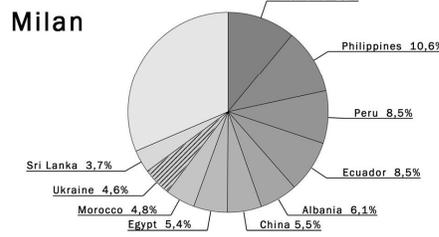
Bologna



Roma



Milano



Note: The diagrams demonstrate that Naples and Bologna are important not only because of the high concentration of Ukrainians as compared to other places in Italy, but also because of a high representation of Ukrainians among other national migrants' groups.