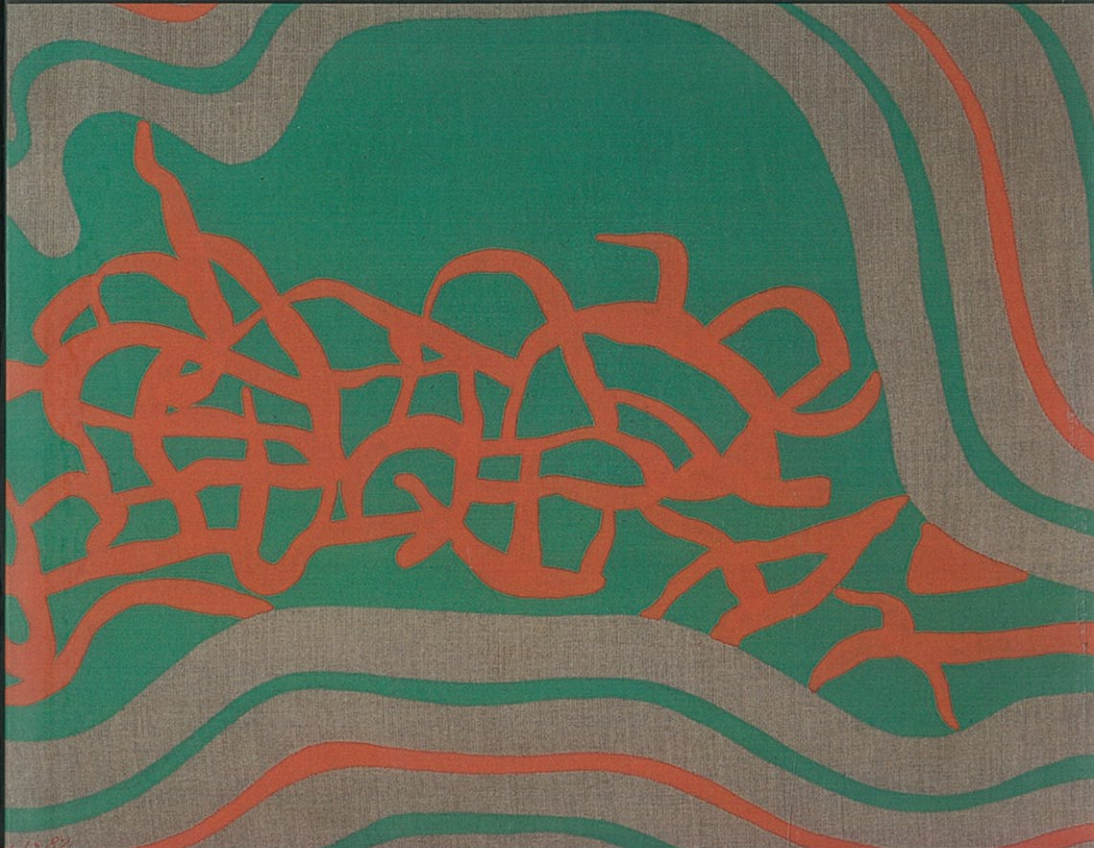


WOMEN MIGRANTS FROM EAST TO WEST

Gender, mobility and belonging
in contemporary Europe



Edited by

Luisa Passerini, Dawn Lyon, Enrica Capussotti and Ioanna Laliotou

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Editors' Introduction

*Luisa Passerini, Dawn Lyon, Enrica Capussotti
and Ioanna Laliotou*

Gender, Mobility and Belonging in Europe

This book is about women who move across Europe, specifically women moving from the European Centre–East to the West. Just fifteen years ago, before the fall of the Berlin wall, and the transformation of the Eastern bloc, mobility in eastern and central Europe beyond national frontiers was rare, requiring either political authorization or considerable risk. In present day Europe, migration from the East to the West is a very significant trend in international patterns of mobility. And, in a parallel change to the character of migration in the recent past, many contemporary migrants are women.

The research this book presents is an oral history of women who have migrated from Bulgaria or Hungary, to Italy or the Netherlands. Our aim is to identify new forms of subjectivity that are part of the contemporary history of Europe, and to explore how the movement of people across Europe is changing the cultural and social landscape with implications for how we think about what Europe means. The research assumes migrants to be active subjects, creating possibilities and taking decisions in their own lives, as well as being subject to legal and political regulation amongst others. We ask: How do people make sense of their experiences of migration? Can we trace new or different forms of subjectivity through present day mobility within Europe? What is the spectrum of contemporary forms of identification in Europe in relation to mobility? These latter questions are also relevant to native¹ women. Through interviews with native women in Italy and the Netherlands, we document and analyse the points of connection of friendship and empathy between native and migrant women, as well as mechanisms of exclusion and xenophobia expressed by native women, for what these allow us to perceive about the symbolic boundaries of Europe. In short, the contribution of this book is to explore migration for what sorts of subjectivity contemporary forms of mobility induce, in both migrants themselves and in native women, and to reconsider the complex set of representations and perceptions attributed to migrants and migration.

Our focus on the interrelation between gender and migration is grounded on particular historical as well as theoretical developments in the field of migration studies. Contemporary migration is marked by particular characteristics that distinguish it from past population movements (Koser and Lutz 1998) amongst which is the so-called feminization of migration. Social scientists have documented the marked increase in the number of women migrants in recent years, and the proportion of women in relation to the total number of migrants. This phenomenon is related to economic, political, social and cultural transformations of late capitalism; transformations that are taking place globally and have different effects on people's lives locally. The feminization of migration is also related to a theoretical re-orientation in the field. During the last decade the study of the relation between gender and migration has foregrounded the dynamic interplay of agency and structure in the organization and operation of the global economic, political and cultural processes that sustain human migration. Scholars have demonstrated how re-thinking these relations through gender offers insight into the feminisation of migration flows and the establishment of transnational families whose networks expand globally and whose importance is fundamental for the operations of economy and culture in late capitalism (e.g. Sassen 2000; Parrenas 2001; Phizacklea 2003).

The testimonies of both migrant and native women confirm the central role of human mobility in the redefinition of relations between Central-Eastern and Western Europe post-1989. If new forms of encounters are shaped within the social, political and economic conditions of post-communism and through the intensification of a wide variety of social, political, economic, and cultural exchanges, mobility and migration between the East and the West play a central role in these exchanges whilst also giving rise to new transnational forms of subjectivity in Europe today. Gender relations have been at the core of these processes: first, the transition from state socialism to capitalism has had a huge impact on the lives and the position of women in Eastern European societies; secondly, the re-arrangement of gender relations is related to the modification of political and social practices, and to understandings of the private and public sphere in post-communism.

In these introductory remarks, we are using the language of migration, yet the concept of migration itself is problematic and warrants some discussion. The term refers to a wide range of movements of individuals and groups of people across regional and/or national borders. Migration has been largely connected to the pursuit of employment and the betterment of one's material conditions of life. Forced migration – as a result of political or religious persecution – has been located in a separate category of refugees. However, during the last two decades, and due to the intense diversification of population movements related to the economic and political processes of late capitalism, the concept of migration has expanded in order to include

different forms of mobility across continuously shifting geographical, economic and political territories. The present research continues in this spirit by emphasizing the diversity and interconnections of processes and motivations through which migration takes place. This volume gives attention to the cultural and emotional underpinnings of the mobility, thus valuing a whole range of 'subjective' motives beyond the quest for material improvement, or political or religious freedom.

In addition, this project seeks to enrich the field of migration studies through an empirically grounded critique of understandings of the migrant as a dislocated and uprooted subject, either prey to forces of integration, or motivated exclusively by rational choices related to the betterment of living conditions. Taking as a starting point how women are moving across Europe immediately challenges the understanding of migration as a linear process of departure and arrival (loss and integration), in which places of origin and destination are singular and fixed and patterns of integration are assumed to follow several stages.

Indeed, the interviews provide us with input for a theoretical reconsideration of the assumptions attached to the term migration. For instance, since the early 1990s scholars of migration have stressed the importance of transnational movement and the establishment of transnational networks of interaction for the understanding of contemporary transformations in the practices of migration in cultural, political, civic and economic terms. The practices of mobility that are presented in the interviews challenge the conventional association between migrancy and loss of subjectivity (as a result of dislocation and uprooting) by suggesting that women transnational migrants develop new forms of subjectivity based on sets of relationships that develop in the context of the movement. Migration and mobility between the European East and the West is marked, enabled, motivated, and realized through the establishment of these relationships. Mobility is also often associated with the types of social, personal, professional and intimate relationships that the migrant establishes and maintains. Through relationships the physical movement of women between East and West Europe is related to the affective mobility that defines the migrants' subjectivity.

Overall, migration in the present research is envisioned as a contemporary form of mobility and a dynamic set of relations between places, cultures, people and identifications. And this has meant reconsidering simple categorizations of these women in terms of labour, family reunification, ideas of home and belonging, assumptions of happiness and satisfaction. For instance, migrant women may be transnational mothers, dividing their time between one site and country in which they work and another in which they share time and space with family members; or they may travel back and forth between different locations. Under these sorts of conditions any straightforward assumptions about sending and receiving societies are also challenged.

As we have already indicated, the study of migration presented here – from the European Centre-East to the European West – is part of a reflection on the repercussions of European migrations on existing ideas of Europe and Europeanness, which helps us to rethink forms of European belonging and to envisage new ways of being European. The contemporary historical context is marked by multiple processes of building a new European social, political and cultural environment that transgresses older divisions between the West and the East. Intra-European migration and the pursuit and establishment of relationships – personal, intimate, professional or collegial – across the European East and West, play a pivotal role in the consolidation of this emergent new European political and cultural space. Intra-European migration has been a constant process in the modern history of the continent and has contributed greatly to the making of European nation-states and the establishment of the European international state system (Bade 1987; Kussmaul 1981; Lowe 1989; Moch 1984; Wlocewski 1934). The intensification of migration from Eastern to Western and Southern Europe is a phenomenon inseparably connected with the post-1989 political changes in Eastern Europe and with the subsequent processes of EU enlargement to the East. Based on the post-Second World War division of the European geo-political space, Western and Eastern European migration systems were almost separate entities (see Hoerder 1990 on the concept of migration system). Post-1989 these two systems merged in a way that has led to the massive migration of people across borders (themselves often difficult to determine) between eastern and western parts of this continent, and this mobility has produced a phenomenon of major political and cultural significance, accompanied by a massive scholarly investigation.

Most studies of the relation between subjectivity and transnationalism trace the impact of the cultural logics of transnational networks on the construction of subjectivity. Aiwa Ong has argued that new modes of subjectivation are drastically shaped by the conditions of transnational mobility and consist of 'flexible practices, strategies and disciplines associated with transnational capitalism', themselves connected with 'new modes of subject making and new kinds of valorised subjectivity' (Ong 1999: 18–19). The expansion of transnational migrants' networks and communities and the intensification of transnational cultural, political and economic interaction in late capitalism have led to the emergence of new forms of subjectivity that enable the subject to act within different levels of local and global communication. The exploration of women's mobility and subjectivity between the European East and the West prompts us to consider how new and old practices of mobility re-configure political space, geo-cultural territories, and ideas of home and belonging.

While political and social transformations within the European Union as well as in single European states are at the centre of public debate, funda-

mental cultural aspects that shape political and social processes are marginal in EU politics. We do not wish to deny the importance of political, social and economic approaches to the significant moments and processes of the contemporary construction of Europe, e.g. EU enlargements on 1 May 2004 and 1 January 2007, however, we want also to stress the importance and gains of thinking through a cultural lens to analyse, understand and transform political, economic and social inequalities. Culture is often invoked in the context of official EU discourse in order to refer to top-down policies that aim at the bureaucratic engineering of European 'cultural identities'. Instead, the notion of culture that we invoke in this research refers rather to dynamic processes of production of meaning that enable the conceptualization of political, social and economic transformations on the level of everyday life and subjectivity.

The present research tries to open up ideas of Europe and Europeanness to include the experiences – in all their diversity – of being a woman moving between two or more countries, and to reconfigure traditionally established relationships between Eastern and Western Europe. It not only attempts to indicate the limits of the Western ways of being European and to criticize Eurocentrism on intellectual and empirical grounds; it also contributes to deconstructing stereotypes about Eastern and Western Europe and Europeans, interpreting the 'hints' at new forms of connection which emerge from the intercultural dialogue in daily life between 'migrant' and 'native' women. We therefore see it as a contribution to rethinking and redefining the very idea of Europe, and of belonging to this continent, into the future. In this perspective, focusing on Europe is a way of locating Europeanness in the world, seeing its specificity and giving up all claims to any alleged superiority and to all internal intra-European hierarchies. While we are aware that some of the problems we have been dealing with in this volume reappear virulently in relationships between European women and women from other continents, we think that the work we have done will constitute a platform for future approaches to intercultural dialogue in a perspective wider than the European one.

Methodological Choices

The choice of the method of oral history in this research responds to two major considerations that we wish briefly to recall. The first is the unique opportunity that oral interviews offer as sources for history, allowing us to combine insights in individual experience at the same time as in the understanding of cultural changes in communities and the relationships between them. The second is the fact that oral history provides a privileged ground for a multidisciplinary approach. Indeed, the present research draws on the following fields of study: cultural history, philosophy, sociology, law, literature, and women's studies. While not all the participants in the research were

specialists in the field of migration, their different expertises brought, we believe, innovative visions to this topic. Moreover the plurality of disciplines involved has had an impact on the language of the book itself. In the chapters of this book a multiplicity of vocabularies shaped by disciplinary and national conventions cohabit with the appropriation of specific theories, models and styles.

The research we present here is primarily based on the collection of life stories and interviews with migrant women from Bulgaria and Hungary, and native women in Italy and the Netherlands. This material is treated in different ways by the authors (single or multiple) of the different chapters. The interviews reappear in various configurations; this choice has been made at the risk of repetition, but it testifies to the possibility of viewing the same material from different points of view. One difficulty of dealing with the testimonies is that they are heavily loaded with projections and stereotypes, for instance based on nation or gender. The cultural stratifications of memory, ideology and experience converge to compose complex narrations that correspond in an indirect way to the complexities in the social processes of geographical mobility. The chapters in this book try to cope with this universe indicating various possible ways of interpreting it. The women's accounts are much more than personal stories. Through migrant women's narratives, we trace the processes (institutional and inter-subjective) which have shaped their strategies and their selves, their understandings of the past, and aspirations for the future, such that their narratives become a document of the contemporary phenomenon of migration in Europe.

We made several choices here which warrant further comment: to select women migrants, and not to include men; to conduct interviews with native as well as migrant women; and to do so in the specific countries chosen. First, our focus on women is connected to the feminization of migration we discussed above. Given the difficulties of managing the large quantity of materials produced in oral history research, we decided to privilege relationships between women as subjects. We set out to document the lives of these new social actors undertaking mobility, and to explore the repertoires of meaning through which they make sense of their trajectories. By asking women to tell us their own accounts, we effectively made it possible for them to position themselves as central actors in their mobility, in contrast to assumptions of their place in migratory processes as connected to family reunification, even though this has ceased to be the dominant reality. Whilst we made the choice to place the resources we had available for the research in the collection of women's testimonies – which has resulted, in addition to this book and other publications, in a digital archive of the interviews² – further research might adopt a similar approach to interviewing men. However, in the present research, men are not absent. They are frequently mentioned in the interviews (both in the questions and the answers) as interlocutors

and partners, whose place in the decision to migrate, and more generally in the construction of new subjectivities, is crucial. They are often presented along nation-based stereotypical lines and they seem to be the target of a shared criticism. We acknowledge the necessity to give them the word on these matters and we look forward to future research taking up the suggestions from recent developments in men's studies and applying them to the study of migration.

Second, the interviews with native women have allowed us to trace contemporary forms of intercultural exchange through accounts of relationships between native and migrant women (and men), and broader perceptions and representations of migrants on the part of native women. This connects to our approach to migration set out above which emphasizes mobility as a dynamic set of relations between places, cultures, people and identifications, and thereby situates native and less mobile subjects in the frame alongside those who move. In other words, we explore migration as a set of acts and effects in the lives of women who are not necessarily mobile themselves but whose worlds are also marked by mobility. In particular this approach has allowed us to document and analyse different forms of encounter – experienced and discursive – between migrant and native women, which exposes both points of connection and empathy, and mechanisms of exclusion and racism. That we have been able to read the narratives produced in different national locations has given us greater purchase in the historical and cultural grounding of these processes.

This brings us to the third element we discuss here: the comparative design of the research. Comparative work illuminates processes specific to certain settings, in addition to those that have a wider resonance. Regarding the specific countries, the choice of Hungary and Bulgaria has made it possible to analyse a spectrum of different paths and patterns of migration. Migration during communism was a political act, irrespective of individual intentions, and a challenge to restrictions on freedom of movement. Within the interview sample, we include a sub-group of women who migrated for political reasons in the past 40 years. Their stories were collected both to document this mobility and to explore connections between the stories of women whose conditions of migration were very diverse, post-1989. Nevertheless, whether the explicit reason given for migration after the changes was love, work, education, or adventure, migration remains tightly bound with the ideas that brought about democratization and commercialization in the former communist block.

Bulgaria and Hungary can be seen as representing two different trajectories of communism. Whilst twentieth century Hungarian history is strongly marked by the events of 1956, in contrast in Bulgaria (a satellite of the Soviet Union), there were not strong anti-Socialist reactions. Today, Hungarian politics continue to be influenced by the 200,000 Hungarians who

left after 1956 and formed a huge global diaspora of political migrants. Whilst some Bulgarians also migrated for political reasons during the 1944–89 period, this was not a general trend (Vassileva, 1999: 9) and has not left a similar legacy. Hungarian migrants in Europe nowadays still tend to form networks based on political, economic or intellectual ties, and the interview material evidences activism in preserving the language and traditions of the Hungarian diaspora. In contrast, Bulgarians abroad prefer to be part of informal networks that are not so strongly differentiated by background, education or political affiliations.

One dimension of the choice of these countries was to explore similarities and differences on the question of Europeaness, as viewed through their *central-to-eastern* locations. They offered a good field of observation, being both – at the time of the research – still out of the EU, but in the process of becoming part of it. The question of European belonging is immediately connected to considerations of gender relations. In addition to political independence, claims for equal opportunities for women and men in education were prerequisites for becoming European in Bulgaria; and in Hungary too Europeaness was explicitly equated with some level of gender equality. The history of the twentieth century and especially of the Socialist period brought to both countries similar discourses of women's liberation, equality and competitiveness between Eastern and Western Europe. Long before the end of the Socialist era, Bulgarians regarded Hungary as 'the West' of the 'Eastern Europe'³. In Bulgaria, women worked and had considerable property rights even in the context of the Ottoman empire. After independence was won, women from wealthier families continued to work: the middle-class family ideal in which women stayed at home was never a significant phenomenon, unlike Hungary.

With regard to the receiving countries, the Netherlands and Italy represent two of the variations within Europe in terms of their histories and politics in relation to migration, which makes their comparison significant. The Netherlands has shifted from being a multicultural society with a long tradition of tolerance, to one that is leading debate on the failure of multiculturalism, and as such opening the way for the acceptance of restrictive policy measures directed at migrants. Italy represents a new receiving country (characteristic of most Southern European countries), in which the category of 'the migrant' is used to redefine Italy's place within Europe from marginal to more central as boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are shifted, from Southern Europe to the East.

The discussion now turns to the research techniques we adopted and some of the issues we grappled with in managing the material and negotiating interpretation. The construction of the sample of migrant women was deliberately open-ended, as we sought to unpack categories of migrants built around singular motivations for migration, e.g. labour or marriage. Nevertheless, we sought to build a sample with internal variation along several dimensions:

marital status; sector of labour market participation; duration of stay (beyond the duration of a tourist visa); date of arrival (to include predominantly but not exclusively post-1989 migrants); age; family status in country of origin; religion; level of education; and location. We did not prioritize 'ethnic minorities' as a category but neither did we exclude it. In practice, too few interview subjects were found to belong to 'minorities' within Bulgaria or Hungary to do any comparative analysis in this respect. Neither did we seek out women who had been subject to forced migration or enslavement. In practice we found very considerable variation in these dimensions *within* women's lives. For instance, legal or illegal as tightly bounded and distinct categories did not make sense in the lives of some women who might pass between the different statuses as they were subject to changes in the law and their job situations.

To gain access to migrant women we used a 'snowball' sampling method. This involved making simultaneous approaches to potential interviewees through different channels, including informal contacts, associations, jobs agencies, and churches. The Bulgarian team established contacts with individuals, networks and organizations that could provide information about the location, occupation and status of migrant women. In practice, some interviews with return-migrants in Bulgaria were decisive for making initial contacts. Following the initial chain of connections, the researcher entered networks of women-migrants ('ex-dancers' in Italy, and workplace-based networks in the Netherlands). The Hungarian team contacted Hungarian embassies, cultural institutes and organizations of the Hungarian diaspora prior to commencing fieldwork, and initial contacts were set up through these organizations. In the Netherlands, the internet homepage of Hungarian immigrants and the mailing list of the Association of Young Hungarians were key sources for contacts: indeed almost all of the contacts came through responses to our call for interviewees advertised in these places. Finally, personal contacts within the sending countries, especially in the case of the return migrants, were also crucial.

All of the interviews were conducted in the first language of the interviewee by a native speaker who was a full member of the project team, and thereby involved in all stages of research design. Nadejda Alexandrova conducted all the interviews with Bulgarian women, and Borbála Juhász conducted the majority of those with Hungarian women; in addition, several interviews were carried out by Judit Gazsi and Andrea Pető. These interviews were semi-structured (by the interviewer) and followed the lines of the interviewee's narrative. We nevertheless sought to explore several themes: the decision to migrate, networks, the journey, employment, experience of legal and other institutions, relationships, customs, and aspirations for the future.

The interviews with native women followed a more structured set of questions: their relationships to migrant women from Eastern Europe; knowledge and images of countries of central and Eastern Europe, including

travel experiences; and ideas about social and cultural practices of migrants. Again, all of the interviews were conducted in the first language of the interviewee, by a full member of the project team. Enrica Capussotti conducted all the interviews with Italian women, and Esther Vonk conducted all those with Dutch women. The principal criterion for selection of women in this sample was to have been in contact with migrants from the East of Europe. In this way we opened the strictly geographical definition of the migrant sample (from Bulgaria and Hungary) and included in the sample of native women persons who had some connection to migrants from Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, etc. We sought native women with different *forms of relationship* to migrant women: through employment – contractual or collegial; associative, e.g. in voluntary or other agencies; intimate, i.e. friendship or other close relationships. We also sought to include persons of various ages amongst the interviewees, and we decided to favour multiple locations within the country (urban and rural). Access was gained through informal contacts, suggestions from the migrants interviewed, and associations.

In both sets of interviews, the interviewer and interviewee shared a location within a common 'imagined' national community and were actively involved in the discussion (and construction) of a specific alterity: 'the native women' (Italians and Dutch, Western Europeans); 'the migrant women' (Bulgarians, Hungarians, Eastern Europeans). Although we acknowledge that positions and identifications are more contradictory and flexible than the categories used to conceptualize them, it is important to stress the presence of a common national background which was at the basis of the sample construction, and which shaped the interplay between selves and others within the exchanges. Overall, the project collected 110 interviews with migrant and native women.

Table 1 Interviews by country (n equals 110)

| | In Italy | In the Netherlands | Total |
|-----------|------------|--------------------|-------|
| Hungarian | 16+4return | 18+3return | 41 |
| Bulgarian | 15+2return | 17+3return | 37 |
| Total | 37 | 41 | 78 |
| Native | 18 | 14 | 32 |

The final part of this methodological discussion raises issues of interpretation and discusses the techniques and processes we put in place in our collaborative work. An important aspect of contemporary oral history is the question of the language, both in the interview and in the analysis of the transcript. All interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and translated into English. Due to the different languages spoken in the research team, we

chose English as the working language (the only language shared by all researchers). These various passages between form and language are relevant. If the transcription is already a transformation of form and meaning – from oral to written even though the transcript is as close as possible to the oral flow – the translation to another language is an additional intervention in the testimony. The texts which then form the data for our analysis are thereby constructed by multiple interventions: first, the construction of the sample itself through networks of different subjects, then the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, then the actions of transcribers and translators, and finally the viewpoints of the reader in trying to analyse the accounts. In our work, the researchers who share the same language as the interviewees continued to act as mediators between the different passages to help colleagues understand the resonances of meaning within the interviews. This was especially important as we sought to avoid single country-based analyses; instead we each worked across the corpus of interviews, and in some of the chapters, as joint authors.

The teams' geographical locations in different European spaces – South (Italy), North (Denmark and the Netherlands), Centre (Hungary), Balkans (Bulgaria) – have helped problematize within the group the very nature of geographical mappings and their implicit hierarchies. And the researchers' physical and intellectual movements through these different spatial constructions throughout the project (for meetings, seminars and conferences) have set in motion a deepened awareness of their artificial nature. Our different ways of interpreting the same corpus of material have generated exchanges (sometimes heated) across the particular epistemological assumptions, theoretical positions, and accepted practices of research associated with the different disciplines brought to this work. At the same time, each of our interpretations has been subject to scrutiny from multiple perspectives and locations. We sought to bring together our approaches, and expand our mutual knowledge of them, without reducing them to a single approach and agenda (Bommes and Morawska 2005). This has resulted in different viewpoints being brought to bear on the material analysed and presented in different styles in the chapters of this book.

Although the multiplicity of the methodological approaches in the analysis of the interviews which are interlaced in this book is part of its richness, we do not want to hide that it was sometimes problematic and challenging to combine differences. The first example of this is the dialogue between the opening piece by Braidotti, inspired by French philosophical studies, in particular of Deleuzian ascendancy, and the concluding one by Passerini, informed by the history of emotions, adopting the concept of inter-subjectivity from women's studies. These two essays represent two different lines of feminist studies, which do nevertheless interact fruitfully, converging on the idea of a new relationship between gender and Europe.

Another type of tension is created by the two essays that follow Braidotti's in Part I. Laliotou writes of women's mobility in a cultural perspective informed by a critical use of the category of gender in an essay that deconstructs the traditional conceptions of migration and links movement with new forms of transnational subjectivity. Petersen, in contrast, takes a legal perspective as a starting point to investigate the legal and normative aspects of subjectivity, which in contemporary Europe are linked to citizenship, at times producing what she terms *privileged subjectivity*.

In Part II, a multidisciplinary approach is brought to a series of key concepts. Building our analysis around these themes helped us to break down boundaries between oral history, literary studies, and the study of migration and mobility from social and historical perspectives. We had many discussions of the content of this part of the book and the concepts we settled on reflect the range of our view points. In the chapter on 'home' (Alexandrova and Lyon), the analysis draws out many aspects of the term connected with space and place, signifying the private and the public, the material and the metaphorical, the physical and the symbolic, all of which are linked through mobility and the capacity of the interview subjects to develop new senses of belonging. The analysis of 'love' (Alexandrova) informed by a multi-disciplinary approach, shows it to be a powerful mediator in and for migration, and a privileged site for exploring women's subjectivity. This is also the case for 'communication', in which Nikolchina explores the intercultural meanings of sharing and togetherness in daily conversation and rituals, as well as the stereotypes attached to different countries and peoples in the experience of migration. Other essays start from concepts which are key to certain disciplines, such as sociology and economics in the case of 'work' (Capussotti, Laliotou and Lyon). This chapter exposes the range of meanings subsumed in the term by the migrant women themselves – manual and intellectual, professional and unskilled, as well as informal care in the home – and highlights points of connection in the negotiation of subjectivity in relation to work. The last chapter of this part is concerned with 'food' (Pető), in which identity and otherness are understood on the basis of the type of socialisation made possible by food preparation and its narration.

The methodological choices and their connections in Part III are less complicated to trace. The first three essays create a field of comparison between two countries of arrival, the Netherlands and Italy, in which the native women's accounts are analysed using perspectives from contemporary history, media studies, and cultural sociology, each of which brings different insights to the interview material. The fourth adds a dimension that was present in its theoretical form since the beginning – the legal one – by offering a specific example in present day Europe which is a sort of warning of the possible negative transformations that democratic and tolerant countries such as Denmark can undergo faced with new pressures to respond to intercultural challenges.

Whilst all the writings refer to the corpus of interviews, they do this to different extents; some have more of a narrative form, others are more analytical. The three sets of narrations – what we have called *intermezzi* – that intersperse the three Parts of the book, give full voice to some of the interviewees, thus restoring the priority of individual memory in the study of subjectivity, whilst the Appendices document elements of each interviewee's biography.

Structure of the Book

The organization of the book is intended to reflect the dynamic between individual and collective both at the level of authors and interviewees. It alternates between groups of chapters written individually or jointly, with *intermezzi* that bring the reader back to the narratives of several interviewees whose lives are particularly significant for the themes treated in the research. The analytic tone of the essay is therefore interspersed with the narrative one of the autobiographical testimony. The latter is constructed through a two-fold inter-subjective exchange. The final version is the result of a montage of the oral narrations, together with a 'translation' of experience into writing.

Taking issue from three separate intellectual fields – history, philosophy and legal theory – the chapters included in Part I address the intersection of mobility, subjectivity and gender in contemporary visions of Europe. History, philosophy and legal theory are combined in this first part in order to evidence some of the interdisciplinary practices that formed this research project in its different stages of planning, interviewing, researching, analysing and elaborating the outcomes of the analysis. In addition, through the deliberate combination of these three fields we want to stress the multiplicity of the intellectual practices and traditions that are actively engaged in – as well as formed by – the process of imaging alternative forms of Europeaness.

In the first chapter, 'On Becoming Europeans' Rosi Braidotti emphasizes Europe's progressive potential. Against the grain of the simultaneous but contradictory celebration of transnational spaces on the one hand, and the resurgence of hyper-nationalisms at the micro-level on the other, Braidotti defends a process of the Deleuzian 'becoming-minoritarian'; in other words, of Europe as a way of both bypassing the global-local binary and of destabilizing the established definitions of European identity. Resting firmly on the belief in a post-Eurocentric vision of the European Union, she follows a philosophical orientation that is based on the practice of philosophy as the art of connection-making. Her aim in this chapter is to draw out a number of theoretical connections between different elements and themes which are discussed elsewhere in this book, such as the interrelation between identities, subject positions and affectivity or love relationships on the one hand, and issues of citizenship on the other. The conclusion of this argumentation, which is at once philosophical and political, is that the European Union as

a progressive project means a site of possible political resistance against nationalism, xenophobia and racism – bad habits that are endemic to the old imperial Europe. It therefore follows that the question of the European Union no longer coincides with European identity, but rather constitutes a rupture from it and a transformation.

In Chapter 2, which is concerned with mobility and subjectivity in the European context, Ioanna Laliotou analyses practices of transnational migration as part of a wider phenomenon of mobility that includes physical, cultural, political, subjective and conceptual forms of movement. This analysis seeks to foreground mobility as a historical and theoretical concept that enables complex understandings of the interrelation between migrancy and subjectivity in contemporary history. The women migrants interviewed for this research were driven by a variety of factors, including the need for better material and professional resources, political and existential dissidence, personal and intimate relationships, love, curiosity, and desire. Their histories indicate that after their migration they were often implicated in life arrangements and conditions that exceeded or altered the plans, desires and strategies they had formulated prior to moving. Taking the interviewees' vacillation between distancing themselves from and associating with the position of the migrant as a historical and theoretical starting point, the chapter traces the implications of these migrant testimonies for the ways in which we understand the contemporary history of mobility. To that end, the author analyses the ways in which the interviewees envision mobility as a constitutive element of their subjective histories and circumstances *vis-à-vis* the contemporary theoretical constellation of notions of mobility, space, normativity, and affective relationships.

Hanne Petersen, in Chapter 3, addresses transformations of legal subjectivity in Europe tracing the changing ways in which legal theory conceives of subjecthood. European legal culture, she argues, is undergoing change as a result of the combination of geo-political developments in the European Union with processes of globalization. This is marked also by a shift from normative jurisprudence to cultural pluralism in contemporary legal studies. If European migration and mobility give rise to different and overlapping kinds of legal subjectivity, in practice what may emerge is a regime of special rights, general rights and different advantages. Petersen argues that a European legal culture has to deal with multiple selves in complex legal contexts and has to face an emerging regime of privilege which is no longer based in laws but rather in the market. Seen in this context, national immigration law and national marriage law in Europe today appear to legitimize certain forms of exclusion, and secure differentiated legal statuses, which exist in interaction with market law and market-based special rights and privileges.

The passage from the first to the second part of the book is punctuated by the first *intermezzo* comprised of two narrations from the migrant women interviewed, one by the Bulgarian woman, Jelisaveta, and the other by the Hungarian woman, Piroska. Jelisaveta tells the story of her experience in Italy, where she arrived in 1993 as a cabaret dancer, later married an Italian, and is now a professional bridge player. Piroska arrived in the Netherlands in 1990, and after many jobs now works as a kindergarten teacher in Amsterdam, and lives in Rotterdam with her second husband.

The collection of chapters in the second part of the book is primarily constructed around different and interconnecting dimensions of identification in the lives of migrant women. These chapters discuss the ways in which the migrant women create meaning in their lives and negotiate the categories in which they are positioned or through which they are called to account for themselves in everyday life. The themes we have selected for analysis emerged both from our *a priori* interests, and from what turned out to be significant in the women's interview accounts. Ideas about belonging is a theme which implicitly or explicitly underpinned much of the research, and is something which is echoed in several chapters – those on border-places and home, communication, and food, in particular. The centrality of relationships in the women's accounts is something that we highlight in the chapters on love, to some extent on work, and again on communication. There are doubtless other topics that we might have made the subject of a chapter here and our specific choices make no claim to comprehensiveness. What they achieve, we think, is to shed light on the ways in which women are moving into and within their new social worlds, through the parallel and complementary perspectives and styles of questioning we brought to the set of interviews.

In Chapter 4 Nadejda Alexandrova and Dawn Lyon discuss the first impressions of the migrant interviewees in the host country, and their memories of border-places such as customs offices, airports, and train stations. Crossing the boundary between home and elsewhere is regarded as a critical moment in the perception of the women as migrants, by themselves and others. The chapter explores liminal space, the 'in-between the designations of identity', and considers the extent to which migrant women create new, perhaps transnational, spaces of belonging, as well as how they sustain former affiliations.

Miglena Nikolchina – in Chapter 5 – analyses the role of communication in the narratives of women migrants. She demonstrates that, partly as a reaction to the painful history of isolation during communism, and partly as a reflection of the dynamics of contemporary life, communication emerges in many of the interviews as a central element of happiness. What she calls the 'turbulence of talk', i.e. filling one's time with people through spontaneous social interaction, is for the interviewees equalled to 'having a life'.

In Chapter 6, Enrica Capussotti, Ioanna Laliotou and Dawn Lyon take on a different element of everyday life: the extent to which migrant women construct their subjectivity in relation to work. The authors focus on the place of work in the contemporary forms of subjectivity that come about through processes of mobility and migration. They analyse the relations in which some women refuse non-professional work, whilst others accept low-status employment. Allied to this, they discuss the themes of dignity and discrimination as they emerge in the interviews, and the issue of the relationship between work and family life.

In Chapter 7, Nadejda Alexandrova explores another central theme, the role of love in the migrant women's accounts. The first part of her analysis describes classifications of literary motifs and plots which are echoed in the interviews and used for the justification of the decision to leave one's country and family, and to live with a partner from a foreign country. The second part of the chapter builds on this, exploring how romantic love becomes a source for 'legitimate' explanations of the migrant women's actions and moves. The third part of the analysis deals with the question of how identification with, or denial of, a romantic narrative can account for the migrants' sense of autonomy, for their capacity for decision-making, and for their own strategies of integration in a new society.

In Chapter 8, the final chapter in this part of the book, Andrea Pető discusses the constitutive and constructive functions of 'food-talk' in the interviews. Speaking about food is a marker of identity and a frame of narrating difference and belonging in the interviews. Analysing both the accounts of migrant and native women sheds light on the processes involved in the negotiation of identity between different food traditions and food systems in a context of migration.

As a bridge to Part III of the book, we have located our second *intermezzo* at this point, a piece which intertwines the voices of the Dutch woman Barbara and the Italian woman Angela. Barbara is a worker in the Jewish Social Service, and has the specific and relevant experience of being married to a Bulgarian; Angela, who now lives in Florence, has had her own migration experience, first following her father and then her husband, both officers in the army.

The interviews of the Dutch and Italian women are at the heart of Part III of the book. They are analysed through mapping out the circulation of images, discursive representations and practices in relation to migrant women in public and private. An analysis of Danish legislation dealing with cross-border relationships concludes this part of the book. Overall, it is here that we evidence and discuss the cultural repertoires and practices (from the legal to the everyday) present in three western EU countries regarding immigration in general and Eastern European women in particular. Esther Vonk, Enrica Capussotti and Dawn Lyon deal with the exchanges between two

women with the same national background (interviewer and interviewee) who dialogically define the interviewee's relations with Bulgarian and Hungarian women amongst others; Inger Marie Conradsen and Annette Kronborg discuss the multiple influences of immigration law (public law) on family law (private law) arising from attempts by the state (or EU) to regulate immigration and cross-border relationships.

In Chapter 9, Vonk focuses on the interconnection between the discursive representations of Bulgarian and Hungarian women migrants in the interviews with Dutch women, and the current public debate on the 'integration' of minorities' in the Netherlands. Her main interest lies in questioning if and how the interviewees reproduce, resist, or contest the political discourse on the 'failure of multiculturalism' that is dominated by exclusionary and racist perspectives. Oppositions between national and non-national, 'real' and 'fake', integration and non-integration connote the debate that occurs with the shift toward the closure of Dutch borders and the stigmatization of difference. If the interviewees echo these dominant paradigms to different degrees (e.g. evoking the distinction between 'real' and 'fake' marriages as ways to enter the country), both their testimonies and the public discourse suggest two main differences in comparison with Italy's public and political spheres. First, the centrality of the welfare state as a battleground for the struggle between inclusion and exclusion (to be a 'national' and to be a 'real' refugee is the precondition for state assistance). This concern seems less central in Italy due to the structural limitations and inefficiency of the welfare system. Secondly, the persistence of a grammar of 'multiculturalism' that is absent or weak in the Italian public discourse dealing with intercultural relations.

In Chapter 10, Capussotti evidences the Italian interviewees' difficulty in narrating their relations with women from the European East. In the Italian political and public spheres, lack of knowledge, repression and inadequacy of a collectively elaborated discourse are combined with the forced exclusion of immigrants' voices and self-representations. Instead, established stereotypes and prejudices offer resources to give images and forms to the relation with 'others': modernity opposed to backwardness, emancipation to traditional femininity, richness to poverty, sign the divide between Italian and Eastern European women. Capussotti interprets the use of these binary oppositions as Italian women's renegotiation of their position within contemporary transnational processes: women migrants are exploited for the self-representation of Italian women to finally become modern, emancipated and fully Western.

Similar discursive mechanisms shape both Dutch and Italian interviewees' relations to 'Eastern European women'. First, we see in both sets of interviews the notion of the 'exceptional' individual that allows for a positive evaluation of a single woman (usually a friend or an employee) in opposition to the rest

of the national group. Secondly, we observe the centrality of gender and gender roles in native women's approaches to and opinions about migrant women – in relation to whom they position themselves as more emancipated – which confirms the centrality of gender in these discourses of 'others'. Thirdly, we note the importance of the nation, in articulation with transnational and global processes, as a basis for claims to belonging.

Lyon's comparative analysis of Italian and Dutch interviews in Chapter 11 further explores similarities and differences in the two sets of narratives, and relates these to the available cultural repertoires of the different settings. Using the concept of boundary-work, she analyses the place of moral and cultural boundaries in narrative constructions of self and other. The analysis disentangles different components of exclusion and racism on the one hand, and grounds for inclusion and solidarity on the other. Whereas employers tend to emphasize moral boundaries in their representations of migrant women, friends more often refer to cultural as well as moral boundaries as a basis for inclusion. The Dutch women voice moral boundaries less strongly than the Italians, and they emphasize cultural boundaries slightly more than moral ones. Furthermore, whereas the Dutch women talk about migration in terms of enrichment, openness, and universality, this vocabulary is absent in Italian testimonies.

Part III closes with an analysis of the Danish legislation concerning cross-border heterosexual relationships and marriage. Danish legislation to control immigration and cross-border relationships is a particularly interesting legal case study, both in relation to specific measures in Italy and the Netherlands, and as indicative of trends at the EU level. Conradsen and Kronborg discuss the growing importance of immigration law over other sectors traditionally identified with family and private law. The Danish conservative government's concern to limit immigration has focused on family reunification as one of the major channels of access to the country; inevitably the legislative effort entered the realm of public and private law transforming their traditional subjects and sphere of interests, and shifting family law into immigration law. Translating the moral panic constructed in Northern European countries around the figures of 'real/fake' refugees, in Denmark, State bio-power is articulated around the divide 'real/fake' marriage, in which love is opposed to instrumental marriage.

Between this collection of chapters and the concluding contribution to the book, the story of Edith appears as the third *intermezzo*. Bruck is a Hungarian woman who represents a sort of memory of 'old' forms of migration: she was the daughter of a very poor orthodox Jewish family deported to Auschwitz. From there, she was taken to Bergen Belsen, then in 1945 she went to Czechoslovakia, and later, in 1948, to Israel. She then made her home in Rome in 1954, where she became a successful published writer.

In the final and concluding chapter, Luisa Passerini opens discussion of a possible future configuration of European women's intersubjectivity. While any subjective formation found today – including those documented by the interviews in the present research – combines old and new forms of subjectivity, from ethnocentrism to interculturalism, this chapter tries to disentangle the new forms from the old. The new, promising ways of being European women point to multiplicity, openness and mutual collaboration, without forgetting the past experiences of women who felt European, such as those who created the group 'Femmes pour l'Europe' in the 1970s. At the same time, the stress put by many of the migrant interviewees on their belonging to 'Central' Europe as well as their insistence on the role of emotions within the process of mobility, contribute to the processes that de- and reterritorialize Europe. The testimonies of native women include both some uncertainty in defining Europeanness, and in some cases the capacity to enlarge their vision of Europe thanks to encounters with women from other parts of the continent. While no immediate optimism can ignore the elements of nationalism and Eurocentrism present in all the interviews – which often function to establish solidarity among European women through contrasting them with women from other continents (American) and/or other cultures (African, Islamic) – the research has nevertheless found in the interviews many elements that testify to the possibility of new ways of being European women, and new forms of belonging to Europe.

Notes

1. We use the term 'native' to refer to those women selected for interview on the basis of their lifelong Italian or Dutch citizenship. We recognize that the term is problematic as it implies an essentialist belonging to nation, and thereby a strict distinction between native and non-native. However we intend it simply as a shorthand to distinguish between our different interviewee groupings. Amongst the repertoire of alternatives, e.g., host or receiving, we found nothing satisfactory.
2. The digital archive is accessible through the website of the European University Institute, which was the co-ordinating institution of the research. See: <http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/Research/GRINE/>.
3. However, in the 1980s the messianic theories about Bulgaria as 'the cradle of civilization', 'the land of the Thracians' were very widespread.

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Part I

Subjectivity, Mobility and Gender in Europe

Chapter 2

**'I want to see the world':
Mobility and Subjectivity in the
European Context**

Ioanna Laliotou

Post-communist movements from Eastern to Western Europe are contributing greatly to the transformation of the ways in which we are currently re-conceptualizing the association between mobility, subjectivity and European history. The relation between Eastern and Western Europe after 1989 has been determined mainly by the social, political and economic conditions of post-communism and by the intensification of a wide variety of political, economic, and cultural exchanges between the East and the West. Human mobility plays a central role in these exchanges, as it transforms past definitions of the political space between the East and West and gives rise to new transnational forms of subjectivity in Europe.

In this chapter, I analyse practices of transnational migration as part of a wider phenomena of mobility that include physical, cultural, political, subjective and conceptual forms of movement. This analysis seeks to foreground mobility as a historical and theoretical concept that enables complex understandings of the interrelation between migrancy and subjectivity in contemporary history. While using the term mobility in order to describe the migrants' sets of experiences of transnational arrangements in Europe, one should remain aware of the liberal connotations of the term; connotations that do not necessarily apply to the historical phenomena of movement studied here. Mobility as a concept is often used in order to refer to the freedom of movement and the dissolution of political, family, social and economic constraints, and is more generally associated with nomadic practices as opposed to sedentary forms of existence and social being. The history of

movement that is presented through the testimonies of women migrants from Eastern to Western Europe is not conducive to the validation of such a liberal take on the concept of mobility. The women whose histories of migration constitute the primary research material in this project were driven by a variety of factors, including the need for better material and professional resources, political and existential dissidence, personal and intimate relationships, love, curiosity, and desire. Furthermore, their histories indicate that after their migration they were often implicated in life arrangements and conditions that exceeded or altered the plans, desires and strategies that they had formulated prior to their decision to leave their countries of birth.

Among the plurality of often contradictory reasons that the interviewees give in order to explain why they left their countries, many of them stated that their movement was not planned as migration, but as a strategy for family unification, or that the purpose was to pursue personal relationships, or simply a result of their curiosity to 'see the world'. However, and despite the fact that this group of interviewees insist on drawing a distinction between themselves and 'migrants,' they describe the conditions of their lives after migration in ways that coincide with traditional narratives of migration, as these descriptions are organized around familiar themes such as adaptation to the new country, cultural incompatibilities, xenophobia, forced integration, nostalgia and homesickness, romanticization of the status of the exiled, etc. As Ana, who was born in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1962 and migrated to Italy as a member of a dance group in 1989, noted, some people never actually consciously decided to migrate. In her interview, Ana insists on the fact that although she had not thought of migrating *per se* she was driven to Italy by her desire to visit different places and countries (Ana, Bu/I). She is nostalgic for the period before the number of Bulgarian migrants increased, when 'people in Italy were interested in us', before they were faced with larger numbers of foreign migrants and became hostile and xenophobic. Like many others, Ana declares that she does not have relationships with other migrants, and she differentiates her position from the lot of the migrant. Despite her insistence on this differentiation, in her description of her social life in Italy, she also insists on her clear strategy of establishing relationships with other Bulgarian women, colleagues and friends. Interviewees who distance themselves from the category of migrants often base their argument on the distinction between having made a conscious decision to migrate on the one hand and of finding oneself in the condition of migrancy without having planned to be in this situation. This insistence is often expressed through extensive references to the role that personal relationships played in their decision to leave their country of birth.

Reflection on the properties of migrant subjectivity is common in the interviews with those who acknowledge the fact that the mobility of their lives is a particular characteristic that gives them a special position both in

their homelands as well as in the countries where they reside. On the other hand, they feel that they do not fit comfortably in the traditional position of the migrant. Marina, a woman from Bulgaria, explains how migration was never in her plans, although travelling had always been her father's aspiration for himself; an aspiration that was never fulfilled 'because during the communist regime he wasn't allowed to do that' (Marina, Bu/I). Towards the end of her interview Marina makes a distinction between her mobility in Bulgaria, Russia and Italy and the forced migration of people who need to migrate in order to survive. She claims that forced migration is a global phenomenon which both expresses and is conducive to human suffering. Forced migration disrupts relationships and bonds of affection and is thus detrimental and cruel, whereas mobility creates possibilities for new relationships and for the expansion of one's horizon of connections and social networks. It would however be a mistake to relate the histories of movement and relocation that are documented in these interviews with cosmopolitanism, since such an interpretation would undermine the documented centrality of the conditions of migrancy in the experiences narrated. Reducing mobility to cosmopolitanism would impede us from understanding contemporary transformations of the practices and realities of migration. In using the term mobility in order to refer to these new practices of migration, I do not intend to undermine the difficulties and constraints that women are faced with in the processes involved in moving from one country to the other and the blockages – cultural, political and institutional – that determine their efforts to re-establish their lives in the countries of migration. Quite differently, the interviews demonstrate the multiplicity of points of departure, destinations, itineraries, strategies, practices and venues that constitute a large range of activities to which the term migration refers. The testimonies of women who state that their desire to 'see the world' defines their history of migration offer a starting point for a re-theorization of the concept of cosmopolitanism in the context of new *cosmopolitical* processes, as Jacques Derrida and others have put it, still in the phase of 'experimentation' (Derrida 2003: 3–23). In many cases women are motivated by an unspecified desire to move, 'to see the world' (Boyana, Bu/NL).

The interviews with women who have moved from the European East to the West are marked by a constant vacillation between distancing themselves from, and associating themselves with, the position of the migrant. Taking this vacillation as a historical and theoretical starting-point, in the following sections I trace the implications of these migrant testimonies for the ways in which we understand the contemporary history of mobility. To that end, I analyse the ways in which the interviewees envision mobility as a constitutive element of their subjective histories and circumstances vis-à-vis the contemporary theoretical constellation of notions of mobility, space, normativity and affective relationships.

Movement and the Critique of Heteronormativity

The relationship between subjectivity and movement has been theorized in the context of many different disciplines and intellectual traditions including philosophy, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, history and post-colonial studies. Theorists, researchers and practitioners in these fields have employed notions such as hybridity and nomadism in order to conceptualise the subject-effects of physical, cultural or psychic transgressions. Hybridity and nomadism became key-concepts in the field of migration studies, especially during the 1990s, when new migrations to old metropolitan centres, including post-colonial and post-communist migrations – led to the creation of migrant communities, cultures and practices that could not be adequately analysed in terms of assimilation, integration, acculturation or parochialism. As has been suggested, migration in the era of postcolonialism created a 'third-space' in culture, a space inhabited by new subjects that enacted and embodied cultural hybridity in the metropolises.¹ Cultural identity was theoretically de-essentialised and re-worked as a terrain of constant negotiation on the level of everyday life and social interaction.²

On the other hand, the association of the migrant with the philosophical figure of the nomad gave rise to inspiring approaches to the psychic affects of migration and movement. Following the Deleuzian critique of the logo-centric and unitary subject of philosophy, attention was drawn to the always-becoming condition of subjectivity, and fragmentation and fluidity were recognized as its main characteristics.³ Certainly, one should keep in mind the sharp distinction between the philosophical figure of the nomad and the historical and social figure of the migrant. Deleuze and Guattari have stressed this distinction with reference to the different sets of relations to the notion of origin,⁴ while other theorists have stressed that the conflation of nomadism, migrancy and cosmopolitanism results in viewing the whole world as migrant, an approach that de-historicizes the experience of migration and undermines our attempt to understand the complexity of the history of mobility.⁵

Nomadic thought enables an understanding of the effects of movement and of the transgression of physical and symbolic borders on the ways in which the migrant becomes a subject. Migrants, as well as natives, partake in flows of desire that break away from codes of signification determined by the dominant assemblages of power, including community, family, nationhood, tradition and local belongings. Breaking away from certain familiar means – material, spiritual, mental or imaginary – of making sense of the world around us, is a necessary element of migration. In the same way, finding new practices of cultural re-coding is also part of the process of migration, leading migrants through recurring stages of reterritorialization. In the contemporary context of intensified mobility the relation between migrant communities

and national homelands and between post-national processes and existing forms of nationhood are marked by different points of de- and re-territorialization. One could even argue that migrant subjectivity is constituted within a sphere of cultural and political becomings, which allow us to study moments of crisis of established majorities and minorities, strategies of articulation of new subject-positions and alternative visions of self and community that do not necessarily historically evolve into fixed collective identities.

These new modes of subjectivation and new kinds of valorized subjectivity are currently being drastically shaped by the conditions of transnational mobility, and consist of practices and strategies and disciplines associated with late capitalism (Ong 1999: 18–19). The expansion of the transnational networks of migrants and communities and the intensification of transnational cultural, political and economic interaction in late capitalism have led to the emergence of new forms of being a subject that enable – and sometimes force – people to act on different levels of local and global communication. Post-1989 migrations and other forms of mobility have brought the concept and practices of citizenship into the foreground of public debates and theorization. Relating these emergences with the on-going political debate on European citizenship, many theorists have placed particular stress on the multi-layered forms of becoming a full member in a community in the age of globalization. On the basis of the varied and changing ways in which people's intimate lives, their families and their networks of friendship affect and are affected by their activities as citizens, theorists have endorsed the notion of 'transversal citizenship,' reflecting the varied forms of current political participation (i.e. national, European or dual citizenship, municipal political participation and residency rights, participation in community political organizations and associations, etc.).⁶ This new form of transversal citizenship is linked to the new forms of subjectivity that have emerged as the result of the mass movements of people and to the consequent diversification of the social body in European societies.

The emphasis on the effects mobility has on the ways one becomes a subject is shared by studies of hybridity, nomadism and transversalism alike. This emphasis, however, encourages a unilateral conception of the relationship between mobility and subjectivity. Attention is focused on the subject-effects of mobility, whereas the possibility that particular forms of subjectivity might enable new practices of mobility is, in general, not considered. However, an important finding of our research is that many of the interviewees consider their migration from Eastern to Western Europe as a consequence of their character, their nature, their personal dispositions and their preferences. Character attributes, intimate relationships and desires, upbringing and family background, personal feelings are all factors that led the decision to migrate. No matter what the specific motivation was, the interviewees give accounts of how changes in emotions, psychic conditions

and intimate relationships led to physical mobility. Preoccupied with the effects of migration on people and recipient societies, migration history and theory has, in general, undermined the bilateral nature of the relationship between subjectivity and mobility.⁷

Recently, this bilateral relationship has been addressed in a growing body of work that seeks to demonstrate the centrality of movement and mobility to the constitution of sexual and gender subjectivities, both historically and contemporarily (Stychin 2000; Binnie 1997; Binnie and Valentine 1999; Bell and Binnie 2000; Weston 1995). In recent years, queer theory has enabled scholars and students of migration to discuss mobility in relation to issues of sexuality and the constitution of sexual subjectivities in diasporas. In the field of Asian American studies in particular, mobility is currently used as a central concept in the study of the transnational citizenship in relation to sexual politics and the emergence of new forms of sexual subjectivities. The conceptual convergence between queer theory and diaspora studies derives from the shared preoccupation, evident also in the interviews of our project, with complicating and problematizing notions of home in order to make sense of conditions of movement. Accordingly, traditional points of departure and arrival, such as Eastern and Western Europe, as well as Asia and Asian America, become open-ended terms, i.e. they lack reference to a strictly defined territory. They represent transnational spaces defined by the movement and practices of people across large geopolitical areas, 'siteless locales' that inherently lack the territorial sovereignty that the geographical terms longingly invoke (Eng 1997). Home – both as origin as well as destination – is thus not limited in the territorial space of the nation-state, but is rather related to subjective practices and dispositions. In many of our interviews women relate home to affective relationships. Home is often detached from the normative association with domesticity or state-nationhood and is related to subjective moves and attachments. Women as subjects in migration are also subjects in exile, a de-domesticated home, an 'uninhabitable domain' (Eng 1997: 32; Eng and Hom 1998; Jackson 2000; Mackie 2001).⁸ From the point of view of queer studies, exile is seen as an advantageous point from which to critique the normativity of heterosexual social and family orders. Queer diaspora studies can be taken as a useful framework and methodology for interrogating the normativity of cultural, political and social participation in the contemporary post-national, post-communist or post-colonial state. Focusing on the inside-out location of home and homeland in the context of sexual subjectivities, scholars have suggested that in order to explore the formation of subjectivity in exile we need to attend to the ways in which social normativities are embedded and embodied in citizenship and nationalism, circulated through capitalism, and mobilized in the discourses of postcolonialism. Exploring the relationship between subjectivity and social normativities of home and homeland presupposes a consider-

ation of the circuits of desire within which home and homeland are conceived. This means attending to the multiple valences of desire, such as identification, national belonging, and affective relationships (Desai 2002: 85).

Studies in queer diaspora have indicated that the connections between travel, mobility and sexuality have a long and complex history. Thus, scholars have analysed the diverse connotations and experiences of home, that range from refuge to a place one seeks to escape from, to the building up of new communities within urban settings and imaginary homelands. The study of queer diaspora has problematized various normative and long-lasting assumptions of migration studies by tracing the multiplicity of definitions of home and origin and by challenging the notion that migrant communities are necessarily culturally homogenous and uniform (Sinfield 1996: 282). Moreover, queer diaspora studies, I suggest, may provide us with a starting point for re-theorizing the relationship between mobility and subjectivity by bringing into the foreground the dynamic nexus between migration and affective relationships.

The Desire to Move: Personal 'Dissidence' as a Constitutive Element of Mobility

The dynamic nexus between migration and affective relationships is articulated in many of the interviews of this project through the invocation of the issue of personal dissidence. Personal dissidence appears in the interviews sporadically and often in inarticulate and contradictory ways. Elements of unruliness, disobedience and of a general disposition to follow a life path, which one was not expected to choose, often co-exist with political and cultural conformism and otherwise conventional outlooks. Even though inarticulate and sporadic, these references to personal dissidence are vital in helping us to understand the ways in which the interviewees conceptualize themselves as migrants in the contemporary European context. In this section, I trace these emergent conceptualizations of migrant subjectivity in order to explore the meaning that the interviewees attribute to the notion of mobility. In order to follow this line of exploration, I focus on points where personal dissidence is associated with an enacted desire and a will to 'move.'

This association is certainly more evident in the cases of women who left their countries of birth before 1989. Pre-1989 migrants often, but not always, identify themselves as political refugees, or as exiles. However, most of the interviewees are perplexed about the nature of their movement, as it appears to be very difficult for them to identify with one or the other of the categories often used to describe people who leave their native countries and spend a part of their lives elsewhere. The fluidity of these categories is manifested in the case of Rosa, a woman who left Bulgaria in 1968 at the age of

twenty (Rosa, Bu/NL). After fleeing from Bulgaria, Rosa describes how, while at the refugee camp in Trieste, she had to choose if she were an economic or a political exile. According to migration policies of the time, a political exile ('*azil politic*' is the term used in the interviews) could get permission to stay in a European country. On the contrary, if a refugee identified herself as an economic exile ('*azil economic*') then she had to leave the continent and go to America, or Australia. Before leaving her homeland, Rosa was a dancer at a Bulgarian dancing group. She travelled and performed in many different places including Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo, and Montenegro. While she was working at a resort hotel at Nova Gorica, she was asked by the Bulgarian authorities to return to Bulgaria. Rosa knew that that call meant the end of her travelling, at least for a while, and she was not ready to comply with the official request. So she decided to cross the border and become a refugee in Italy. She was a self-exiled refugee, although her interview makes it clear that she was not certain about the political or economic character of her exile. However, it is obvious in the interview that the driving force behind her movement across Europe was not resettlement, but rather a choice of going into exile instead of confinement in her home country. Rosa's exile led her to many different European locations including Trieste, Rome, Paris and The Hague. It is very difficult to understand the experience of mobility that is described by migrants such as Rosa through the conventional lenses through which migration and the need for resettlement in another country are viewed. The rigid categories used in official classifications and immigration policy documents do not make sense when the subjects narrate their life-stories. Apart from revealing the conventionality of the categories themselves, this ambiguity also registers the particular characteristics that mark population movements from Eastern to Western Europe after WWII. Pre-1989 migrants often emphatically insist on references to their personal dissidence as the main factor that made them move. 'I could not keep my mouth shut,' remarks an interviewee, and in this way she attributes her will to cross the borders to her unruly and independent character.

Although references to dissidence are to be expected in the stories of political refugees, they are also present in narratives that seem to belong to the more traditional migrant story variety. Personal dissidence – against that which different subjects define in their own terms as a norm – can be traced to the ways in which the interviewees present their will to 'see the world,' or 'to travel' in general, or to pursue professional success and education in other places, or simply to try one's luck outside the borders of the native land. In almost all of the interviews, migrants claim that it is their desire, their will and their envisioning of moving that eventually causes them to move. The desire and the will to move is an important element in all of the interviews. One could actually argue that the desire to move is the core element around which a plurality of other key referents are articulated which

shape the migration story: love, relationships, nostalgia, professional pride, personal achievement, family obligations, the lure of the West, etc. Against the grain of the established assumptions that we have today about women's forced migration from Eastern to Western Europe – assumptions that are grounded in widely disseminated images of the Eastern European woman as a powerless sexual victim – almost all of the subjects insist that the decision to migrate was theirs and that this decision was grounded in the desire to leave their country and live for a certain period of time abroad. Even in cases where the overall narrative reveals the complexity of the structures of power within which women's movement takes place, the subjects insist on descriptions of their own desire and their will to migrate.

References to the desire to move are also very important for our understanding of the subjects' attitude towards Europe, the West and their native countries as well as to the countries of migration. One of the questions that came up in the interviews concerned the migrants' conceptualizations of Europe, and how their notions of European-ness relate to pre-existing images of the West. As expected, references to Europe and to the West were, in most cases, indirect and embedded in the migrants' descriptions of their experiences and their judgment of the countries of migration, as well as in their attitudes towards their native countries – in particular with regard to their positions on the issue of repatriation. These descriptions and attitudes are interdependent in the sense that we cannot understand the migrants' attitude towards Italy or the Netherlands unless we relate it to how they think about returning to their native countries. The reasons migrants give, in order to explain their desire to return to Bulgaria or Hungary, are related to their judgments of the countries of migration and their cultures, politics and everyday life. However, the ways in which they view Europe, the West and their countries (of origin and/or of migration) are influenced by the way in which they experience mobility. In almost all of the cases movement is presented as an on-going process. Moving from the one country to the other, from the one city to the other, back and forth between the native country and others is presented as a continuous process that should not be impeded by political and social factors and regulations. European countries, but also others that seem to be incorporated in the West, such as post-colonial Tunisia, seem to belong in a familiar territory within which movement does not represent a rupture in one's life's course. Even in the case of narratives that register nostalgia and homesickness, the physical movement away from the native land does not seem to represent a traumatic experience of separation. References to the notion of insurmountable distance, long or expensive journeys, long-term obstacles to communication are almost absent. Some exceptions can be found in the case of political migrants, when they refer to periods when, for political reasons, communication was very difficult with members of their families who had stayed behind. In gen-

eral however, subjects seem to consider it common sense that they travel to their homeland at least twice a year and that they keep close relationships with family, friends and professional associates. Life in the homeland is not presented as a life left behind. In this respect, the narration of migration does not borrow elements of the rhetoric of loss and of death that we find in the study of other cases of migrant cultures. The chord between homeland and migrant land is alive and dynamic, and mobility between the East and the West is experienced as a continuous process of movement within a wider territory of Europe. As Marina, who was born in Sofia in 1967 and who left her country a few years ago after she fell in love with an Italian journalist, put it: 'it is trivial to talk about global world, but this is reality. I can see that my Bulgarian friends and I read the same books and we watch the same TV programs, we follow the progress of the same world events. So the distance between us is not so big' (Marina, Bu/I).

In this regard, the migrants' attitudes towards their homelands and towards their countries of residence are very ambivalent and fluid. Very rarely do we encounter fixed and wholehearted presentations of paradise either in descriptions of the homeland, or in descriptions of the country of migration. More importantly, it appears that migrants had not even expected to find in the countries to which they had migrated the actual materialisation of utopian visions of the West. The concept of the West that appears in the interviews has no strict territorial reference, but rather refers to the level of desire, objects, arrangements, ways of feeling and experiences that the subject desires or has desired in the past. Thus, the discrepancy between utopian visions of the West and the actual situation of the countries of migration is often not expressed as a form of disappointment. There are not many references in the interviews to the expectation of finding a utopian West in Italy or the Netherlands. Disappointment with the conditions of life in Italy or in the Netherlands is culturally defined in terms of national characteristics. Thus, Italy is often presented as being disorganized and bureaucratic, whereas Italian social life is often referred to as being too traditional and family-centred. Few of these critical representations of Italy reflect stereotypical Italian self-perceptions, while others follow typical European perceptions of culture and politics in the Mediterranean South. Similarly, the Netherlands is often presented as culturally reserved and emotionally 'cold'. Descriptions of the Netherlands and Italy are very mixed — critical and positive — quite inconsistent and contradictory, and sometimes even share elements that are used in the descriptions of Hungary and Bulgaria. In some cases, the descriptions of Hungary and Bulgaria are so positive that one may wonder why the subject chose to live elsewhere. These are the cases of subjects whose desire to move had become predominant and independent from territorial determinants. Dissidence in these cases is associated with mobility *per se*, because the latter presupposes disassociation from personal

and social norms (i.e. what one is supposed or normally expected to do with their lives). Dissidence is thus expressed through the desire to move, both physically as well as subjectively. Boyana, who left Bulgaria to go to Tunisia, then to the Netherlands and back to Bulgaria in the pre-1989 period, after having been denied permission to study in the United States, admits that 'seeing the world' was her main goal, but then she concludes her interview by insisting that 'her feet are there,' meaning in Bulgaria. In many pre-1989 cases of migration, it is evident that restrictions on travel generated a general and overarching desire to move. Place did not always matter as much as the very experience and condition of being elsewhere (Boyana).

Political space is re-defined by this tendency to be mobile that is very often realized in gendered practices of mobility and in the transformation of gender relationships in Eastern and Western Europe. Through the association of mobility with personal as well as political dissidence, migrants conceptualize Europe more as a condition of aspired mobility than as a specific geopolitical territory or as a form of cultural identification. Eastern European migrants envision being 'Europeanly'⁹ as being based on one's ability to move back and forth. This vision is very closely connected with a notion of the West as a utopian universe defined by one's ability to move, physically as well as psychically, and to pursue alternative life-courses.

Curved Spaces

The association, made by the Eastern European migrants in these interviews, of the West, Europe and mobility has to be contextualized according to shifting conceptualizations of political space between Eastern and Western Europe. These interviews take place at a historical moment of transformation, marked by the processes of political, cultural and social transition in East Europe of the post-1989 period. During the last decade, gender relations have been at the core of these processes in many ways. First, the transition from state socialism to capitalism has had a huge impact on the lives and the position of women in Eastern European societies. Second, the re-arrangement of gender relations registers, and is indicative of, a wide range of changes that are related to the modification of political and social practices as well as understandings of the private and public sphere in post-communism (Einhorn 1993; Funk and Mueller 1993; Moghadam 1993; Rueschemeyer 1994; Corrin 1992; Reading 1992; Posadskaya 1994). Third, as political change has been accompanied by the intensification of multi-level communication between the European East and the West, gender issues have become particularly contentious and almost emblematic of the difficulties of communication and mutual understanding that exist between the two sides; ruptures that were powerfully and lastingly forged during the Cold War.

Since the early 1990s there has been a growing body of scholarship that addresses the relation between gender and political transition in Eastern and Central Europe. In many cases this scholarship has diagnosed a difficulty in communication about issues related to gender. Scholars have stressed how the presumption that political identities and categories under capitalist and communist regimes are fundamentally the same underpins the tensions in West–East transnational feminist debate. These tensions often concern the so-called ‘paradox of (anti) feminism’ in East Europe. This paradox is defined by two main elements: one, the realization that political transition has in many respects led to the deterioration of conditions in women’s lives in the East (as indicated in less political participation, rising unemployment, the roll-back of social services, the masculinization of property, state intervention in reproductive practices, etc.); and two, the great apprehension felt by women in the East about unproblematically embracing feminism as an emblematic force of democratization (Watson 2000).¹⁰

This apprehension has been a common characteristic in countries where feminism was introduced early on, through state politics as part of projects which aimed at the modernization of traditional societies. State feminism has, in many cases, operated as a tool of political transition that marked the consolidation of modern nation-states and different projects of modernization in the twentieth century. State feminism in these cases developed a political agenda that aimed at the re-organization of the family and attempted to bring about changes in family law with the purpose of placing women in the role of the active and more efficient managers of the economics and the morals of the family unit. Moreover, it also aimed to promote the further introduction of working and lower middle-class women into the labour market – by endowing paid female labour with the aura of a means of emancipation – and to educate women so that they would undertake the task of being the interlocutors between Western ideas and methods of managing affective and family relationships on the one hand, and the traditional societies that had to be modernized on the other.¹¹

The experience of the last decade has shown that, in the cases of political transition in Eastern and Central Europe and in the Balkans, Western feminism has often assumed the role of the promoter of Western values of liberal democracy and capitalist re-organization of society. More dramatically, since the early 1990s Western feminist agendas have been appropriated in order to legitimize and provide a moral background to practices of military intervention in the context of a series of ‘just wars’ conducted by Western countries in the Balkans and in the Middle East. Although feminists around the globe are very much aware that ‘defending women and children from their own people’s barbarity’ has historically been used as an argument by colonizers and aggressors in order to legitimize the most cruel practices of territorial expansion and the establishment of coercive systems of control,

in practice transnational feminist politics have not problematized adequately the different levels of complicity that the appropriation of feminist agendas today involves.¹²

It would however be a mistake to argue that the crisis in communication between Easterners and Westerners immediately after the changes of 1989 concerned exclusively feminists or the debates taking place within transnational feminism. As it has been pointed out, the late 1980s and early 1990s were marked by a generalized crisis in communication especially between partners whose intellectual engagement had anticipated the process of political transition. Interestingly, scholars who have attempted to analyse this communication failure have also pointed out that the incomprehensibility became even more apparent when post-communist Easterners were brought into discussion with Western Marxist thinkers. The communication failure was not in these cases attributed to cultural difference, but rather to the divergent meanings of homonymous concepts whose uses derived from differing political histories (Buck-Morss 2000).¹³ If the communist regime has operated as a significant heterotopia for western democracies – including marxist intellectuals in the West – and *vice versa*, then the crisis of communication should be attributed to what Nikolchina terms an uncritical homonymic use of heterotopian signifieds. ‘The trouble springs from the fact that the homonymy of signifieds, which, as in Foucault’s specular definition of heterotopia, ‘represent, contest, and invert’ each other, has a neutralizing or even deadly effect when the mirror falls to pieces and the spaces on its two sides merge’.¹⁴

The more it becomes evident that, in order to explore and re-conceptualise the history of the European twentieth century beyond the Manichean terminology of the Cold War (i.e. beyond the fragmented vision of two Europes divided by the Iron Curtain), we cannot rely upon the obsolescent steadiness of heterotopian knowledge, the more we realize the need for new languages of communication and new concepts of analysis of Europe. Within this new project, the re-conceptualization of the space marked by the mobility of people whose lives transcend the changing borders between the East and the West is a first priority. Focusing on the association between mobility, visions of the West and Europeaness distances us from notions of an absolute space that does, or does not, accommodate the movement of social actors, identities and culture. The interviews analysed in this chapter indicate that it is the physical and psychic movement of people that defines space on different levels of interaction between the European East and the West. The understanding of subjective relationships between the European East and the European West as established by political/social actors in the pre-defined absolute space of post-communism leads to the deadlock of communication, which has already been described by theorists both in the East as well as in the West. Furthermore, presupposing knowledge of this

political space just by naming it as post-communism – or as the European Union – and then trying to re-accommodate the history of a great part of the twentieth century under the reformist umbrella of western democratic normativity – in which feminism is then presented as a means of democratic reform – obliterates the challenge that historicity poses to our understandings of the world.

A return to historicity would direct our attention to the ways in which the space between East and West is constituted by the historical experiences and the visions of those whose movement defines – and is defined by and across – the political borders between the East and the West, in a period when these borders, as well as their imaginary functions, are intensively mobile and transitional. The ideas of Europe and the West that emerge in the interviews promote a notion of curved space, in the sense that political space between the East and the West is de-territorialized and re-determined by the physical as well as the subjective movement of actors. As has been argued, ‘with political ‘curved space’ (...) political actors/identities, rather than acting ‘within’ political space, or being prevented from so doing by virtue of space’s lack, instead *constitute, as they are constituted by* a specific political ‘curved space’ (Watson 2000: 197). As analysed in the previous section, dissidence towards normativity, the desire to move and the ability to maintain the distinction between utopian visions of the West as a condition of aspiring mobility and the migrants’ actual experiences in Italy and the Netherlands, become factors that curve the political space between the European East and the West.

In the following section, I discuss how, in the process of migration, the political space between East and the West is curved through ‘moving relationships’ that migrants pursue, establish and maintain.

Relationships that Move You

Migration often entails the physical disruption of intimate relationships and, in some cases, it also involves taking a distance from one’s own familiar territory, surroundings and social as well as family circles. In our interviews with Eastern European migrants to Italy and the Netherlands, mobility is most often either motivated by relationships, or has enabled the establishment of new relationships. We can understand this link between mobility and relationships in a twofold way. First, mobility can be motivated by relationships. The most typical examples of this are the movement that is subsequent to the establishment of relationships between people with different origins, and that which is involved in situations of family re-unification, caring for parents, children and other dependent family members. Secondly, relationships enable mobility on a more subjective level. Relationships pro-

vide the context within which the subject reflects on changes that are taking place in her personality, her desires, her general outlook and her plans for the future. In this sense relationships are associated with psychic and subjective forms of mobility. The subjects are thus both physically as well as psychically and subjectively moved *by* and *through* their relationships. In many cases, the interviewees emphatically insist on the inseparable intertwining between physical and subjective movement in a way that does not allow for any attempt to distinguish between the two aspects of mobility. This systematic insistence creates the impression that, for the interviewees, migration cannot be understood without a consideration of the relationships involved in the process, and also that the relationships necessarily result in personal transformation and movement. Relationships that are created prior to migration have an impact on the decision to move, whereas other relationships become important after the relocation to a new place, where they facilitate changes in the conditions of one’s life and outlook.

Intimate and emotional relationships can operate both as motives for, as well as deterrents against, migration. In some cases, the migrant’s relationships connect her with her place of origin, whereas in other cases relationships push her to transcend traditional bonds related to her social circles in the homeland. In many cases, relationships with people in the homeland remain un-named, as the interviewee refers to them using general terms such as ‘family and friends’ (Agi, Hu/NL). On the contrary, ‘moving’ relationships are named and exemplified. This is often expressed in contradictory ways (Boyana, Bu/NL), when for example migrants insist on the intimacy and closeness of relationships in East Europe while, at the same time, they also insist that it was an intimate relationship that made them move to the other country (Piroska, Hu/NL).

In many cases, relationships – or even the potential to establish relationships – redefine space, as they make geography and the psychic self intersect. Migrants often describe and evaluate cities and places of residence in terms of how suitable these places are for the establishment of personal relationships with others. This is more evident in the case of migrants who have followed a long itinerary of migrations. In these cases the experience of mobility is expressed through a constant evaluation of different places based on the subject’s experiences of movement. Boyana, a 63 year-old Bulgarian violinist, left her homeland when she was very young. After completing her studies at the conservatorium, she worked for a couple of years in Bulgaria and then accepted a job as a performer in Tunis. Her ambition to continue her music studies in the U.S. was curtailed when her application for permission to accept a scholarship offered to her by the Boston Conservatorium was officially rejected. Thus, Boyana returned to Tunis where she stayed for eleven years, until she met her French husband and moved with him to Strasburg. Since then she has pursued her career and personal life in differ-

ent European cities including Utrecht and Amsterdam. Establishing intimate relationships is presented as a major goal in this migrant's life, and the possibilities that a place offers for this become an important criterion for evaluating a city, a country, a culture, or a people. Despite her love for Amsterdam, Boyana refers extensively to the difficulties that she faced in establishing friendships there, which she attributes to the 'reserved' character of Dutch culture, as opposed to the 'adventurous' nature of people who, like herself, had been on the move. Intimacy and the potential for establishing close relationships is a constitutive element of subjectivity that emerges in the context of mobility. Relationships move the subject through different points of migration. The migrant's investment in the practices of establishing relationships enables reflection on the different sites of mobility and allows the subject to explain her choices, to argue for her own agency in the process of migration and to make sense of the long series of movements that would otherwise appear as totally circumstantial.

Apart from cities and cultures, there are also particular locations and spaces of social interaction – often related to certain professions and activities – that facilitate the establishment of relationships. As the migrant reflects on how she organizes her life in the context of mobility, special attention is given to the importance of places such as foreign language schools, training and immigration centres, social services and support networks, art centres and different kinds of welfare and sports associations. Even though most of the women insist on the fact that they avoid becoming involved in national associations which would possibly bring them in closer contact with other migrants from their own homeland, they actively pursue their involvement in activities that often attract international participants and publics. Apart from qualifications and expertise, language schools, training centres for women and migrants, and social services often also provide emotional refuge during periods of isolation and uncertainty. Through the relationships that are created in the context of these institutions, migrants share their experiences with others who are in a similar position and thus manage to recognize themselves in the lives of others. The migrants' reliance on social networks which have an international constituency is also reflected by the fact that many of the women who were interviewed often sought employment in sectors related to international professional activities: foreign language schools, universities, the arts, trade, sports and entertainment.

The interviews indicate a productive intersection between love relationships and the ways in which subjects understand and experience physical and affective mobility. This intersection is often articulated through the association between love relationships and the disruption of other social and affective bonds in the lives of women who migrate between Eastern and Western European countries. Let us take the example of Kamilla, who

migrated to Italy in 1970. Kamilla was born in 1945 and raised in Budapest by Hungarian parents. At the age of sixteen she learned that she was in fact the out-of-wedlock daughter of a German woman married to a Hungarian man, with four children from that marriage. Having had music lessons at a young age, Kamilla took up singing in her early twenties and soon after that embarked on a performing career, first in Hungary and then abroad. As member of a Hungarian performing group she played music and danced in a number of Italian cities. During these years, however, Kamilla unknowingly became involved in a tax evasion scandal when the manager of the troupe withheld taxes from the artists but never turned money in to the Hungarian tax bureau. As a result of that Kamilla could not return to Hungary because of fear of being persecuted. She mentions that other members of the group who did return had their performing licenses withdrawn and were stranded in their cities of origins for as long as five years. The prospect of being stranded and being left in no position to perform seemed unbearable to Kamilla, who decided instead to stay in Italy under uncertain legal status both in Italy as well as in Hungary. She describes how she was drawn into the status of refugee against her own will, whereas her desire was simply to travel as a way of promoting her career.

For Kamilla, sliding into the status of illegal migrant-refugee involved an itinerary from Italy to South Africa, then Germany and back to Italy. She mentions that she kept touring around twenty-one different countries for about ten years before she relocated herself in Florence. In the process she attempted unsuccessfully to claim German citizenship and acquire legal documentation based on the fact that she was born in Germany. In the meantime, her communication with her family in Hungary had been disrupted, as her father had sent her coded letters warning her not to return in order to avoid persecution. She married an Italian and stayed in Florence with him, but the marriage ended shortly because of general failure in communication both between the couple, and between Kamilla and her husband's family. Kamilla's story is one of disrupted relationships. She presents disruption as a result of her original departure from Hungary. Defecting from her country, even though it was inevitable and beyond her own will or decision, represents in Kamilla's story an 'original sin', which has caused a series of disruptions and anxiety both about her own self and the lives of her loved ones. As she put it: 'since I left Hungary I've been fighting to overcome the difficulties of life. Nothing worked out the way it should've.'

Kamilla refers frequently to her worries about the family she left behind. She also describes mobility as a continuous cause of both further disruption and the establishment of new relationships. It is almost as if the flexibility and change of relationships comes to coincide with the physical mobility of the subject. Later in the interview she turns back to the issue of her biological family origins and at this point it becomes obvious that the 'original moment'

of departure that led her to a lifelong experience of mobility has to be traced to the time before her own birth. Kamilla was born in Germany in 1945, the illegitimate child of a German army officer, and a German mother who was then married to a Hungarian soldier, who was at that time on the Russian front. After the war, the mother left the newborn child at the town clinic and returned to Hungary with her husband and her four children. Kamilla was taken under the protection of a Hungarian doctor who was working at the clinic and who, in 1948, decided to move back to Hungary and to bring the child with him. Kamilla was then given up for adoption to a Hungarian couple in Budapest, who raised her as their own child. She discovered that she was adopted when she was sixteen years old. Kamilla's life was marked by the disruption of relationships caused by various experiences of inter-European mobility. She understands her own life as a continuation of this tradition of operating within a geo-political space determined by a web of relationships, some of which are weaved beyond the subject's agency. Kamilla reclaims these relationships that are established and disrupted beyond her agency – such as her relationship with her biological mother – through her references to dreams and intuitive connections. Kamilla refers very often to her dreams, since she is convinced that she is warned by dreams whenever 'trouble is brewing' in her life. She mentions that she had dreamed of her migration before she left, and that later she dreamed of her father being ill when she was abroad. When she narrates her family history and the events of her adoption she does not refer much to her biological mother – although she was the one who played the most important role in the process. However, she concludes her reference to her half-siblings, whom she has never met and by whom she was never accepted, with a story that stresses the psychic connection between herself and her biological mother. According to this story, during a visit to Hungary in order to support her ailing foster mother, Kamilla happened to drive by her biological mother's house, which she vaguely remembered. Without making any further inquiry, she relied on her conviction that this incidental passing in front of the old house was a premonition that her biological mother was dead. Psychic connections, premonitions and instincts become means for reclaiming relationships that have been disrupted. By reclaiming these relationships, Kamilla manages to keep track of her long itinerary of movement and to make sense of her own story by recording her transformations and life changes.

In other cases, the subject experiences these changes through intimate relationships with her children. Relationships with children are particularly moving since the subject's transformation through mobility is reflected in what the children have become. The importance of child–parent relationships becomes more evident in those cases where the subject has particularly invested in the processes of social and cultural integration in the country of migration (Emilia, Hu/NL). For Emilia, a computer programmer, who was

born in Budapest in 1958 and who migrated to Holland in 1988, social and cultural integration was achieved through her dedication to her children and their proper upbringing. Thus, her children became a strong link between Emilia and Dutch society and culture. This becomes evident when she explains how raising children in a foreign country motivates a parent to integrate into the new culture. As she put it: 'the moment you realize that this is the place where your children live, where they will grow up, the moment this flashes into your mind, *you have to* get down to it and start learning ...'. The relationship between Emilia and her children constructs a new universe that contains her life in her host country and renders her an integral part of this new universe. In this case, affective relationships become a means of integration and of establishing communication with a foreign culture.

Establishing, maintaining and reclaiming relationships are integral parts in the migration project. In most of the interviews with migrant women, relationships highlight various physical, psychic and subjective aspects of mobility. Through relationships, the physical movement of women between East and West Europe is related to the affective mobility that defines the migrants' subjectivity. From this point of view, the processes of establishing, maintaining and reclaiming relationships exercise a strong power on the 'curving' of political space between the East and the West. By addressing the connection between 'moving' relationships and the redefinition of political space, a new field of inquiry around issues of mobility, communication, participation and cultural emergences is opened up.

Approaching the history of migrants and contemporary migrations in Europe from the perspective of subjectivity, and enlarging the scope of migrant subjectivity through an emphasis on the role that affective relationships play in the context of mobility, goes against the grain of scholarly and other approaches that objectify the migrants by reducing the complex process of mobility to the movement of rational subjects driven solely by economic need, or to the coercive displacement of those who are trafficked or otherwise forcibly brought to the West. Such objectification deprives the social image of migrants in the Western European countries of important elements of agency, complexity and multiplicity. By foregrounding the notion of mobility, I propose an exploration of the physical as well as the psychic, subjective and cultural aspects of women's movements across Europe. Read from this perspective, the interviews offer us valuable lessons, especially because they provide points of critique that undermine normative notions of Europe, cultural territories, political space, home, homeland and migrancy. Through an analysis of the interviews that places emphasis on affective mobility, and consequently offers critique of normative understandings of culture and subjectivity, a ground is offered to us from which we might re-examine our definitions of Europe, the European East and the West, and the curvature of the political space between older definitions and the emerging understandings of people on the move.

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Notes

1. The literature in this field is vast. Here, I am referring mostly to the impact of the intellectual contributions of British scholars working in the field of Cultural Studies, such as Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Paul Gilroy, Robert Young and others.
2. According to ethnographic, sociological and cultural analysis of hybridity, the creation of new migrant communities in the European metropolitan centres led to the emergence of new ways of being a migrant, that did not presuppose assimilation into the hegemonic culture of the country of destination, but which also defied the parochialism that characterized commitment to the norms of old country national culture. This process was also analysed from a different point of view by Etienne Balibar (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991).
3. This is another vast body of literature. Rosi Braidotti's intellectual contribution to the analysis of subjectivity via nomadic thought and ontology is a notable example of the richness and the strong impact of this approach on the study of migrant subjectivity (Braidotti 1994).
4. 'Whereas the immigrant leaves behind a milieu that has become amorphous and hostile, the nomad is the one who does not depart, does not want to depart, who clings to the smooth space left by the receding forest, whether the steppe, or the desert ...' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 [1980]: 381).
5. For a critique of this approach see Cheah and Robbins 1998.
6. With reference to post-1989 migrations in Europe, Nira Yuval-Davis has proposed the notion of multi-layered forms of becoming full member in a community in the age of globalization. She endorses the notion of 'transversal citizenship' in order to envision the possibility of new form of politics of difference. Transversal citizenship is grounded on the idea that 'difference encompasses equality and perceived unity and homogeneity are replaced by dialogues that give recognition to the specific positioning of those who participate in them as well as the 'unfinished knowledge' that each such positioning can offer' (Yuval-Davis 1999: 123). Transversal citizenship is thus based on an epistemological and political distinction between the notion of participation in and identification with a community. This new form of transversal citizenship fits with the new forms of subjectivity that have emerged as the result of mass movements and the diversification of the social body in European societies.
7. Elsewhere, I have analysed the role that the models of assimilation and/or integration have played in producing authoritative representations of the migrant as an uprooted subject whose history constitutes exclusively part of the national history of the recipient country. Research in the transnational history of migrants indicates that migration has historically played an important role in the consolidation of ideological

discourses on nationhood in countries of emigration. For such analysis in the case of Greece and Greek migration, see Laliotou 2004.

8. The scholarship on queer diaspora is extremely rich and diverse. For a comprehensive overview of such scholarship in the field of Asian American studies, see (Eng and Hom 1998; Jackson 2000; Mackie 2001).
9. By using the adverbial form of 'European' (unusual in English but present and sensible in other languages), I wish to stress and maintain the importance of the difference between being someone and enacting oneself in a particular way. Addressing the ontological aspect of this difference is much beyond the scope of this chapter, but I think the distinction has important implications for the ways in which cultural, political and intellectual mobility and exchanges between the East and West open up new possibilities for envisioning Europe beyond Eurocentrism today.
10. Peggy Watson describes this paradox by referring to the difficulties that Eastern thinkers and activists have encountered when trying to convey the different ways in which inequality is articulated in their countries to Western feminists. She argues that, from the beginning, much of the transnational literature on women in post-communism has reflected a need to account for the non-sequitur which anti-feminism after communism appeared to represent (Watson 2000: 191).
12. As Peggy Watson has suggested 'if feminism's *raison d'être* is specific to political exclusion in democratic regimes (...) how far is feminist discourse of transition actively reproducing the preconditions of its own existence, in naturalizing competitive democracy through a categorical focus on gender, and taking for granted the broader implications of the state-economy changes currently being put in place? Such considerations have been left outside the analysis of post-communism, where intellectual inquiry has been overly restricted to the excavation of the kind of communist legacies which will explain failed predictions, but leave presuppositions intact' (Watson 2000: 195).
13. Evidently, there is a notable lack of theorisation of the issue of East-West (mis-) communication on the part of Western European intellectuals and scholars. This lack is, I believe, indicative of how prone Western European intellectuals are to presume the commonality of language and terminology when it comes to engaging in debates with different intellectual environments and traditions. The Euro-centricity of such intellectual engagements is only conducive to the further deepening of the crisis of communication and the hardening of ideological positions that support the 'right' of the West to 'protect', 'educate' and 'develop' the European East and the Balkans.
14. As Nikolchina astutely points out, this neutralization and homonymy of unacknowledged differences resulted in a desematization of the signifiers, which then led to the evacuation of meaning and the disabling of communication that became apparent during the messy Yugoslav wars and which has migrated to subsequent conflicts, which are 'as bloody as they are inarticulate' (Nikolchina, forthcoming: 5-6).

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*Chapter 6***Migrant Women in Work***Enrica Capussotti, Ioanna Laliotou and Dawn Lyon***Premise**

The theme of work¹ is a site through which migrant women negotiate their sense of self, and reflect on their social position. The heterogeneity of the interviewees of this research (see Appendix for details) means that they express a range of relations to work, determined by their occupational and educational background, their social status and varying connections between work and other dimensions of their lives (sociality, communication, affective relationships, home, social recognition). This chapter focuses on the place of work in the development of forms of subjectivity arising through mobility and migration.²

The women we interviewed are migrants in the context of global processes which make certain kinds of work available and desirable in certain locations (Sassen 1991; Scrinzi 2003). These global processes change the availability of work, its conditions, and its value (in monetary and social terms). At the same time, the women are subject to the norms and conditions of national and local labour markets, including, especially in Italy, informal and unregulated ones. There are some significant differences in the labour markets of Italy and the Netherlands. Notwithstanding these structural features, the sectors in which the interviewees tended to work were quite similar and we did not find major national differences expressed in their accounts, which are more strongly marked both by local conditions and by general problems in the two countries (e.g. childcare arrangements and the structure of the working day).

Two-thirds of women are in the labour market in the Netherlands, where a central feature of women's employment is the high proportion who work part-time: three-quarters of those employed.³ Whilst they enjoy a wide range

of social rights and provisions notwithstanding this status, the Netherlands is nevertheless characterized both by high labour market participation for women, and by traditional gender relations in terms of the division of domestic labour, something which is reflected in the interviewees' accounts of the structure of the school day for instance. Italy has the lowest proportion of women in the labour market of all the twenty-five European Union countries; little more than two-fifths of women are in employment. In contrast to the Netherlands, women who work tend to be engaged in full-time employment, with less than one fifth of those in work working part-time.⁴ Traditional gender relations predominate in the division of domestic labour. For example, Italy is noted for the presence of migrant domestic and care workers in Italian homes (Andall 2000). This is associated with limited provision of social services in the public and private sectors. Whilst it supports the participation of some women in the labour market, it does not alter the organization of domestic labour between native men and women (Phizacklea 1997).

This chapter is organized in five sections. The first is concerned with the interviewees' emphasis on self-realization through work. In the second section work is articulated as a sphere through which affective relationships can be built and where intersubjectivity can develop. The third section focuses on the ways in which migrant women claim dignity as workers. A fourth theme is a discussion of work and family; and in the final section, we explore how the women interviewed reflect on exploitation, and gender and race discrimination in their work environment.

Sustaining Professional Identities

This part of the discussion analyses the ways in which work is a source of a positive sense of self and a basis for satisfaction. It is work – or more specifically, the market valorization of skills and competences for work – that underpins the women's capacity for mobility. These interviewees are mostly in (or looking for) professional positions, for instance in teaching, information technology (IT), and translation. Work is associated with a sense of possibility and openness – notably for those with computer and IT training in the Netherlands (Kalina), and for those working in intellectual fields in Italy.⁵ The analysis shows how these women define what work they would and would not accept. This is connected to their sense of self-worth in terms of their social/occupational status, or in some cases, have an explicit economic basis, notably related to the possibility of 'return'. At the same time, they are subject to specific pressures and constraints as non-native workers, marked both as women and as migrants. Their abilities are viewed through these positions, as a result of which they are channelled in particular directions.

Plamena, a Bulgarian woman living in the Netherlands, refused to apply for lower-level jobs even when her initial and repeated applications for training programmes with banks were unsuccessful, because of her inadequate language proficiency, she said. Finally, her persistence was rewarded with a traineeship in which she could develop her language skills whilst working in a 'huge organization that is known all over the country. This is very important to me.' She evidently seeks recognition through her work and cannot contemplate a lower-status position, because of the effect it might have on her self-image and relationships with others. Her decision to migrate was a definitive one – 'I came here with the idea that there is no coming back'. At the same time, her only possibility of returning to Bulgaria is by earning money: 'It sounds very pragmatic, but I can't go back to Bulgaria without money'. Both building her life in the Netherlands in the present and keeping open the possibility of return in the future mean that she will only consider work of a certain status.

Marina, a Bulgarian migrant in Italy who works as a journalist, considers return as an ever-present option: 'it feels good to know I can do it any time I wish to'. However, the logic informing her decision not to return in a more permanent way is expressed through her professional activity: 'I'd go back if I found a job which is more interesting or which I can do better than what I do now. So far I haven't discovered such a job and that's why I don't consider returning to Bulgaria'. Whilst the reality of economic and professional opportunities is highly relevant⁶ – as Kalina expresses it, 'I just can't smile with such a salary' – prioritizing work over country of residence is not a given. Yet occupation functions in the interview accounts *as if* it were wholly determinant; rather than constraining, this might be read as allowing another life which is hard to claim on other grounds.⁷ Moreover, in the context of present economic conditions, it is a highly legitimate mode of justification for life choices. An effect of this orientation, however, is that it is necessary to have a reason to return, rather than a rationale to stay.

In a third example, Kristina also refuses low-level work. She explicitly states that she migrated for work, and not for a relationship. She was a performer in a Bulgarian circus, which she joined after working in a disco in the former Yugoslavia. When the circus moved to France, she stayed in Italy. This was in early 1989, prior to the collapse of communism, when it was possible to obtain a residence permit valid for two years. Nowadays, her orientation is to stay in Italy 'as long as it gives me opportunities to work' – but not just any kind of work. She has become a fitness instructor and a drama teacher and 'wouldn't stay in Italy if I had to work as a cleaner or a housemaid'. She has always 'pray[ed] to God to let me work only in jobs I enjoy [laughter]. I guess God must exist because so far I always worked in what I've wanted to'. Work gives her a wider sense of belonging in the world, and she can imagine living in many locations. She is 'closely bound up with my

job' and would move for it as it is work that 'brings me satisfaction and keeps me happy'. In her own estimation, she is 'not the kind of woman to settle down with a family'. As in other cases, there is an emphasis here both on self-realization and on a middle-class status.

If the above examples evidence the limits some interviewees fix on their choice of work, in what follows, we see another pattern, that is, how migrant women in (semi)professional occupations are 'channelled' in their work. The story of Henrietta, a Hungarian woman who migrated to the Netherlands to be with her partner, is very telling of the ways in which the context of a migrant woman's life constructs her professional possibilities. Henrietta was a lecturer in a Hungarian university, teaching Dutch. She and her future (Dutch) husband met when he visited the university. They decided to pursue their relationship in the Netherlands, she left her job and migrated. In the interview she recounts, at length and with feeling, the different jobs she has held since her arrival. She has settled, for the time being, into a secretarial position for a university professor. She feels 'truly relieved' that she 'might after all be able to survive all this!' she says. Still, she misses teaching and feels some discomfort at 'being a secretary with a university qualification.' In her search for intellectual activity in her life, she has recently undertaken some translation work. Translation emerges in this context as a possible profession, and one can trace in Henrietta's narration the channelling of interests and energies to this point. Paradoxically, the Dutch context effectively robs her of the capital that was valorized in Hungary – her capacity to teach Dutch. What is notable is how translation work comes to be seen as a resolution.⁸ However, within this, it is through her 'being Hungarian', and her command of her native tongue, that she is now valorized.

Similarly, Anett, a Hungarian woman who went to the Netherlands to be with her partner, energetically sought a job, sending out 20–25 copies of her CV a day. She was finally contacted by an agency looking for Hungarian, English-speaking, people. Whilst she retains ambitions to start her own company, or to do an MBA, one can see how the structure of opportunity also channelled her to move towards translation.⁹ Women in these positions are effectively valorized for what we call their 'national capital' – competence in their native language, and local knowledge.

In this section, we have drawn attention to two orientations to professional work. The first is the refusal to accept low-status work. Here, work is the site through which the women gain a sense of place in the receiving country, within which social status registers as very important. This might indicate that particularly in a new geographical location and one in which some forms of belonging are difficult to achieve, status and position become more significant for creating a sense of self (Olwig and Sorensen 2002: 8). In the second set of examples, we have seen how one's positioning as a migrant

gives rise to specific 'choices' (e.g. translation work) as some capacities are foregrounded and valued over others in new ways in the new context.

'Doing something for myself': Creating Social Bonds through Work

The migrants' accounts present us with an enlarged understanding of work, encompassing the affective relationships the workplace makes possible, as well as work as an activity (of service, production, etc.). Many interviewees talk about social isolation as an aspect of living in a foreign country, and for some the need to break out of this is more significant than the intrinsic satisfaction they might get from work. Indeed, the connection between work and relationships is most explicit when the interviewees describe employment as a means of social integration in the new country. Work provides opportunities to create social relations and friendships, and is a reason to go out – just 'not to stay at home'. Kalina, for example, is 'motivated to start working, because of the isolation ...' Annet takes this further, suggesting that work is also linked to autonomy within a partnership: 'I had no job, no nothing at the time, just him [her partner]'.¹⁰

Furthermore, the context of work itself provides emotional stimuli for establishing relationships – although for the migrant women it may also at times be a site of discomfort. Henrietta talks of her fraught experience of looking for work in The Netherlands. She starts positively, also echoing Annet's point:

I didn't want to stay at home at all. I thought if I wanted to get integrated in this society it wouldn't do just to make some sandwiches in the morning for my friend and then to stay here waiting for him to return at 6 p.m., watching TV and reading the papers. That wouldn't help make me feel at home. I thought, well, I still do, that the best way to establish relations is to find a job and work together with others and then you get to know the Dutch.

The narration which follows is of trials and difficulties and is charged with emotion and strong language. After starting to work as a secretary in a company producing bread-making machines, an experience she describes as 'a disaster', she loses confidence in her ability to operate in Dutch, as she 'just couldn't cope'. The technical vocabulary used in the company and the need to deal with people from different parts of the country who spoke with strong accents or in dialect, sent her into a spiral of uncertainty. She became shy and implies that her relationship suffered as a result. However, a new job provided the basis for new forms of social relations: 'After I changed my job, it got much better, I started to feel alive. Joined a sports club, joined a choir last September, so now I do plenty of things and feel all right.'

The association between work and socialization reflects an attitude that does not exclusively concern migrants, but characterizes contemporary post-industrial societies more generally. The blurring of boundaries between work and 'free' time, and between work-space and home-space, is congruent with the experiences of many people who create social networks and bonds from within their work environment. This attitude is accentuated however in the case of the migrant women interviewed here, as they made a more general evaluation of types of employment according to the opportunities specific environments offered for the establishment of relationships. This emphasis is telling of the importance of social bonds for survival in the receiving society, and helps us understand why some of the interviewees argue that they are pleased with their employment in low-qualified low-paid jobs. The pleasure of work needs to be read against a context in which it is difficult to find one's 'place', to achieve a sense of belonging.

Lubomira and Teodora are both highly-trained women who claim to be satisfied with their current employment in a supermarket mostly because of their 'friendly colleagues and the atmosphere that gives you the chance to develop in one way or another without feeling ignored'. Teodora is a graduate in Slavic philosophy who speaks with remarkable equanimity about this shift in her life. She is learning Dutch and fits her work around her classes. Her friend, Lubomira, relates positively to her work experience because she is treated in a way that does not make her feel like a second-rate person, 'just because I am not Dutch and I do not come from a Western European country', something which often happens in other contexts, she says. Lubomira attributes this friendly atmosphere to the Dutch work-culture, commenting, 'the well-known distance between a boss and a worker, which is characteristic for Bulgaria, does not exist.' According to Teodora, there is relief from the patriarchal styles of supervision that the women are more familiar with in Bulgaria:

As for the distance between a boss and a worker in the Netherlands, no one tolerates people who try to dominate by power and shouting ... So you will never come across the 'chorbadja'¹¹ type of boss. You will never have a boss of the 'fatherly' type either: that is to say 'I do everything for you and you have to be grateful to me.' So I don't feel discriminated in that sense.

The self-fulfilment that these migrant women seek through work has many dimensions and, is not exclusively related to content, status or pay.¹² An important dimension is the opportunity to 're-make oneself'. Teodora finds dignity in her supermarket job because she sees in it a demonstration of the rejection of a source of discontent for her in Bulgaria.

I even had a conversation with my boss once, he had by chance read my application file and he asked me: 'Lubomira, I can see what kind of education you

have.' And I said to him: 'It doesn't matter what kind of education I have, because I am not used to sitting at home doing nothing; so I like my job at the moment and what is important to me is that I am satisfied that I am doing something mainly for myself'. [...] Because I was 42 and I wasn't married back in Bulgaria to some extent I felt underestimated as I was a woman and I was not married. You can never see that here. Under no circumstances. And I simply relaxed.

When Teodora and Lubomira talk about the future, they offer different visions of the development of their lives. Whilst Teodora, for the time being at least, is settled in her low-status work, Lubomira envisages a professional future, and considers her job in the supermarket as a short-term solution. The difference in these orientations is explicitly connected to what they both perceive to be *viable*. After arriving in the Netherlands, Lubomira needed to wait for her diplomas to be approved in order to apply for a higher-level position in her field (engineering), something she refers to repeatedly, and about which she is hopeful. If that does not work out, she says that she will pursue her education in the Netherlands 'to get a master's degree and to look for an appropriate job. Not that I am having any financial problems, but I just don't want to turn my back on those six years of studying, to forget them as if nothing had happened [laughing]'. In contrast, Teodora has 'no illusions that I will be able to find a job here', because the dominant interest in the Netherlands is in modern languages, which means western languages. Even if she tried her hand in this area, she would be competing with native speakers which would be 'very hard' she says.

As for the financial side of the question I have accepted the possibility that I will work till I am 65 years of age, as it is here, if I am safe and sound, as a cashier: that is what I work as now. Because my salary is enough to finance, together with my husband's, four trips abroad every year. That is what I am interested in, being able to travel to neighbouring and remote countries, and to buy books. My salary covers that completely and I have the chance to save something: 'to put something by for a rainy day' [laughing]; I could never do that back in Bulgaria ... The money simply goes so fast in Bulgaria. That's it.

Despite the differences in their future plans and their work-related ambitions, Teodora's and Ludomira's accounts indicate that they have a high degree of emotional and psychic investment in their work, especially in terms of establishing social networks and relationships within the receiving countries, and between receiving and sending ones.

Demanding Dignity

In contrast to these accounts, many women migrants are disconcerted about the content of their low-paid and low-social-status work. Dignity, a traditional dimension of self-representations of working, reoccurs repeatedly in the interviews, taking various forms: a claim, a hope, an ambition, or an absence. These women insist that their work environment does not provide them with opportunities to develop relationships and is thus a source of discontent as an activity and an image. For example, Rosa, a fifty-three year-old woman from Bulgaria who lives in the Netherlands, explains how difficult it is to find a fulfilling occupation: 'I don't have any work, I get social benefits; meanwhile I work on the black market. What can I say, I go to clean people's homes. When somebody asks me what I do, I say, I look after old people, 'cause I don't feel like saying I clean houses'. Rosa wanted to train as a dental assistant, but was rejected because of her age, and she was forced to take whatever work she could find in order to support her teenage son. Her testimony evidences the social stigma attached to cleaning, whilst eldercare ranks more highly. Even though she is in a very difficult position, the image of dignity in work remains significant.

In another case, Reneta, a Bulgarian migrant who works at a social care centre, uses her work environment as a starting-point in her criticism of Dutch society. She clearly relates her criticism of the lack of communication in Dutch culture generally to the fact that she feels very constrained and underestimated in her job. Her account, which contradicts those of Teodora and Lubomira, nevertheless confirms the importance of the quality of inter-subjective interaction and social relationships in the subject's experience and understanding of work, positively or negatively. Furthermore, feeling isolated from Dutch employees and the work culture are juxtaposed with the apparent naturalness of her relationships with other migrants. Reneta emphatically argues that she has contacts with other migrants all the time; she identifies with migrancy, which she sees not only as a condition of being in another country, but as the only condition within which sociality can develop, underlining positive complicity between migrants:

I told a friend of mine who is an Indonesian woman – I told her: 'it's better to have a team, to work in a team, which would consist of people from the lowest class of other countries, but not in a Dutch team'. Because they [migrants] are, they are like us – natural people. You can tell them absolutely everything, you can joke with them, while you can't do this with Dutch people. No.

Reneta's disposition towards work is strongly marked by the way in which she conceptualizes her status as a migrant woman, which has itself arisen through her being constituted as a migrant in the Netherlands. Now a fifty year-old woman, she originally left Bulgaria in 1988, illegally crossing the border into

Serbia, where she was arrested, and sent first to a Serbian prison, then to a refugee camp, and finally back to Bulgaria. She managed to migrate after the amnesty in 1989, and ended up in the Netherlands, where she has succeeded in securing permanent residency: however, she is now contemplating retirement in the 'warmth and sorrow' of Bulgaria. In her present world, dignity and recognition are things she can only claim from other migrant workers and friends. And dignity – from within social relationships – is presented as more important than the status, pay or content of work.

The Relationship between Work and Family Life

The 'feminization' of the labour market – the massive entrance of women into the paid economy, and capitalism's higher evaluation of attitudes and competencies historically perceived as feminine (care, reconciliation, mediation, etc.) – is the context in which migrant women seek work. In spite of this trend, the women's testimonies articulate the persistent divide between the private and the public, and the gendered dimensions of labour relations. They refer specifically to women's experience of having to combine productive work with family care. The frequency of references to the care system – inside and outside the family, private and public – points to the enduring division of labour between the sexes: most of the women interviewees who are also mothers undertake the major responsibility for care.¹³

In the Netherlands, some of the women who are not in formal employment comment on how the structure of the school day makes it practically impossible to combine work and childcare. For instance: 'Well, for example in the morning I have to take my little girl to the school at a quarter to nine, after that I have to pick her up at twelve, after that I have to take her back again at half past one and pick her up again at half past three, which actually completely divides up the whole day' (Alena, Bu/NL). Others lament the good professional opportunities that existed under socialism (Victoria, Bu/I), or explain how the situation of migration with limited resources makes them reliant on men and thereby in part reproduces traditional gender relations (Jelisaveta, Bu/I), which is a reversal of their previous situations of equality.

The limitation of workers' social rights (e.g. maternity leave) is navigated by women through various forms of resistance. Motherhood can mean entering a terrain of negotiation and conflict with one's employer, since a working mother is a stigmatized figure in both Italy and the Netherlands:

I didn't tell my boss I was pregnant. [When] I really couldn't do up my skirt and trousers, I told him. He was speechless when I confessed my 'sin' of being pregnant ... I felt very much ashamed, my face was burning, you can imagine, because I also felt I betrayed him.' (Emma, Hu/I)

Lying, for Emma, registers as a negative action that leaves her with the sense of having betrayed her own values, because she believes that for 'human relations to be fair and open, we all tell what we think. I don't like to carry secrets ...'. Alena's outlook towards work and motherhood is critical of specific versions of womanhood in Bulgaria. Differentiating herself from the 'ambitious' model of womanhood, she enlarges the idea of work, so that it includes the labour required to take care of oneself and others. Other interviewees claim that studying, caring for children, and 'dreaming' of what else they might want to do is also valuable work, and no less ambitious than being employed. In a shift in Alena's ideas about work, she now believes that self-fulfilment can also come from investing time and effort in herself and not just from offering her labour in the form of employment and expecting acknowledgment from the work environment. Caring – for herself or her family – is part of her new understanding of herself and is presented as a form of emancipation. After introducing the typical opposition between motherhood and ambition for a career, Alena refers to a new dimension, that is the perception that her ambitions will however be frustrated by job market conditions in the Netherlands. This declaration casts light on another dimension of the ambivalent relationship between desire, satisfaction and opportunities: when the job market is unable to sustain and meet women's ambitions (because of persistent hierarchies and power relations based on gender, class, racial and ethnic dimensions), the private sphere emerges as a possible, positive location. Subjectivity is articulated around both a previous time – the one devoted to the self-realization one found through work in one's own country – and a present time, which is marked by motherhood and the family, in the context of migration. Employment is then presented as an impediment to the fulfilment of true relationships, such as love and parenting relationships. Alena comments,

I don't think there is anything nicer than paying attention to your own child and watching her grow. And few women have this opportunity in Bulgaria, very few women. Now the truth is that Bulgarian women are morbidly ambitious and they want to work actually. And I was like that. I was like that until the moment I found out it was much nicer and much more enjoyable to be busy with my kid than going to work! Because no matter what kind of job I find here, most probably it will not be on my specialty, or what I have always dreamed of or wished for ...

Similarly, in Bori's narrative, her lack of interest in a career coincides with her condition of being a Hungarian living in Italy. She has a university degree in Italian and Hungarian languages, and she was a teacher in Hungary, but when talking about the job market in Italy she can only be generic and ironically refers to 'selling ice-cream':

I'd like to have some type of job, which doesn't make me nervous as my reasons are, first of all, I want to have something to do, and we also need money. But in Hungary I worked a lot in my job, which brought me a lot of satisfaction, so I'm not motivated by any desire of self-realisation. For me, that is in the past tense. [...] I'll have to work, no question about that. I have no idea, though, because what I am qualified to do is not relevant here at the moment. Anyway, things will sort themselves out somehow. I do not feel any particular commitment to, say, selling ice-cream, but I'll come up with something. I'm sure I will, only I don't know what it will be.

The contribution of this section is to show how subjectivity is shaped by the conditions in which the migrant women deal with motherhood and work. They argue that the very concept of work should be expanded to include care activities in the home; and their accounts illustrate how the private sphere emerges as a space of potential satisfaction in the face of frustration in the labour market. Whilst these points are relevant for women more generally, migrant women face particular forms of discrimination and exclusion.

Discrimination and Solidarity

It was very interesting but I worked illegally. Because in the capitalist system a workforce costs much less if one works illegally. [...] Capitalism was something new for me. Things were changing at home in 1991 but we were taken very good care of. If you work illegally nothing is secured for you. You can't be sure whether you get your salary at the end of the month or not, whether you can still continue next Monday. So it was a very new and hard life style for me. Very hard. Because I realized how vulnerable you are when you have virtually nothing. (Emma, Hu/I)

In response to the question of whether her precarious work conditions are due to her being a foreigner, Emma continues to stress the superimposition of class, gender, national and geographical discrimination and prejudice:

No, this is quite usual. And it makes things worse if you are a foreigner. A foreigner but not an American, English, French ... Coming from Eastern Europe means they look down on you. You have to do twice as much to be appreciated, just as it is between men and women. ... They are afraid that Eastern European people hunting for jobs will pour in. They are afraid of criminals and prostitutes. This is what they are afraid of. So it is not simple, not simple.

Insecurity, openness, self-employment and creativity are the fundamental concepts of current hegemonic discourses about the labour market: if jobs are not offered, they can somehow be invented, so the ideology which underpins current discourses about work goes. Yet, despite this dominant discourse, migrant labour is, in general, considered to be much more pre-

determined and less open to negotiation and creative invention. Migrants are seen as being almost 'natural' providers of cheap, flexible, unskilled and mundane work, with their labour being deprived of creativity and inventiveness. We can understand the ambivalent references we encountered on this subject as a direct reaction to the pressures that migrant women feel to accept work as unskilled workers in low-paid jobs despite the fact that they are often highly qualified. In many of the interviews, the women migrants counteract the pressure on them to provide flexible and low-paid labour in the receiving country by claiming their right to reflect inventively on their position in the labour market.

Violeta (Bu/NL) takes an explicit position on the discrepancy between the migrants' qualifications and their employment. According to her, the migrants' troubled relation to qualified employment is determined by the perspective of the more economically developed countries of migration as a social problem. New as well as old cultural, political and economic divisions between migrant and native labour determine the politics of discrimination and solidarity in contemporary European societies. She recounts,

It's unreasonably difficult for foreigners to find work, in spite of their qualifications and experience. It's true for all kinds of foreigners – it doesn't matter if they are from Eastern Europe, from America, from Western Europe. In spite of the fact the Dutch are tolerant, it's almost on the surface, accepting others is still a problem of this nation, as it is a problem for all nations.

The forms of discrimination that these women encounter, both in Italy and the Netherlands, due to the fact that they come from Eastern Europe, are often denounced by the interviewees in ways which stress the negative consequences not only in term of material conditions but also as psychic costs: 'so my self-esteem here [Hungary] was always turned on and there [Italy] it was rather turned off' (Gyöngy). Uncertainty, harsh competition, and self-promotion are the key elements used by Gyöngy to describe the labour market in Hungary after the transition. Although she is happy to be back in her job as a teacher of English in Hungary (she is a return migrant), she notes the context of uncertainty: 'whatever you have you can lose it overnight, so you're supposed to renew yourself all the time. [...] You have to keep fighting to do the job. Fighting! ... You have to sell yourself! So that's how it is here, too ...'. In fact Gyöngy felt herself to be a successful teacher of English in Hungary, while she was someone with 'no place there [Italy]'. Not being a 'native speaker' prevented her finding a job; but she feels that 'the [schools of English] were biased against Eastern Europeans, their pronunciation or whatever. So I wasn't given a chance. What's more, when my son was in kindergarten, I offered them to give English lessons for free ... They refused even that. I felt myself to be a kind of failure ...'.

This kind of discrimination is also felt by other migrant women who live, like Gyöngy, in a city in southern Italy. Gyöngy recounts two examples of extreme exploitation, the case of a baby sitter from South Africa, and a domestic helper from Romania, who were both treated as 'servants': 'It irritated me no end the way she [the Romanian woman] was exploited. I think it irritated me because I saw her as oppressed and felt myself oppressed at the same time. Well, she came from Romania, from poverty. And then people here wanted to take advantage of her'. Although there were many differences between these women lives (in terms of education, job opportunities, and material conditions), Gyöngy stresses her sense of empathy based on the connections to her own experience (the frustration of her ambitions). Nonetheless, she defines the possibility of solidarity at an emotional level, which can be sustained by the common experiences of being abroad, being migrants, and being women. Overall, this section has evidenced discrimination faced by the migrant women, its effects at the material and symbolic levels, and, more positively, how it can be used as a basis for solidarity.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have traced various ways in which women migrants relate to work and the impact it has on how they conceive of themselves in the context of migrancy. We have focused on the ways in which they negotiate their professional identities and occupational choices, and we have explored how the women migrants position themselves in the work environment and evaluate forms of sociality that emerge there. We have analysed the migrants' positions *vis-à-vis* discrimination at the workplace, claims for dignity, and the relationship between work and family life.

Recent research in the field of labour studies has approached work – particularly low-paid, low status and often, but not always, migrant work – from the point of view of the biopolitical formation of subjectivity with a varying degree of success (Felstead and Jewson 1999; Parrenas 2001). In order to distance themselves from approaches that uncritically overemphasize the notion of control over migrant and labouring subjectivities, and women's subjectivity in particular, scholars have pointed out that such approaches tell us only part of the story, since they erase 'the linkage to the circuitry of power that is to be found, increasingly throughout the globe, in the multi-face of what many have been otherwise calling 'control' inside the network comprised by the homeworker, the state social worker, the NGO advocate, the organizer, the academic, and the policymaker' (Staples 2003; see also, Clough 2002). Resituating the politics of labour at the core of the analysis of this global circuitry of power makes it necessary to turn our attention to the appearance of new types of working subjectivities that could be characterized as 'turbulent' rather than as 'revolutionary' in the old sense.

The new turbulent politics of labour that has been traced by other researchers emerge through the contradictions that mark the relation between migrant subjectivity and work in various ways. Migrants invest and pursue professional identities, but at the same time they endow low-paid and low-status employment with great expectations in terms of social recognition, dignity and the establishment of social relations. Women migrants view work as an important site for the achievement of self-fulfilment and personal development; but on the other hand, they often deconstruct and enlarge the very notion of work by disassociating it from employment and occupational activities. They reflect on discrimination as a core element of the condition of migrancy, but they also insist on the liberating potential of working in a country other than their own. These sets of contradictions echo overall transformations of the role and the concept of work that concern not only migrants but contemporary late-capitalist societies more generally. Nevertheless, the emergence of these contradictions in the interviews with migrants indicate the complex and multifaceted role that work plays in the formation of the migrants' sense of self and thus go against the grain of uncritical approaches that assume a direct, self-evident and homogeneous association between migration and labour.

Notes

1. We use the term work broadly to refer to employment and other forms of labour, paid or unpaid, in the formal, informal or voluntary sectors.
2. We do not address the full range of concerns which can be found in the rich bibliography on work, migration and gender. Over the last two decades scholars in the field have conducted in-depth research into the role played by gender divisions and migrations in the formation of labour relations in post-industrial societies. Strong emphasis has been put on the study of home-based labour and the transnational structure of informal sectors of employment (Fuentes and Ehrenreich 1983; Benería and Roldán 1987; Kofman *et al.* 2000; Lutz *et al.* 1995; Phizacklea and Wolkowitz 1995; Borris and Prügl 1996; Koser and Lutz 1998; Parrenas 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002). This body of scholarship has provided us with empirical evidence as well as conceptual formulations that solidly ground the position that the gendered organization of contemporary migrations is at the core of complex processes that determine the role, the form and the politics of labour in late capitalism.
3. 65.8% of women in the Netherlands are in the labour market in 2003; 74% of them work part-time which usually means less than 20 hours per week (Eurostat, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/>).
4. 42.7% of women in Italy are in the labour market in 2003; 17.2% of them work part-time, an average of 23 hours per week (Eurostat, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/>).
5. However, there are also stories of the non-recognition of qualifications, especially in the 1960s and 70s.
6. This orientation is repeated by several other interviewees, e.g. Poly, Irena, Kristina.

7. Indeed, in the case of Marina, her parents were unprepared, scared and saddened, as well as glad for her at the news of her departure. The shock or grief of parents is also a common motif in the interviews.
8. She is also considering doing a Ph.D. on the history and politics of translation between Hungarian and Dutch.
9. This is the case for most of the women who work as translators in our sample.
10. Independence is a theme echoed in other interviews, in such a way that work becomes the pre-condition of migration for some women (Erzsébet, Hu/NL).
11. A feudal type of governor in Bulgaria during the Ottoman times.
12. Catherine Casey (2004) argues in the case of temporary work that 'some women are striving to practise their own preferential employment patterns in ways that actively challenge conventional economic assumptions of employment behaviour and traditional trajectories of women's lives'. However, she also goes on to suggest that these orientations may be an oppositional strategy to the acceptance of degraded jobs and employment relations.
13. There were some cases of transnational mothering, and this is certainly a widespread phenomenon (Parrenas 2001).

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