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## **EU RESEARCH ON SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

***Gender relationships in Europe at the turn  
of the millennium:***

***Women as subjects in migration and marriage***

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**EU RESEARCH ON  
SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

**Gender relationships in Europe  
at the turn of the millennium:  
Women as subjects in migration and marriage**  
**GRINE**

**Final report**

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## **PREFACE**

Within the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Union for Research and Technological Development (RTD), the Key Action *"Improving the socio-economic knowledge base"* carried broad and ambitious objectives, namely: to improve our understanding of the structural changes taking place in European society, to identify ways of managing these changes and to promote the active involvement of European citizens in shaping their own futures. A further important aim was to mobilise the research communities in the social sciences and humanities at the European level and to provide scientific support to policies at various levels, with particular attention to EU policy fields.

Since the launch of the Key Action in 1999 more than 1600 research teams from 38 countries have been mobilised. While most important collaborative efforts involve researchers from EU countries, the participation of accession countries is already noteworthy with 189 research teams from these countries.

The three Calls for proposals of the Key Action Call *"Improving the socio-economic knowledge base"* addressed different but interrelated research themes which contributed to the objectives outlined above. These themes can be regrouped under a certain number of areas of major policy relevance, each of which are addressed by a significant number of projects from a variety of perspectives.

These areas are the following:

- ***Societal trends and structural changes;***  
16 projects, total investment of 14.6 Million Euro, 164 teams
- ***Quality of life of European Citizens,***  
5 projects, total investment of 6.4 Million Euro; 36 teams
- ***European socio-economic models and challenges***  
9 projects; total investment of 9.3 Million Euro; 91 teams.
- ***Social cohesion, migration and welfare***  
30 projects, 28 Million Euro; 249 teams.
- ***Employment, and changes in work***  
18 projects; total investment of 17.5 Million Euro; 149 teams
- ***Gender, participation and quality of life***  
13 projects; total investment of 12.3 Million Euro; 97 teams
- ***Dynamics of knowledge, generation and use***  
8 projects; total investment of 6.1 Million Euro; 77 teams
- ***Education, training and new forms of learning***  
14 projects; total investment of 12.9 Million Euro; 105 teams
- ***Economic development and dynamics***  
22 projects; total investment of 15.3 Million Euro; 134 teams
- ***Governance, democracy and citizenship***  
28 projects; total investment of 25.5 Million Euro; 233 teams
- ***Challenges from European enlargement***  
16 project; total investment of 12.8 Million Euro; 116 teams
- ***Infrastructures to build the European Research Area***  
9 projects; total investment of 15.4 Million Euro; 74 teams.

The work undertaken by the **project "Gender Relationships in Europe at the turn of the Millenium: Women as Subjects in Migration and Marriage – GRINE"** , has contributed to the advancement of knowledge on **Gender, participation and quality of life** .

The insights and information that the reader will obtain in the following pages constitute the main scientific findings and the associated policy implications of this research project. This project brought together 5 research teams in a collaborative endeavour lasting 30 months. The main objectives to be reached by this project were the following:

With regard to the fields of enquiry of marriage and migration:

1. To formulate some theoretical insights on the specificity of gender relations in Europe.
2. To advance hypotheses about new contemporary forms of women's subjectivity from the study of women as agents of change in their own lives and environment.
3. To critically examine the conceptualisation of strategic action.
4. To explore gender in the historical construction of the idea of Europe through an analysis of the activities of the group "Femmes pour l'Europe".
5. To investigate the place of women in the process of migration.
6. To study the impact of relationships to women in host countries upon the process of migration and the forms of women's intersubjectivity in this process.
7. To explore the existence of a narrative tradition (and its possible transmission) from political migrants.
8. To analyse the strategic use of legal systems/cultures in Europe by individual men and women, and how legal cultures react; to highlight the changing relations between gender and cultural and legal norms in Europe today.

The abstract and executive summary presented in this edition offer to the reader the opportunity to take a first glance on the main scientific and policy conclusions, before going into the main body of the research provided in the other chapters of this report.

As the results of the projects financed under the *Key Action 'Improving the Socio-economic knowledge base'* become available to the scientific and policy communities, Priority 7 "*Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge Based Society*" of the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Union for Research and Technological Development (RTD) is building on the progress already made and aims at making a further contribution to the development of a European Research Area in the social sciences and the humanities.

I hope readers find the information in this publication both interesting and useful as well as clear evidence of the importance attached by the European Union in fostering research in the field of social sciences and the humanities.

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## Abstract

This research project is based on oral history interviews with migrant women from Bulgaria and Hungary to Italy and the Netherlands. Our analysis emphasises how they make sense and act in their own lives, and seeks to identify new forms of subjectivity that are part of the contemporary history of Europe. In interviews with native women, we sought to document and analyse the points of connection of friendship and empathy between themselves and migrant women, and the mechanisms of exclusion and xenophobia they also voice. Overall, the project collected 110 interviews with pre and post 1989 migrant and native women.

The study of migration from the European East to the European West is part of a reflection on the repercussions of European migration on the redefinition of existing ideas of Europe and European identities. The testimonies both of migrant and native women confirm the central role of human mobility in the redefinition of relations between Eastern and Western Europe after 1989. The project evidences both the democratic potential of contemporary form of exchange in Europe and the lasting influences of prejudices and stereotypes based on hierarchical ideas of self and other, us and them. To discuss and confront the spread of Islam-phobia and racism should become one of the first priorities of a cultural policy addressing racism and intercultural encounters in Europe.

In the analysis of the interviews, we identified the themes of communication, love, and work as spaces and activities through which migrant women created meaning in their lives, and narrated their histories. Relationships in particular are central to the lives of many migrant women, connected for some to their reasons for migration or to their reasons for staying. On the theme of work, we find a range of orientations (i.e. the refusal of non-professional work, work as an instrument to achieve broader life goals). There is also consciousness of discrimination in the labour market, on the basis of nationality and gender. Beyond either love or work, communication in the everyday is emphasised by many of the migrant women as the principle site of happiness and a space of recognition. Narrations of border-crossing, and meanings of home went beyond the standard understandings of singular belonging, challenging discourses of integration in any simplistic sense. And belonging is also powerfully expressed in relation to food. These analyses allowed us to contribute to policy implications in the following areas: legal status and gender relations, family unification, multiple citizenship, information and communication, women's employment situation and demography, the 'brain drain' phenomenon, and education.

The persistence of Eurocentrism as a system of thought to identify 'other' cultures is evidenced strongly in the interviews with native women. The role of national mass media in sustaining and transmitting cultural stereotypes and prejudices is strong. In the Netherlands, we analyse how Dutch women narrate their relationships to Eastern European women through discursive strategies: 1) The 'one exception'; 2) Denial of dominant images; 3) Political and historical knowledge and consciousness. The narratives of Italian interviewees expose forms of racism that function primarily on the naturalization of specific elements: national 'character', class belonging and education, gender roles and sexuality. Analysis of the representations of the native women is also comparatively explored, using the concepts of moral and cultural boundaries. Areas covered in terms of policy: mass media, education, training,

organisation of policy-fields, (in)dependent residency, (gender) mainstreaming, and the construction of 'illegality'.

The legal dimension of the project was explored both in the interviews and through an analysis of the Danish case. The "Danish legal story" is an example of the combination of an individualized modern "marriage regime" with a strong state interest in limiting access to the country especially through family reunification. The intimate relationship is in itself a privileged relationship. The results of the Danish legislative strategy, which is legitimised by its protection or conservation of modernity is in practice one which privileges those love relations where people have the same national citizenship, or EU-citizenship.



# 1. Executive Summary

## Introduction

What do we mean when we talk about migration in Europe today? The sorts of images of migration we have from the past century are dominated by poor and miserable migrants moving to a new continent where they remain for the rest of their lives, recreating national or ethnic communities and mourning the loss of the homeland. Into the present, the images we see in the West transmit multiple and contradictory meanings. On the one hand, they depict people from different places in the world forced to move by persecution or poverty, constructing the ‘fear of invasion’ of unregulated flows that threaten to disrupt the demographic and cultural fabric of ‘receiving’ countries. On the other hand, we have positive images of the highly-skilled who are highly valued, notably in the sciences or IT. Whether the images and discourses are positive or negative, both reproduce Europe as a space where people want to be.

We could continue with this list for quite some time – of those who are welcomed and those who are excluded - but what we want to draw attention to is the ambivalence that characterises contemporary migration in Europe. Migrants are wanted for their labour, yet rejected as equal competitors; wanted to prepare exotic foods for our festivities, and rejected for the smells of their kitchen; migrants are seen as useful (as care workers, builders and so on) but they are not recognised as equal subjects deserving political, social and cultural rights. Within this, women are subject to particular scrutiny. They are predominantly perceived as victims of trafficking or sex workers, as involved in loveless marriages in exchange for a passport, or celebrated for their submissive forms of femininity.

The research starts from the identification of migrants as active subjects, creating possibilities and taking decisions in their own lives, as well as being subject to legal and political regulation and other forms of ‘discipline’ in the various settings of their lives. 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). Instead of being conceptualised as a linear process in which places of origin and destination are singular and fixed and patterns of integration are assumed to follow several stages, migration is envisioned as a contemporary form of mobility which is marked by complexity and contradiction. 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.

The understanding of migration put forward in this work is a dynamic set of relations between places, cultures, people and identifications. 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. The project seeks to enrich the field of migration studies by articulating a critique of older understandings of the migrant as a dislocated and uprooted subject, either pray to forces of integration, or motivated exclusively by rational choices related to the betterment of living conditions. What we tried to do is hold onto the complexity of migration, of how it comes about and how it is lived. For example, one contemporary form of mobility is this going back and forth between different countries usually

leading to a perception of multiple belonging. This may be a mobility that is enjoyed and one that is at the same time made possible and limited by legal regulation (i.e. this sort of mobility sometimes takes place with tourist visas). In these conditions any straightforward assumptions about sending and receiving societies are also challenged.

Gender is one of the central categories of analysis of the project, in (at least) three ways: 1. Women are the central subjects of the project. This choice is connected to the contemporary phenomenon of the feminisation of migration<sup>1</sup> as well as to follow the research teams' interest in how women as subjects are produced; 2. Gender is constitutive of the subject. It is through the categories of gender that we make sense of ourselves, that we both renegotiate and are subject to its hegemonic meanings. These processes operate in interactions such that gender is performed in ways that entrench and challenge it; and they operate through institutions that normalise modes of being 'men' and 'women'. 3. Gender is a fundamental tool to understand social and cultural dynamics at the symbolic level.

This research project is based on oral history interviews with migrant women, specifically migrant women moving from the European East to the West, to gain an understanding of how they makes sense and act in their own lives, and to identify new forms of subjectivity that are part of the contemporary history of Europe. Through interviews with native women (in Italy and the Netherlands) we sought also to document and analyse the points of connection of friendship and empathy between themselves and migrant women, and the mechanisms of exclusion and xenophobia they also voice. In short, the orientation of the project, indeed its innovative approach in the field of migration, was to explore migration for what sorts of subjectivity contemporary forms of mobility produce, in both migrants themselves and in native women, and to reconsider the complex set of representations and perceptions attributed to migrants and migration.

The project is primarily based on the collection of life stories and interviews<sup>2</sup>. The oral history interviews with migrant women from the sending countries selected for the study (Bulgaria and Hungary) were relatively unstructured (by the interviewer) and followed the lines of the interviewee's narrative. Nevertheless we sought to explore several themes with the interviewee: the decision to migrate, networks, the journey, employment, experience of legal and other institutions, relationships, customs, and aspirations for the future. Oral history interviews were the chosen methodological tool here in order to allow us to draw conclusions about new contemporary forms of women's subjectivity from the study of women as agents of change in their own lives. In addition, interviews were conducted with native women in the receiving countries of this study - Italy and the Netherlands - to explore

<sup>1</sup> Koser, K. and H. Lutz. 1998. *The New Migrations in Europe. Social Constructions and Social Realities*. London: Macmillan.

<sup>2</sup>

<i>Total interviews</i>	<i>In Italy</i>	<i>In the Netherlands</i>	<i>Total</i>
Hungarian	16+4return	18+3return	<b>41</b>
Bulgarian	15+2return	17+3return	<b>37</b>
<i>Total</i>	<b>37</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>78</b>
Native	18	14	<b>32</b>

contemporary forms of intercultural exchange. These interviews followed a more structured set of questions around the thematic priorities of the research. Questions addressed 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. Overall, the project collected 110 interviews with pre and post 1989 migrant and native women.

The summary of the research findings is presented below through four (linked) themes: Europe, subjectivity, migration and gender; the legal regulation of relationships and mobility; migrants' subjectivity; and the construction of the other in the receiving countries. After the discussion of each theme, we present the policy implications connected to it.

### **Europe, subjectivity, migration and gender**

The study of migration from the European East to the European West is part of a reflection on the repercussions of European migration on the redefinition of existing ideas of Europe and European identities. While political and social transformations within the EU as well as in single European states are at the centre of the public debate, fundamental cultural aspects that are part of and shape political and social events are marginal in EU concerns and European political spheres. Although we do not deny the importance of a political, social and economical approaches to the significant moments and processes of the contemporary construction of Europe, eg EU enlargement on 1 May 2004 or migration itself, we want to stress the importance of thinking through a cultural lenses to analyse, understand and transform political, economic and social inequalities. The contemporary historical context is also 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 of relationships—personal, intimate, professional or collegial—across the European East and West, play a pivotal role in the establishment of this emergent new European political and cultural space.

The teams' location in different European spaces – South (Italy), North (Denmark and the Netherlands), Centre (Hungary), Balkans (Bulgaria) – has helped to problematise within the group itself the very nature of geographical mappings and their implicit hierarchies. The construction of geographical areas, borders and cultures is shaped by power relations that can be identified in time and space (i.e. the creation of the European East, South and the Balkans was functional to the affirmation of the Western European model of civilization including imperialism, colonialism, and racism); the researchers physical and intellectual movements through these different spatial constructions has set in motion the awareness of their artificial nature and helped to redefine some categories that were embedded in this cultural tradition.

The testimonies both of migrant and native women confirm the central role of human mobility in the redefinition of relation between Eastern and Western Europe after 1989. If new forms of encounters are shaped within the social, political and economic conditions of post-communism and by the intensification of a wide variety of social, political, economic, cultural exchanges, mobility and migration between the East and the West plays a central role in these exchanges and also gives rise to

new transnational forms of subjectivity that emerge in Europe today. Gender relations have been at the core of these processes in a twofold way: 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; and 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.

The testimonies of migrant women are also explored for the forms of belonging they claim in relation to a European space. The interviewees were asked directly about their vision of Europe, how they perceive themselves in a common European space. We note their stronger claims to be European than the native women interviewed. What we wish to emphasise here is a utopian – in the positive sense of this word, indicating possibilities that are implicit but not obvious within the existing order - reading of the future possibilities for belonging to an identity that is in process, and can be kept open to inclusion.

### Policy implications

We are, at the very time of writing this report, at a critical juncture in the EU with the first phase of enlargement to the East underway, exposing in that process all its contradictions. If it is too early to take stock of gains and losses, what is evident in the present is the legacy of colonial orientations that are brought to the representations and discourses of a new Europe. One of the main contradictions is the rhetoric of freedom and openness on the one hand, and new stratifications on the basis of who can enjoy the new opportunities for mobility etc. on the other. Not only do the bodies of the EU have a role in changing material conditions, they might also make innovations to challenge the representations of the EU's new members.

In addition, heightened internal mobility (at least for some) is accompanied by stronger external borders. There is a great deal of contemporary discussion of the management of these borders – in a climate of acceptance of their existence which we contend should be subject to challenge through the sorts of ideas we discuss here on the construction and meaning of Europe. These borders take strengthened material forms (walls, fences), and greater legal powers and regulation, for instance, the militarisation of the work of border-guards.

The project evidences both the democratic potentiality of contemporary forms of exchange in Europe and the lasting influences of prejudices and stereotypes based on hierarchical ideas of self and other, us and them. At a time in which the enlargement of the European Union is used to articulate general claim about Europe – as if the EU and Europe were perfectly coincidental – Eurocentrism emerges as a significant element in the testimonies both of migrant and of native women. The possibility to discover and appreciate people identified with the European East and West on the part of migrant and native women in the West, goes together with the identification of a deeper irresolvable diversity in relation to Muslim people. They represent 'the' negative other that seems to be shared by many of the testimonies from East and West alike. To discuss and confront the spread of Islam-phobia should become one of the first priorities of a cultural policy addressing racism and intercultural encounters in Europe.

We would add a note here on the importance of formulating the issues of Europe, subjectivity, migration and gender in ways which are accessible to students and teachers within primary, secondary and higher education. Indeed, the creation of texts and materials to be used for teaching and for disseminating these ideas to younger generations (through educational radios, and the production of multi-media programmes) is a central recommendation.

### **The legal regulation of relationships and mobility**

The “Danish legal story” is an example of the combination of an individualized modern “marriage regime” with a strong state interest in limiting access to the country especially through family reunification. The Danish case is used as a reference point for the development of measures elsewhere in Europe and as such has a more general relevance. Contemporary modern marriage has to a great degree lost its legal importance (in Denmark as well as in some other European countries) in relation to maintenance of spouses. Divorce rates have grown, and legal restrictions to divorce have been almost eliminated.

However, close to 50% of immigrants in *Denmark* marry a spouse from outside the country. This pattern has not changed over the last decade. This marriage pattern and marriage practices among immigrants (especially from non EU countries) has meant that immigrant marriages have become a migration-generating institution. The persistence of this marriage pattern has been used by parties and politicians in Denmark (and elsewhere) to argue in favour of strengthening requirements for obtaining *family reunification*. Generally it has been argued in the media, that marriages between immigrants are often either forced or arranged marriages. The argument for stricter access to family reunification in Denmark has been that the older a person is, the easier it is to resist family pressure in marriage matters.

The combination of this phenomenon and the rhetoric about forced marriages has enabled the Danish state to produce legislation considerably limiting the entrance of foreigners to the country without the legislator meeting any severe criticism from inside the country. The consequence of these legal changes have been that the possibility of a married individual to live together *within* Denmark with a marriage partner coming from a non-EU country has become limited. Marriage law has become instrumentalised by immigration law to secure limited access to the country.

Marriage law is however phrased in general terms and as general rights following the modern ideology of equality before the law. This means that relationships between Danes who are not immigrants and non-EU citizens have also become subject to the same regulations, excluding non-EU partners’ access to the country. This again is at odds with an ideology that understands relationships and marriage as voluntary and love-based. The result has amongst others been (failed) ideas presented in the Danish parliament to circumvent these unwanted consequences and to secure the "real love" relationships through 'love-cards'. Since this avenue has been considered impossible to deal with administratively, the idea has however been abandoned.

The intimate relationship is in itself a privileged relationship. The results of the Danish legislative strategy, which is legitimised by its protection or conservation of modernity – as symbolized especially in the modern welfare state and modern

intimate relationships - is in practice that it privileges those love relations where people have the same citizenship or EU-citizenship.

Security issues at present also legitimise restrictive legal regimes towards so-called “third country nationals”, especially with regard to family unification, work permits and reasons for extradition. These developments may legitimise or give rise to *general forms* of legal regulation and administration, which on purpose and deliberately have *different effects* upon different groups of citizens, depending upon their ethnic background and affiliation. The case study of the Danish legal regime indicates and illustrates a relative shift of values in European states and perhaps in Europe at large, where values of equality and freedom are yielding to or being supplemented by values of security and difference. Issues of justice, which were important in pre-modern eras influenced by natural law may then again attract much stronger interest both on local, national and European level.

The national case study demonstrates the practical exclusionist consequences of the national legislative development. The study of the concept of “subject” and subjectivity” seen in the light of both John Stuart Mill’s historical discussion of *The Subjection of Women* and the core interviews, draws attention to the contemporary importance of the legal culture of Europe, which less than 200 years before the “reunification” of Europe was *dominated* by legal regimes based upon special rights and privileges combined with general rights. Two hundred years ago these special rights were primarily *legal rights*, granted by a sovereign, an absolute monarch or an emperor to his or her subjects. European legal history is thus a history of different rights for different groups (estates and classes) of people including different rights for men and women. With an expansion of the EU with a very large number of states, the *diversity* of the historical and cultural legacies may become more clearly seen and felt. A *legal culture of privilege* as an important heritage and instrument of organizing societies may in this situation in practice come to present an element of both continuity and commonality. Paradoxically it may also be an instrument which preserves the culture of modernity in Europe even if it has high costs. The forms of subordination and/or privilege experienced by migrating and/or married women are not (necessarily) a consequence of formal and legal differences *within* one national legal system. In the cases we are dealing with they may also be the result of intersections and overlapping of a number of different legal systems and cultures. In the EU-European context issues of “whiteness”, religion (Christianity), formal education and qualifications, as well as economic income are amongst the markers of privilege. “Traditional” (un-modern) gendered lifestyles and religious affiliation (especially to Islam) may be reasons for or markers of practical and legal forms of subordination in other situations. Thus some of the interviewed women can be seen as privileged in some respects and less privileged or even subordinated in other respects.

### Policy Implications

From a legal perspective cross-border relationships imply a conflict between the state’s interest in controlling who crosses its border and individuals’ emotional desire to form relationships, the corresponding legal disciplines being immigration law and family law. The legal analysis set out to analyse cross-border relationships from the perspective of immigration law and family law respectively. The two perspectives belong to different legal spheres, public law and private law, the logic and underlying

values of which differ fundamentally. The purpose of applying this dual perspective on the object of analysis was to demonstrate how the focus of the legislator had shifted from relationships to the crossing of borders. This shift has transformed what has in the last part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century come to be understood as an essentially private enterprise into a matter of great public concern. The conclusion of the analysis was that matrimonial law had been reduced to an appendix to immigration law. This is bound to have consequences for matrimonial law.

The proposed council directive on the right to family reunification is exactly an attempt to try and flesh out international standards as regards common criteria. This is a difficult but important step. The difficulties are well reflected in the extended process of negotiations of the directive just as they are reflected in the lack of agreement as to the scope of the concept of family. From a policy perspective it is interesting to observe that the directive does not take its starting point in love but in 'effective marital and family life'; the path of the subjective element that was paved in the Danish story is not taken in Europe. And seen against the Danish experience this appears wise. However, the fate of the directive is not without problems: the reductionist understanding of family that clings to heterosexual marriage whereas the world has for a long time had a much more varied approach appears anachronistic. And building policy on only a section of reality is not a viable way ahead – even if it turns out that it may well for the time being be the only way ahead.

In order to make a workable policy in the increasingly important field of cross-border relations in an internationalised world it is necessary to strike a more practicable balance between family and immigration. In order to achieve this, it is necessary both on a national level as well as on a European level to consider the possibilities of establishing administrative and counselling procedures that secure a variety of interests. The interests of national citizens and national political institutions in being able to influence who is and who becomes part of the local/national community and thus both bearers of rights and contributors to the common good need to be taken seriously in order not to fuel xenophobia and excessive and exclusive nationalism. The need to secure human rights especially to a contemporary and developing trans-national and even globalised family life must be taken much more strongly into consideration in present day national and European institutions.

In a Europe "united in diversity" as proclaimed in the draft European Constitution it is necessary to rethink present and existing national and European institutions, procedures and standards, which have not been set up with this aim as an important objective. It is necessary to develop and establish legal institutions, procedures and standards that consider and protect variety and diversity. In this respect it might be possible to find some inspiration in the European legal heritage of a system of differentiated rights and obligations – of special legal rights (privileges) and obligations.

To secure variety might require a different constitution of legal bodies, where the voices of representatives of trans-national, reconstituted mobile and migrant families and individuals may be heard. Voices, experiences and insights which must also be integrated in developing administrative procedures, legal requirements as well as decisions in order to secure the value of diversity also in legal practice.

### **The multiple location of the migrant subject**

While statements about the multiple location of the subject are easy to agree with, in everyday life we often lock others into a fixed positions imposing on them a principal set of overarching characteristics. The 'migrant' is the kind of category that is consuming. Being a migrant somehow erases all other dimensions of the self, such that class position, education, political orientation, family history, sexual orientation and so on, are either assumed as known or disregarded. Migrants are asked to talk about migrant issues, and to perform as 'migrants' in ways which limit their expression of certain emotions, subject positions, and identifications. Furthermore, images of 'migrants' are, in the receiving countries of this study - Italy and the Netherlands - generally negatively portrayed in the media and in everyday exchanges.

If we start from the orientation that migrants are active subjects, we can look for the ways in which they construct meaning in their lives and refuse the categories in which they are positioned or through which they are called to account for themselves. One of the original features of the project is to conceive of emotions - hopes and fears, attachments and identifications – and relationships, as central to life strategies and conduct, and generative of new forms of subjectivity, new ways of thinking, acting and being in the world. The migrant women's lives, recounted in the interviews, are much more than personal stories. Through their accounts, we trace the processes (institutional and inter-subjective) which have shaped their strategies and their selves, their understandings of the past, and aspirations of the future, such that their narratives become a document of the contemporary phenomenon of migration in Europe.

In the analysis of the oral history interviews conducted for this project, we identified the themes of communication, love, and work as spaces and activities through which migrant women created meaning in their lives, and narrated their histories. Relationships in particular are central to the lives of many migrant women, connected for some to their reasons for migration or to their reasons for staying. The testimonies offer material for analyses of transnational marriage and its impact in the life and self-appreciation of the migrant women. Very often the regime of romantic love is used to justify the decision to migrate, marriage and the procedure of getting European citizenship. Love at a distance, love at first sight, love as passion and suffering are some of the common motives in such accounts. Yet there are also other accounts in which the intimate relationship is part of the story of migration but the narrative is focused more on the woman's sense of self-improvement. Love is present but it is not confined to its romantic versions. It is love that leads to (self)-knowledge as other types of experience such as working or interacting with people.

On the theme of work, we find a range of orientations. Some women refuse non-professional work, claiming that they would return if they could not work at a certain level. For others work is an instrument to achieve broader life goals, which makes the content of the work itself less important than for those whose identifications are more connected to their work activity. The migrants are also conscious of discriminations in the labour market, on the basis of nationality and gender, and recount how these are discursively expressed. Our approach has allowed us to perceive the cultural composition and cultural borders which shape the labour market. While issues of exploitation are also very much the reason for this

characteristic, the cultural mechanisms that trap the migrant personality within the fact of s/he being a migrant is also playing a role. It is the 'cultural capital' collected in the native country – what we term 'national capital' - that offers the only possibility for occupation and self realisation. A condition that emerges in our testimonies when women with high education are channelled into work as translators or journalists in their mother tongue. This condition is both a source of satisfaction and of alienation and dissatisfaction when the individual claims the right to express other capabilities and desires.

Beyond either love or work, communication in the everyday is emphasised by many of the migrant women as the principle site of happiness and a space of recognition. Yet relations with authorities are often fraught, and the testimonies offer numerous accounts of the obstacles for migrants' access to public places and institutions (hospitals, schools, bureaucracy...). The analysis 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 as one of the central values and practices of many migrant women.

In addition, narrations of border-crossing, and meanings of home went beyond the standard understandings of singular belonging, challenging discourses of integration in any simplistic sense. The possibility of possessing several identification documents and the experience of passing several national borders creates a mode of thinking which allows changes of migrants' identity and sense of belonging. For some of the women interviewed, home is in the plural, for others still it is multiple. This means that they do not have a straightforward identification with a single nationality alone. Belonging is also powerfully expressed in relation to food. Indeed the interviewees' food-talk (processing and consuming) is used as a marker of identity and as a frame of narrating various forms of difference, a flexible site for constructing self and other.

The comparative design of this research illuminates processes specific to certain settings, as well those that have a wider resonance. The choice of Hungary and Bulgaria has allowed the analysis of a spectrum of different paths and patterns of migration. Migration during communism was a political act, no matter what the individual intentions were, and a challenge to restrictions on the possibility to leave one's country. Indeed, an additional objective of the project was concerned with women who left selected East European countries - Hungary and Bulgaria - 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. Whether the explicit reason was love, work, education, or adventure, migration after the changes is tightly bound with the ideas that brought about democratization and commercialization in the former communist block.

## Policy Implications

1. *Legal status and gender relations.* One problematic area for many migrant women is the difficulty of obtaining a residence and work permit since a condition for obtaining one is the possession of the other, which presents a 'vicious circle'. A solution used for women's legal status has been their partners' taking full responsibility for them, including the obligation to live together, and being subject to 'aliens' policing inspections at any time. Yet, the problems of the regulation may really be seen when a problem arises in the relationship. Then, the systems do not provide women who would like to stay in the given country and would be self-supportive with some days of grace, so to speak, for the duration of the residence permit. For a more flexible procedure, a more adjusted institutional system and an attitude rooted in real life would be required. For instance, appeals and complaints should be processed by expedite procedures, and migrant women seeking advice should have an opportunity for legal guidance and consultation, including from other experienced migrants.<sup>3</sup>

2. *Family unification.* It is clear from the interviews how much migration policy has not effectively dealt with family unification, by placing numerous obstacles in the way of family members. The advantages of the phenomenon of inter-cultural relationships, including economic and cultural interpenetration, should be emphasized and supported; the right for the protection of family life should be acknowledged as a basic human right and family unification should be considered as a successful integration of people from a third country.<sup>4</sup> Among the objectives of the European Union there is a directive for the unification of families, but this should fully be enforced in migration policy in Hungary and Bulgaria. The current regulation is still insensitive to modern tendencies and in the definition of a family member it does not take non-traditional family models into account (e.g. a life-partner, same-sex partners); in so doing, it puts pressure on young couples and urges them to step into the bonds of marriage as a condition for their stay to be legal. Another problem is that the legal status of those who possess a so-called humanitarian residence permit (which is quite a common form of authorization) does not allow them to enforce their right for family unification even after years of having a valid permit and thus excludes them from the opportunity to apply for child-welfare and social assistance.

3. *Multiple citizenship.* We urge support that parents and children can obtain dual citizenship – this may increase mobility by serving as a symbolic gesture showing that the issuing country readily welcomes them if they decide to return home. Citizenship issues should be dealt with on EU level.<sup>5</sup> Multiple citizenship may be the grounds for the expulsion of someone to the country s/he is the citizen of although s/he may have no relation to that country whatsoever, and adequate protection here should also be guaranteed.

4. *Information and communication.* It is a widely accepted notion that social positions may be changed through geographical changes of positions.<sup>6</sup> Today's Hungarian and Bulgarian emigrants who were the first in their families to leave the country over the

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.epp-ed.org/Press/pdoc03/priorities2004-2009final-hu.doc>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ofakht.hu/hirlevel/2003/hirlev02-s.htm>

<sup>5</sup> For details, see Protocol 4, Article 3, in Council of EU' Convention on Human Rights)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.replika.c3.hu/38/07nieder.htm>, *Etnicitás és politika a késő modern nagyvárosokban* (Ethnicity and politics in the late modern large cities) Niedermüller Péter

last ten years had already had certain information on the target country before leaving. Information appeared to be the most comprehensive in economic questions, especially in the case of men. In addition, symbolic, cultural, and historical reasons are relevant in choosing a country of migration. Surprisingly few emigrants knew anything about admission regulations. Given the changes in the European Union member countries' admission regulations (the regulations have become stricter) and the long migration traditions of the groups, one would expect emigrants to be better informed about admission issues. As a source of information, families come first (and friends to a lesser extent). Agencies of the country of origin and the target country do not usually provide useful information on the receiving country for the emigrants. Personal information always takes precedence over information given by agencies. Decision-makers have to consider the migrants' needs and demands to the largest possible extent. What messages and values should be conveyed in the various communicational interactions? We consider exemplification as the best mechanism to convey values and therefore think migrants with experience should be initiated into the discussions (e.g. the experience of returning, complex contacts in more than one society, etc.) and communication about migration towards the general public.

5. *Women's Employment Situation and Demography.* The activity profile of women working abroad has changed in an interesting way. Approximately until the end of the 1980s, a significant proportion of the women had emigrated to another country as family members and later came to participate in the labour market. In the last years, the number of women who decide to leave their country voluntarily and alone to work abroad has been increasing. The passive status characteristic of earlier decades has been replaced by an active presence in the labour market. One effect of emigration in the labour market of the sending country is that through emigration the sending country's population becomes older while through immigration the receiving country's population becomes younger. These arguments demonstrate that the countries should put equal emphasis on their immigration policy as on their emigration policy. In this context we note that twenty years ago in Hungary the rate of women's employment was among the highest in the world; today's data is similar to Europe's lowest respective data. Another problem is demographic transformation, namely the ageing of the population, which is characteristic of the whole of Europe. In addition, Hungary also has a long way to go to reconcile family and working life, for both men and women. It is important that Hungary should improve its job creation policy in order to become attractive for young women who – in choosing their residence, perhaps with their foreign husband – should find employment and opportunities for family formation.

6. *The 'Brain Drain' Phenomenon.* Although migration obviously has two directions (immigration and emigration), on defining migration, countries tend to specify the circle of immigrants and consider immigration as a relevant concept while they pay less attention to the migration of their own citizens to other countries. The so-called brain drain (or skill drain) phenomenon carries significant economic advantages for the recipient country and major losses for the sending country. Consequently, receiving countries usually accept skilled labour forces without reservation. The problem is that the greatest demand will appear for those (highly qualified, creative information specialists, computer specialists, researchers, etc.) who are also required at home. One possibility is to encourage mobility within the country by providing information and resolutely improving the content of education.

7. *Education.* In Hungary and Bulgaria, a particular problem is that the general secondary school curriculum contains almost no reference to equal opportunities between men and women, basic human rights, and migration as a decisive phenomenon of our age. Just in the recent years, due mainly to the work of non-governmental organizations, the social awareness of these phenomena has grown. Yet this problem also seems to be a timely one as a rise in migration may be expected after accession to the European Union. We would stress two values that – with respect to the current discussion – appear as challenges for the education sphere. One is social acceptance of the migrants’ point of view, the second is the principle of equal opportunity between women and men.

In the formation of education policy current changes in the world should be taken into consideration since teaching is to some extent always occurs in a certain intercultural social-economic-political environment. In intercultural education, educated migrant women who possess languages and are familiar with cultures may also have an enormous role and may participate as mediators in the communication of sister schools and in exchange programs. As a method, it might be the most useful if schools provided opportunities for exchange programs, within the compass of which students would become acquainted with the culture of a given country and, through meeting students of the same age class, with the experiences of communication, and with the usefulness of a living language. This may increase their ability to tolerate ‘otherness’ and may strengthen the positive role of collective experience in them through the realization of common projects. With respect to the success of equal opportunities between women and men, the most important tasks of the educational system are: greater information on equal opportunities policies and practices to be circulated by the institutional structures concerned, and encouraging the establishment of networks for comparing and exchanging different experiences.

### **The construction of other(s) in Italy and the Netherlands**

In order to grasp the complexity of migration as a phenomenon the research also included, in addition to the testimonies of migrant women, accounts from native women in the two Western European countries of this study - The Netherlands and Italy. The analysis focuses on the articulation of class, nation, and gender in transnational encounters between indigenous and migrant women, as friends, in employment relationships or in contact through charitable or voluntary sector organisations. It is our contention that migration is a process that concerns both the migrants themselves as well as the natives of the countries where people migrate and that mobility is part of the history of countries of emigration as well as of those who receive migrants. In this sense, 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 within and across Europe.

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 moved 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 persistence of Eurocentrism as a system of thought to identify 'other' cultures is evidenced strongly in the interviews with native women. The widespread use of stereotypes and prejudices to relate to several groups perceived as different is marked. In particular, there is a high degree of Islam-phobia, in which Islam was transformed into the utter negative 'other' of Europe. The role of national mass media in sustaining and transmitting cultural stereotypes and prejudices is evidenced.

In the Netherlands, we analyse how Dutch women narrate their relationships to Eastern European women, discussions in which reference to other migrant groups are evoked to to define 'self' and 'other'. Within the discussion of the interviews, two main themes are highlighted in order to further investigate the question of representation of 'self' and 'other' by Dutch women: 'reasons for migration', and 'integration in Dutch society'. The interviews illustrate the omnipresence of the current public debate around immigration and integration, in which Dutch Muslims are central, and in which the position of women takes up a central role. It is almost impossible to speak about migration or migrant women without referring to the debate on integration. The respondents make use of different 'strategies of resistance' – discursive strategies, that is – which may be more or less effective. 1) The respondent emphasizes the uniqueness of her friend/her colleague/the women she knows: she is different from other Eastern European women in the Netherlands. 2) Denial of dominant images: Repeating (dominant) images of migrants that come to the fore in the media, followed by an explicit statement that one does not share this image. In this case, the speaker in fact presents herself as an 'exception': it is because of her specific characteristics – tolerance, openness towards others, 'naivety' – that she has different ideas. thinks otherwise. The effect is that hegemonic discourse is repeated, while it is neither denied nor confirmed. 3) Finally, political and historical knowledge and consciousness – and, importantly, accountability for one's own position within the specific geo-political setting – are crucial prerequisites for identification and bonding with 'others', and resistance to stereotyping and 'othering' discourses.

The narratives of Italian interviewees expose forms of racism that function primarily on the naturalization of specific elements: national 'character', class belonging and education, gender role and sexuality. These tropes are used to identify several women coming from the East. The 'object' of the narrative is isolated and differentiated - because of her exceptions in term of wealth, education, and gender behaviour - by an imagined community. Usually this strategy of distinction is sustained by experiences based on friendship, on voluntary work, on encounters within the household (between employer and employee) and it demands the depiction of a group conforming to the 'real' and 'authentic' East. Whilst the group carries the weight of stigmatization and prejudices, the exceptional individual is recognised and can become a positive point of reference for the Italian interviewee (as in the Netherlands). Similarity and sameness are thus produced through the vocabulary of exceptionalism and differentiation. Migrant women are used by Italian women for the renegotiation of their self-representation as well their position within contemporary Italy and Europe. Their narratives show – and sometimes challenge - “the multiple articulations of the triumphant European/Western women versus 'the

others”<sup>7</sup>. This configuration presupposes a reference to backwardness that is mitigated only by exceptional individuals. Eastern European migrants are placed in the Italian past because of the poverty of their countries; because of their approach to men and gender roles; because of the more authoritarian relationships between generations; because of their style in dressing; because they seem “naive, childish” to the entrepreneurial Italian mentality; even because of their commitment to religion.

Analysis of the representations of the native women is then comparatively explored, using the concepts of moral and cultural boundaries<sup>8</sup>. Overall, what is striking is the extent to which moral boundaries figures in the accounts of many of the native women interviewees. Indeed, moral failings are often the grounds through which racism is expressed. The emphasis on morality can be seen as evidence of the burden of suspicion migrant women are subject to – and in strikingly gendered ways, for instance around the issue of respectability/sexuality. Yet, the types of boundary-work one can trace in the narratives vary according to the nature of the relationship to the person(s) about whom she is speaking: employers tend to emphasise moral boundaries in their representations of migrant women, and friends more often refer to cultural as well as moral boundaries “to incorporate the other into their own group”<sup>9</sup>. The Dutch women express some similar positions to their Italian counterparts. They generally voice moral boundaries less strongly than the Italians and they emphasise cultural boundaries slightly more than moral ones. The most striking difference however is in the components of anti-racist discourse present in the interviews. The Dutch talk about migration in terms of enrichment and openness, a vocabulary that is not heard in the Italian interviews. In a further comparison between migrant and native women within Italy, we see that those with lower social status - as perceived by the host society - emphasise moral boundaries most strongly, in relation to themselves, to achieve inclusion. Morality functions as a basis for equality in the face of limited cultural or socio-economic resources. In some contrast, those with higher social status on the other hand tend to emphasise their “social membership” of Italian society through insistence on cultural boundaries.

### Policy Implications

Although we have highlighted in our work the positive potentiality of intersubjective encounters within Italy, the Netherlands and Europe, the testimonies reflect and often reproduce stereotypes, prejudice and a lack of knowledge of women coming from different Eastern European countries. What we want to stress is the need for resources able to introduce in the public sphere knowledge about, and representations and voices of migrants and diasporic groups. These interventions are needed both in Italy and the Netherlands although the two societies have a very different practice of policy on migration issues (e.g. in the field of public service – health system, housing, education, communication, law and so on). What we present below has relevance for both countries, although we discuss some selected specific measures for each.

#### 1. Italy

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<sup>7</sup> Lutz, Helma, 1997, “The limits of European-ness: Immigrant women in fortress Europe” Feminist Review, 57, 93-111

<sup>8</sup> Lamont, Michèle, 2000, The Dignity of Working Men, Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class and Immigration, Russell Sage Foundation and Harvard University Press

<sup>9</sup> Lamont, Michèle, 2000, “The rhetorics of racism and anti-racism in France and the United States” in Michèle Lamont and Laurent Thévenot (eds) Rethinking comparative cultural sociology, Repertoires of evaluation in France and the United States, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

*Mass media.* All the testimonies have referred to Italian TV to denounce its transmission and reinforcing of the more widespread stereotypes concerning eastern European women, associated almost exclusively with sex-work and more recently with domestic service and care-work in private houses. Similarly the press write about presence of women from eastern Europe in Italy only when they are involved in specific experience such as trafficking, violence and insecurity. These factors are significant elements of the common idea of women from the European East either as victims or as sexually dangerous individuals threatening the community. Although monitoring systems and data collection already exist (see the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia EUMC)<sup>10</sup> what is needed is a more efficient collaboration between different public and private resources at national and EU level. Educational programmes as well as programmes directly created by so-called minority groups should be supported. In addition, they can be productively interconnected with strategic actions supporting entering the field of training, mobility, employment.

*Education.* Schools and educational institutions (from the kindergarten to University) are an important space of encounters between women and men, of different generations and of various backgrounds. In our testimonies schools offered one significant place of meeting between migrants and native women shaped by the possibility of more equal relations (the role being that of the parent), by the sharing of a common interest (children's education), or by the recognition of a public institution. We suggest the importance of a multiple investment concerning the various subjects involved in the system: the students, the teachers, the parents. Actions should be taken in order to support a positive attitude and experience of intercultural relations of all subjects and during all grades of the educational career.

*Training.* The interviews, both with migrants and with 'native' women, confirm the need for further interventions to train professionals in the public sector to deal with multicultural issues. Although the testimonies are produced by subjects living within a common European space - characteristic that in most interviews has been stressed referring to common religion (Christianity), similar familiar and educational models, - public sites (police offices, hospitals, social security offices among others) are places in which the condition of 'being a migrant' is felt in more acute negative way. If in the last decade training in multicultural issues has been organised, evidence confirms that it has privileged the idea of having a 'intercultural mediator' (usually from a non Italian background) instead of training Italian professionals in key institutions. A study of the effect of this policy is very much needed to re-orient public intervention in the field.

## 2. The Netherlands

*Organisation of policy-fields.* The production of knowledge takes places in different, often interconnected realms. Knowledge and 'truth' produced in policy-making is informed by the law and often by the social sciences field. In turn, policies have impact on people's lives materially as well as symbolically. Culture and representation are directly affected by policy-making – and vice-versa. The fact that the production of knowledge and policy is often artificially separated in different 'sections' or disciplines (in science as well as in politics) causes contradictions, which effect in very concrete problems for different groups of people. A striking example is

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<sup>10</sup> [http://eumc.eu.int/eumc/material/pub/media\\_report/MR-CH4-8-Italy.pdf](http://eumc.eu.int/eumc/material/pub/media_report/MR-CH4-8-Italy.pdf)

the contrast – even antithesis – between the field of immigration policy, integration policy and emancipation policy.

*(In)dependent residency.* The example of the dependent residence permit for migrant women married to a Dutch citizen or a permanent resident in the Netherlands, is striking in this context. Marriage became an important means of legal entrance into the Netherlands (as well as to other countries in the EU). After the recruitment of labour from abroad officially stopped, family reunification or formation became, along with entry through the asylum procedure, the most common means of legal entry. The dependent spouse is not granted independent residence permit until after three years into the marriage. If the marriage breaks up before the end of that period, the spouse has no legal status, no residence permit, and no right to work or receive social benefit. Formally entry legislation are gender-neutral, but because of its features the effects differ greatly for women and men. Through the income requirements for the permanent resident partner, the ‘male breadwinner’ model is reinforced through aliens law. This creates, because of changing patterns and gender roles in the indigenous population, a gap between ‘modern’ indigenous population and ‘traditional’ immigrant population. Secondly, marriage as the ‘gatekeeper’ in immigration law creates inequalities between immigrants and indigenous population, and forces immigrant women in a vulnerable position dependent on their husbands – in sharp contrast with the model of ‘modern and emancipated’ European women. Although this law applies to both women and men, women are most affected. First, because more women than men have right to residence through this specific construction. Secondly, women are vulnerable in this position of dependence from their husbands: in case of abuse, women have the choice to either leave her husband with the risk to loose her right to residence, or stay with her abuser. The Dutch government, in their emancipation policy, encourages and propagates women’s right to autonomy, choice and independence, but at the same time the emancipation – and thus also the ‘integration in Dutch society with all its merits’, as is one of the aims of the integration policy – of migrant women is endangered by the dependent residence right.

*(Gender) Mainstreaming.* The effects of the new immigration policy under the current government are different for women and men. And whereas in the field of emancipation policy, the new direction is that all attention should go to the emancipation of women of ‘allochtone’ (literally: ‘from elsewhere’) background – in practice, the target group referred to by this term is Muslim women – it is these women who are most effected by the new, more restrictive immigration policies that are being proposed and installed. Restrictive criteria for family formation and unification affect women most; asylum is often not granted on gender-sensitive criteria; the position of labour migrants from the new EU countries – a growing number of whom are women – is undermined by the decision to gain no free entry of people to (most of) the new EU member states.

*The construction of ‘illegality’.* Notwithstanding the concern for victims of trafficking in many European governments, the effects of the concrete measures taken to fight trafficking are often not in the benefit of the women concerned. The illegalization of people combined with the gendered dimension of trafficking and prostitution, combines external circumstances, force and exploitation (from traffickers), and law and policies in the country of immigration to cause and extremely vulnerable and

impossible situation for women. The choice between sustaining the situation of exploitation, or ending the situation of sexual and financial exploitation by reporting to the police – thereby taking the risk to be forced to leave the country because of their undocumented status – takes agency away from women. Faced with a ‘choice’ which is an impossible one, and women either remain in the country of immigration ‘illegally’ with all consequences connected to that status.<sup>11</sup> The result is that often the struggle against traffickers is, in practice, just another anti-immigration measure: trafficking networks are occasionally stopped, traffickers get punished but new ones appear, and women are deported to where they do not want to be for a variety of reasons.

Some concrete changes that would follow from the above discussion are the following:

1. The *dependent* residence permit – whereby the ‘foreign’ partner’s residence permit is dependent on her or his marriage with the (native) partner – should be changed into *individual* residence permit in order to ensure that women and men alike can remain independent and autonomous, which is the only possible basis to become full and actively participating citizens.
2. Trafficking does not cause illegality, the construction of illegal citizens enables trafficking. Therefore the notion of ‘illegal people’ should be abandoned. Undocumented people should not be in risk of being removed from the country or be punished by the system in any other way.
3. Terminology used in policies in different fields should be transparent and systemised. Politicians should not borrow terms used in the press and popular discourse resulting in false use of terms like ‘allochtoon’ when a specific group of (often Dutch by nationality) citizens is meant (often, for example in case of third-generation children of migrant grandparents, not even officially belonging to the category used). This helps to clarify and understand what and who it is that is being discussed, and what the consequences of certain policies are for which groups.
4. Emancipation policy should be based on facts, not on the ideology of ‘free choice’. The facts (number of women on the labour market; number of women in high positions in all realms of the labour market; availability of childcare facilities; division of paid and unpaid labour between women and men and between Dutch women and immigrant women) show that Dutch women are by far not ‘emancipated’ as popular discourse and concrete policy wants. Visibility of these facts should be the basis for a new and form emancipation policy, targeting all women and men, not only specific (minority) groups.

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<sup>11</sup> This issue also came up in the interviews with Dutch women doing social and political work with and for undocumented migrant women and/or migrant sex workers.

Conclusions. Overall, we want to stress that our emphasis on the cultural dimension of policy interventions is due to two main considerations: 1) The centrality of culture as a battlefield in which identities, recognition of self and other, fears and curiosity are negotiated and elaborated. Culture in our understanding is a key element which shapes, influences and conditions social, political and economic issues; 2) the marginal position and relevance given to culture in contemporary European policy and political agendas.

If culture is central, an effective political culture cannot be achieved without considering and entering the field of material equality, wealth, job opportunities, social services, housing, and so on. Many times we have heard migrant women claiming full citizenship not only on the level of cultural recognition but also of access to economic, social and political resources. We re-assert the claim made by migrant women themselves that cultural recognition is often possible only in terms of cultural essentialism (i.e. migrant women are often asked to cook and perform their ‘very culture’ in terms of food, music, style of dress). Our emphasis on culture is critical of essentialism and naturalisation and rather sees culture as a theory and practice able to transform other levels of life; a practice of citizenship which includes work, political rights, social rights such as housing, education and the recognition of the multiple desires and location of each subject.

More generally, fields of policy that are intrinsically interconnected should not be separated. Both ‘intersectionality’ – the fact that different dimensions of one’s identity and position such as gender, nationality, ethnicity, educational background, are interconnected – and ‘mainstreaming’ – the notion that all policies should be screened for their impact on different groups of people – are relevant here.

## 2. Background and objectives of the project

This project was based on four sets of material. 1) Primary research was conducted with migrant women in the sending countries selected for the study - Bulgaria and Hungary. Oral history interviews were the chosen methodological tool here in order to allow us to draw conclusions about new contemporary forms of women's subjectivity from the study of women as agents of change in their own lives (objectives 2,3,5&7<sup>12</sup>). 2) Interviews were conducted with native women in the receiving countries of this study - Italy and the Netherlands - to explore contemporary forms of intercultural exchange and the actual and potential impact relationships with native women might have on processes of migration (objective 6). Overall, the project collected more than 100 interviews of migrants (pre and post 1989 migrant and native women). 3) Both sets of interviews contribute to new understandings of 'belonging' to and meanings of the cultural and political space of Europe and the European Union, a dimension of the project which has gained in prominence since the original proposal. In addition, we conducted some historical work on women's contribution to the construction of Europe, notably in the group *Femmes pour l'Europe*, created by Ursula Hirschmann in the 1970s (objective 4<sup>13</sup>). 4) A legal perspective on contemporary changes in the regulation of migration took Denmark as a case study, and explored connections and tensions in the regulation of migration and of relationships (including marriage as well as other 'bonds of affection') (objective 8). In Denmark close to 50% of immigrants marry a spouse from outside the country. This pattern has not changed over the last decade. The persistence of this marriage pattern has been used by parties and politicians to argue in favor of strengthening requirements for obtaining *family reunification*, the argument being that the older a person is, the easier it is to resist family pressure in marriage matters. The Danish case is used as a reference point for the development of measures elsewhere in Europe and as such has a more general relevance.

The testimonies both of migrant and native women confirm the central role of human mobility in the redefinition of relation between Eastern and Western Europe after 1989. If new forms of encounters are shaped within the social, political and economic conditions of post-communism and by the intensification of a wide variety of social, political, economic, cultural exchanges, mobility and migration between the East and the West plays a central role in these exchanges and also gives rise to new transnational forms of subjectivity that emerge in Europe today. Gender relations have been at the core of these processes in a twofold way: 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; and 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. Our contribution here evidences the operation of gender in social life from which we draw theoretical conclusions (objective 1). The contemporary historical context is also 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 of relationships—personal, intimate, professional or collegial—across

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<sup>12</sup> Numbers here refer to the objectives set out in the Technical Annex to the project proposal.

<sup>13</sup> It was not possible to take this line of work as far as we had hoped within the project. The available material was much more limited than we had been led to believe.

the European East and West, play a pivotal role in the establishment of this emergent new European political and cultural space.

One of the original features of the project is to conceive of emotions - hopes and fears, attachments and identifications – and relationships, as central to life strategies and conduct, and generative of new forms of subjectivity, new ways of thinking, acting and being in the world. The migrant women's lives, recounted in the interviews, are much more than personal stories. Through their accounts, we trace the processes (institutional and inter-subjective) which have shaped their strategies and their selves, their understandings of the past, and aspirations of the future, such that their narratives become a document of the contemporary phenomenon of migration in Europe. This is at a time when the very meaning of Europe as a space and a site of identity is itself in the making. Taking distance from approaches that associate Europeaness almost exclusively with official and top-down political constructs, the project brings into the foreground and analyses the historical experiences and the reflections of women who migrated and organised their lives between East and West Europe. The experiences and visions of the women who were interviewed expand across the actual borders between the East and the West in a period when these borders as well as their imaginary functions are probably more mobile and fluid than ever.

The understanding of migration put forward in this work is a dynamic set of relations between places, cultures, people and identifications. Instead of being conceptualised as a linear process in which places of origin and destination are singular and fixed and patterns of integration are assumed to follow several stages, migration is envisioned as a contemporary form of mobility which is marked by complexity and contradictions. For instance, migrant women may be transnational mothers, dividing their lives between one site and country in which they work and another in which they share time and space with family members. We use the term mobility in order to better describe the multitude of itineraries, practices, aims, desires and visions that are associated with women's movement between Eastern and Western Europe. Work and financial aspirations, intimate relationships, kinship, imagination and adventurous inclination as well as political dissidence appear as constitutive elements of the subjectivity of women whose mobility re-designs the cultural geography of Europe. By employing the term mobility the project seeks to enrich the field of migration studies by articulating a critique on older understandings of the migrant as a dislocated and uprooted subject, either pray to forces of integration, or motivated exclusively by rational choices related to the betterment of living conditions. Instead, though analysis of original research material, the research demonstrates that contemporary intra-European migration is a more complex process marked by the political and cultural performances that exceed the concepts of integration, rational choice and uprootedness.

In order to grasp the complexity of migration as a phenomenon the research also includes, in addition to the testimonies of migrant women, accounts from native women in the two Western European countries of this study - The Netherlands and Italy. The analysis focuses on the articulation of class, nation, and gender in transnational encounters between indigenous and migrant women, as friends, in employment relationships or in contact through charitable or voluntary sector organisations. It is our contention that migration is a process that concerns both the

migrants themselves as well as the natives of the countries where people migrate and that mobility is part of the history of countries of emigration as well as of those who receive migrants. In this sense, 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 within and across Europe.

The comparative design of this research illuminates processes specific to certain settings, as well those that have a wider resonance. The choice of Hungary and Bulgaria has allowed the analysis of a spectrum of different paths and patterns of migration. Migration during communism was a political act, no matter what the individual intentions were, and a challenge to restrictions on the freedom to leave one's country. Indeed, an additional objective of the project was concerned with women who left selected East European countries - Hungary and Bulgaria - 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. Whether the explicit reason was love, work, education, or adventure, migration after the changes is tightly bound with the ideas that brought about democratization and commercialization in the former communist block.

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 moved 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.

### **Summary of original objectives**

1. To make theoretical contributions to the working of gender in social practice in Europe.
2. To draw conclusions about new contemporary forms of women's subjectivity from the study of women as agents of change in their own lives (in the domains of marriage and migration).
3. To critically consider the conceptualisation of strategic action.
4. To consider the process of the construction of Europe and its gendered dimensions in contemporary and historical perspective.
5. To explore processes of migration from the perspective of women. This includes making connections between ideas and images of the West and the mobility undertaken.
6. A second objective of direct relevance to migration is to investigate the images and representations of native women in the receiving countries of the East and of Eastern and other migrants. Here, as above (5), ideas of Europe, and the comparative dimensions between the two sending and the two receiving countries are developed.

7. A third dimension of the oral history work of this study is that concerned with women who left selected East European countries - Hungary and Bulgaria - for political reasons in the past 40 years.
8. To analyse the constitution of cross-national relationships through legal regulation.

### **3. Scientific description of the project results and methodology**

The findings presented here are based on the chapters which have been produced for the forthcoming book, *Women from East to West* (Berghahn Books, 2005) which is the key publication of the project.

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## Methodology

As we have already indicated (in part 2), the project is primarily based on the collection of life stories and interviews. In the life story approach interview subjects, in this case, migrant women, are asked to narrate their lives with minor interventions from the oral historian. The interviews were nevertheless organised around 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 conducted with native women followed a more structured set of questions around the thematic priorities of the research. Questions addressed 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.

### Construction of the sample

#### *Migrant women*

The sample we sought to construct was deliberately open-ended. We wished to unpack the categories of migrant built around singular motivations for migration, eg labour or marriage. Nevertheless, the project prioritized a few relevant categories that we sought to include: married women, since marriage is seen as a relevant aspect of migration; women working in different labour sectors; various durations of stay (beyond the duration of a tourist visa); post-1989 arrival; various ages; various family status in country of origin; various religions; various level of education. We did not prioritise ethnicity as a category but neither did we exclude it. In practice, too few interview subjects were found with any ethnic belonging within Bulgaria or Hungary to do any comparative work. Neither did we look for women who had been subject to forced migration or enslavement. We considered that to deal with the complex issues these conditions of migration raise we would need to concentrate more on them than the design of this project – its very variety of subjects – would allow. In addition, we prioritized women located in different cities in order to map potential variation connected with different spatial dimensions of life. To gain access to migrant women we used different channels, eg informal contacts, associations, jobs agencies, churches. We gathered contacts for interviews on the basis of what is known as the ‘snowball’ sampling method.

Bulgarian sample. The Bulgarian team sought to establish contacts with individuals, networks and organisations that could provide information about the location, occupation and status of migrant women in Italy and the Netherlands. Some interviews with return-migrants in Bulgaria were decisive for making initial contacts. Following the initial chain of contacts, the researcher entered networks of women-migrants (“ex-dancers” in the case of Italy, and women with similar working place in the case of The Netherlands).

Hungarian sample. The Hungarian team did considerable research prior to the field trips by contacting Hungarian embassies, cultural institutes and organisations of the Hungarian diaspora. Supplied by the contact list given by these pursued the snowball

method which proved successful. In the case of the Dutch interviews the Internet was the best way to find our interviewees. The umbrella homepage of the Hungarian immigrants in the Netherlands and the mailing list of the Association of Young Hungarians in Holland was very helpful, indeed almost all of our contacts came through answering our call for interviewees advertised on the homepage and on the mailing list. Finally personal contacts from home, especially in the case of the return migrants, was crucial, as it was more difficult to find return migrants who would be willing to give an interview.

#### *Native women*

The main criteria for 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 from Hungary) and included in the sample of native women persons who employed or work with migrants from Poland, Czech Republic, Romania etc. Within this frame we have chosen persons 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 relationship. For ethical reasons, interviews were not conducted with employers of migrant women interviewed, but they could be a friend or contact of such a person. 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.

Total interviews=110

	In Italy	In the Netherlands	<i>Total</i>
Hungarian	16+4return	18+3return	<b>41</b>
Bulgarian	15+2return	17+3return	<b>37</b>
<i>Total</i>	<b>37</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>78</b>
Native	18	14	<b>32</b>

#### **Language, transcription and translation**

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 conducted by a native speaker in the first language of the interviewee. They 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 the researchers). All these passages between form and language are relevant in terms of methodology and analysis. If the transcription is already a transformation for what concerns 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 influencing meanings and narrative forms of the testimony. This makes it especially relevant that the presence of researchers who share the same language of the interviewees continue to act as mediators between the different passages and to help colleagues understand the resonances of meaning within the interviews.

#### **Inter-subjectivity and inter-disciplinarity**

The attention to inter-subjectivity in the interviews is the only way to understand the processes of formation of the oral evidence, that far from being spontaneous it is constructed by multiple interventions: first of all the construction of the sample, through networks of different subjects, then the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, and then the actions of transcribers and translators. The interpretation of the oral evidence is therefore the last step in a long and complex process, that tries to capture a much longer accumulation, that of a repertoire of different forms of subjectivity, both individual and collective.

When we talk about the intervention of the interviewer, we do not mean only or even primarily the fact that s/he brings onto the scene her individual subjectivity. What is even more important is the fact that another accumulated subjectivity is brought forward: that of the scientific disciplines that are called into play in order to construct the sample, envisage the questionnaire and give an interpretation. In the case of this project, these disciplines are oral history, social and cultural history, sociology, philosophy, law and literary criticism; they are represented by various experts and are brought together through numerous exchanges between us. Trying to work across these disciplines, we privilege lines of thinking that perceive the active construction of meaning in the migrants' and native women's lives, the relationship between the symbolic and the material, between the imagination and the everyday, and between the life trajectory and legal regulation of employment, educational and relational opportunities. Our interpretations, often diverse, are then subject to scrutiny from different perspectives and locations. And all of them must be examined in the changing context of contemporary Europe.

**I: Subjectivity, Europe, Gender and Migration**

## **Gender, Subjectivity, Europe: A Constellation for the Future.**

*Luisa Passerini*

This chapter stresses the aspects of intersubjectivity that presided on the choices made in order to establish the research and in the course of its development, putting at the center of it the relationships between the interviewed women from Bulgaria and Hungary on the one hand, and from Italy and the Netherlands on the other. Intersubjectivity is also understood in connection with the reflection on Europeanness and on how the sense of belonging to Europe can be changed by exchanges between migrants and natives. Finally, intersubjectivity also has to do with the relation among the researchers and between the researchers and the interviewees.

After a brief analysis of the historical antecedents (particularly the group *Femmes pour l'Europe* created by Ursula Hirschmann in Brussels), the chapter considers the hesitations of the interviewees in replying to questions such as: “Do you feel European?”, “What does Europe mean to you?”. After initial hesitations, the interviewees often affirm a sense of belonging to Europe. Whatever the roots of the hesitations and verbal difficulties in expressing a sense of belonging to Europe – that can be many different ones – the chapter argues that this moment of suspension before expressing an allegiance to Europe should be valued. It indicates a substantive problematicity for women to feel fully European, because of the inherited lack of recognition as full citizens. It also implies that one cannot declare oneself European - and especially not a European woman - so easily of these days, without going through a complex path, of de-construction and re-construction.

One of the important steps in this direction concerns the re-discussion of the boundaries of Europe. A stereotype implanted in our research from the beginning has been the assumption of the division between an East and a West of Europe, a stereotype that the research came to radically challenge. This division appeals to our imaginary and is a legacy of shared political and cultural ideas. In fact, on the basis of the interviews, both Bulgaria and Hungary appear to be considered by their citizens as being European by excellence, due to their central location in the continent and “inbetweenness” between East and West. The attitude of being “central” to Europe is highly significant at the symbolic level, because of its double sense, geographical and cultural. The metaphor of the “heart” of Europe, often used to indicate various countries (a recurrent case is Switzerland, also for its federal structure), is another example of the search for affirming centrality, first of all in a physical sense, that becomes immediately symbolic. Besides, the metaphor of inbetweenness has a double meaning in a gendered context: it also alludes to the activities of mediation that women have performed for a long time; we can imagine that this mediation is now being transformed, being no longer closely coupled with subordination. Understood geo-symbolically, centrality is very relevant. It is a way of redefining East and West, that implies the existence of an Eastern Europe, Russia, whose Europeanness is often denied of these days.

Meanwhile, the discursive insistence on centrality, as well as the experiences of mobility and of exchange between mobile and native women, re-territorialise Europe in the sense of designing a European territory that does not yet fully exist, but is a possibility, after the de-territorialisation provoked by migration. The territory on

which the migratory itineraries are carved is already European, but not in a simple sense. It is still burdened by former hierarchies between periphery and centre, between East and West, South and North, all charged with value judgments that establish different levels of Europeanness. This territory can become European in new senses, as this term takes up new meanings. Various processes of redesigning culturally the European territory seem to take place; such could be the links between regional and local areas rather than nations (for instance in the close connection between the Balkans and Puglia established by Michaela (It), a very different approach than the traditional insistence on the national intra-European stereotypes which we also hear in the interviews).

The issue of “central” Europe is not present in the interviews with Dutch and Italian women, who however often adopt the East/West divide in a critical way. Some Dutch women criticise this divide as not really relevant (Janette) or “unnatural”, i.e. enforced only in the last fifty years, during the era of the communist regimes (Ida). At the same time, others state that “the border [of Europe] stops at the Russian border”, since the Russians “don’t have the ‘European culture’”, as for instance the Poles do (Annet, NL). The Italian interviews bear the effects of the collective amnesia in Italian public discourse regarding the era of communism and the cold war; this is just one of the reasons of the denial, in these interviews, of differences between the East and West of Europe, but it should be kept in mind as an important component. It is more accentuated in Italy than in other Western European countries because of the specific vicissitudes of the Italian Communist Party and its international role, as well as its links with the anti-fascist Resistance and the social movements in the national context – that amounts to a complex ambivalence.

A further theme of the chapter in exploring new ways of feeling European has to do with the fact that the intimate is very present in the narratives of Bulgarian and Hungarian women, often in connection with the question of being European. The private is present in the new sense of belonging that can be evinced from some replies, either in the form of allegiances linked with marriage and love – as in the preceding example – or on the basis of the ancient self-representation of woman as mother that seems to solve or overcome the problematic nature of the European rhetoric of unity, like in the quotation from Ivaïla (Bu) claiming to be one of the female ancestors of a new generation of Europeans. While this type of link is rarely uttered, love on the contrary is very present in the narratives of the Bulgarian and Hungarian women as a reason for migration, either with a husband or with a boyfriend. Other times love is introduced as the consequence of migrating and a reason for staying on. Love appears in a certain sense to be a European force, although often paired with nationality. This does not mean that other emotions, such as pride, and other themes, such as work, do not figure prominently in the interviews. In fact, one should bear in mind that the background to our analysis is a situation where multiple subject positions, with contradictory discourses and opposing needs, are being configured, as Ruba Salih has observed. However, it seems relevant to give space to love, both in view of the contribution that this can give to envisaging migrant women as subjects of emotions besides ideas and attitudes, and because of the recent re-discovery of emotions in feminist scholarship.

Finally the chapter addresses the question of gendering the European subject. In a post-colonial world, the subject of Europeanness is no longer understood exclusively

as male, white and Christian (even layness was defined as antagonistic mainly to Christianity), a view that resulted in ignoring the plurality of European cultural traditions and/or subjecting them to a rigid hierarchy. That vision of subjectivity favoured a conception of life in which emotions were extolled but not integrated with intellectual values, where women and men were only formally equal, and the fulfillment of a love relationship was either confused with the sexual act or completely detached from it. The concept of identity related to this vision was monolithic and hierarchical, subordinating the richness of psychic life to a pyramidal system of values. Conceptualising European identity in this way was part of a tradition of dogmatic ethnocentrism that privileged the dominating role of Europe and isolated it. Indeed, the arrogance of that form of subjectivity went together with its defensive character.

The new subjectivities that are in the process of being formed no longer lay the claim to be superior to any other one, although saving the specificity which derives from place and tradition (and in the end that of the individual in its multiple connections). This is one reason why “identification”, “belonging”, “allegiance” are better terms than identity, because they allow to deal with an idea of Europeanness in which the women we encountered can be seen as contributing to the construction of feelings rather than seen as negotiating objectified identities; in this light, we can understand better their potential contribution to develop and spread feelings of belonging to Europe, not without criticism, and problematising this sense of belonging, certainly distancing themselves from any conception of Europe as a fortress.

## Feminist theories of subjectivity in a European perspective

Rosi Braidotti and Esther Vonk

### Gender, migration and subjectivity

Which forms of subjectivity emerge in the context of contemporary women's migration in Europe? Which are the contributions of feminist thought to the understanding of migration and forms of *subjectivity in motion*? In the following pages we try to highlight the most significant findings of the project in relation to the above questions. We have selected from the range of figurations that draw on the condition of migrancy, in-betweenness, border-crossing, nomadism, diaspora, and dislocation, two figurations that can further our understanding of subjectivity in this specific context.

### The 'stranger to ourselves'

By stating that 'we are strangers to ourselves'<sup>14</sup>, Julia Kristeva points out that strangeness, or otherness – being a 'foreigner' – is fundamental to being a subject. The foreigner lives within us: 'he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder.' The stranger is always in motion, doesn't belong anywhere. Kristeva points at the possibilities this state of being in motion opens: being alienated from oneself, however painful that may be, enables new ways of imagining, the drive that is necessary to come to radically different ways of thinking. The split identity or 'kaleidoscope of identities' inherent to this 'strangeness' in ourselves is fundamental to our subjectivity. The foreigner for Kristeva refers both to the foreigner in the 'real-life' version – the foreigner as the one who left her/his country, the migrant who is 'foreign' in the country s/he now lives in – as well as the metaphorical condition of being 'foreign', the foreigner within ourselves. Everyone, even if sporadically, experiences her/himself to be a foreigner, a stranger, in her/his own country, place, environment or culture; no one fully coincides with their national, sexual, ethnic, social, cultural or political identity. This impels us to identify with the other, the foreigner.

The emphasis Kristeva places on the structural non-unity of the subject and hence on elements of inner 'otherness' keeps with the psychoanalytic tradition. What is commonly known as 'the unconscious' is merely the marker of the fundamental importance of non-closure in the structure of subjectivity. The central idea is that the subject does not coincide with her/his conscious self-image, and hence is a stranger to her/himself. Kristeva also states that exile always involves 'a shattering of the former body', as it is, in one way or the other, the shattering of repression that leads people to migrate, to cross borders, to leave one country for another and become a foreigner. Leaving behind family, language and country and settling down somewhere else involves, according to Kristeva, necessarily a radical rupture, a break with any prohibition, and an opening up of what can be imagined as possible. Kristeva pays special attention to the function of language, in particular, to what it means to be a polyglot, emphasising the specific perspective of the 'outsider-within' position of the polyglot.

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<sup>14</sup> Julia Kristeva (1991), *Strangers to ourselves*. Translation of *Etrangers à nous-mêmes* (1988)

### **The ‘nomadic subject’**

The figuration for contemporary subjectivity that Rosi Braidotti offers is the ‘nomadic subject’: ‘a situated, postmodern, culturally differentiated understanding of the subject in general and of the feminist subject in particular.’<sup>15</sup> Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the nomadic, the nomadic subject is an empowering image of the ‘female feminist subject’. The notion of nomad refers to the simultaneous occurrence of different axes of differentiation, intersecting and interacting in the constitution of subjectivity. It is a transversal and inter-connective position. The nomadic subject combines multi-layeredness with accountability.

The nomadic subject is ‘a subject in transit and yet sufficiently anchored to a historical position to accept responsibility and therefore make [one]self accountable for it.’ Important in the figuration of the nomadic subject is that it allows for movement, for the crossing of boundaries and categories. It takes as its starting point the decline of the classical European subject as universal, male and Euro-centric, and of fixed identities. Notwithstanding the decline of fixed identities, the nomadic subject is a situated subject, that is, a subject that speaks and acts from a certain location which is historically, sexually and racially embedded, or rather embodied, and accountable for this location and its history. Braidotti places this ‘materialist’ approach to the subject, the emphasis on the embodied nature, the bodily roots of subjectivity, at the heart of the epistemological and political project of nomadism. The nomad stands for the situated, embodied, differentiated feminist subject.

### **Intersectionality**

The concept of ‘intersectionality’, the intersection between different axes of differentiation in the formation of subjectivity, becomes a key concept in the field of feminist migration theory. The concept was introduced by the U.S. lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw but was soon taken up in other disciplines and fields of research within gender studies. According to Crenshaw intersectionality is not a new, totalising theory of identity but ‘a provisional concept linking contemporary politics with postmodern theory.’ Indeed, while Crenshaw was the one to introduce the term intersectionality, the idea that gender is not an autonomous ‘system’ but is interacting and simultaneously being constructed with other systems of meaning, is by no means a new insight in feminist thought. Black and lesbian feminists in the early 1970s already expressed the inadequacy of gender as a category of experience and analysis if its intersections with ‘race’, sexuality and class are not taken into account.

### **Discussion**

The variety in figurations of the feminist subject in process is connected with the different theoretical frameworks from which these figurations derive. Kristeva, with the ‘stranger within’, offers a psychoanalytic figuration of the (sexualised) other within. Her theoretical framework is (post)Lacanian psychoanalysis. Kristeva herself was a Bulgarian refugee living in France, which strongly impacted on her work, including the notion of the ‘stranger’. Both the notion of ‘migrant otherness’ in a European context, and ‘sexual otherness’ are at stake in her figuration of the ‘stranger within’.

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<sup>15</sup> Rosi Braidotti (1994), *Nomadic subjects*

Braidotti's nomadic subject, inspired by philosophical critiques of Eurocentric humanism, rather refers to 'a critical consciousness that resists settling into socially codes modes of thought and behaviour'. Braidotti emphasises that 'it is the subversion of a set of conventions that defines the nomadic state' and that nomadism is explicitly meant as a critique of Eurocentric assumptions about the unity, centrality and fixity of the subject of knowledge and/as power. Braidotti's method is about situating through cartographies, through mapping the locations while at the same time emphasising mobility and de-territorialization as a feature of historicity. In this context, it is important to note that the nomad, embodying mobility and de-territorialisation, is historically a signifier of danger. Nomads, like the Roma population, with no or little ties to the state, are a threat to the European nation states. They have historically been constructed as 'the other' of the European citizen, whose mobility is contained within the parameters of the state.

Because of the qualities of mobility, border-crossing and different ways of belonging that are inherent in the migrant condition there has been an explosion of figurations drawing from this notion in poststructuralist theory and in postcolonial and feminist theory in particular.<sup>16</sup> Whereas in the field of migration theory questions regarding shifting subjectivities have been neglected for a long time, concepts relating to migratory subjectivity are often used as 'metaphors' in poststructuralist and postcolonial theories of subjectivity, though often these have little to do with the actual movement of people. Homi Bhabha (1994) explains this by the referring to the cultural indeterminacy and hybridity of migrant subjectivity, its quality to unsettle fixed notions of identity which is revealing the difference that lies at the heart of identity. Theories of nomadism challenge unitary concepts of identity and represent subjectivity as mobile, multiple and migratory.

The trope of 'migrancy' allows for the envisioning of trespassing boundaries of different kinds, including disciplinary and epistemological ones. It is therefore no coincidence that the most powerful theories of the subject in feminism are directly linked to notions of migrancy, as it helps to envision the intersection of different axes of differentiation in the constitution of subjectivity. It is important, however, to understand that philosophical notions of migrancy or nomadism are figurations that aim at accounting in a non-sociological manner for the subject positions of different kinds of subjects-in-process.

'Gender' is a crucial tool of analysis if we want to account for the process of migration in a European context today. Gender Studies have developed into a large and diversified field of theory which covers a range of issues and areas, including a variety of disciplinary and theoretical traditions.<sup>17</sup> In the context of our research,

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<sup>16</sup> See Sandra Ponzanesi (2002), 'Diasporic subjects and migration'

<sup>17</sup> In response to these developments, the field of Gender Studies has been mapped and classified thoroughly. The systems of classification are many, and they constitute a field of enquiry in themselves. Some of the major efforts to classification are the *glossary of feminist theory*, and the *Routledge international encyclopedia of women*. Rosemarie Buikema and Anneke Smelik, in their introductory textbook 'Women's Studies and Culture' (1995), use a classification system based on emphasis on respectively equality, difference, and deconstruction. These perspectives refer to different strategies and theoretical positions in feminist theory. The emphasis is thus slightly different from Hardings' in her classification of feminist epistemologies, in which she distinguishes empiricism, standpoint theory and postmodernism as the main tendencies in the field of gender studies. This

focusing on women's subjectivity in a context of women's mobility in Europe, it is central that 'gender' is taken to be a multi-layered concept, and is investigated as such, if we want to do justice to, and grasp full understanding of, the different levels at stake. The levels of personal identity, including the dynamics between self-identification and collective identities; the role of gender as a principle of organisation of social structure; and gender as a system that produces socially enacted meanings, including the production and working of power in this process, are all equally relevant in our study, and have to be studied as *interacting* systems of meaning. It is furthermore especially important that gender is studied in its intersections with other axes of differentiation. From the field of feminist migration theory, as well as from the oral accounts of the women who participated in this project, it shows that ethnicity, class, nationality and other categories are as important as the category of 'gender' in the construction of subjectivity, and, more importantly, that it is impossible to 'separate' these categories. Simplifying by using an either/or approach, privileging one category over others, instead of an and/and approach, simply does not do justice to the reality of women's lives today. Thus, when we use 'gender' as a category of analysis, it includes its intersections with issues of ethnic, national, 'racial', economic, and sexual position.

While it is necessary for a thorough analysis of our material to take into account the intersections of different axes of differentiation, a one-dimensional use of the concept of intersectionality (however paradoxical this may sound), as only addressing multiple levels of discrimination or subordination, is insufficient. A vision of the subject as multiple, open-ended and in process is the best way to account for the multiple identifications and the intersection of different levels and categories that we encounter in our project. To deal with the complexities at stake, with women's accounts of their own decisions and lives, the different dimension of identity and the different intersubjective relationships at stake, a concept of subjectivity 'in process' is necessary. The feminist subject-in-process is internally diversified, 'not one'. It is the product of processes that constitute it as a 'self' and as a social and speaking subject, and is constructed through its necessary relations to others. The subject does not coincide with its rational, conscious self. Furthermore, feminist visions of the subject in process stress the ways in which the subject is constructed as historically, politically, culturally, sexually and racially specific. The body, as a culturally coded, socialized entity, the site where the biological, the social and the linguistic intersect<sup>18</sup>, is the primary site of location of the feminist subject. This vision enables the dismantling of hierarchical power relations and exclusionary practices based on 'difference' as culturally and socially constructed, as opposed to 'naturally given'.

Figurations of the feminist subject in process are powerful accounts of alternative subjectivity, situated and politically grounded, with great transformative potential. The figuration of the 'nomadic subject' offers the space to think feminist subjectivity as differentiated and always in process, while starting from the situatedness of the subject. It takes into account the power dynamics at work in its specific location, while at the same time emphasizing the subverting and transformative power of the

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difference in emphasis in itself reflects the variety in developments within the field of gender studies, which can be viewed and classified from various specific academic traditions or disciplines.

<sup>18</sup> Rosi Braidotti (1994), 'The subject in feminism', in: *Nomadic subjects*

'female feminist subject'. Feminist theory needs visions of the subject that do both at the same time.

## **Transformations of legal subjectivity in Europe**

*Hanne Petersen, Annette Kronborg, and Inger Marie Conradsen*

### **I. From the subjection of women to privileged subjects**

#### **European interdisciplinary research about gender relations – methods and definitions in the legal contributions**

The bulk of legal research and jurisprudence done in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has dealt with positive law and with the systems of creation, administration and implementation of positive legal norms. From the beginning of the century national (democratic) legal systems became the focus of legal research in a struggle against the heritage of Natural law. The dominant approach to the study of law both on a national and on a European level has been a uni-disciplinary approach. European *interdisciplinary* studies of law are not that usual, and studies involving a gendered legal perspective have only emerged within the last 30 years. In Northern Europe, Nordic Women's Law has for a quarter of a century attempted to work with trans-national and to a certain degree also interdisciplinary approaches and methods both at home and outside of Europe.

This theoretical and methodological legacy is an important reason for Denmark being chosen as a case to exemplify the legal aspects of gender relations in Europe at the turn of the millennium. The studies of "women's law" in the Nordic countries has been strongly influenced by northern European legal culture, which again is influenced by socio-legal thinking within the framework of secularised, protestant, social democratic welfare states and welfare regimes – all influenced by international and Anglo-Saxon feminist jurisprudence. Nordic Women's Law has developed in a period which has been characterized by important changes in gender relations, important changes in women's work, which has gradually come to encompass both unpaid work in the home and a constantly growing participation in paid work for an ever large proportion of women, as well as a significant reconstitution of family life, where divorce rates have grown radically and where as a consequence the legal institution of marriage has lost its former social function as a legal frame of a stable and enduring intimate union. Processes of individualization supported by legal regulation have been particularly strong in the Nordic countries and in Denmark. Some of the developments in Northern Europe may have been as comparable to the earlier situation in what is no longer called "Eastern Europe" as to the situations in Southern Europe.

In the interdisciplinary research project, GRINE, the bulk of the work which has been done consists in collecting sources of oral history – individual stories from women, who have moved from one European country to another and/or married there. Decisions to change place and establish relations of a personal, social, cultural, economic and legal nature are individual, but they are also influenced by contexts, expectations, customs and traditions. They take place within a European context at the turn of the millennium where important social, cultural and legal transformations are also taking place. These transformations influence both personal considerations and resources, but the reverse is also true. The accumulated effects of wo/men's choices influence general political and legal considerations. Time and space matter, as do patterns of uncoordinated but combined and similar actions. The interviews

give an idea about both differences and similarities in the reflections, motivations and concerns of women moving from the eastern part of Europe to western European countries. They also give an idea about how women's expectations and decisions have clear normative implications and thus have relevance for legal systems and thinking.

An important method of the project has been the case method, where the interviews are meant to illuminate "the ways in which individuals make choices about their own lives". The research methods and the theory developed within the field of oral history have been crucial within this respect. The interpretations of the interview material is linked both to the material and to the professional context and background of the interpreters. The legal approach to the project has taken the case study as its central method as well. From a legal perspective the case study serves as a method to illustrate the general and common research questions of the project in at least two ways.

The *first* and most important approach has been to study *one* example of a European national legal system more closely, namely the Danish legal system. The idea is that a closer socio-legal study of *one* specific national European legal system may serve to give an indication of some of the *common* trends and general challenges, which European legal regimes within the European Union may be experiencing and facing in processes of transition of both the European Union, characterized by changing/waning national legislative power and changing understandings of Europe. This national case study may also give a sense of the more general – and often very restrictive – legislative climate emerging in European countries today in matters regarding trans-national marriages and third country migration.

The *second* use of the case method relates to legal insights, which may be gained through legal perspectives upon the interview-material. This material is so large that it has not been possible to make a comprehensive socio-legal or legal anthropological investigation of the material. To use the term of the Dutch legal anthropologist J. F. Holleman (1986), the interviews may generally be described as "*trouble-less cases*". These are cases, which have not necessarily resulted in formal legal conflicts. In very few of the life stories described in the interviews serious legal conflicts have arisen. Nonetheless the cases may contribute to a broader understanding of some of the normative processes through which a new European legal culture and new legal regimes may be emerging. We may in this material find indications of guiding normative principles and values, which may be important in a broader "range of socio-legal traffic" taking place in Europe at the turn of the millennium. And as Holleman also claims "it is the common trouble-less cases of normal practice that usually constitute the normative frame of reference by which trouble-cases themselves are being judged". That is, the legally – and politically – *relatively* uncontroversial cases of trans-national movements and legal migrations of ("Eastern" and "Western") European women and of trans-national marriages between Europeans – serve as the normative frame of reference by which trouble cases involving mobility and marriage of Europeans as well as non-Europeans may be judged.

In an interdisciplinary research project another difficulty stems from the fact that we use terms and concepts, which have different histories and different meanings within

different disciplinary traditions of knowledge. This is especially striking with regard to the concepts of *subject* and *subjectivity*. The use of the term differs from one field of knowledge to another as well as from one national and professional language to another. That we are dealing with an elusive term is indicated by the fact that a general search for the term “subject” in Oxford Reference Online displays 98 results of understandings of the term “subject” or of its use in specific relations. In the project the term is used in at least two important ways, one more related to social theory in a very broad sense and one related to legal theory in a more narrow sense. The paper on legal subjectivity deals primarily with the legal understanding of the term, and with its developments.

The Danish and German contemporary understanding seem to be very similar: “The legal subject describes all persons who are bearers of rights and obligations. Besides natural persons (human beings) these are also legal persons in their different legal forms such as associations, corporations, companies with limited liabilities and by public law bodies” (my translation) (Wikipedia, die freie Enzyklopädie). In English the term subject may be used to describe somebody, who “is under the dominion of a sovereign”, and it may also refer to the term “citizen”. In German and Danish the first understanding of “sub-ject” is translated in ways, which underline the hierarchical relations between sovereign and ruled – in German *Untertan*, in Danish *Unders t*. The feudal and imperial as well as colonial heritage of the term is underlined in the way Oxford Reference Online explains the term “British subject”.

A contemporary differentiated legal subject-hood both within the individual European nations and member states of the EU and within the EU itself opens the doors to social relations of great complexity, as well as to legal relations of great complexity. We may envisage a future, where legal and social relations could be characterized by individuals, whose *status* are becoming more and more different, and where the change in economic and legal status will have serious implications for the rights and obligations of individual subjects.

### **Results of the research highlighting the state of the art – innovative aspects:**

#### *Migration and marriage*

The *national case study* combines a study of immigration law with a study of matrimonial law. This is an innovation made possible through the composition of the research team. This combination has revealed the individualization processes, which have taken place within (Nordic) matrimonial law during the 20<sup>th</sup> century where family relationships today matter more than the legal institution of marriage. This weakening of the institution of marriage, and of its general ideological and legal protection has paved the way for a process, which has made marriage law become an appendix to immigration law. Changes of marriage conditions demonstrate that these conditions do not serve the institution of marriage, but rather serve the interests of the state in being able to police and control outer borders. The combined study of marriage and migration law gives new insights into both migration law and marriage law, which will be of relevance on a general European level.

A presentation of immigration law as a presentation of a “*Danish legal story*” has also enabled us to present a very technical and constantly changing field of law from

a more general perspective highlighting general aspects of change rather than focusing too strongly on legal technicalities. The combination of an individualized modern “marriage regime” with a strong state interest in limiting access to the country especially through family reunification, has enabled the Danish state to produce legislation, which limits the entrance of foreigners to the country considerably without the state meeting any severe criticism from inside the country. The modernization and individualization processes exclude forms of critique based upon (almost non-existent) arguments about a need for traditional protection of the institution of marriage. The Danish legal story thus tells a story about how law becomes an instrument for “conservation of modernity” - in the form of a modern lifestyle of privileged subjects. The exclusionist approach to migration by way of family reunification is legitimised by and based upon a combination of the modernist, individualized understanding of marriage which has developed during the last part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the modern understanding of marriage as a love based relation. It is generally assumed both in the general public as well as in parliament and in government that family reunification through marriage is not based upon love but that the “migration generating” marriages are predominantly arranged or even forced marriages.

The possibility of the individual to live together with somebody he or she loves, if the beloved does not have proper Danish or EU-citizenship or residence permit also becomes limited as a result of the changes of the legal regimes of migration and marriage. However even if this seems to be contradictory to a modern understanding of the love basis of an intimate relationship, this cost has to be paid to the other modern value of equality before the law. The intimate relationship is in itself a privileged relationship. The results of the Danish legislative strategy, which is legitimised by its protection or conservation of modernity – as symbolized especially in the modern welfare state and the modern intimate relationships - is in practice that it privileges those love relations, where people have the same citizenship or EU-citizenship.

#### *Privileged subjectivity*

The *second* use of the case study relates to a study of a legal understanding of the concept of “subjectivity” informed both by findings of the national case study, and informed by legal insights gained through “a legal gaze” upon the interview-material. The national case study demonstrates the practical exclusionist consequences of the national legislative development. The study of the concept of “subject” and subjectivity” seen in the light of both John Stuart Mill’s historical discussion of *The Subjection of Women* and the core interviews, draws attention to the contemporary importance of the legal culture of Europe, which less than 200 years before the “reunification” of Europe was *dominated* by legal regimes based upon special rights and privileges combined with general rights. Two hundred years ago these special rights were primarily *legal rights*, granted by a sovereign, an absolute monarch or an emperor to his or her subjects. European legal history is thus a history of different rights for different groups (estates and classes) of people including different rights for men and women. With an expansion of the EU with a very large number of states, the *diversity* of the historical and cultural legacies may become more clearly seen and felt. A *legal culture of privilege* as an important heritage and instrument of organizing societies may in this situation in practice come to present an element of

both continuity and commonality. Paradoxically it may also be an instrument which may preserve the culture of modernity in Europe even if it has high costs.

When the term “privilege” is used in this paper and project, it presupposes a changing understanding of privilege along the lines of the development of a changing understanding of the term monopoly. Monopolies were in earlier centuries granted by sovereigns as exclusive legal rights, but today they are mainly understood to originate from market conditions. In the same way today’s privileges – special rights – no longer necessarily originate in legal rights granted by a sovereign power, be it a monarch or a legislator. Most contemporary privileges – special rights – will probably originate from different forms of bargaining power of individuals or groups of individuals, who may thus produce “negotiated law” in the form of contracts and thus become beneficiaries of market privileges – maybe even beneficiaries of privileges in marriage markets.

The forms of subordination and/or privilege experienced by migrating and/or married women are not (necessarily) a consequence of formal and legal differences *within* one national legal system. In the cases we are dealing with they may also be the result of intersections and overlapping of a number of different legal systems and cultures. In the EU-European context issues of “whiteness”, religion (Christianity), formal education and qualifications, as well as economic income are amongst the markers of privilege. “Traditional” (un-modern) gendered lifestyles and religious affiliation (especially to Islam) may be reasons for or markers of practical and legal forms of subordination in other situations. Thus some or even several of the interviewed women can be seen as privileged in some respects and less privileged or even subordinated in other respects.

Security issues concerning states and individuals as well as issues of how to secure global power relations have gained overriding prominence in the Western world in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is not a new concern for (European) states. Nonetheless in a changing Europe these issues affect both national and European legal policies and regulations, and at present they also seem to legitimise restrictive legal regimes towards so-called “third country nationals”, especially with regard to family unification, work permits and reasons for extradition. This development may also legitimise or give rise to *general forms* of legal regulation and administration, which on purpose and deliberately have *different effects* upon different groups of citizens, depending upon their ethnic background and affiliation. The case study of the Danish legal regime is an example of this. Furthermore, it may indicate and illustrate a relative shift of values in European states and perhaps in Europe at large, where values of equality and freedom are yielding to or being supplemented by values of security and difference. Issues of justice, which were important in pre-modern eras influenced by natural law may then again attract much stronger interest both on local, national and European level.

We may now live in an age, where (some) cross-national bonds of affection between women and men are sometimes becoming as difficult to establish *legally* as they once were in status societies, where relations across class and status could not be established or where the poor (or the colonized) were not always allowed to marry. But today the obstacles to legal recognition of marriages may originate from lack of economic means, from ‘unsuitable’ national legal status, or from ‘unsuitable’ ‘non-

European' religious marital practices, and not (necessarily) from membership of social class by birth as was the case when Balzac wrote about the "Lost Illusions" of feudal France in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. National immigration law and national marriage law in Europe today seem to be legitimising certain forms of exclusion, and establishing certain forms of differentiated legal status in interaction with market law and market based special rights.

Modern European legal culture has been strongly influenced by the importance of national legal systems. States have for centuries had a very strong role in lawmaking; laws have been understood as being equally valid for all citizens; laws have been expected to be general and not to give special rights to special groups or individuals; legislation has especially in Northern Europe been understood to be secular; marriage has been assumed to be a voluntary monogamous union between a man and a woman; legal restrictions on movement from one country to another have been usual; family life has been protected legally; foreigners (especially foreign women) who have married nationals have thus typically been granted an easier (privileged) access to and citizenship in a national jurisdiction; Europeans themselves have typically considered their own social and legal systems as superior to non-European systems perhaps with the exception of American legal culture.

Much of what has so far been considered European *migration*, will within an expanded Europe be understood as legal and legally protected *mobility*. Mobility of privileged resourceful Eastern Europeans will in a longer time perspective most likely not be restricted legally regardless of gender. Many Europeans will in the future have different and overlapping kinds of legal subjectivity. In the process of becoming European subjects a more instrumental approach to national citizenship may be developed. The role of states in the making of "law in books" may decline. Europe's "law" will consist of international law, EU-law, judge made law, national law, and market law to name the most important forms of law. These different legal regimes will not be equally valid for every European. Europe and Europeans will experience increasing legal diversity, although a different kind of diversity than was known in the period of the hegemony of state law. Under a regime of EU-law, legal diversity will probably originate from both competing horizontal as well as competing and combined hierarchical sources of legality. State legal regimes may compete and coexist with other national legal regimes as well as with EU-law and international law, not least in areas of migration and marriage. In practice what emerges in Europe at the turn of the millennium, when one studies legal aspects of gender relations in relation to marriage and migration, may look like a regime of special rights, general rights and different advantages. The most likely beneficiaries of this conglomerate of legal regimes will be those with greatest bargaining power and access to market privilege.

## **II. Changing Matrimonial Law in the Image of Immigration Law**

From a legal perspective, cross-border relationships imply a conflict between the state's interest in controlling who crosses its border and individuals' emotional desire to form relationships. The core elements of this perspective are immigration and marriage and the juxtaposition of these form the basis of the paper. The purpose is to shed light on cross-border relationships from two different angles – immigration law and family law - and where Danish law is used as a case-study. These two

perspectives belong to different legal spheres, viz. public law and private law. The logic as well as the underlying values in public and private law differ fundamentally. By analysing the regulation of cross-border relationships from both perspectives we wish to demonstrate how the focus of the legislator has shifted from relationship to the crossing of borders. The consequence of this is that matrimonial law is reduced to an appendix to immigration law.

### **Immigration Law**

The Danish story, as it is expressed in the recently reformed immigration law, is concerned with curtailing the influx of foreign subjects coming to Denmark, and with better integrating those that are already there. The foundation of this story was laid in the late 1990s and reached its zenith during the 2001 election campaign. Similar developments have taken place in a number of European countries, so even if the present story is illustrative in a European context rather than exhaustive, it is not unique. Family reunifications together with asylum seekers make up important exceptions to a prevailing stop of economic migration. Due to its built-in migration generating quality and hence uncontrollability, family reunification takes up an exceptional position. Characteristic of the legislation regarding family reunification is that it is composed of a number of different measures that, when taken together, are intended to function as a multi-layer filter with a view to excluding as many applicants as possible.

The most prominent provision is concerned with changing the age limit as regards the reunification of spouses from 18 to 24 years, which means that both spouses must now be 24 years of age before reunification is possible.<sup>19</sup> From the *travaux préparatoires* it is clear that the quantitative element, i.e. a decline in family reunifications, plays a prominent part in this change. It is emphasized how the marriage pattern of migrants has remained unchanged from 1994 to 1999 where 27% married a Dane, 23% married an immigrant, 3% married a descendant of an immigrant and the remaining 47% married a person living abroad who subsequently moved to Denmark.<sup>20</sup> Against this background of close to 50% of immigrants marrying a spouse from abroad the argument is coupled to minimising the risk of arranged and forced marriages with a view to obtaining family reunification, the argument being that the older a person is, the easier it is to resist family pressure in marriage matters, the quantitative dimension of the resistance playing an important part.

In addition, the previous rules were based on modern western-European norms of family-building that had been exploited for migration purposes through pro-forma and forced marriages. The ‘them-us’ division appears in the perception of marriage: read in context it is revealed that Western European family life is based on love whereas ‘elsewhere’ (that is situated closer to the (muslim) far-east than eastern Europe) love is not a prerequisite and marriage is consequently reduced to being instrumental. The provisions may be seen as safeguarding what could be termed the subjective aspect of marriage, i.e. that the spouses live together not only for legal purposes but are motivated by a personal conviction, viz. love. This presupposed link between law and love is crucial.

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<sup>19</sup> S. 9 (1).

<sup>20</sup> The respective figures in 1994 were 28%, 22 %, 2% and 48%.

A more qualitative innovation in the reformed act, however with strong quantitative undertones, is the strengthening of the aggregate tie-criteria in 2000. Apart from exceptional cases, family reunification can only take place if the spouses' aggregate ties with Denmark are stronger than their aggregate ties with another country.<sup>21</sup> This implies that a foreign man living in Denmark wishing to marry a woman from his home country is prevented from living in Denmark with his spouse. If the foreigner is a naturalized Dane s/he may also be excluded from living in Denmark if his/her wife/husband comes from his country of origin. More radically the rule implied that a Danish citizen who has lived abroad and founded a family there may be prevented from returning to Denmark with his or her family. However, this particular aspect of the rule was modified in December 2003 so as to allow persons that have been Danish citizens, by birth or naturalization, for 28 years to return to live in Denmark with their foreign spouse where they do not meet the criteria.<sup>22</sup> From the *travaux préparatoires* it follows that the 28 years limit is intended to combine the 24 years limit with 4 years of the aggregate tie criteria with a view to extending the protection of young persons at risk of entering forced marriages. In the 'them – us' context as outlined above the provision is concerned with more us. But it is so in a subtle way as the extension to Danish citizens, that is to the 'us' category, is meant to affect the 'them' among us only.

At this point it is useful to draw the attention to a proposal of the Danish opposition in the spring 2003 that aimed at introducing a 'love-card' (kærestevisum)<sup>23</sup>. The purpose of the proposal was to mend the damage done to a number of mainly, but not only, young couples that the strengthened rules had prevented from living together in Denmark. The proposal allowed couples over 18 years of age the possibility of testing their relationship for up to one year by giving them the possibility of living together in Denmark without making marriage a condition. The parliamentary debate following the proposal shows in a convincing manner laws difficulties in handling love. Not surprisingly the Government rejects the proposal with reference to the possibility of circumventing the 24-year age limit as well as the aggregate-tie criteria of the act.

To return to pro-forma marriages and forced marriages the provisions regulate that a residence permit cannot be issued if there are definite reasons to assume that the decisive purpose of contracting the marriage or establishing cohabitation is to obtain a residence permit.<sup>24</sup> And that apart from exceptional reasons, notably obligations in international law, conclusively make it appropriate, a residence permit cannot be issued if it must be considered doubtful that the marriage was contracted or the cohabitation was not established at both parties' desire.<sup>25</sup> This was further emphasized with the introduction in December 2003 of the presumption that if the marriage takes place between close relatives it is an indication of the marriage not being established at both parties' desire.<sup>26</sup> The *travaux préparatoires* extend this presumption to apply to situations where family reunifications have already taken

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<sup>21</sup> S. 9 (7).

<sup>22</sup> Lov nr. 1204 af 27. december 2003 om ændring af udlændingeloven. S.9 (7).

<sup>23</sup> Beslutningsforslag B 127 om indførelse af et kærestevisum af 27. marts 2003. See also Conradsen: Kærlighed og konventioner. Historien om et bebudet kærestevisum in Jørgensen et al. (eds.): Nye retlige design.

<sup>24</sup> S. 9(9).

<sup>25</sup> S. 9(8).

<sup>26</sup> Lov nr. 1204 om ændring af udlændingeloven af 27. december 2003.

place within the close family, including (second) cousins, like this introducing an extended version of original sin in immigration law. The consequence of this presumption is that the onus of proof is reversed: it is for the couple to establish that their marriage is a result of their free will, and thus based on love, rather than for the administration to prove that it is not. This device serves to overcome the difficulties of law's dealing with love as illustrated by the love-card episode above. However, rather than overcoming this difficulty the device serves to circumvent it by passing it on to the couple.

### **Family Law**

From the perspective of family law the regulation of marriage traditionally is of a different character. In a legislative draft from 1913 marriage was presented as if it still had some authority in society as the exclusive way of founding a family, even though its authority was quickly losing power. The committee did not propose any regulations, which they considered to be seriously undermining the authority of marriage. The intention was that only people who met certain marriage conditions (age, monogamy, etc.) should enter marriage and that the matching of men and women should be made with respect of the order within and between the families. Marriage gave meaning to the relationship between the family members, whose conduct were measured on the basis of the marital norms within society. In the draft marriage was understood as an institution where the individual should find their meaning of family life according to the tradition. The continued weakening of the institution of marriage during the 20th century is historically explained by the rise of the industrial society and the following change of the position of women of the middle class. This development is mirrored in the legislation. In contemporary Danish family law marriage could be characterized as an *offer to autonomous partners* of a certain *distribution of risks* concerning their property and support in case of dissolution of their marriage in the future.<sup>27</sup>

Three characteristic elements of the legislative development up until today point towards this changing role of the institution of marriage. One element is the exclusion of the relationship between parents and children from matrimonial law. Another element is the liberalization of the conditions of divorce. A third element is that marriage is no longer a fault-based-regime. The matrimonial norms became challenged in society. Therefore, it became more difficult for the judge to evaluate the behaviour of the spouses on the basis of common societal matrimonial norms. It was too difficult truly to decide who of the spouses was the guilty part of the damage. Thus, fault became old-fashioned as a legal argument.

The reform of immigration law in 2002 contained alterations of the Marriage Act. One new marriage condition is that both spouses need to have Danish citizenship or a residence permit. Thus, people who are only staying in the country because their migration case is being tried by the Danish authorities are not allowed to marry in Denmark. This group of people is considered to represent a risk because they are suspected of abusing the rights of family reunion in order to enter the country by way of a "fake" marriage. An exemption from the requirement of citizenship or residence permit may be granted by the marriage authorities if a marriage does not represent an abuse of the rights of family reunion but is considered to reflect an existing personal

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<sup>27</sup>Annette Kronborg, " gteskabsbetingelser" *Juristen*, forthcoming.

relationship between the partners. Relevant criteria for a permission to marry (according to section 11a) are the length of the period of time the applicant has already stayed in Denmark and whether or not the couple is expecting a child.

These new marriage conditions have an other purpose than supporting and shaping the marriage institution. The incorporation of the conditions despite of their different character from family law was not seen as a problem in the legislative process. In Parliament no concerns were expressed about the new legislation's possible violation of the values embedded in family law. This lack of critique is in line with the contemporary view of marriage. As a *societal* institution it has no value. The spouses have to create the value themselves. As described earlier the development of family law has meant that marriage is reduced to a matter between the spouses. The definition of a good family life has changed from marriage as a formal institution to the welfare of the specific spouses. The instrumentalization of the Marriage Act means that there is no direct connection between the systematics of the provisions and the corresponding aspects of society, which the provisions are systematized to concern – in this case marriage. In short, the new provisions in the Marriage Act are not about marriage. They are about controlling the national borders.

In the period of traditional matrimonial law – as in 1922 – the legislation seemed more inclined to be understood as aiming at constituting social life as such. This was also a period closer to natural law. The legislative systematization was in accordance with the different societal aspects. Today's legislation has new different tendencies. The new Danish reforms seem to be an instrument of solving concrete problems with no ambitions of spelling out general norms about marriage as earlier. The purpose of the alterations of the Marriage Act was to optimize their effect as problem-solver, optimizing the control of the national borders.

### **Final Remarks**

The legislative work in these years implies a shift from family law to immigration law, which again implies an instrumentalization of matrimonial law. This has as a consequence that love as opposed to marriage has become the object of legal regulation. The Danish examples with the proposed introduction of a love-card as well as the recent resort to the technical reversal of the onus of proof in suspected cases of forced marriages convincingly demonstrate this. Concerning family-reunion with a partner, the EU-countries until now agree on marriage only as the relevant criterion. This is an agreement of doubtful content since marriage has lost its traditional meaning as known in family law.

**“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 is determined mainly by the social, political and economic conditions of post-communism and by the intensification of a wide variety of political, economic, 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 it gives rise to new transnational forms of subjectivity in Europe.

In this chapter, practices of transnational migration are analyzed as part of wider phenomena of mobility that include physical, cultural, political, subjective and conceptual forms of movement. While privileging the use of the term mobility in order to describe the sets of experiences of transnational arrangements of migrants’s lives in Europe, we remain aware of the liberal connotations of the term, connotations that do not necessarily apply to the historical phenomena of movement that we set out to study. 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 their planning, desires and strategies prior to their decision to leave their countries of birth.

Many interviewees stated that their movement was not planned as migration, but as a strategy for family unification, with the purpose to pursue personal relationships, or simply as 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 the migrants, they describe the conditions of their lives after migration in ways that coincide with traditional narratives of migration, organized around familiar themes such as adaptation to the new country, cultural incompatibilities, xenophobia, forces to integrate, 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 member of dance group in 1989, noted some people never actually decided consciously 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. She is nostalgic of 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.

As many others, Ana declares that she doesn't have relationships with other migrants and she differentiates her position from the migrant lot. Despite her insistence on this differentiation when she describes her social life in Italy she also insists on her clear strategy to 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 making a conscious decision to migrate on the one hand and find oneself in the condition of migrancy without that having been part of your personal planning. 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, but on the other hand they feel that they do not fit comfortably in the traditional position of the migrant. Marina, another woman from Bulgaria, explains how migration was never in her plans, although traveling has always been her father's aspiration for him; an aspiration that was never fulfilled "because during the communist regime he wasn't allowed to do that" (Marina, BL/IT). Towards the end of her interview Marina makes a distinction between her mobility between Bulgaria, Russia and Italy and the practices of forced migration followed by people who need to migrate in order to survive. She claims that forced migration is a global phenomenon expressing and conducing to human suffering. Forced migration disrupts relationships and bonds of affection and is thus detrimental and cruel, whereas mobility creates the possibility for new relationships and for expanding one's horizon of creating 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 centrality of the experiences narrated in 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, we do not undermine the difficulties and constraints that women are faced with in the process of the movement from one country to the other and the blockages—cultural, political and institutional—that impede their efforts to re-establish their lives in the countries of migration. The interviews demonstrate the multiplicity of points of departure, destinations, itineraries, strategies, practices and venues that constitute a large range of activities that the term migration refers to. In many cases women are motivated by an unspecified desire to move, "to see the world" (Boyana, BL/NL).

The interviews with women who have moved from the European East to the West are marked by a constant vacillation between taking a distance from and associating 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 the migrant testimonies for the ways in which we understand the contemporary history of mobility. To that end, I analyze the ways in which the interviewees envision mobility as a constitutive element of their subjective histories and circumstances vis- -vis the contemporary theoretical constellation among notions of mobility, space, normativity and affective relationships.

## **II: Subjectivity in motion in accounts of migrant women**

## Political Migrants and memory of the past in Eastern Europe

Andrea Pet

### Introduction

The standard book on the social history of Hungary defined the “typical migrant of 1956” as “younger than 25 years, male, an university student or a skilled worker.”<sup>1</sup> If that is the case, there is no space for the female migrants in this story. To make the picture even more gloomy, in 1956 the 175 082 Hungarians who left the country did that without leaving any documented and recorded trace in social science.<sup>2</sup> In this case with the emigrants of 1956 it is even more unlikely that we find any traces of women who left Bulgaria and Hungary before 1989 because of political reasons. This invisibility is due to the absence of gender sensitive data and to the general assumption that agents in migration studies are men: they decide, they are emigrating. Women are predominantly discussed in the context of trafficking, which means the context of forced migration.

Migration studies focused on “leading” politicians who emigrated because of communist rule, and with very few exceptions these remarkable personalities were men. In the first waves of political emigration we see women on the lists of emigrants, but as time passed and as the migrants from the communist Hungary and Bulgaria found less and less political space for their work, these women also disappeared from the lists. This gender blind characteristic of presenting women’s migration causes serious theoretical problems which fits into the aim of the GRINE project to investigate subjectivity. Based on the interviews we are investigating how women as migrants decide upon their own lives and also using this knowledge we are trying to reformulate the relationship between women and migration studies as far as pre-1989 migrants are concerned.

The pre-1989 migrants in our sample at the GRINE project were represented with 13 interviews.<sup>3</sup> The stories of the migrants are constructed in an uncertain cross-cultural context. The cultural repertoires used in the interviews are different from the recipient community, the references to presumed common meanings and knowledge are *ad hoc*. The remembering by migrant women take the mythical route producing a more or less similar, but coherent self-presentation.

The pre-1989 migrants are divided to the following groups depending on the time and motivation to migrate. The group which is not represented in the sample are those extreme right wing politicians and sympathisers who considered the Soviet occupation a threat. They left up until 1945. The first group in the sample consists of those women who left their country right after WWII. They are few in numbers by

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<sup>1</sup> Valuch Tibor, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a XX. század második felében*, (The Social History of Hungary in the 20<sup>th</sup> century) Osiris, Budapest, 2001, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted Csepeli, Gy., Dessewffy T., Dulovics D., Tóka G., in Gyáni Gábor: az 56-os menekülők emlékezési stratégiái in *Emigráció és identitás. 56-os magyar menekültek Svájcban*. (Emigration and identity. 56 emigrants in Switzerland) szerk. Kanyó Tamás. L’Harmattan – MTA Kisebbségkutatási Intézet, Bp., 2002. p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> On the different waves of Hungarian emigration see nagy, Kázmér: *Elvesztett alkotmány*, (Lost constitution) München, Auróra könyvek, 1974., Borbándi Gyula, *Emigráció és Magyarország. nyugati magyarok a változás éveiben. 1985-1995*. (Emigration and Hungary: Hungarians at the west during the time of change) Basel- Budapest, Európai Protestáns Szabadegyetem, 1996.

now, but they are constructing a different category since they are referring directly to WWII and to the communist takeover as an important change in their life, and as a factor which mobilised them. They left up until 1947, because of the communist takeover. In Bulgaria in 1947 there was a massive wave of emigration mostly due to the nationalisation. The Jews opting for an *alia* due to the revival of anti-Semitism after WWII make a different case study but they were present both in Hungary and in Bulgaria.

The second group is the group of women from Hungary who emigrated in 56.<sup>4</sup> This group consisted of mostly young and-or educated women. The narration of 56 is very different. Some considered 56 primarily as an opportunity frame for leaving the country. The opportunity is very often mixed with an imperative of life-saving if the husband or the wife had a previous record of anti-communist activity.

1956 also plays a role in setting up patterns of symbolic communication: the institutionalisation of Hungarian migrant life received a new push after 1956. Hungarian migration of 1956 was the most “successful” migration as far as the social success and level of integration into the recipient community is concerned due to the social composition of the migrants. Also for the new migrants, who left Hungary after 1989, the experiences and models of living of the “old emigrants” were an important point of reference. The associations and cultural life of the 1956 migrants in the Netherlands had the emotional “imagined” bounding of meaning to the homeland.

Migration happened through marriage or adventurous escape. The way to get out of the communist countries happened only through these two channels. Marriage was used as a strategy in the case of the families of deep religious beliefs. The integration was narrated more easily if the husband was of the receiving nation. The network of Dutch protestant priests played an important role in helping migration even with match-making from the communist Hungary.

In Bulgaria, and in Hungary, between 1956 and 1989, emigration was treated as treason, and unsuccessful attempts to cross the border were punished severely. A possible and legal way of emigration for women was a marriage with a foreigner. In our sample there are several of these women, who discussed the legal and bureaucratic obstacles they had to face during arranging their marriage.

As far as the reception of the pre-1989 migrants are concerned, in the interviews with native women, it clearly emerged that the pre-1989 migrants represent a different migrant group. The Dutch and the Italian women in their interviews underlined that the pre-1989 migrants were “more educated” and left for political reasons, unlike the present migrants whose only aim is to live better.

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<sup>4</sup> More on this see Peto, Andrea, „A Missing Piece? How Women in the Communist Nomenclature are not Remembering“ *East European Politics and Society*\_Vol. 16. No. 3. Fall 2003 pp. 948-958.

## Interview analysis

Hungary and Bulgaria belonged to the Soviet Block. We might assume that those who left these countries did so because of their dissatisfaction of the political situation there. These countries were the countries of “statist feminism” when authoritarian political practice was combined with top-down state emancipation efforts so those women who left were critical to this developments, especially to the forced emancipation. If it is true that conservative woman are “relative creatures”<sup>5</sup> who made decisions, after what kinds of consideration did they decide to emigrate? Answering these questions will shed a light on female relational identity in connection to the dominant male political culture and the structure of remembering..

The political narrative overshadows the economic one, as the “master frame” for narration. The general fear and distrust in economic migrants except one successful period of 1956 for the Hungarians, forced the migrants to use rather the “political frame” for narration referring to the communist persecution in a general stereotypical way.

Analysing the interviews with pre-1989 migrants we see that they have experienced the “statist feminism” of their home country and they experienced equality defined at the workplace. The “cultural repertoires” (Lamont, 2000) of the migrants were defined by the “statist feminism”, which was very different from that of the receiving county. For the political migrants statist feminism was oppressive or expected to be oppressive, yet the world they have found on the other side of the Iron Curtain was not their dream land. In that sense it was more “difficult” to be a female migrant than a male migrant. On the one hand, the women who left Hungary and Bulgaria before 1989 experienced a different level of gender equality in the work-place and everyday life than the native women in Italy or the Netherlands. On the other hand, when they were asked to give stories about their life in their homeland they were not expected to say anything positive, because that has related to the communist political system. In that sense men experienced discrimination due to class and ethnicity, but in addition to it women also experience discrimination because of their gender.

If we compare the situation of pre- and post-1989 female migrants we find a serious difference. For the post-1989 migrants that gap between institutionalised welfare systems between their homeland and the receiving country was not that big. By the mid 1990s the state socialist welfare system collapsed, and due to the pressure coming from the new social movements supporting networks have been built up in the Netherlands for instance.

The gender script of migration is also interesting in an other framework, which is the framework of resistance to communism. During communism the stereotypical women’s characteristics: intimacy, sensitivity, family-centredness were performed as a resistance to “statist feminism”, because these characteristics were relativized by the rhetoric of “statist feminism”.<sup>6</sup> The private resistance to communism was based on restoring the so-called “female virtues” in family, based on the cult of Virgin

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Yalom, Marilyn, (1990) "Biography as Autobiography: Adele Hugo, Witness of Her Husband's Life" in Groag Bell, Susan, Marilyn Yalom eds. *Revealing Lives. Autobiography, Biography and Gender* (State University of New York Press) p. 53.

<sup>6</sup>On this see Pet , Andrea (1994) "As He Saw Her": Gender Politics in Secret Party Reports in Hungary During 1950s" in *CEU History Department Working Paper Series*, No. 1. pp. 107-121.

Mary, which aims to preserve the family values in private life against the pseudo-equality of state socialism. The paradox, how a woman might be active in public when the conservative discourse expects them to stay passive was solved with the post 1990 revival of the cult of Virgin Mary as a cult of normative motherhood.<sup>7</sup> The centrality of “family” in the conservative discourse should be the starting point of the analyses. The conservative discourse on “family” is characterised by the clear division between public space, which is for men, and private space, which is exclusively for women and for the “family”. However participation in revolutions and remembering of revolutions or migration might blur these distinctions and might lead to redefinition of hierarchies. Migrant women are leaving their families, elderly parents behind, very alien to conservative thinking so they are forced to construct a family in their new homeland in order to construct new emotional ties and to decrease their guilty feelings.

In the case of migration the question is what happens if points of reference and boundaries are challenged by the new environment. The pre-1989 migrant women were coming from a “statist feminist” environment, and they arrived in a seriously patriarchal environment. In Italy and in The Netherlands before the second wave of feminism these migrants had to face discrimination as migrants as well as women.

The very special composition of 1956 migrants from Hungary, that they were mostly skilled workers and youngsters with university degrees, made that adaptation a success story if we are measuring it with the degree of acculturation. The level of integration is often as presented as a one-sided process, which “only” depends on the newcomer, and of course his or her level of “culture”. It is presented as if there is a problem with integration that is the problem of the others.

### **Educational deprivation as migration cost**

The first group of women migrants could never dream of getting a higher educational degree in the communist Hungary that they were unable to obtain due to their religious practice or political discrimination. For the second group in the “free world” the most important difference these women experienced is the different status of women in public sphere. Women as wives and especially mothers were not welcome to work. The difficulty to make their own university degree officially acknowledged by the relevant authorities of the receiving countries and/or finish their education was similar to the migrant men. However the social and cultural context was very different. One of the main achievements of “statist feminism” was offering equal educational opportunities for men and women and the building up of supportive welfare services: crèches, day-care schools, etc. In a migrant situation women had to fight not only for the institutional validation of their knowledge but to do so in a non-welcoming micro and macro environment. A woman as a wife of a priest is not expected to work, and there were no available childcare facilities available either in Italy or in the Netherlands for young women with small children, which made the completion of higher education illusory and forced women to find other ways of education for themselves (evening courses, etc.). Overall, the women migrants who left their countries with “statist feminist” regimes were paying a serious price for their decision. Their new homes, Italy and the Netherlands, did not

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<sup>7</sup>Peto, Andrea, „Conservative and Extreme Right Wing Women in Contemporary Hungary. An Ideology in Transition” in *Women and Politics. Women in History/History Without Women*, Eds. Knezevic, Durdja, Koraljka Dilic. Zenska Infoteka, Zagreb, 20001, pp. 265-277

encourage women to live and to act as autonomously as did the official state emancipation policy in their home country, where free educational and employment opportunities for women were rather norm than exceptions.

The post-1989 migrants are shocked by the total ignorance of “the Italian” and “the Dutch”, who know nothing about Eastern Europe and have problems defining the capitals of these countries, for example. Their position that they could move freely between countries offers a different, critical position, with respect to the pre-1989 migrants who considered their decision to emigrate as final and who never forecast the collapse of the communist system, the “system of political poverty” as one of the interviewees labelled the communist political system.

The research results underlined the importance of emotions in the process of bordering. The “other” was defined by emotions, as well the stories about communism. The example of women who left Hungary and Bulgaria before 1989 however remained invisible in the public discourse, and also for the women, who left after 1989 they did not serve as an example. The missing link of generational communication caused by the “system of political poverty” has got far reaching consequences if we are analysing the narratives of women who left after 1989.

## **"My hobby is people": Migration and communication**

*Miglena Nikolchina*

In the interviews with the Bulgarian women-migrants there is a recurrent emphasis on the joy of conversation and on its little rituals (like having coffee or *rakia* with salad). Conversation emerges in the interviews as the figure of a specific understanding of happiness - of happiness as essentially a good positioning in a fluctuating group where you can talk! "I always want to talk. I love talking." (Kremena) It is not a question of friendship, of deep mutual understanding, of loyalty, of durability, or of being helpful and supportive; it is not a question of usefulness and it is not a question of fine moral attitudes but, rather, of a certain easy-going availability of people to whom one can talk.

This effortless, easy-going aspect of "filling one's time with people" is essential. Communication should not be planned, negotiated, prepared. Its indispensable component is spontaneity - the option of meeting someone in the street and deciding to have coffee together immediately, without the other one taking out his/her calendar and saying "what about next Friday?" "It is very important for me... to be able to drop in at a friend's for coffee without me calling first and she taking out her calendar 'I'm busy tomorrow.' If she is in, in you go to have coffee, if not - on you go." (Albena)

In a number of the interviews, in terms of the praise it gets, this vision of happiness where you can have coffee with people without taking out your calendar looms larger than love, larger than the chance to follow one's vocation, and larger than economic success. The absence of the perpetually open horizon of spontaneous interaction seems to make other achievements insufficient. "I always wanted to have a life. If there is no one to meet and discuss my pictures... I don't feel good." (Kremena) Marriage does not seem to assuage such an absence, although work - any work that involves being with other people - might. As Nona, whose "golden cage" marriage seems to create precisely this type of dilemma, points out, she would prefer to work, in spite of her being abundantly provided for, "as a shopkeeper or in a tourist agency just for the sake of being for at least four hours among people." "I preferred working rather than staying at home... just to have a reason to go out of the house and then come back." (Violeta)

The interviewees tend to interpret their own attitudes to communication in cultural terms. The Bulgarians are warmer than the Dutch and as warm as the Italians - or, perhaps, as warm as the South Italians in the case when Italians in the North will not do. These perceptions are frequently endorsed by attitudes in the host country. "Like most Dutch people my husband is a big enthusiast about this Bulgarian warmth, hospitality, broadmindedness, whatever you call it... It just flows out of me!" (Plamena) The disparity between the perception of Italy and the Netherlands reinforces the cultural perspective, especially if we take into consideration the fact that complaints about loneliness and personal failure in communication may still accompany the conviction that Italians are open and communicative.

Today, this complicity between the migrants and the hosts in conceiving differences as cultural, ethnic, or national is reinforced by current theoretical perspectives with

their various emphases on multiculturalism, on ethnicity, or on the local versus the global. If, however, the migrant women's emphasis on communication is unpacked through an approach that takes into account certain comparatively recent contingencies we might be able to uncover a dynamism that is not reducible to issues of cultural identity. As it happened, communication became a dominant preoccupation in the last decade of communism in Bulgaria - in theoretical terms but also as a *modus vivendi* that simultaneously incorporated and kept its distance from traditional practices in a conscious effort to differentiate itself from the discursive monopoly of the state. The driving force of this preoccupation with conversation was the tacit knowledge that the recourse to orality, to speaking rather than writing, to the art and the "element" of conversation, to the voice that articulates the thought and is equally good in presenting its own position and the position of the other, was motivated by a censorship that could still control publishing but no longer controlled speaking. In his essay "On good conversations", written in 1959 but published posthumously only in 1978, on the eve of the decade that would change Eastern Europe, Bulgarian writer Tsvetan Stoyanov speaks about "the conversation of the oppressed and the tortured, above whom there weighs the shadow of a gloomy tyranny and for whom it would be dangerous to even dream together - and yet, there is hope in each syllable they utter..." (Stoyanov 1988: 69) What was impossible in writing took place in talking.

Dialogue was hence not only valorized theoretically but was also - or, perhaps, predominantly - enacted as conversation. It thus returned to the cultural substratum where - its theoreticians were perfectly aware - it had its immediate support. But not unchanged. While, in the 1960s, the conversations for which Stoyanov was praised by those who remembered him were still informal and took place in selected cafes and private apartments, from the late 1970s on dialogism turned into an increasingly deliberate practice. As Angel Angelov (1997) put it, "'Dialogue' was a humanitarian mind-set, normative and unattainable, that was cultivated in intellectual circles in the 1980s against the complacent and monological institutionalized discourse of the state. This mind-set presupposed the self-discipline of listening to the other while simultaneously neutralizing the noise of your internal authority."

The cultivation of dialogism took the form of what came to be designated as *the seminar* (Nikolchina 2002). The seminar, which began in elitist groups discussing Plato's distrust of writing or Wittgenstein's critique of language, grew through proliferating circles of people and events and emerged as a major feature of the last decade of the communist regime in Bulgaria. By the end of the 1980s it spilled over from University auditoriums into street action involving hundreds of thousands of people. This was as much as Tsvetan Stoyanov had hoped for: "How often, since there are human beings and human history, have good conversations gone beyond their microcosm and turned into a huge social force! Now close by, now far away, the fires of good conversations are flickering all over the globe today... Conversations are weapons... Nothing was ever done without a good conversation - neither the building of the Parthenon, nor the tearing down of the Bastille" (Stoyanov 1988:70-1).

While no Bulgarian intellectual today seems to be particularly concerned with the "complete unfurling of the element of speech" or, indeed, with the virtues of dialogism, the belief in the value of communication seems to have accompanied

migrant women. Are they keeping the traces of the political past of the home country? Some of the migrants do mention in their interviews the ban on communication and the isolation imposed by the *ancien regime* in order to “keep people in ignorance and disinformation” (Irena).

In a further echo from intellectual attitudes in the 1980s, there is an awareness of the “dialogical” aspect of communication and a keen perceptiveness to the lack of dialogism as an internal component of thinking. “I always try to think not only my own thoughts but also the thoughts of the other. I don’t think it’s good to be blind to other positions and believe only in your own,” says Ana whose pet shop in Pisa brings her in frequent debates with animal rights activists. She is worried not by their particular ideas but by their unwillingness to assume that the other’s position might have legitimate claims to what is right. “I cannot believe my own beliefs with such absolute conviction that I wouldn’t allow for the possibility that the other might be right. But am I right in being like this?” - she asks.

Or is there, perhaps, something in the situation of the migrant that carries on preoccupations already forgotten in the home country? An easy-going, serene perception of movement is typical of new migrants for whom “patriotism” (unlike older emigrants, they never use the word) is not a country but the attachment to a certain type of sociality, to “just having coffee with people.” Are the lightness, the ease, the grace in the general attitude of new migrants to migration enacting the fantasy of the eighties, the fantasy of being “logged in” to the now close, now distant fires of conversations flickering all over the globe? And could the awareness of the values of understanding be the specific gift, to a world in flux, of this light-hearted mobility which voices its plea for “dialectical communication”?

Last but not least, in the face of new challenges, could communication be the Bulgarian migrant’s “weapon” in times of need? There are cultural differences, all right. The vital question that looks to the flexibility of the future rather than to the sediments of the past, is what mobilizes these differences and to what ends it summons their shifting meanings.

## The topos of love in the life-stories of migrant women

Nadejda Alexandrova

This paper tries to analyse the interview material with regards to the “affective investment”<sup>1</sup> of emotions such as love, which the migrant women make in the course of their process of adaptation and integration to their new intimate and social space in the country of migration. The aim of the text is to search for evidence in the narratives of the interviewed Bulgarian and Hungarian woman how through the love discourse the migrant woman expresses her knowledge about her own self; how she develops a “the reflexive project of the self”<sup>2</sup> which can empower her instead of making her a victim of illegal migration, trafficking or any form of patriarchal domination. The paper will try to envision the migrant’s positionality in a world full of cultural and social norms, stereotypes, such as such as “every marriage should be based on love” or “true love is the basis of every intercultural relationship” which are often expressed through the regime of romantic love.

The first part of the analysis will deal with the formation of the apparatus of the regime of romantic love. It will not search concrete literary and cultural sources, which have grounded the above-mentioned assumptions. Instead the first part of the analysis will use already existing classifications of literary motives and plots as analytical tools and search for their narrative mimicry.

The most frequent motive used in describing the story of a transnational intimate relationship is the motive of *love at a distance* (“*amor de loing*”). The real geographical distance offers possibilities of developing that motive combining it with the motive of *love as a passion*, a driving force which overcomes distance and the *motive of separation* and suffering, caused by leaving or giving up the object of love. According to the interview material marriage or cohabitation, based on “true love”, are also means for overcoming that distance, therefore the scheme of falling in love (at first sight) and getting married to the partner from another nationality is the most common one in the sample (40 out of 77). To broaden the view on the variety of topoi of love in the sample I will pay attention also on the mimicry of the *motive of the quest*, which can be connected with the migrant’s strategy of travelling and learning, and in which love experience and marriage are regarded as part of the road to personal accomplishment and success.

While the first part of the analysis will be in search of romantic schemes and plots in the narratives of Bulgarian and Hungarian migrant women, the second part will pay attention to the way through which the romantic love becomes a source for legitimate explanations of the migrant women’s actions and moves. The paper seeks to explore how the regime of romantic love is most often preferred as a way to prove the “true emotional attachment” in a transnational heterosexual relationship between an East European woman and a Western male partner. There is an awareness of the social stigma upon transnational intimacies, which are based on economic and pragmatic grounds, therefore the migrant’s story of marriage needs legitimation from the society by a story of “true love”. Romantic love, can serve as means for such kind of legitimization, especially when intercultural relationships are discussed. In Giddens’s terms exactly the regime of romantic love “provides a narrative within which the individual can make sense of the unfolding of his or her life”.<sup>3</sup> The assumption that

the notion of “true love” entails a life-long heterosexual marriage is exactly such a secure narrative which do not oppose “powerful constraints such as common sense, religious tradition and jurisprudence”.<sup>4</sup>

The echo of the Western public debate about fake marriages, which East European women perform in order to have a better life in the West, seems to be heard in the migrants’ efforts to convince the interviewer of the authenticity of their feeling of love. As far as Dutch immigration policy is concerned, the authenticity of the relationship should be proved by artifacts, on the basis of which a declaration that certain mixed marriage is “real” and not “fake”. (The accounts of the Hungarians Monika and Annet are very telling on that issue.) Therefore, letters, diaries and signs of mutual affection are often driven in the stories of the interviewed women as proofs that their story of marriage and migration is based on “true love”.

Another usage of the regime of romantic love can be observed in the interviewees’ conviction that “true love” is the necessary prerequisite for overcoming cultural differences between two partners from different countries. When distance is overcome in such a transnational marriage, the process of learning the ways of the other becomes difficult because cultural differences become visible in the everyday life of the couple. The women account that marriage involves a long process of accepting the reactions and attitude of the partner and only romance and “true love” can give patience in such an intercultural relationship. Violeta, who met her Dutch husband through an agency, claims that she definitely fell in love and gives such an advice to the women who want to marry a foreigner: “I would advise them to look for love as a base, because only this could help them to survive in a foreign country.” Romance comes as a means for overcoming “the insurmountability of cultural differences and the need to preserve one’s own identity from all forms of mixing”.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes as a comment and explanation of this experience the migrant expresses stereotypical points of view like this of the Bulgarian Jelisaveta’s who is married to an Italian: “I think that in the beginning he felt sharply the cultural differences between us. We [Bulgarians] are a little more serious than them [Italians] in some respects. That’s why, in the beginning he found it hard to get used to the fact that I was closely bound to my family back in Bulgaria” .

The love relationship in marriage can facilitate understanding and knowledge not only about the partner but also about the local culture, mentality or social order. The interviewed women often reproduce more general social positions and stereotypes, such as the alienation in the Dutch society, or the laziness and backwardness of Southern Italians, etc. For example some Bulgarian interviewees married to rich Italians from the North of Italy (Irena, Nona) are in favour of the policy of governing party of Berlusconi, which does not tolerate immigration, and introduce restrictive migration policies even though once they had to face bureaucratic obstacles in order to stay and marry in Italy. Another example is the attitude to Southern Italians, which in most of the cases is not based on personal contacts but on a deeply rooted stereotype in the Italian society about the lack of order and the laziness of people in Southern Italy (Irena, Angelina, Yana).

The examples given so far are illustrations of the way the discourse of romantic love is infiltrated with dominant public discourses about immigration, marriage, nationality, etc. The inscription of the topos of love within the topos of marriage is a

way not only to position oneself into the new intimate space – that of the romantic relationship. The romantic love-story, containing a variety of motives such as love at a distance, motives of separation and reunion, is needed to legitimise the new position of the speaking subject. This is a positioning within larger regimes of power in the new social space of the country of migration. It is means for interpreting social norms, and reproducing stereotypes and as a whole for the interviewed women, it is means for revising the progress of the “reflexive project of the self”.

The third part of the analysis will deal with the question how identification with or denial of the romantic love-story can account for the migrants’ sense of autonomy, for their capacity for decision-making and their own strategies of integration in a new society. It will use examples of life-stories, which contain romantic narratives and plots but are related more to other aspects of the migrant’s life such as work, career, and adaptation to the local society. Without embracing the full set of characteristics of the opposition “romantic love”/“pure love relationship” offered by Giddens, the paper will try to illustrate how the regime of romantic love gives way to that of “pure love” in cases where the intercultural relationship is regarded as means for self-development, and as a “reflexive project of the self”. These features are especially visible in the migrants’ stories of separation, their stories of several consecutive relationships or in those cases where the women claim that love is not part of their story of migration.

During the whole interview the migrant women had the chance to place the topos of love at a moment they found appropriate, and to make it central or peripheral to their story of migration. But the direct opportunity to locate the topos of love in relation to their experience sometimes requires a deeper reflection on the question of love and identification or denial with the regime of romantic love. From the given answers it is visible that the directness and suddenness of the question sometimes disrupts the continuous flow of the carefully prepared therapeutic story. It provokes laughter (Eva, Ana, Mina, Joanna), signs of misunderstanding (Olga, Lora), confusion (Alena) avoidance (Emma) approval of the idea (Angelina, Yana, Kremena, Albena). The material contains 14 positive answers to that question, 9 negative answers. The other 15 cases are placed in between affirmation and negation for a number of reasons. The positive answers, which were discussed above, are usually those in which marriage was a reason for migration and love was considered as a necessary prerequisite for such a union. There are several possible reasons for the negative answers. Of course there can be technical reasons related to the preparation of the questionnaire and sample, and the influence of the neighbouring sections of questions, which were focused on other spheres of life.

The regime of romantic love is not valid in such interviews, in which the women emphasize ‘work’, ‘career’, or ‘studies’. This is also the case with some of the migrants in Italy who came “to dance” (Ana Kristina), “to work” (Maya) or had political reasons (Rosa). Their story of migration includes various intimate relationships some of which were already told in the interview but the negative answer shows that consciously the women do not link their story of migration with romantic love. (Kristina, Reneta, Rosa, Adela, Ana). These migrants have found other legitimate reasons for their actions. The emphasis in their stories is put more in the issue of self-development and improvement, on the way they have overcome difficulties on their own. Perhaps their stories can be linked more closely with the

aim of the narration to generate a positive image of the migrant of a master of her own actions. Then these migrants' "spatial stories"<sup>5</sup> which mention love by denying its romantic regime and embracing its regime of "pure relationship" modus – one possible way to explain the future trajectories of that "reflexive project of the self". Of course every such "spatial story" reproduces different image of the speaking self, but the most important is that the presence of any such regime of intercultural intimate experience of the migrant women can be means for further analyses of how new types of subjectivity can be formed in the intersection between mobility and affective investments.

Notes.

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2. Giddens, Anthony. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*: Stanford University Press, 1992. p.9
3. Simmons, Solon and Neil Grossman "Intimacy as a Double-Edged Phenomenon? An Empirical Text of Giddens." *Social Forces* 81, no. 2 (2002): 531-555.
4. *Ibid*, p.535.
5. Flesler, Daniela. *Intercultural Romance and the Immigration Question in Two Contemporary Spanish Films*, *Studies in Hispanic Cinemas* (forthcoming)

## **Migrant women in work**

*Enrica Capussotti, Ioanna Laliotou & Dawn Lyon*

### **Introduction**

In our study of migrant women's subjectivity, work emerges as a fundamental site both to renegotiate individual identity and as a basis for women's position within the new country. Due to the very rich bibliography concerning work and migration, we want to stress the particularity of our approach. Rather than analysing work as an economic relation, we have sought to pin down the place of work in contemporary forms of identity construction underway in processes of mobility and migration. It is this last point that we will illustrate in the following pages while we refer to the annexed tables for an overall picture of interviewees' employment condition.

Our sample is rather varied in terms of social class and occupational status. This means that this research can make a particular contribution here in discussing the effects on the self of the trajectories taken by highly educated women who do not find work at their level. Our analysis has several dimensions: 1. Work for the self/self-realisation through work; 2. Work as instrumental for other life goals; 3. Work as negation of the self; 4. Gendered exclusions within the labour market.

First a word about context. The majority of the migrant women interviewed in this study live – and work – in The Netherlands or in Italy. These countries provide markedly different settings in terms of labour market practices and other institutional and cultural features relevant to work. The Netherlands currently has a high participation of women in the labour market, close to 60%, yet a central feature of women's employment here is the high proportion who work part-time. Whilst they enjoy a wide range of social rights and provisions notwithstanding this status, it nevertheless has meant that the Netherlands is characterised by high labour market participation for women, and traditional gender relations in terms of the division of domestic labour<sup>8</sup>. Italy, which actually had a greater proportion of women in the active labour market circa 1960 than the Netherlands (22% cf 16%), is now noted as the country of the European Union with the lower proportion of women in the labour market, at least according to official statistics (around 42.5%). In addition, unlike in the Netherlands, women who do work tend to be engaged in full-time employment. The limited social services in either the public or private sectors is associated with Italy presently employing more care-workers in the home than any other EU country.

### **1. Sustaining professional identities: Self-realisation through work**

There is much talk about the ease with which those with marketable skills are able to be mobile through their work. Kalina – a Bulgarian woman living in the Netherlands with training and experience as a computer programmer - testifies to this: "it was not

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<sup>8</sup> Indeed, some of the women in the Netherlands who do not work comment on how the structure of the school day make it practically impossible. 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 divides up absolutely the whole day." (Alena, Bulgarian in NL)

difficult for one with my background to find a job”. Some knowledge and skills are highly transferable, others less so.

For most of the interviewees with professional status in their previous lives there are new limitations and new opportunities in their move to Italy. What is striking however is the way in which their migrant status and certain aspects of their cultural capital, and what we might call a kind of *national capital*, are valorised in the new context. 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 what is possible for her professionally. Henrietta was a lecturer in the Hungarian university system teaching the Dutch language. She met her (Dutch) husband when he visited the university where she worked. They decided to pursue their relationship in The Netherlands so 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 which she says is “all right”. However, in her search for some intellectual activity in her life, she has recently started to undertake some translation work. Translation, also in other accounts emerges, often as a possible profession. One can trace in Henrietta’s narration the channelling of interests and energies to this point. In her particular case, because her professional position was as a teacher of the Dutch language (which gives her some ease in settling in The Netherlands), the context effectively robs her of the capital that was valorised in Hungary. What is interesting is how translation work comes to be seen as a resolution, bridging different points of connection. It is through her ‘being Hungarian’, for her command of her native tongue, that she is valorised. She is also considering doing a PhD. Even here her subject interest is in translation, its history and politics, between Hungarian and Dutch. The narration leaves a taste of *amor fati*: she is not unhappy now but she has come to love the life has...

## **2. Work as instrumental for other life goals**

Many of the interviewees talk about the social isolation of not working and for some the need to break that is more significant than the intrinsic satisfaction of the job. Work provides social relations on the job and the chance for friendship beyond it. Sometimes, it means just being out of the house - “not to stay at home” was a frequent formulation, or to have a reason to go out which in turn valorises the sense of returning.

Teodora is a graduate in Slavic philosophy. For six months, she has worked in a supermarket. She speaks with remarkable equanimity about this shift in her life. She is learning Dutch and fits her work around her classes. She feels gratitude for the opportunity that was given to her and the kindness of her fellow employees. Her friend, Lubomira, is being interviewed at the same time. She agrees with Teodora that she is treated well at the supermarket not made to feel like a second-rate person “just because I am not Dutch and I do not come from a Western European country”, something which happens often in other contexts. There is relief too from patriarchal styles of supervision that the women are more familiar with in Bulgaria – neither “the ‘chorbadja’<sup>9</sup> type of boss”, nor “the ‘fatherly’ type either, that is to say ‘I do

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<sup>9</sup> A feudal type of governor in Bulgaria during the Ottoman times.

everything for you and you have to be grateful to me.” Furthermore, Lubomira emphasises the importance of work, in opposition to idleness, rather than its content, when one day her boss comments on her education: “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 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’ and so on.”

After arriving in the Netherlands, Lubomira needed to wait for her diplomas to be checked out in order to apply for a higher-level position in her specialty, something she refers to repeatedly. She is hopeful of future opportunities in an area at least close to what she has studied (engineering). And if that does not work, then 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 6 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 equals western languages. Even if she tried her hand here, she would be competing with native speakers which would be “very hard” she says. She hasn’t given up the search for such a position but in the meantime, she continues to work at the supermarket. She has recentred her life along a different set of priorities and claims contentment also imagined into the future.

In the case of these two women, work plays an important role in enabling mobility as it provides the migrants with the material conditions, the social context, and the emotional *stimuli* for establishing relationships. Work both enables and interferes with different sets of relationships in the migrants’ lives prior to and after their migration. The connection between work and moving relationships is more explicitly presented when the interviewees describe employment as a means of social integration in the new country. As Kalina mentions, one is “motivated to start working, because of the isolation...” The association between work and socialization reflects an attitude that does not concern exclusively migrants, but characterizes contemporary societies more generally. The blurring of the boundaries between work and “free” time, and between work-space and home, is congruent with many persons’ tendency to create social networks and bonds from within their work environment. This attitude may be accentuated in the case of migrant women as it leads to a more general evaluation of types of employment according the opportunities specific environments provide for the establishment of relationships. Many interviewees argue that they are pleased with their employment in low-paid jobs that do not require special qualifications because the environment is collegial and allows them to feel as part of a group.

What we learn here is that the self-fulfilment that the migrant seeks to achieve through work has many dimensions and is not directly related to the content, the status or the payment for the work done. Self-fulfilment depends on the opportunity that one has to re-make oneself. Changing one’s own circumstances involves altering self-perceptions - always related to how the subject thinks that she used to be perceived by others. Thus, Teodora feels dignified by her job at the Albert Hein supermarkets because she has re-made herself over by getting rid off the source of

her discontent in Bulgaria (being underestimated for not being married). The chain of connections through which meaning in the present can be built is a personal one. Whilst a certain kind of happiness might be achieved through a constellation of life elements, and one where the content of work itself or professional status is not foregrounded as important, we would nevertheless want to argue for an increased work and professional opportunities for migrant women - and men.

### **3. Work as negation of the self**

Indeed, dignity is an issue that reoccurs in migrant women's references to work, as a claim, a demand, an ambition, an expectation, or as projected image of oneself. Contrary to Teodora and Lubomira, other interviewees insist that their work environment does not provide them with opportunities to develop relationships and it is thus a source of discontent. Reneta works at a social care center and she takes the work environment as a starting-point in order to criticize the Dutch society and culture in general. She relates her criticism of the lack of communication with the fact that she feels very constrained and under-estimated in her job. Reneta's disposition towards work is marked by the way in which she conceptualizes her status as a migrant woman. She is a 50-year old woman who left Bulgaria in 1988 and she describes herself as a political migrant. In 1988 she crossed illegally the Bulgarian border with Serbia, but she was arrested which led her first to a Serbian prison and then to a refugee camp and back to Bulgaria. She managed to migrate again after the Amnesty in 1989 and she ended up in the Netherlands. After many years and adversities in her personal life she managed to stay in the country permanently is now contemplating pension and return to the "warmth and sorrow" of Bulgaria. Reneta projects her emotional discontent that results from interrupted relationships to her status as a migrant worker. Although she does not find her work emotionally satisfying, it is evident that according to her expectations the work environment should be more conducive to the creation of human relationships, if it weren't for the cultural difference that determined her colleagues constraining and detached attitudes. Thus, dignity and recognition is something that she claims from other migrant workers and friends. The opportunity to relate humanly and naturally to colleagues, employers and other people in the work environment is necessary precondition for feeling dignified and content.

### **4. Gendered exclusions within the labour market**

One of the characteristics of contemporary literature on work transformations is the stress on the 'feminisation' of the labour market. Usually the term refers to the massive entrance of women into formal economy as well as to contemporary capitalism's high evaluation of attitudes and competencies traditionally associated with the feminine - e.g. care, mediations, relations... While roles and abilities historically constructed as feminine are appreciated goods of dominant capitalistic trends, women's testimonies highlight the contradictory and ambivalent transformations of the private/public relations occurring in their lives. While the labour market is fragmented into a plurality of contracts, professional figures, customers and rights, women are together a subject of change and a subject trapped in traditional power relationships and gender stereotypes which appear strengthened within these contemporary conjunctures.

One feature of this is the awareness of the gendered division of labour. In complaining about the kindergarten, about the lack of public assistance to working-mothers, the testimonies refer to the specific women's experience of having to combine productive work and care of the family. The frequency of considerations about the care system - inside and outside the family, private and public - seem to point to an enduring division of labour between the sexes. The persistence of traditional 'feminine' ideas, roles and contents is evident in the frequent references to the tensions between being a worker and being a mother. Bori explains her situation as housewife and mother in Italy referring, amongst other things, to the fact that: "kindergartens are only part-time service. No meals provided. As for primary school, some do, others do not offer meals to the pupils. (...) The general assumption is that mothers have nothing else to do but to look after the children. Or you have the grandparents to help." (Hu/I)

Alena can decide to be a mother and an housewife she says; explaining her decision she introduces a typical opposition with other women who have career ambitions. Then she refers to a new dimension, that is the perception that her ambitions will however be frustrated by the job market in the Netherlands. A declaration that she can strategically introduce to sustain her original decision; or/and it can highlight another aspect of the ambivalent relationship between desire, satisfactions and opportunities: when the job market is unable to sustain and meet women ambitions (because of lasting hierarchies and power relations based on gender, class, racial and ethnic dimensions), the private sphere emerges as a possible positive landing-place. Subjectivity is articulated around a previous time - the one devoted to self realisation through work - and a present signed by motherhood and the family. In this new condition work is not excluded - because of economic reason or for need to be busy - but is not anymore associated with self-realisation: "I'd like to have some job, which doesn't make me nervous as my reason 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 new job, which brought me a lot of satisfaction, so I'm not motivated by any desire of self-realisation. For me, this is past tense" (Bori, Hu/I).

While insecurity, openness and self employment/creativity are fundamental key concepts of contemporary ideology about work, women bear the memory of the contradictions and fatigue introduced by emancipation. Bori claims the long tradition of emancipation of Hungarian women, much longer that in Italy according to her. But it was a distorted emancipation because only produced: "that women had to take a workload 80 times that of a man's workload, having had to toil like a workhorse, this is not what I call emancipation. Emancipation, as far as I'm concerned, is equality at most. But to distort the share of workload the way it is actually done in Italy or Hungary, you can't speak about emancipation."

If we pay attention in particular to the *language of discrimination* through a comparison between Gyongyi and Emma, it emerges that uncertainty and vulnerability are exasperated by migrancy. Answering to the question if the precarious work conditions are due to her being a foreigner, Emma replies stressing the superimposition of class, gender, national and geographical discriminations and prejudices: "no, this is quite usual. And it makes thing worse if you are a foreigner. A foreigner but not an American, English, French (...). Coming from Eastern Europe is something they look down on you. You have to do twice as much to be appreciated,

just like it happens 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.”

Discriminations - both in Italy and the Netherlands - from coming from Eastern Europe are often denounced stressing the negative consequences not only in term of material conditions but also for the subject’s self-esteem: “so my self-esteem here [Hungary] was always turned on and there [Italy] it was rather turned off” (Gyongyi). In fact Gyongyi felt a successful teacher of English in Hungary and someone with “no place there [Italy]”. She recounts how “that [school of English] were biased about Eastern Europeans, about their pronunciation or whatever. So I wasn't given a chance. What's more, when I had my son in kindergarten I offered them to give English lessons for free, playing courses in English. They refused even that. It felt like kind of failure for me...”

**Imaginary geographies: border-places and ‘home’  
in the narratives of migrant women**  
*Nadejda Alexandrova & Dawn Lyon*

**Introduction**

This chapter looks at imagined geographies - the migrant women’s visions and images of ‘border-places’ and ‘home’, charted from their stories of mobility from Eastern Europe to Italy or the Netherlands, to analyse their relations and politics of belonging. In the analysis, it connects these claims for belonging to the dominant available ways to make sense of migrants’ social locations in contemporary Europe. A prototypical immigration narrative is one in which ‘immigrants’ are supposed to move from one ‘culture’ into another. Cultures are assumed to be distinctly bound in space in this thinking, and home is taken to emerge through a linear transition from one place to another, a process through which migrants are ‘integrated’. In contrast, multi-cultural perspectives emphasise migrants’ communities. In effect, home is reinscribed in the country of origin, an essentialism from which there can be no escape. A third alternative, much discussed in recent years, is transnationalism. Transnational identities emphasise new forms of belonging and social embeddedness where networks span more than one location, and migrants are not reduced to any one belonging - national origin or present location. The resultant ‘hybrid’ identities are celebrated by some commentators and academics as novel and liberatory forms of subjectivity. This chapter seeks to critically engage with this thinking through the analysis presented here of what migrant women say about their own sense of place and belonging in the worlds they inhabit.

**Crossing borders: The sanctity of the passport**

That the border-place may be experienced and imagined in many different ways (Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler, 2002: 331) means that narratives of border-crossing can be considered as key moments in the subject’s construction of the meanings of transition and reincorporation. What makes the border-place so important is its liminal status of a “as a threshold between more or less stable phases of social processes” (Turner, 1987), literally and symbolically ‘in-between’, a place from which new life possibilities can be imagined. Passage through the passport office for non-EU citizens requires many kinds of identifications, proofs and guarantees of identity. Reasons and explanations and all other accounts of the migrant’s decision to cross the national border are in that moment representations of the self, repeated and reconfigured according to time, place, location and questioner. The border-place is a threshold in the migrant women’s lives of this study, the narration of which evidences their agency, self-reflexivity, and forms of belonging, both achieved and imagined.

The passport is a major object of concern and care in the migrant women’s interviews, a guarantee of possible return in both directions. The women without identity documents felt the precarity of their situations, which made the drama of return very present, fearful that the border would never be successfully crossed and that liminal phase would continue indefinitely. Women with dual citizenship or two identification documents are comforted by this, fully aware of the flexibility they permit, changing formal identity and belonging according to the requirements of the national border to be crossed. Whichever their personal situation, all the migrant

women insist on the importance of keeping their documents in order and respecting the sanctity of the passport<sup>5</sup>.

### **Transition and non-places**

For the migrant woman from Eastern Europe who flies for the first time to the West, walking the long curved corridors between airport terminals and gates makes a powerful impression. Many of the women interviewed included in their journey narrative descriptions of airports, especially the airports at Amsterdam, Milan and Rome. When asked what was their first impression of the country of migration several directly replied “the huge, enormous, airport” (Alena, Eva, Mina, Teodora). Some describe their feeling of astonishment when they encounter the glitter of the airport shopping zone, especially those who migrated before the Changes or in the early 1990s.

Those passengers on the verge of becoming migrants might use their identity (in formal ways through the holding of passports and other documents) to pass the border and to become partially freed of that identity, capable and ready, in the mix of the colourful, consuming crowd to see themselves anew. It is also a space in which others realise the loneliness of their journey (eg Mina). Some also talk of feelings of confusion when they lose themselves in the labyrinth of halls and escalators. Indeed, Eva, arriving from Bulgaria, got lost at Schiphol airport in Amsterdam and recounts asking a policeman to show her the way out. No one was waiting for her which made her on-going journey to the countryside very difficult, quite a typical narration in the accounts of those who do know recognise or are not able to follow the signs and rules of their new locations. Overall, the airport is also the confusing threshold of the space “beyond, which signifies spatial distance, marks progress, [and] promises the future” (Bhabha, 1995: 4).

The airport was also often recounted as the first gate to the social and the cultural life in that country. For instance, Mina recounts her first impression of Italy: “I thought it was a beautiful country... although I couldn’t see much of it from “Leonardo da Vinci” airport in Rome...” The name ‘Leonardo da Vinci’ airport is enough for her to call Italy beautiful, a name which represents the art and beauty of the European/Italian Renaissance. That this name is given to a modern building which itself does not have much history functions as a metonymic link to transfer *beauty* from art to national territory, thus producing meaning for the migrant familiar with the figure of Leonardo.

### **Landscapes, space and objects**

In the interviews of Jelisaveta and Alena, Bulgarian women migrants on their way to Italy and the Netherlands respectively, the green land, seen from the window of plane or train, was the first impression they remember. “Lots of greenery and everything remains untouched” is Alena’s description of the space ‘beyond’ in the Netherlands. The greenery is not unfamiliar for Jelisaveta, in fact it reminds her of Bulgaria: “I liked the scenery very much. It is quite similar to Bulgaria, but may be later in Spring... It’s great ... Especially here, in Tuscany, it feels like the Balkans, there are a lot of similarities.” Other interviewees mention different features of the landscape and infrastructure also as points of divergence from the sending countries. “Terrific

superhighways” (Plamena) are amongst things to get used to, as are tidiness, cleanliness (Reneta, Alena), and the abundance of everything (Albena, Mina, Angelina). In the narratives these characteristics are brought out as a legend of the country.

Whilst the geographic characteristics are similar of the place she has left and the one she is now in, what remains for Jelisiveta is to create a more private space in her new location. Indeed, one of the most self-evident ways in which home is talked about is the physical space that it occupies (Finch and Hayes, 1994). Sometimes, home is a minimal expression of belonging – the place one lives in and that is all. However, sometimes this is linked to the investment in property in a different location. Ana and her husband started building their own house in Bulgaria, at the same time as working and travelling around Italy, initially as performers. Irena, Angelina and Jelisiveta all talk about the apartments they have bought in Bulgaria. What is interesting in these accounts is the investment in home elsewhere and into the future, and includes the flow of significant financial sums to Bulgaria, whilst present day work and life takes place in Italy. Other women talk explicitly about the laboured creation of home. Eva, a Bulgarian migrant, lives with her Georgian boyfriend in the Netherlands. When she is asked if she has found her home or still looking for it, she replies: “I’d say I am creating it. I am rather creating it than looking for it. Because I have this flat and I’m going to make it my place. At least while I’m here...” Clearly there is evidence of what Avtar Brah calls ‘homing desires’ (1996: 180) - “the desire to feel at home by physically or symbolically (re)constituting spaces which provide some kind of ontological security in the context of migration” (Fortier, 2001: 410).

The place of objects within and between the space of home also offers very interesting insights into the symbolic value they carry for the expression of belonging (see Salih, 2003). We did not ask directly in the interviews of this research what migrant women buy or take with them when they visit their relatives or friends in their countries of origin and vice versa. Still, they spontaneously talk about food as a site of belonging - explored in depth in a separate chapter - and they sometimes also referred to the ‘peopling’ of their workplaces and homes with images and icons of their ‘home’ countries, or with objects and fragments of their loves through which they could feel secure. In the case of Karolina, a journalist and translator, this practice is one conducted by several of the women in her workplace. Their work as experts in the language or current events of their countries might strengthen the sense of belonging and construct in them stronger national identities than might otherwise have been the case (cf Riccio, 2002, who argues that some forms of transnational connections reinforce the sense of national identity expressed through symbols of home).

### **Home as destination or deferral**

If for some home gathers meaning through spaces or objects, for others it is located in the imagination, notably in two formulations: one, imagined as an achievement into the future, ie home as destination rather than origin, and two, as an ever-present latent possibility but one which is repeatedly deferred. These are the orientations to home we discuss in this section.

Marina, a Bulgarian migrant to Italy whose works as a journalist, talks in several ways about the question of return. That it is possible but also deferred are central to her account. "Would you return to live in Bulgaria? I've thought about that. It feels good to know I can do it any time I wish to." In addition to accessibility, she emphasises her continuity of contact with Bulgaria, not only through her work as a journalist, but because most of her adult life was spent there, a relationship to a place which for her "can never be broken; it won't be broken even after many years have passed." She visits regularly, "at least twice a year because there are all my sweet memories." The logic of her not returning 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." This orientation is repeated by several interviewees (Poly, Irena, Plamena, Kristina). Whilst the reality of economic opportunity is highly relevant - the theme of work is also discussed in a separate chapter - the investment in work over country of residence is chosen, not given. Occupation functions as if it were wholly determinant, a non-negotiable factor which rather than constrains, allows for the possibility of another life which might be hard to claim on other grounds. In the context of present economic conditions, it is this mode of justification that is the most legitimate. One of the effects of this orientation however is to make it necessary to have a reason to return, rather than a rationale to stay. Home is therefore both imagined and deferred into the future.

### **Multiple belonging and its limits**

In this part of the chapter we analyse the ways in which migrant women claim to belong to more than one place or grouping. Karolina, a Bulgarian migrant who now works as a part-time journalist and translator in Italy and is married to an Italian, speaks of her long-standing patriotism, a sense of national belonging inculcated by the communist regime she says, and undiminished by her "fully democratic" ideas and her Italian citizenship. She puts it strongly: "...despite the fact that I'm an Italian citizen, I've always stood up for my fatherland. My fatherland remains in my heart". Others also idealise the country of origin, reifying national belonging, for example, Boyana who is discussing her return to Bulgaria after 23 years in the Netherlands: "But my roots are here, my feet are in this land." Frequent trips to the sending country make possible the integration of central figures and places of life, notably through repeated visits to symbolic sites: "He has visited the Rila Monastery maybe 25 times and every time we come back," Karolina remarks about her husband, implying the re-enactment of these processes of incorporation, and the idea of home encapsulated in specific locations.

A number of the women interviewed speak powerfully in the register of multiple belonging, home in more than one place. In these cases, mobility is a prerequisite for comfort and well-being in the country of migration. More generally, technologies are understood to bridge distance very clearly, making places more accessible and lifestyles more mutual (eg Morley, 2001). Emma talks about mobility as a 'feeling' related to the opportunity to come and go, which she counter-poses to definitive exile. There is no strong distinction in time between one place and another she says. For Marina, the sites of her longing are multiple: "I feel a little homesick about Moscow, although I lived in it only six years and it isn't my native country. Nevertheless I miss living in Moscow sometimes, just like I feel homesick about

Bulgaria.” But she doesn’t consider herself to be an ‘emigrant’, a phenomenon which in her view “has a relative meaning in 2002”. As she explains, “It only takes one hour and forty minutes to get from here to Bulgaria. If I had married somebody who lived in Bourgas, perhaps I would visit my parents even more seldom than I do now. As soon as I make up my mind, I can make a flight reservation and the next day I can be having lunch with my friends in Sofia.” Csilla also refers to time-space compression: “1000kms is not that far after all.. you can get into the car in the morning and you’re there in the evening”. In addition, living in Italy does not mean being culturally remote from her friends in a “global world” when Marina explains, “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.” Juli (HuI) also comments how her mother kept sending her the Budapest programme guide so she could know what was going on in theatre and cinema. The circulation of “symbolic goods” (Lash and Friedman, 1992, cited in Morley, 2001: 426) mediates affective connection, and can sustain belonging.

However, multiple belonging is not so fluid for all the migrant women. Marina expresses what a number of migrants fear - the loss of any kind of home, the danger of becoming “a kind of rootless tree”. More generally, the limits of belonging are also frequently expressed, not least in relation to legal status. Boyana, in her imminent retirement, wants to feel a European citizen who can cross borders without fear and settle in whatever place she finds convenient. Similarly, Angelina, a 30 year old migrant in Italy, considers the possibility of return, but only when she finally gets Italian citizenship. And there is the traumatic experience of Reneta, a migrant in the Netherlands, who made her first effort to cross illegally the Bulgarian-Serbian border in 1988. She and her husband were arrested and repatriated and their ‘home’ as prisoners, and it was only after the Changes when her fixation to go to ‘the clean space’ in the West was satisfied when she went to the Netherlands. Only after marrying there and saving money for her retirement is she confident of enjoying the rights and the documents to return to Bulgaria and at the same time to use the income saved from the Netherlands.

## **Conclusions**

The legal regulation of formal belonging and its implications for feeling a sense of entitlement to place is powerful in the narratives. Not having documents is the source of considerable anxiety. Who does and doesn’t get entitlement to gain legal residence, or more, is a central question for the possibilities of belonging. Agreements between Hungary and Bulgaria and other countries of the EU make dual citizenship possible which itself at least opens the possibility for easy mobility and participation in life in more than one location. This makes the persistent salience of nation states in the regulation of everyday life *less* evident than for some other migrant groups. Notwithstanding the importance of legal regulation, residence permits or citizenship rights are not by themselves sufficient to secure belonging. Whilst many of the women interviewed claim happy and fulfilled lives, many speak at length of loneliness, and enforced solitude and independence in spite of legal regularity. Amongst return migrants, some speak of having “never really felt at home” (Angela, HuI). And several of the migrants have either had nervous breakdowns or come close to such a crisis, indications of the ontological insecurity mobility can produce when forms of support are diminished.

To return to the point at which we began, we can ask what the forms of belonging we have presented tell us about transnational or other practices in the lives of these migrant women. Certainly some of the women report activities which are embedded in their lives which require sustained contacts and travel across national borders - an accepted understanding of transnationalism (Portes *et al*, 1999). These range from the economic (traders, eg Jelisaveta), the political (those who go to vote, eg), the cultural (teaching exchanges, job secondments, translation and journalistic work), and the personal (the many interviewees who regularly spend Summers and other extended periods in the sending countries). Home is variably physical and imaginative, as the analysis has shown. For some it remains “sentimentalised as a space of comfort and seamless belonging” (Fortier, 2001: 412) such that the movement away from home contributes to the production of it as ideal. Yet, even when home is deployed in narratives of beginnings, it is continually reprocessed, and when it is place of return, it is not necessarily unchanging. A focus on the process and labour of attachment, as we have tried to do, de-reifies home and shows its indeterminacy (Fortier, 2001).

## Food-talk: markers of identity and imaginary belongings

Andrea Peto

### Introduction

This paper explores “food-talk” as an indicator of social relations in the interviews made in the GRINE project how it constitutes forms of imaginary belongings.<sup>1</sup> Food as topic might sound trivial but “food is life, and life can be studied and understood through food.”<sup>2</sup> Eating has a social component as well as biological one as it is the case with sexuality.<sup>3</sup> Food systems: the production, preparation, consumption, attitude, symbolism of food are operating in time and in space which is defined by gender, class, ethnicity, beliefs and cultural context.<sup>4</sup> Analysing interviews of migrant and receiving women sheds a light on processes how identity is negotiated between different traditions of food systems in a migration context.

Food-talk has different social functions and it encodes social events.<sup>5</sup> Speaking about food (processing and consuming) is used as a marker of identity and as a frame of narrating forms of difference but it serves also as a meta-discourse: everybody knows and seemingly understands food i. e. we all have to eat to survive, so that is an “easy” vocabulary at hand to use when important issues need to be described. The food-talk is also a construction: the same ingredients cooked at the same way can be labelled differently depending on the cultural context. The “food-talk frame” is very proper with its flexibility to serve as a site of constructing the self and the other. Food has productive and regulative functions: women are mostly expected to prepare the food, and consume it as a part of a community. The rituals, arrangements, myths constructed around this double function of food are serving as a site of accommodation as well as of resistance. In this paper I analyse the conflicting traditions of systems of food in Hungary, Bulgaria and in Italy, in the Netherlands.

### Conflicting traditions of food systems

The two receiving countries in our project: the Netherlands and Italy represent two opposing points in the North-South contrast as far as cuisine is concerned which opens up space for comparison.<sup>6</sup> The two countries represent two different food cultures: the Dutch have a culture of eating related to the protestant norms, not to a culture of cooking as it is the case in Italy. The way how women are generally organising cooking, meals and social life in the two different types of families: small, enclosed in Netherlands and the open, big families in Italy helps us to understand the

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<sup>1</sup> On the different approaches: functional, structural, cultural approaches to food see Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class. A Study in Comparative Sociology*. Cambridge University Press, 1982, esp. pp. 12-33.

<sup>2</sup> Carole Counihan, Penny van Esterik, “Introduction” in p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Douglas, “Deciphering a Meal” in *Food and Culture. A Reader*. ed. Carole Counihan, Penny van Esterik, Routledge, 1997. p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Musya Glants, Joyce Toomre, Introduction in *Food in Russian History and Culture*. ed Musya Glants, Joyce Toomre, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1997, xii. See an attempt for a summary of cultural history of food by Massimo Montanari, *The Culture of Food*. Blackwell, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> See on this Roland Barthes, “Towards a Psychology of Contemporary Food Consumption” in *Annales E.S.C.* 16. September- October 1961, pp. 977-986.

<sup>6</sup> Jack Goody, *Food and Love. A Cultural History of East and West*. London, New York: Verso, 1998.p. 128.

constructions of difference experienced by migrant women arriving from Hungary and Bulgaria.

The imperial tradition of Italy and Netherlands are influencing differently the food culture: in Italy ethnic cooking is not popular, while in Netherlands variety of ethnic cooking is available. The Italian cooking is experienced as dominant and hegemonic by migrant women, with very little space for food fusion, while the Dutch cooking is puritan and cold. The Italian food culture is regional but perceived as one homogenous “Italian” cuisine - “Italian cooking” exists only outside Italy for non-Italians - while the Netherlands is not different as far as regional cooking habits are concerned. “Italian cooking” is not as sophisticated as the French one, it is a good “housewife” (casalingua) cooking, so it is both apparently easy to learn and hard to do well. Also the Dutch perceived by the migrant women as puritan, cold, economic and reserved are presenting food practices as difficulty for women to understand.

Women migrants coming from the culture of “statist feminist” emancipation were acquainted with the ideology and the practices of waiving the domestic burden from housewives. The culture of communal kitchens and rewritten cookbooks for promoting healthy and easy cooking transformed their symbolic understanding of cooking not as a duty nor as an achievement but as a service.<sup>7</sup> A “good housewife” in Italy earns that appreciation; in the case of the migrant women first they have to learn what is expected from them. Preservation of “national” food traditions of the migrant women also forms of preserving national identity, which is very rarely the case with the migrant women in the sample who are also marked as different by receiving women through their cooking and eating habits. In the case of the women coming from a more emancipated environment to a very traditional Italian context that was not easy. Also these migrant women who are coming from the “statist feminist” background they have different attitude to cooking.

The women who left Bulgaria and Hungary after 1989 they did that mostly of economic reasons. In Bulgarian economic difficulties made the life difficult there and food was rare and undifferentiated. Leaving Bulgaria meant not only that they have gone to a different situation: still with less money but a variety of choices, which forces construction of a narrative as if it would have been her own choice to eat less. It is a common experience of the Hungarian and Bulgarian migrant women that they were arriving from a culture of need to a cult of consumption, so for them eating was losing its social and nutrition functions and received a symbolic value.

### **Food and Power**

Consuming food fosters and maintains social connections, and reinforces hierarchies through power. As Jack Goody pointed out: “the analyses of cooking has to be related to the distribution of power and authority in the economic sphere”.<sup>8</sup> Power is manifested in who is being served and who is serving the food. Women gain symbolic power from controlling cooking. It is not only a financial control, women are in charge of the household money, but also with their ability to decide what to

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<sup>7</sup> Halina Rothstein, Robert A. Rothstein, “The Beginning of Soviet Culinary Arts” in *Food in Russian History and Culture*. ed Musya Glants, Joyce Toomre, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1997 p. 180.

<sup>8</sup> Goody 1982 p. 37.

cook they are influencing the behaviour of the whole family. Buying food is providing economic power and the control over the purchase is a form of disciplining power exercised by the receiving community. The sociological notion of “gate keeper” describes the function of women, since they decide what should be on the menu. But on the other hand the conscious decision “not to cook” is the first step on the long road leading towards women’s autonomy and liberty with a rejection of traditional gender role. Preparation of food in the kitchen constructs intergenerational connections: it strengthens the position of some when they gain power to exercise it over others: e.g. mother-in-laws on daughter-in-laws at times experienced by the migrant women as a form of control by the receiving community.

### **Food-talk marking the “Self” and the “Other”**

Food also serves as a point of self identification, and it serves to express ideas about the relationship between the “self” and the “other”. Different ingredients and ways of cooking are defining “the Other”. Food-talk remains the last “politically correct” discourse to differentiate between us and the “other”. Speaking about different types of food and different ways of preparing food is a way of differentiation and as such it is very much connected to describing migration processes. The expression of subjectivity of the migrant women is happening in the form of finding comfort or in the process of adaptation to the new food culture. The meanings of identity is renegotiated through imagined food narratives. Food-talk is a site where identity is negotiated, where the constraints of subjectivity is becoming apparent. The interviews we made with migrant and receiving women are illustrating relationship between food habits and identity construction. The difference is overcome by imitation, imitating the food culture of the receiving community.

Food as a form of identity is clearly expressed in the excerpts about the different Hungarian Cultural events organised in Italy or in the Netherlands, which are arranged around ritual-ethnic “food consumption”. Processing the same food the same way as “the Hungarians” usually do, is setting up an imagined ancestral link with the homeland, which offers emotional security. Cooking of ideal-typical dishes also serves as a form of memory: reconstructed memory of the homeland. As Mary Douglas pointed out: “each meal carries something of the meaning of other meals: each meal is a structured social event which structures others in its own image”<sup>9</sup> Returning home and to enjoy the “imagined meals” to represent home is one of the great joys of migrant women.

Processing food also means maintaining the cultural norms of the community: to prepare exactly the type of food at a certain date of the year construct belonging. In the case of the Syrian Jewish Community in Mexico because of their affluent status they hire native cooks, whom they teach to make the traditional and required dishes and who are instrumental in using Mexican ingredients and technology of cooking. In the case of Hungarian and Bulgarian emigrants they are themselves cooking in the kitchen for others. Because of their low social status or because they became full time mothers and providers they are using cooking as a mean of survival. The division line between Bulgarian, Hungarian women and the others is very clear; there is no interaction in the interviews between the different “food-talks” but

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Goody (1982) p. 31.

manifestations of power and hierarchies. In some cases as in the case of Syrian Jews living in Mexico food is a place for hybridity, while in the case of Bulgarian and Hungarian migrants there is no mention of the combination of different ingredients, nor the difficulty to buy “real” ingredients for ethnic cooking.

### **Food and control**

Food is a tool for socialisation of women. Food processing, exchanging recipes, gossiping in the kitchen were always important parts of women’s social life. In the case of migrant women in the new home this social support and networks are missing and the previous experience of community and intimacy becomes an individual struggle for acceptance on the most intimate level. They have to learn how to cook “according to the taste” of their partners, or sometimes their mother in laws. Eating, like talking is a patterned activity.<sup>10</sup> In Kristeva’s work, *Power and Horror* food symbolically competes with words<sup>11</sup> which has special importance as far as experiences of migrants who are struggling with language problems are concerned. This isolation makes this pattern of food processing an achievement, a product of acculturation. At the same time an expression of imagined belonging to home through preserving ethnic cooking is present in the narratives.

Consuming food together strengthens the bonds in the family. In a case if the couple represents different cooking traditions it is a questions of manifestation of power whose cooking becomes the dominant. In the case of migrant women they are giving up their “gate keeper” function and they are trying to match their performance to the expectations of the receiving community. It can be a form of resistance not liking the food processed by the other, since that represents “the other”. Husbands represent the native community with their eating and its food culture so the wives have no other alternative but to adapt to his same-ness. Preparing food is also a mean of exercising control. Studies show that instances of domestic violence are happening when men are complaining about the preparation and service of meals because that is the most trivial sign of women accepting subservient domestic role.<sup>12</sup> Women in the sample also experienced violence and shame in cooking and serving situations.

### **Conclusions**

The history of non-understanding between native populations and migrants is manifested in communication. Migrant women are mute: mute because they might not speak the language and they are not familiar with the customs and the traditions of the receiving country patterned activity of cooking. The first level of experiencing the “otherness” is through purchasing, preparing, consuming food. Therefore food-talk is an important site of manifesting identities and imaginary belongings. The belief that there is a choice of women during food talk is totally illusory: they can adopt a narrative strategy of negotiations for constructing agency but there is very limited space for renegotiating “women’s natural role as a provider” in those context.

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Halliday is quoted in Mary Douglas, *Deciphering a Meal* p. 37.

<sup>11</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1982.

<sup>12</sup> Rhian Ellis, “The Way to a Man’s Heart: Food in the Violent Home. in Anne Murcott, ed. *The Sociology of Food and Eating* Aldershot: Gower Publishing pp. 164- 171 Quoted in Marjorie DeVault, *Conflict and Defence in Culture and Food*. p. 184.

In the case of a migration situation these women have a very limited space for negotiation women's work as a work of care due to the complex function what food is carrying in social, economic and cultural context which this paper could only start to explore.

### **III: Relationships between migrant and native women**

## **Dutch women's positioning in the public debate on migration and integration**

*Esther Vonk*

### **Summary**

This chapter discusses the ways in which Dutch women narrate their relationships to Eastern European women. In looking into the intersubjective process of defining 'self' and 'other' in the context of friendships between women, it investigates how the categories of gender, ethnicity and 'culture' function discursively in processes of bonding and identification. Representations of self and other, connected with the construction of collective categories of 'we' and 'them', take up a central place in the interviews with both Eastern and Western European women. The interviews discussed are examples of women belonging to the white majority speaking about women belonging to a minority: immigrant women from Eastern Europe. It is relevant to place the interviews within the context of recent public debates; these can help clarify and interpret some of the issues voiced in the interviews (see below).

Within the discussion of the interviews, two main themes are highlighted in order to further investigate the question of representation of 'self' and 'other' by Dutch women, because of their significance, their reoccurrence in the majority of the interviews, and because of the different ways the different interviewees deal with them. The first theme is 'reasons for migration': the stories told by the Dutch interviewees on the reasons women migrate to the Netherlands. These stories first of all refer to concrete women – Hungarian and Bulgarian friends, colleagues or acquaintances of the respondents – but in many cases lead to the expression of ideas about reasons to migrate to the Netherlands generally. These stories form a more or less significant part of each of the interviews, as the theme 'reasons for migration' was part of the interview schedule. The second theme is 'integration in Dutch society'. Unlike 'reasons for migration', 'integration' was not thematised in the interview schedule, neither did I during the interviews introduce the term 'integration'. Nevertheless, practically each of the interviewees brought the concept into the interview. I want to investigate where this recurrence stems from, and in which ways the interviewees use the concept.

### **Context**

Last November, minister de Geus, of the Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment, responsible for emancipation policy, held a speech during the celebratory event of 25 years of emancipation policy in the Netherlands. He used this opportunity to ensure the audience that the emancipation of the Dutch woman is fully accomplished – a message that we've heard before, from different sides, but that had not been officially declared by a government representative. However, minister de Geus hurried to footnote his declaration, by stating that, when he says 'Dutch women' in this context, he means white, native Dutch women (so-called 'autochtone vrouwen'). There are other groups of women in the Netherlands, for whom emancipation is still highly necessary. The minister, from now on, will therefore focus on the process of emancipation of what he called 'a part of our allochtone (non-native) fellow citizens'. This chapter focuses on interventions in the current public debate on 'the integration of minorities' in the Netherlands, with a focus on the issue of women's emancipation, and its discursive role within this debate. This

debate has everything to do with gender, ethnicity and power relations, and the way in which the debate is taken shape, asks for critical feminist analysis and contributions.

In the current public debate around the ‘integration of minorities’ – the most recent chapter in an ongoing debate on the Netherlands as a multicultural society – the idea that multicultural society has failed is predominant. This idea as such is not new. Feminist philosopher Baukje Prins has thoroughly documented the ways in which articulations of this idea have developed since the early 1990’s.<sup>13</sup> She groups the different *genres* of discourse that pronounce the multicultural society failed under the heading of ‘new-realist discourses’. What is new in the recent debate is, first, that the new realist discourse around immigration and integration has been radicalised. Secondly, it has a wider public support, in as far as that it is no longer necessarily viewed as racist or extreme-right, but as simply realistic, as ‘seeing things for what they are’. A wave of publications in the popular as well as serious press on the ‘problems’ of multicultural society and the lack of integration of second and third generation Turks and Moroccans, are illustrative of this tendency. So are the critiques on the government policies that should have enabled immigrants to ‘integrate’ in Dutch society: a commission of politicians, with the help of a team of researchers, was brought together to investigate the results of 30 years of ‘integration policy’. The report they delivered – which was mildly critical, with an overall conclusion that most migrants did integrate, whether that was thanks to, or despite the policy - was trashed by many, politicians, scientists and opinion makers, even before it was published – and from some sides even before the investigation stated.

The reason to characterise ‘new realism’ as a discursive genre, is based on Prins’ choice to focus on the performative effects of the used discourse. More than pointing out how a certain discourse *describes* reality, Prins is interested in how the discourse *generates* reality. Public debates not only describe and comment upon reality, they are also dialectically linked to this ‘reality’. Public opinion, policy-making and relationships between individuals and between and within groups are (also) shaped by the debates that are taking place in the media. The accounts of the interviewees of their relationships to each other can be seen as a site where the influence of public debates on relationships between people in daily life, the ways in which discourses in public debates are influencing and shaping ‘reality’ and practices, operates. The discursive space within which the current public debate on the integration of minorities takes place, works as ‘enabling constraint’ on the kind of stories that can be told about immigration and integration.

I will focus on the question how the Dutch interviewees, in their accounts of their relationships with Eastern European women and their representation of ‘self’ and ‘other’, negotiate their position within or against the public discourse. How do they represent themselves, other women, and the relationships they are involved in? How do their stories relate to the ‘stories’ that come to the fore in the public debate? In which ways are notions of gender, ethnicity and cultural identity articulated? How do Dutch women – representatives of the ‘neutral’ majority group – relate to representatives of the ‘marked’ minority? How can they identify with them, what is the function of signifiers of sameness of difference in their stories? At certain

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<sup>13</sup> Baukje Prins, *Voorbij de onschuld. Het debat over de multiculturele samenleving*. Amsterdam, Van Gennep, 2000.

moments they identify with them, at other moments they distance from them. At which instances, and why this ambivalence? ‘Difference’ creates sometimes a fundamentally ambiguous position for the ones in the majority position, in relation to the one in the minority position, especially when personal interests are involved. How do the interviewees deal with this? I am particularly interested in the strategies used to deal with, and counter, hegemonic discourse. People are also active subjects, who can resist the ‘call’ of discourse upon them. By analysing the respondents’ stories around ‘integration in Dutch society’, this chapter explores the above questions, and assess the respondents strategies to resist hegemonic discourse.

## Conclusion

The interviews illustrate the omnipresence of the current public debate around immigration and integration, in which Dutch Muslims are central, and in which the position of women takes up a central role. It’s almost impossible to speak about migration or migrant women without referring to the debate integration, it seems. One of the main dimensions of this is, for me, to look into the ways the respondents position themselves vis-à-vis this debate. That public debates have an effect on ‘reality’ does of course not mean that everyone a-critically adopts the dominant discourses of the moment. Critical discourse analysis, in its orientation, topics, and issues that are tackled, studies ‘the (abuse of) power in relations of gender, ethnicity and class, such as sexism and racism’.<sup>14</sup> The question is how discourse enacts, expresses, condones or contributes to the reproduction of inequality. This opens also possible ways to effectively resist and dissent. What I wanted to show is how difficult it is to successfully resist hegemonic discourses, even when the respondent has an interest in resistance, because of personal engagement with those who are the object of these discourses. However, difficult as it may be, resistance is not impossible, and happens on different levels, with varying degrees of success. This is also proven by the interviews. The respondents make use of different ‘strategies of resistance’ – discursive strategies, that is – which may be more or less effective.

There are three overall discursive strategies that can be distilled from the oral sources:

1. The ‘one exception’: The respondent emphasizes the uniqueness of her friend/her colleague/the women she knows: she is different from other Eastern European women in the Netherlands. A variant is the claim that Eastern European women (or Hungarian women, or Bulgarian women) are different from other groups of migrant women in the Netherlands. In both cases, the effect of this strategy to resist stereotyping images or hegemonic discourse about immigrant women, is only very limited, to the extent that not the image itself is criticized. Moreover, implicitly it is confirmed, by the repetition of that stereotype and the denial that a specific person is ‘like that’, precisely by pointing to the ‘uniqueness’ of that one person.
2. Denial of dominant images: Repeating (dominant) images of migrants that come to the fore in the media, followed by an explicit statement that one does not share this image. In this case, the speaker in fact presents herself as an ‘exception’: it is because of her specific characteristics – tolerance, openness towards others, ‘naivety’ – that she has different ideas. thinks otherwise. The effect is that hegemonic discourse is repeated, while it is neither denied nor confirmed.

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<sup>14</sup> Van Dijk (1987)

3. Finally, political and historical knowledge and consciousness – and, importantly, accountability for one’s own position within the specific geo-political setting – are crucial prerequisites for identification and bonding with ‘others’, and resistance to stereotyping and ‘othering’ discourses. Consciousness of the different positions that migrant women have in Dutch society – not caused by ‘cultural differences’, but precisely by the system that qualifies them as ‘migrant’, as ‘different’, and attributes to them other – less – rights, is a starting point in resisting hegemonic discourses about ‘foreigners’. This requires reflection on one’s own position vis-à-vis the other, and knowledge of legal and historical frameworks that are part of the Dutch system. The knowledge of the histories of interethnic relations, and the identification of oneself as inheritant of, and therefore part of, those histories forms the basis for the acknowledgement of the ‘differences that matter’ that are a result of these histories, the influence on the different positions people take in society today. The historical and social dimensions of inter-ethnic relations do not only come to the fore on the personal level, but are embedded in a context. Acknowledging that context, and one’s own as well as the other’s position within it, is what Baukje Prins calls ‘the loss of innocence’, which is prerequisite for the development of new, situated knowledge and skills. Members of minority or marginalized groups are more likely to develop those skills as they are ‘forced’ by confrontation with their position as ‘other’. Members of majority groups have to consciously learn, even though they are more likely to perceive themselves as the normal, the natural, and thus not question their own position or identity.

## Transnational migration and new forms of Italianess

Enrica Capussotti

During the last period of the research project, some news attracted our attention because were pointing to fundamental mechanisms which shape the political and cultural debate over migration in western Europe. In Italy the headlines were dedicated to Umberto Bossi's pronouncement against giving to non-Italian residents in Milan access to council houses: "No houses to the *Bingo Bongo*, houses to *lombardi*" was the provocative linguistic act chosen by Bossi<sup>[1]</sup>. In England the discussion concerned home secretary David Blunkett's new reform of asylum system; he was renamed King Herod after saying the British state would take into care the children of 'failed claimants' who continue to refuse the offer to be flown back home<sup>[2]</sup>. In Rotterdam the city council adopted a policy paper that it is said sought to restore 'long term balance' to the city 'curbing new immigration of the wrong sort'. To settle in the city women and men must earn 20% more than the country's minimum wage or about 9.10 euro an hour, and they have to possess a good command of the Dutch language. The new rules - if established - would also apply to Dutch white people so that the legitimate accusations of institutional racism can be rejected<sup>[3]</sup>.

The three events mentioned here constitute a typical scenario in contemporary Western European societies which are engaged in the tenacious exclusion of 'non-national' from social rights and welfare state. 'Global migration management', at EU as well as at national levels, is organised around the key strategies of harmonisation (at EU level), control (of European borders), selection (of the wanted/skilled migrant) and exclusion (of "illegal" migrant). Yet national histories - although daily challenged and transformed by transnational impulses and practices - retain specific repertoires and social accomplishments that condition responses at and experience of migration.

Bossi used the term *bingo bongo* speaking at radio Padania, the radio station of the Lega Nord party (Biorcio, 1997). He was addressing party activists and the label helped to mobilise their sense of belonging to a community of 'common' people for whom *bingo bongo* is the maximum effort of fantasy and imagination<sup>[4]</sup>. Although this rhetoric is confined to a sordid portion of Italy's population, it has the possibility of interfering within the public discourse. Furthermore the possibility for this expression to emerge lay, among other reasons, in the absence of public immigrants' voices; there are very few public sites that migrants can use to express their interests, experiences, self-representations. Italy's migrant population is fragmented (45 nationalities having at least 5,000 representatives, King and Andall 1999:142) and silenced within the national arena. Political responses are mainly articulated following electoral interest, with the right wing parties shaping agenda and tones and imposing dispute over criminality, fear and repatriation; and centre-left parties which often adequate to the right rhetoric opposing a vague and empty solidarity. In addition important forms of solidarity - which are articulated within Catholic and socialist political cultures - are not exempted from exoticism and paternalistic view of immigrants. As Grillo and Pratt argue, the local arena offers the most important though contradictory forms of political and cultural mobilisation that deal with the politics of recognizing difference<sup>[5]</sup>.

Instead in the UK and the Netherlands the discussion is dominated by the images of 'bogus' asylum seeker and 'illegal' migrants. Using the welfare system as a key element, the political discourse focus on the idea of shifting from a system of privilege (in which 'false' asylum seekers and poor migrants can advantage from national social benefits) to one of 'fair' welfare, 'fair' asylum system and legal, managed migration<sup>[6]</sup>. The mentioned articles point to national citizenship as the “last status privilege” (Ferraioli 1995) in the same moment in which globalization and transnational migration contribute to redefine the nation state, its functions, borders and senses of belonging, citizenship is reinforced to norm access to state assistance, resources and rights. In Balibar's analysis 'this national preference is both an objective institution and a phantasm through which all national individuals tend to perceive the special character of their own relationship of dependence and demand vis-à-vis the state' (Balibar, 1991, p. 15).

The criminalization of migration is another fundamental element of contemporary scenario; migrants are constructed as the 'new dangerous classes' (Mezzadra, 2000) and the tireless focus on 'illegal' immigration maintains and sustains exclusion and exploitation at various levels: it regulates the labour market and wages (offering 'illegal' workers at low costs in Western houses, constructions, agriculture, small industrial production); it provides the 'fear' to be exploited by conservative politics; it justifies police control, restriction of rights, and privatisation of welfare system. Italy's 2002 legislation on migration has receipted the centrality of the axis 'national preference' (a term coined by the French Far Right), criminalization of migration and utilitarian paradigm: it ratifies work contract as the precondition to enter legally into the country while making more difficult 'documented' immigrants' access to social rights (*carta di soggiorno*) (Scevi, 2002).

Now we move from the ghosts agitated in the public sphere to the representations of Eastern European migrant women in Italian women testimonies. There is not a direct connection between the two; yet the mechanisms articulated within the public discourse are confirmed, renegotiated and resisted within the interviewees' voices. The narratives of Italian interviewees expose forms of racism that function primarily on the naturalization of specific elements: the national 'character', class belonging and education, gender role and sexuality. These tropes are used to identify several women coming from the East. The 'object' of the narrative is isolated and differentiated - because of her exceptions in term of wealth, education, and gender behaviour - by an imagined community. Usually this strategy of distinction is sustained by experiences based on friendship, on voluntary work, on encounter within the household (between employer and employee) and it demands the depiction of a group conforming to the 'real' and 'authentic' East. Whilst the group carries the weight of stigmatization and prejudices, the exceptional individual is recognised and can become a positive point of reference for the Italian interviewee. Similarity and sameness are thus produced through the vocabulary of exceptionalism and differentiation.

Migrant women are used by Italian women for the renegotiation of their self-representation as well their position within contemporary Italy and Europe<sup>[7]</sup>. Their narratives show “the multiple articulations of the triumphant European/Western women versus 'the others' (Lutz, 1997). This configuration presupposes a reference to backwardness that is mitigated only by exceptional individuals. Eastern European

migrants are placed in the Italian past because of the poverty of their countries; because of their approach to men and gender roles; because of the more authoritarian relationships between generations [Cristina]; because of their style in dressing; because they seem “naive, childish” to the entrepreneurial Italian mentality [Patrizia]; even because of their commitment to religion (this point was raised by Orietta, the owner of a farm in the traditionally catholic Italy's North East).

Memories of Italian emigration are also used to construct the divide between Italian modernity and ‘others’ backwardness. Polish domestic helpers reminds to Roberta of Italian country girls of the 1950s who migrated from the rural areas to Rome; Cristina recalls a similar image but puts it even further back in the late XIX early XX century. She explicitly refers to her memory of “our” way of life many years ago - “when our grandparents lived in the countryside” - to account for a better communication with Eastern European than with Filipino women. She also mentions the episode *From the Apennines to the Andes* published in the book *Cuore* that is one of the main texts for the construction of a popular version of Italian national identity (Colombo 1998). In the episode an Italian mother was forced by poverty to leave Italy and her son and to go to work in Argentina as a servant. Eastern European domestic helpers remind Cristina the fictional story and consequently overlap with Italy’s diasporas. Contemporary migrants, although admired because they “leave and go back, like a man”, are perceived as the incarnation of the same old story of poverty and of reactions to it. Cristina also traces a parallelism with her own experience of commuting “for seven year being a teacher, I left with my suitcase, the first of my family” [my translation].

Individual and collective memories are inevitably activated by transnational migration. But they are often marked by rhetoric that flattening socio-historical specificity constructs the representation of an unchangeable history of people mobility. This pattern limits the understanding of the specific location of contemporary migrants within global relationship of power and exploitation, migrants’ action and reaction to multiple forces that both oblige them to move and prevent their movement. In addition, the appeal to the memory of Italy's emigration and poverty can be used both to justify Italian women’s position of power (for instance Orietta refers to the harshness of her seasonal emigration to Germany as an ice-cream seller to excuse the request of hard work to the seasonal Polish and Rumanian fruit-pickers in her farm); or to accommodate it (like Cristina comparing her experience as a middle class commuting teacher with contemporary servants within the household).

The renegotiation of Italian women’s self-identity occurs along different axes and multiple, interlocking perceptions: Italians and migrants; Northerners and Southerners, Italians and North European (See also Mai 2002). The self representation continues to be built on duality and stereotypes: while Italians are much more open and friendly of North European, the latter are much more organised and hard worker (Angela uses the whole *repertoire* of self denigration that is undividable from Italian national identity) (Bollati, 1983) Italy's Southerners are lazier than Northerners (Rosaria and others); and migrants are less developed and more backward than Italians (all).

The concepts and words of modernity are largely used within Italian humanities and social sciences, mass media and political discourse often without the problematic connotations of other national context (Mason 1988). Modernity opposed to tradition has been – and sometime still is - the dominant conception of the country in the eyes both of Italian and of foreign commentators (Agnew 1997). The image of backward Italy and above all of backward Italian women catch in the network of religion, patriarchy, poverty is today projected to migrant women to sustain the alignment of the interviewees with modernity, emancipation and development. The presence of migrants in the peninsula is the ultimate condition for Italians to finally feel part of EU<sup>[8]</sup>. Eastern European women seem to deserve the idiom of what Guha calls “improvement” - the possibility of overcoming difference through imitation (Guha 1989) - while other diasporic communities – manly identified as Muslim but sometime Asian, Filipino, Nigerian - incarnate otherness. These dynamics regulate inclusion and exclusion, positive and negative recognitions; hierarchies within perceptions of immigrant communities. Eurocentrism and ethnocentrism provide the vocabulary to deal with sameness, diversity, intercultural encounters, confirming the difficulties of dealing with hybridity and liminality outside of the spectrum of sedimented dichotomies and stereotypes.

<sup>[1]</sup> Bossi is the leader of the separatist party Lega Nord (based mainly in the Northern-East regions of Lombardia e Veneto) and Minister for Reform (ministro delle Riforme) in Berlusconi's government. See *La Repubblica*, 4 Dec. 2004.

<sup>[2]</sup> *The Guardian*, 25 Nov. 2003; for Blunkett's clarifications see 'I am not King Herod', *The Guardian*, 27 Nov. 2003.

<sup>[3]</sup> Councillor Marco Pastors and the party Leefbaar Rotterdam (Liveable Rotterdam) are the proponent of the initiative. See *The Guardian*, 2 Dec. 2003.

<sup>[4]</sup> The term refers to people from Africa identified as simple, naive, alike monkeys. It is possibly a legacy of the colonial imaginary. If *Bingo Bongo* is an American song that Sophia Loren sings in the film *Peccato che sia una canaglia* (1954) and which Renzo Arbore has more recently recorded, in the Italian popular imagery the term is above all associated with the film *Bingo Bongo* (1982); in the movie the famous performer Adriano Celentano plays a uomo-scimmia that becomes the leader of an animalist movement. See Aldo Grasso in *Corriere della Sera*, 5 dicembre 2003.

<sup>[5]</sup> The book essays focus mainly on different institutions within Emilia-Romagna (rich central region); Grillo and Pratt 2002.

<sup>[6]</sup> Arun Kundnani (2001) reconstructs the new commonsensical popular racism directed at asylum seekers in UK.

<sup>[7]</sup> For an analysis of the national collective ‘self’ see Mai 2002; Cotesta 1999. See Flesler (2003) for similar dynamics in Spanish culture.

<sup>[8]</sup> Nicola Mai stresses that the “need” to limit immigration has been justified with the concept of Italy's full «entrance» into the European Union during 1990s; to be accepted as member of EU meant also to control rigorously Italian borders (Mai 2002).

## **Moral and cultural boundaries in representations of migrants**

*Dawn Lyon*

### **Introduction**

The analysis of boundaries undertaken in the GRINE project is two-fold: 1) a comparative analysis of the boundary-work of native Dutch and Italian women when talking about migrant women; and 2) a comparison within Italy of native women and migrant women themselves talking about migrants. The results are summarised below, after a brief discussion of boundaries and their relevance in this research.

### **Boundaries**

Boundaries (and borders) have been at the centre of influential research in the social sciences and humanities in recent years. Their emphasis on relational processes offers productive ways to think about mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in everyday life (Lamont and Molnár, 2002). This paper starts from the position that in everyday life we spend a good deal of time and energy engaged in making distinctions between ourselves and others. In placing ourselves in relation to others and being positioned by them, we seek to distinguish ourselves from others - personally (self-other) and collectively (we-they) - often through the drawing of symbolic boundaries which can be conceptualised as operating through cultural, economic and moral dimensions (Lamont, 1992, 2000a). Boundaries are a medium through which we acquire status, resources, resist threats and legitimate social advantages (Lamont, 1992: 13)

Boundary work is an intrinsic part of the process of constituting the self; they emerge when we try to define who we are: we constantly draw inferences concerning our similarities to and differences from, others, indirectly producing typification systems... By generating distinctions, we also signal our identity and develop a sense of security, dignity and honour; a significant portion of our daily activities are oriented towards avoiding shame and maintaining a positive self-identity by patrolling the borders of our groups (Lamont, 1992: 11).

Michèle Lamont makes a distinction between different types of boundaries: moral, Socio-Economic and cultural. Moral boundaries are “drawn on the basis of moral character; they are centred around such qualities as honesty, work ethic, personal integrity, and consideration for others”. “Cultural boundaries are drawn on the basis of education, intelligence, manners, tastes, and command of high culture.” Socio-economic boundaries are “judgements concerning people’s social position as indicated by their wealth, power, or professional success” (1992: 4). She first applied these ideas in her study of upper-class men in France and the US - ‘Money, Morals and Manners’ (1992) - and more recently in a book on working-class men in France and the US, subtitled ‘Morality and the boundaries of race, class and immigration’ (2000). In this work she argues how moral boundaries differ across communities: working-class white men more strongly emphasise an ethic of discipline whilst black men place more importance on an ethic of care.

Reading the interviews through the concepts of moral and cultural boundaries in particular, it is remarkable how salient they are, and how productive for sorting through the narratives of the host women. The analysis focuses on the content of the interviewees’ talk, disentangling the elements of these discourses, the components

which underpin the construction of self and other. The value of analysing the operation of boundaries in this way “puts flesh on it [the relational dynamic of racism] by documenting inductively the building blocks of racism” (Lamont, 2000a: 57), and how they are experienced, and reveals points of connection for friendship, understanding and empathy. The analysis seeks to trace these distinctions to the cultural repertoires and resources that people have to think with in the particular settings of this study, and evidences how certain repertoires are sustained over time and strengthened in the present climate through entrenched cultural practices and institutional arrangements.

### **Summary of analysis**

The first line of work – a comparison between Dutch and Italian women - offers a comparative perspective which views one set of norms and practices in the light of another. It seeks to explore the different - although overlapping - narratives by analysing how, within their talk, the interviewees are repeatedly making distinctions between themselves and those they feel are different from them. Many of these distinctions are not only about ‘difference’ but are at the same time judgements of worth, whether another person, or group, is somehow better or inferior to them. Overall, what is striking is the extent to which moral boundaries figures in the accounts of many of the native women interviewees. Indeed, moral failings are often the grounds through which racism is expressed (Lamont, 2000a). The emphasis on morality can be seen as evidence of the burden of suspicion migrant women are subject to – and in strikingly gendered ways, for instance around the issue of respectability/sexuality. Yet, the types of boundary-work one can trace in the narratives vary according to the nature of the relationship to the person(s) about whom she is speaking: employers tend to emphasise moral boundaries in their representations of migrant women, and friends more often refer to cultural as well as moral boundaries “to incorporate the other into their own group” (Lamont, 2000b: 44). The Dutch women express some similar positions to their Italian counterparts. They generally voice moral boundaries less strongly than the Italians and they emphasise cultural boundaries slightly more than moral ones. The most striking difference however is in the components of anti-racist discourse present in the interviews. The Dutch talk about migration in terms of enrichment and openness, a vocabulary that is not heard in the Italian interviews.

The second line of work on boundaries developed within the GRINE project is a comparison between migrant and native women within Italy. When migrant women themselves are included in the analysis, we see that those with lower social status - as perceived by the host society - emphasise moral boundaries most strongly, in relation to themselves. Morality functions as a basis for equality in the face of limited cultural or socio-economic resources. In some contrast, those with higher social status on the other hand tend to emphasise their “social membership” (Lamont, 2000b: 44) of Italian society through insistence on cultural boundaries.

### **Moral boundaries**

**1. Hard work as moral worth.** The discussion of hard work shows how migrants are represented against an implicit or explicit public narrative of laziness, or applauded for their willingness to labour without complaint. Hard work is often a very central moral boundary in contemporary western culture (and especially so for

men) (Lamont, 2000a). It can be argued to have particular resonance in relation to migrants. In Western Europe migrants are often perceived to gain from undue, or at least unearned, social benefits which residency rights under some conditions endow. Many Dutch interviewees refer to the image of the migrant in search of 'golden mountains' and the perception of them as a "threat, as an economic burden". Its presence as a repertoire of sense-making is evidently strong, even if the individual interviewees take distance from it. Generally, in talk of migrants, inactivity is met with disapproval - sharpened by those who are themselves hard-working in relation to the idea that someone else is getting something for nothing (eg Lamont, 2000a). And some make a quick leap from inactivity to criminality, especially in their perceptions of men (eg Valeria). In the Dutch context, civility and discipline are also mobilised as categories of evaluation. The migrant women themselves talk often in terms of their capacity for and experience of hard work, signalling both a reality and awareness of how they are measured. In some accounts, hard work is part of a persistent family emphasis on autonomy, self-reliance, discipline and so on.

## **2. Moral boundaries drawn on the body: respectability, sexuality and hygiene.**

In the discussion on respectability, sexuality and hygiene, women's bodies are seen as the measure of morality, through reference to sex-work, dress, and hygiene. Respectability is a central category of self-identity and evaluation by others of women in lower class positions (Skeggs, 1997). Migrant women both in the Netherlands and Italy are frequently represented as prostitutes in media coverage and are routinely subjected to the questioning of immigration officials in which suspicion that they may be prostitutes - instead of students, employees or tourists as their papers state - hovers in the background and at times is explicitly voiced. None of the interviewees took this position. On the contrary some spoke critically of media representations. Overall, the Dutch more than the Italian interviewees talk about women migrants who do work in prostitution. More generally however, the women interviewees were sometimes vocal about the dress and hygiene of migrant women (about which there were no specific questions in the interview schedule). Criticism of the 'vulgarity' of the women's appearance on the one hand, or their lack of fashionable clothes on the other, is most notable amongst the Italian interviewees. The Dutch in contrast refer more to the excess of attention given to appearance, expressed in terms of subordination to femininity (Esther), or a lack of body discipline (Norine). Migrant women themselves are keen to secure their respectability but talk less directly about dress for instance. The moral gaze which places them under suspicion is a double one, coming both from Bulgaria or Hungary, and Italy.

## **3. Traditional morality and gender relations.**

This theme has already been elaborated in the previous chapters. Here I revisit it in order to locate it as a moral boundary. Traditional attitudes of women and how these are used to reproduce essentialised and homogenised views of the collective other. Migrant women are both applauded and derided for their traditional morality. Combined with legal, normative and cultural practices, eg limitations on rights to work in the case of family reunification, these material divergences and discourses produce a distinction between 'the European woman' and 'the other (migrant) woman'. Western/European women are portrayed as "triumphant in the realisation of equal rights and social equality" (Lutz, 1997: 97) and are the measure against which others are judged - and predictably found lacking, eg the presumed absence of female autonomy in Muslim

cultures seen as one of many “deviations from European femininity” (ibid). At the same time, whilst western women are celebrating greater autonomy migrant women are often expected to conform to different codes, in which the nuclear family and the breadwinner principal is strong. It is the very regulations which circumscribe life for migrants that produce them as traditional against the claim to modern lifestyles amongst the indigenous population (ibid: 105). Conversely many migrant women are critical of the extent of conventional gender relations in Italy.

**4. Mothering and morality.** The section on mothering instances a further arena in which women migrants in particular are subject to reproach, measured against local ideals of mothering; and how migrant women themselves live trans-national mothering including the tensions between material provision and physical care.

**5. Legality.** Lastly, the question of legality is a striking reference point of many migrant women’s narratives, and becomes a moral boundary for many of them as well as for many native women. Whilst the host women talk about migrants through their legal status, legality is a more central referent from the migrant women themselves which suggests the omnipresence of their status as an issue in everyday life.

### **Cultural boundaries**

**1. European ‘values’.** Under the banner of so-called European values, native women claim similarities with other women on the basis of shared ideals. They articulate a dividing line in connection to Americanisation/globalisation, religious difference (Islam), and ‘skin colour’. For the migrant women interviewed from Hungary and Bulgaria, Europe is evoked as a space to which they may belong (as explored by Passerini). More specifically, Italy is said to offer a particular welcome to Bulgarians as, in the accounts of the migrant women, there are many similarities between Italians and Bulgarians in terms of character.

**2. Cultural capital: Intelligence, education, and language.** Cultural capital: intelligence, education, and language, are invoked as markers of distinction, and used as a mechanism of inclusion of friends. Using the head - rather than the hands - is applauded even if the work is manual. This is part of a distinction between Western/modern/ rational and rural/ unthinking/ Eastern. Taking the initiative is praised also elsewhere be it to study or solve problems or manage difficult situations. These are highly valued dimensions of individualism in the West. Acceptance of them in everyday conduct is met with approval and relief. At the same time, many friends of migrant women in the Netherlands and Italy alike talk very positively about their intelligence. Migrant women themselves do not often talk directly about their intelligence, or even very much about their education. There are some exceptions here amongst those who have struggled to get their qualifications recognised or have been obliged to repeat studies where this was not possible. Language however is a central concern and many are proud of their competence and what signals for belonging. Nevertheless, the precariousness of these achievements are felt in criticisms of accent etc.

**3. Cultural practices: Cooking and community.** Cultural practices around cooking and living space are sites through which belonging is often judged. Whilst these have

already been explored in the chapter on food, again they are briefly reconsidered within the perspective of boundary-work, and to enable us to make connections across a number of the themes discussed in the previous chapters. In particular, migrant women are positioned as the other, representative of an authentic cultural and culinary tradition which they are called to perform for their new Italian friends.

**4. Travel and cosmopolitanism.** This is a theme especially valued in the accounts of migrant women in which cultural boundaries get expressed through the mind-opening possibilities of travel that mobility implies.

**5. High culture.** Migrant women with high cultural capital emphasise cultural boundaries more than the host women. For instance, Kristina was especially excited to meet another Bulgarian woman for the purpose of the interview. She invited Nadia to join her for lunch at the house of the person she called her “soul father” a man whom she describes as having taught her “to perfection in the language and culture of ancient Rome”.

### **Expressions of anti-racism**

In addition to the kinds of distinctions discussed so far, there are explicit expressions of anti-racism on the part of the native women interviewees. These are much clearer and stronger in the Netherlands than in Italy. There is a ready vocabulary of anti-racism in the Netherlands whereas Italy has never known the large-scale anti-racist movements notable in France for instance. Anti-racism expressions take three main forms in the interviews. 1. There is a discourse of enrichment which positively views the impact of migrants - although in some cases, this is selectively applied. 2. The stress on openness places the light over the conduct of those in the receiving country, the efforts they make to welcome others and gain understanding of their lives. 3. There is recourse to universality, eg “we all have the same insecurities”, which functions as an equaliser.

## **4. Conclusions and policy implications**

This section of the report is organised as follows. First, we present the key conclusions of the research. Then we discuss the policy implications that arise from them in three groupings: legal considerations; the sending countries (with separate sections for Hungary and Bulgaria); and the receiving countries (with separate sections for Italy and the Netherlands).

### **General overview of conclusions**

The orientation of the project, indeed its innovative approach in the field of migration, was to explore migration for what sorts of subjectivity contemporary forms of mobility produce. The research starts from the identification of migrants as active subjects, creating possibilities and taking decisions in their own lives, as well as being subject to legal and political regulation and other forms of ‘discipline’ in the various settings of their lives. The social composition of the sample is (deliberately) varied. For some of the women interviewed, migration can take place in a spirit of adventure, for love or other forms of discovery. For others, migration takes place under conditions of considerable economic constraint and limited social and cultural resources. The political migrants who also figure amongst the interviews have experienced migration as a form of exile, and later (post-1989) have they re-gained the opportunity to travel and even return. The present research has sought to explore what kinds of subjectivity are possible in the variety of conditions in which migrant women have moved and lived. This approach has produced very rich analyses (detailed in part 3) which comprise a significant and original contributions to the state of the art concerning migration, gender and European studies. The centrality of oral histories of the lives of migrant women in the research has helped us to foreground the cultural dimension in our reflection (eg how meanings are made) and analyse its connections to other dimensions, eg the legal - and it is in the field of culture that we want to address many of our policy considerations below. First, we present the key conclusions in four (linked) themes: Europe: the legal dimension; migrants’ subjectivity; and the construction of the other in the receiving countries.

### **Europe and subjectivity**

The study of migration from the European East to the European West is part of a reflection on the repercussions of European migration on the redefinition of existing ideas of Europe and European identities. While political and social transformations within the EU as well as in single European states are at the centre of the public debate, fundamental cultural aspects that are part of and shape political and social events are marginal in EU concerns and European political spheres. Although we do not deny the importance of a political, social and economical approaches to the significant moments and processes of the contemporary construction of Europe, eg EU enlargement on 1 May 2004 or migration itself, we want to stress the importance of thinking through a cultural lenses to analyse, understand and transform political, economic and social inequalities.

Having this agenda in mind, the European character of the team – from institutions in five national settings, and with a team of scholars from seven countries - has offered

concrete grounds on which to explore and experience working hypotheses, methodologies and conceptual tools of the project. Indeed, a great contribution of the GRINE project was the possibility of academics from five universities to work together on the various aspects of the relations of Eastern Europe to Western Europe and vice versa, the meanings of gender and practices of migration. Such cooperative work broadens the scope of research and in the process of intellectual interchange, new perspectives and conclusions about the issues of women as agents in the modern mobile and global world appear. For example the partners based in Sofia and Budapest very much influenced the composition of the sample to be analysed. They claimed the legitimacy to give voices to women migrants which do not fit within the widespread idea of eastern European women migrants as victims of trafficking, abuse and misery. Although it is absolutely not our intention to deny the existence of these problems, the research teams decided to give space to other subjects and other stories which are themselves relevant for the understanding of mobility and intercultural encounters across Europe.

In addition, the teams location in different European spaces – South (Italy), North (Denmark and the Netherlands), Central Europe (Hungary), Balkans (Bulgaria) – has helped to problematise within the group itself the very nature of these geographical mappings and their implicit hierarchies. The construction of geographical areas, borders and cultures is shaped by power relations that can be identified in time and space (i.e. the creation of the European East, South and the Balkans was functional to the affirmation of the Western European model of civilization including imperialism, colonialism, and racism); the researchers physical and intellectual movements through these different spatial constructions has set in motion the awareness of their artificial nature and helped to redefine some categories that were embedded in this cultural tradition.

In the chapters of part 3 of the report (and which will appear in the book in an extended version) the testimonies of migrant women are explored for the forms of belonging they claim in relation to a European space. The interviewees were asked directly about their vision of Europe, how they perceive themselves in a common European space. We note their stronger claims to be European than the native women interviewed who are less problematically anchored and recognised in the legal infrastructure of the nation state.

The “Danish legal story”, which was analysed for this research as a specific case in the EU but one with a more general relevance, shows the combination of an individualized modern “marriage regime” with a strong state interest in limiting access to the country especially through family reunification. This has enabled the Danish state to produce legislation considerably limiting the entrance of foreigners to the country without the state meeting any severe criticism from inside the country. The possibility of the individual to live together with somebody he or she loves, if the beloved does not have proper Danish or EU-citizenship or residence permit also becomes limited as a result of the changes of the legal regimes of migration and marriage. However even if this seems to be contradictory to a modern understanding of the love basis of an intimate relationship, this cost has to be paid to the other modern value of equality before the law. The intimate relationship is in itself a privileged relationship. The results of the Danish legislative strategy, which is legitimised by its protection or conservation of modernity – as symbolized especially

in the modern welfare state and the modern intimate relationships - is in practice that it privileges those love relations, where people have the same citizenship or EU-citizenship.

In a *second* use of the case study, the legal understanding of the concept of “subjectivity” is explored. The national case study demonstrates the practical exclusionist consequences of the national legislative development. The study of the concept of “subject” and subjectivity” seen in the light of both John Stuart Mill’s historical discussion of *The Subjection of Women* and the core interviews, draws attention to the contemporary importance of the legal culture of Europe, which less than 200 years before the “reunification” of Europe was *dominated* by legal regimes based upon special rights and privileges combined with general rights. Two hundred years ago these special rights were primarily *legal rights*, granted by a sovereign, an absolute monarch or an emperor to his or her subjects. European legal history is thus a history of different rights for different groups (estates and classes) of people including different rights for men and women. With an expansion of the EU with a very large number of states, the *diversity* of the historical and cultural legacies may become more clearly seen and felt. A *legal culture of privilege* as an important heritage and instrument of organizing societies may in this situation in practice come to present an element of both continuity and commonality. Paradoxically it may also be an instrument which may preserve the culture of modernity in Europe even if it has high costs. The forms of subordination and/or privilege experienced by migrating and/or married women are not (necessarily) a consequence of formal and legal differences *within* one national legal system. In the cases we are dealing with they may also be the result of intersections and overlapping of a number of different legal systems and cultures. In the EU-European context issues of “whiteness”, religion (Christianity), formal education and qualifications, as well as economic income are amongst the markers of privilege. “Traditional” (un-modern) gendered lifestyles and religious affiliation (especially to Islam) may be reasons for or markers of practical and legal forms of subordination in other situations. Thus some of the interviewed women can be seen as privileged in some respects and less privileged or even subordinated in other respects.

Security issues at present they also seem to legitimise restrictive legal regimes towards so-called “third country nationals”, especially with regard to family unification, work permits and reasons for extradition. This development may also legitimise or give rise to *general forms* of legal regulation and administration, which on purpose and deliberately have *different effects* upon different groups of citizens, depending upon their ethnic background and affiliation. The case study of the Danish legal regime is an example of this. Furthermore, it may indicate and illustrate a relative shift of values in European states and perhaps in Europe at large, where values of equality and freedom are yielding to or being supplemented by values of security and difference. Issues of justice, which were important in pre-modern eras influenced by natural law may then again attract much stronger interest both on local, national and European level.

### **The multiple location of the migrant subject**

While statements about the multiple location of the subject are easy to agree with, in everyday life we often lock others into a fixed positions imposing on them a principal set of overarching characteristics. The 'migrant' is the kind of category that is consuming. Being a migrant somehow erases all other dimensions of the self, such that class position, education, political orientation, family history, sexual orientation and so on, are either assumed as known or disregarded. Migrants are asked to talk about migrant issues, and to perform as 'migrants' in ways which limit their expression of certain emotions, subject positions, and identifications. Furthermore, images of 'migrants' are, in the receiving countries of this study - Italy and the Netherlands - generally negatively portrayed in the media and in everyday exchanges.

If we start from the orientation that migrants are active subjects, we can look for the ways in which they construct meaning in their lives and refuse the categories in which they are positioned or through which they are called to account for themselves. One of the original features of the project is to conceive of emotions - hopes and fears, attachments and identifications – and relationships, as central to life strategies and conduct, and generative of new forms of subjectivity, new ways of thinking, acting and being in the world. The migrant women's lives, recounted in the interviews, are much more than personal stories. Through their accounts, we trace the processes (institutional and inter-subjective) which have shaped their strategies and their selves, their understandings of the past, and aspirations of the future, such that their narratives become a document of the contemporary phenomenon of migration in Europe.

In the analysis of the oral history interviews conducted for this project, we identified the themes of communication, love, and work as spaces and activities through which migrant women created meaning in their lives, and narrated their histories. Relationships in particular are central to the lives of many migrant women, connected for some to their reasons for migration or to their reasons for staying. The testimonies offer material for analyses of transnational marriage and its impact in the life and self-appreciation of the migrant women. Very often the regime of romantic love is used to justify the decision to migrate, marriage and the procedure of getting European citizenship. Love at a distance, love at first sight, love as passion and suffering are some of the common motives in such accounts. Yet there are also other accounts in which the intimate relationship is part of the story of migration but the narrative is focused more on the woman's sense of self-improvement. Love is present but it is not confined to its romantic versions. It is love that leads to (self)-knowledge as other types of experience such as working or interacting with people.

On the theme of work, we find a range of orientations. Some women refuse non-professional work, claiming that they would return if they could not work at a certain level. For others work is an instrument to achieve broader life goals, which makes the content of the work itself less important than for those whose identifications are more connected to their work activity. The migrants are also conscious of discriminations in the labour market, on the basis of nationality and gender, and recount how these are discursively expressed. Our approach has allowed us to perceive the cultural composition and cultural borders which shape the labour market. While issues of exploitation are also very much the reason for this

characteristic, the cultural mechanisms that trap the migrant personality within the fact of s/he being a migrant is also playing a role. It is the 'cultural capital' collected in the native country – what we term 'national capital' - that offers the only possibility for occupation and self realisation. A condition that emerges in our testimonies when women with high education are channelled into work as translators or journalists in their mother tongue. This condition is both a source of satisfaction and of alienation and dissatisfaction when the individual claims the right to express other capabilities and desires.

Beyond either love or work, communication in the everyday is emphasised by many of the migrant women as the principle site of happiness and a space of recognition. Yet relations with authorities are often fraught, and the testimonies offer numerous accounts of the obstacles for migrants' access to public places and institutions (hospitals, schools, bureaucracy...). The analysis 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 as one of the central values and practices of many migrant women.

In addition, narrations of border-crossing, and meanings of home went beyond the standard understandings of singular belonging, challenging discourses of integration in any simplistic sense. The possibility of possessing several identification documents and the experience of passing several national borders creates a mode of thinking which allows changes of migrants' identity and sense of belonging. For some of the women interviewed, home is in the plural, for others still it is multiple. This means that they do not have a straightforward identification with a single nationality alone. Belonging is also powerfully expressed in relation to food. Indeed the interviewees' food-talk (processing and consuming) is used as a marker of identity and as a frame of narrating various forms of difference, a flexible site for constructing self and other.

The comparative design of this research illuminates processes specific to certain settings, as well those that have a wider resonance. The choice of Hungary and Bulgaria has allowed the analysis of a spectrum of different paths and patterns of migration. Migration during communism was a political act, no matter what the individual intentions were, and a challenge to restrictions on the freedom to leave one's country. Indeed, an additional objective of the project was concerned with women who left selected East European countries - Hungary and Bulgaria - 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. After the changes, it turned into one of the most obvious manifestations of a newly won freedom. Whether the explicit reason was love, work, education, or adventure, migration after the changes is tightly bound with the ideas that brought about democratization and commercialization in the former communist block.

### **The construction of other(s) in Italy and the Netherlands**

The persistence of Eurocentrism as a system of thought to identify 'other' cultures is evidenced strongly in the interviews with native women. The widespread use of stereotypes and prejudices to relate to several groups perceived as different is marked. In particular, there is a high degree of Islamophobia, in which Islam was

transformed into the utter negative 'other' of Europe. The role of national mass media in sustaining and transmitting cultural stereotypes and prejudices is evidenced – and forms the basis of some of our policy recommendations to follow.

In the Netherlands, we analyse how Dutch women narrate their relationships to Eastern European women, discussions in which reference to other migrant groups are evoked to define 'self' and 'other'. Within the discussion of the interviews, two main themes are highlighted in order to further investigate the question of representation of 'self' and 'other' by Dutch women: 'reasons for migration', and 'integration in Dutch society'. The interviews illustrate the omnipresence of the current public debate around immigration and integration, in which Dutch Muslims are central, and in which the position of women takes up a central role. It's almost impossible to speak about migration or migrant women without referring to the debate on integration. The respondents make use of different 'strategies of resistance' – discursive strategies, that is – which may be more or less effective. 1) The 'one exception': The respondent emphasizes the uniqueness of her friend/her colleague/the women she knows: she is different from other Eastern European women in the Netherlands. 2) Denial of dominant images: Repeating (dominant) images of migrants that come to the fore in the media, followed by an explicit statement that one does not share this image. In this case, the speaker in fact presents herself as an 'exception': it is because of her specific characteristics – tolerance, openness towards others, 'naivety' – that she has different ideas. thinks otherwise. The effect is that hegemonic discourse is repeated, while it is neither denied nor confirmed. 3) Finally, political and historical knowledge and consciousness – and, importantly, accountability for one's own position within the specific geo-political setting – are crucial prerequisites for identification and bonding with 'others', and resistance to stereotyping and 'othering' discourses.

The narratives of Italian interviewees expose forms of racism that function primarily on the naturalization of specific elements: the national 'character', class belonging and education, gender role and sexuality. These tropes are used to identify several women coming from the East. The 'object' of the narrative is isolated and differentiated - because of her exceptions in term of wealth, education, and gender behaviour - by an imagined community. Usually this strategy of distinction is sustained by experiences based on friendship, on voluntary work, on encounters within the household (between employer and employee) and it demands the depiction of a group conforming to the 'real' and 'authentic' East. Whilst the group carries the weight of stigmatization and prejudices, the exceptional individual is recognised and can become a positive point of reference for the Italian interviewee (as in the Netherlands). Similarity and sameness are thus produced through the vocabulary of exceptionalism and differentiation. Migrant women are used by Italian women for the renegotiation of their self-representation as well their position within contemporary Italy and Europe. Their narratives show “the multiple articulations of the triumphant European/Western women versus 'the others'” (Lutz, 1997). This configuration presupposes a reference to backwardness that is mitigated only by exceptional individuals. Eastern European migrants are placed in the Italian past because of the poverty of their countries; because of their approach to men and gender roles; because of the more authoritarian relationships between generations [Cristina]; because of their style in dressing; because they seem “naive, childish” to the entrepreneurial Italian mentality [Patrizia]; even because of their commitment to

religion (this point was raised by Orietta, the owner of a farm in the traditionally catholic Italy's North East).

Analysis of the representations of the native women is then comparatively explored, using the concepts of moral and cultural boundaries (Lamont, 2000a). Overall, what is striking is the extent to which moral boundaries figures in the accounts of many of the native women interviewees. Indeed, moral failings are often the grounds through which racism is expressed. The emphasis on morality can be seen as evidence of the burden of suspicion migrant women are subject to – and in strikingly gendered ways, for instance around the issue of respectability/sexuality. Yet, the types of boundary-work one can trace in the narratives vary according to the nature of the relationship to the person(s) about whom she is speaking: employers tend to emphasise moral boundaries in their representations of migrant women, and friends more often refer to cultural as well as moral boundaries “to incorporate the other into their own group” (Lamont, 2000b: 44). The Dutch women express some similar positions to their Italian counterparts. They generally voice moral boundaries less strongly than the Italians and they emphasise cultural boundaries slightly more than moral ones. The most striking difference however is in the components of anti-racist discourse present in the interviews. The Dutch talk about migration in terms of enrichment and openness, a vocabulary that is not heard in the Italian interviews. In a further comparison between migrant and native women within Italy, we see that those with lower social status - as perceived by the host society - emphasise moral boundaries most strongly, in relation to themselves, to achieve inclusion. Morality functions as a basis for equality in the face of limited cultural or socio-economic resources. In some contrast, those with higher social status on the other hand tend to emphasise their “social membership” (Lamont, 2000b: 44) of Italian society through insistence on cultural boundaries.

## **Policy implications<sup>1</sup>**

### **1. Legal considerations**

A precondition for making policy recommendations is a thorough understanding of the question at issue followed by an analysis pointing out the caveats of the existing policy with a view to improving it.

One of the concerns of the GRINE research project is with cross-border relationships, understood as relationships where the spouses originate from different countries. From a legal perspective cross-border relationships imply a conflict between the state's interest in controlling who crosses its border and individuals' emotional desire to form relationships, the corresponding legal disciplines being immigration law and family law. The legal analysis set out to analyse cross-border relationships from the perspective of immigration law and family law respectively. The two perspectives belong to different legal spheres, public law and private law, the logic and underlying values of which differ fundamentally. The purpose of applying this dual perspective on the object of analysis was to demonstrate how the focus of the legislator had shifted from relationships to the crossing of borders. This shift has transformed what

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<sup>1</sup> This section is composed of the ideas of each team in the project. The views of one team are not necessarily shared by the others.

has in the last part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century come to be understood as an essentially private enterprise into a matter of great public concern. The conclusion of the analysis was that matrimonial law had been reduced to an appendix to immigration law. This is bound to have consequences for matrimonial law.

The legal analysis took its starting point in what was termed ‘the Danish story’, the focus being on the comprehensive reform of immigration law that took place in 2002. The reform was the culmination of a number of individual legislative changes in a context of an increasing number of immigrants and growing public pressure for action well. Similar situations exist in a number of European countries (notably the Netherlands), and this one-country analysis is thus an example of general relevance. The character of the conflict underlying the analysis is well-captured in the following quotation of the Danish Minister for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs, Bertel Haarder, in one of the leading Danish newspapers, *Berlingske Tidende* 13. september 2002: “The Danish State cannot and will not interfere with the right of Danes to marry whom they choose. But it is quite natural for the state to interfere with who should be allowed to live in Denmark. Here a number of requirements exist.” This quote makes clear that the choice of the individual is indeed conditioned by not only the number of requirements set up by the state but in addition the character of them. This pinning down of the problem is not limited in its geographic application but holds general relevance and is thus central to the formulation of policies also at a European level.

The analysis also demonstrated the law’s difficulties in handling love as opposed to marriage. This was reflected in the Danish ‘counter-story’ of the unsuccessful attempt to introduce a love-card. The criticism of the rules was that they were so severe that they also prevented Danes from living in Denmark with a foreign spouse. The purpose of the ‘love-card’ was to allow couples to live together in Denmark *without* being married, if their relationship was based on ‘real love’. The proposal to introduce a love-card was however unsuccessful. Eliminating formal marriage from a relationship proved too complicated from a perspective of control. As a result of this difficulty the solution chosen to accommodate the criticism had to resort to a technical solution, viz. to reverse the onus of proof, which ‘delegated’ the difficulty to the couple in question. The interviews show that this problem of proving a ‘love relation’ is also encountered by some of the interviewed women in other EU-countries.

Another important insight from the story of relevance to policymaking in the field is drawn from international law. In relation to trans-national marriages, international law and national law interrelate. A number of international instruments introduce special procedures regarding one spouse’s access to acquire the nationality of the other spouse. Cross-border relations and its derivative legal complications are well-known phenomena that may be seen as an attempt to meet the tension between the interest of the state to control its border and that of the individual to marry whom he or she chooses. However, this compromise is limited to citizenship, i.e. to the formal inclusion in the state. And the privilege requires several years of marriage as well as residence on the territory. It should however be borne in mind that marriage is the cause of the privileged access to a new citizenship.

When it comes to be granted access to the territory the situation is different. Residence on the territory differs fundamentally from citizenship, as it must be given

in anticipation. The state must make a decision before the person in question has proved his or her good intentions. Today the concern of the state is not so much natural security in relation to residence (even if September 11 has reintroduced this perspective in immigration law) as safeguarding of the labour market and the welfare state. So where marriage in the granting of citizenship was the cause of privileged procedures, in relation to residence it has become the mechanism of regulating access to the territory. This is due to the migration-generating and hence quantitative aspect of marriage considered important by many states including the Danish state.

As the state cannot control emotions it is left to establish criteria controlling access to the territory. And the Danish example demonstrates in an exemplary manner that the state is willing to take extensive measures in order to limit access to the country based on private decision-making, viz. marriage. The price paid for this, however, is that marriage is made an appendix to immigration law. The general understanding of marriage as being a love based institution seem to be turning into 'lost illusions'. In practice a love based marriage now requires that the partners have already obtained the privileged national or EU-citizenship.

As such the approach taken is the privileged procedure reflected in citizenship in reverse: instead of being the cause of privilege, marriage has become *the* control measure. Requirements regarding the content of the marriage are being set up: it must be of a certain length before citizenship can be granted just as it must be based on certain values. It is far from certain that this subjection to immigration law is desirable. As a minimum policy-makers, national as well as international, must take a position on the extent to which marriage should be reduced to an instrument in the course of curtailing the mobility of non-citizens.

The proposed council directive on the right to family reunification is exactly an attempt to try and flesh out international standards as regards common criteria. This is a difficult but important step. The difficulties are well reflected in the extended process of negotiations of the directive just as they are reflected in the lack of agreement as to the scope of the concept of family. From a policy perspective it is interesting to observe that the directive does not take its starting point in love but in 'effective marital and family life'; the path of the subjective element that was paved in the Danish story is not taken in Europe. And seen against the Danish experience this appears wise. However, the fate of the directive is not without problems: the reductionist understanding of family that clings to heterosexual marriage whereas the world has for a long time had a much more varied approach appears anachronistic. And building policy on only a section of reality is not a viable way ahead – even if it turns out that it may well for the time being be the only way ahead.

A final important issue when talking policy-recommendations is the nation state starting point of the legal approach to cross-border relations based on the notion of the state founded on territory and people. The establishing of a common outer border as set out in the Schengen agreement and the creation of Union citizenship copy the terminology as well as logic of the nation state, even if it is not directly applicable as a number of important modifications exist. Nevertheless, it shows how fundamental the concepts are to our understanding of 'them and us' (something which is evidenced in the section of the project which analyses the narratives of the native women). Here the lessons learned from the Danish story, viz. that marriage is subjected to migration

law with the consequence that it is not seen in its own right should be borne in mind by policymakers. The proposal directive strikes this balance by applying the lowest common denominator in defining family members. It is however, dubious if this is a wise way ahead.

It would probably be worthwhile both on a national level as well as on a European level to consider the possibility of establishing administrative and counselling procedures that secure a variety of interests. The interests of national citizens and national political institutions in being able to influence who is and who becomes part of the local/national community and thus both bearers of rights and contributors to the common good need to be taken seriously in order not to fuel xenophobia and excessive and exclusive nationalism. The need to secure human rights especially human rights to a contemporary and developing trans-national and even globalised family life must be taken much more strongly into consideration in present day national and European institutions.

In a Europe “*united in diversity*” as proclaimed in the draft European Constitution it is necessary to rethink present and existing national and European institutions, procedures and standards, which have not had this aim as an important objective. It is necessary to develop and establish legal institutions, procedures and standards that consider and protect variety and diversity. In this respect it might be possible to find some inspiration in the European legal heritage of a system of differentiated rights and obligations – of special legal rights (privileges) and obligations.

To secure variety might require a different constitution of legal bodies, where the voices of representatives of trans-national, reconstituted mobile and migrant families and individuals may be heard. Voices, experiences and insights which must also be integrated in developing administrative procedures, legal requirements as well as decisions. At this point it is not possible to propose specific arrangements, but just to underline the strong importance of the need to secure the value of diversity also in legal practice.

To conclude: The Danish story has contributed to point out both the character of the problem, the inherent conflict between state and individual, and laws difficulties in handling this conflict. As a result of this the legislator took side with immigration policy leaving the family policy in the lurch. In order to make a viable policy in the increasing important field of cross-border relations an internationalised world it is necessary to strike a more viable balance between family and immigration.

## **2. The sending countries**

### *2.1 Hungary*

On the basis of the interviews taken in the course of the research, new, migration-related elements arose that require solutions as soon and effectively as possible both on the level of the European Union and that of Hungary.

In Hungary, to raise these issues is most timely since both the national development plans coming into effect in 2007 and the enlargement of the European Union is underway. Thus, women migrants’ viewpoints may be lobbied for now so that they

appear among the objectives and priorities of future development strategies and a political conception take place to fill the legal gaps and strengthen the social dimension.<sup>2</sup> Hungary should resolve to attach importance to the formation of the various sectoral and regional development strategies because only thus may resources be required for their implementation later.

First and foremost, therefore, the capacity of public administration should be concentrated on the organization of development plans so that the country's "programme" and its policies would start out in a proper direction, along appropriately formed priorities. To do this, the current situation and the probable trends of migration should be evaluated; on the basis of the concerned group's real problems, the current or potential target group (young women who intend to immigrate or emigrate) may be initiated even as partners into the definition and implementation of the strategies. The development of partnership can be realized by conscious state participation. In the communication between the various policies (e.g. demographic policy, flow of labour, economic competitiveness, employment policy, education, research and development, etc.) a sort of catalyst role should be taken on in addition to the constant communication with the strategic partners. For this, more intensive inter-departmental communication and a changed attitude is required; thus, potential migration problems of the future should be made the most of and used for the country's benefit, or the shocks should be eased (e.g. the shock of returning home or emigrating). Opinion polls among young women should be conducted now, for example, within the framework of immigration offices (polls on motivations, experience). Thus, it might be investigated in connection with employment whether it is a major point in a young couple's decision on settlement if they both are able to find a job (without administrative obstacles). Consequently, it is a good idea to affect motivations directly by improving domestic employment opportunities and helping the foreign partner's social integration. (For instance, the development of language competence – and thus the communication skills – of the population would help a great deal.) This is in turn an educational problem, into which Hungarians returning home may be initiated. After all, if the wage-rate does not promote quality in the field of education, at least decision makers will have to pay more attention to the opinion and experience of teachers.

We aim at formulating objectives and recommendations that are coherent with the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategy and the Social Schedule so that our point of view could be consistently represented on the levels of the European Union and Hungary, and priorities that equally serve the interest of both the migrants and the nations could be correctly identified in the comprehensive strategies. The detailed recommendations are thematically grouped on the basis of the problems that arose over the course of the interviews and in professional forums; the evaluation of the present situation (current means, measures, etc.) is followed by the problems and recommendations that should be taken into consideration in their solution. The recommendations do not aim for completeness, are chosen from arbitrary fields, and are – first and foremost – concentrated on the situation of women. They are based primarily on the experience and observations of the Hungarian women interviewed as part of this research. As a consequence, numerous fields of questions are not dealt with in the recommendations

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<sup>2</sup> "The definition of objectives are given by politicians but it may as well happen that only assignments are originated by them and they do not specify any closer facts. The objectives are in most cases purely the concretization of certain interests." (<http://beszelo.c3.hu/03/10/03toth.htm>)

that are otherwise strongly related to migration problems in the Hungarian public life (e.g. the Roma question, refugee policy); neither are some significant questions related to the situation of women such as the human-trafficking, violence, or illegal employment in the entertainment industry, etc.

#### I. Clarification of concepts and target groups

Owing to Hungary's peculiar position (namely, the great number of Hungarian minorities living in the neighbouring countries), quick solutions to the situation of the special migrant groups – refugees, Hungarians beyond the frontiers to the direct implications of immigration and the phenomenon of the anti-foreign sentiment should be found. Another important target group is the potential emigrants. This group consists of highly-educated young persons, whom the country's economy would also need as a knowledge-based society will essentially be built on this generation of 20-30-year old men and women.

The *migrant target groups* and the various actors interested in the subject (state, private and civil spheres) should clarify the relevant concepts so that the basics for a common thinking and definitions of the problems would be available. By this, we primarily mean taking the results of sociological research and civil organizations specialized in migration problems into consideration in the making of international agreements and the formation of a national policy.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of the interviews of the present research it is clear that women immigrating into western countries may be divided into groups. A migration policy is required that supports mobility (both in a social and geographical sense) and migration and is founded on unambiguous objectives and measures. For examples, the stereotypes of the receiving countries should be fought against (e.g. in the media and politics).

It is clear from the interviews how much migration policy has not effectively dealt with family unification, by placing numerous obstacles in the family members' ways. It should also be realized and considered in the making of the policies that racial and national processes are essentially socially constructed and as a consequence of more intensive migration an increasing number of mixed marriages can be expected. The advantages of this phenomenon as well as the possibilities of the economic and cultural interpenetration lying therein should be emphasized and the positive concomitants of these relations supported; that is, the right for the protection of family life should be acknowledged as a basic human right and family unification should be considered as a successful integration of people from a third country.<sup>4</sup>

Among the objectives of the European Union there is a directive for the unification of families, but this should fully be enforced in Hungary's migration policy as well since the current regulation is insensitive to modern tendencies and in the definition of a family member it does not take non-traditional family models into account (e.g. a life-partner, same-sex partners); in doing so, it puts pressure on young couples and urges them to step into the bonds of marriage as a condition for their stay to be legal. Another problem is that the legal status of those who possess a so-called humanitarian

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<sup>3</sup> For example, within the compass of a model program launched by the Menedék Egyesület (Hungarian Association for Migrants), a "communal room" has been created with numerous stop-gap services. The program is now in danger because of financial difficulties.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ofakht.hu/hirlevel/2003/hirlev02-s.htm>

residence permit (which is quite a common form of authorization) does not allow them to enforce their right for family unification even after years of having a valid permit and thus excludes them from the opportunity to apply for child-welfare and social assistance.

## II. Historical Background – Harmonisation of Laws, System of Institutions, Corruption

Regulations (rights, obligations, rules, residence permits, etc.) and the institutional system (policing of aliens, public administration, interpreter services, counselling) related to migration do not function effectively. Besides the growing control mechanisms (e.g. the activity of the policing of aliens), the procedural regulation in connection with migration should be simplified and made more transparent as the current practice does not harmonize with reality and therefore the regulation is now a hot-bed of corruption and illegal solutions. Policies should also pay attention to the phenomenon of “voting by foot,” that is, if the free flow of persons fully becomes a reality in the expanded European Union, then the more mobile citizens will probably consider in their choosing a workplace and residence to what extent a given target country’s migration apparatus helps their settlement and integration.

In Hungary, the Inter-Departmental Committee of Refugee Affairs started work in 1991 with the aim of helping the regulation of the immigrants’ situation and the development of refugee policy by co-ordination and conciliation between the representatives of ministries and other competent organizations. In 2001, the Committee’s work was brought to an end by a governmental regulation. Parallel with this, in 1998, the individual Office of Refugee Affairs and Migration ceased to work and currently only a major department of the Office of Immigration and Nationality (OIN) is entrusted to deal with this “stressed” issue. These negative changes show how the topic of the protection and integration of refugees and migrants is thrust into the background. Because a governmental regulation of 1998 declares that “the assistance to help refugees’ social integration is a state affair,” it is now time that a comprehensive integration policy should be established.

One problematic area is the difficulty of obtaining a residence and work permit since a condition for obtaining one of them is the possession of the other, which presents a ‘vicious circle’ to many women. The single solution for the legalization of the settlement has been their partners’ taking full responsibility for them and their living together for years, which the ‘aliens’ policing may inspect at any time. Yet, the defects of the regulation may really be seen when a problem arises in the relationship. Then, the systems do not provide women who would like to stay in the given country and would be self-supportive with days of grace, so to speak, until the residence permit is terminated. Neither is it realistic that if divorce takes place after a child has been born in the marriage the state comprehensively provides for the divorced woman and her child. For a more flexible procedure, a more adjusted institutional system and an attitude rooted in real life would be required. For instance, appeals and complaints should be processed by expedite procedures, and migrant women seeking advice should have an opportunity for legal guidance and consultation. Human resources for such an information-serving system may be based on experienced women who live in the given country; they would be able to help their fellows coming from their sending

countries to find their ways in the labyrinths of bureaucracy, and in their decision-making.<sup>5</sup>

In 2004, the MATRA project was launched. It aims at the development of a comprehensive integration policy and the definition of its constituent elements (e.g. development of an educational programme for refugees and immigrants). Also, on May 1, 2004, EMMA (Single Hungarian Works Database) was launched, which provides relevant information. Migrants and professionals may contribute to this work while a network counsel is already working and should be improved as a positive example. Besides, the European Commission and Hungary are about to make the Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM) on social integration final.

“More and more people obtain a national status, which provides real protection, through their birth, marriage or, after their escape, naturalization from a new state, that is, the chance for the rise of multiple citizenships is increasing.” (For example, our domestic laws – on the basis of Act XXXVIII of 1996 Article 13 make the extradition of citizens with dual citizenship possible if their permanent residence is abroad.) However, multiple citizenship may be the grounds for the expulsion of someone to the country he is the citizen of although he may have no relation to that country whatsoever, and adequate protection here should be guaranteed. We urge support that parents and children can obtain dual citizenship – this may increase mobility by serving as a symbolic gesture showing that the issuing country readily welcomes them if they decide to return home. Citizenship issues should be dealt with on EU level.<sup>6</sup>

### III. Employment, Voluntary Work, Civil Organizations (social map, partnership)

#### *Women's Employment Situation and Demography*

The activity profile of women working abroad has changed in an interesting way. Approximately until the end of the 1980s, a significant proportion of the women had emigrated to another country as family members and later came to participate in the labour market. In the last years, the number of women who decide to leave their country voluntarily and alone to work abroad has been increasing. The passive status characteristic of earlier decades has been replaced by an active presence in the labour market. One effect of emigration in the labour market of the sending country is that through emigration the sending country's population becomes older while through immigration the receiving country's population becomes younger. These arguments demonstrate that the countries should put equal emphasis on their immigration policy as well as on their emigration policy. In this context we note that twenty years ago in Hungary the rate of women's employment was among the highest in the world; today's data is similar to Europe's lowest respective data. Another problem is demographic transformation, namely the ageing of the population, which is characteristic of the whole of Europe. In addition, Hungary has also has a long way to go to reconcile of family life and working life, for both men and women.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.epp-ed.org/Press/pdoc03/priorities2004-2009final-hu.doc>

<sup>6</sup> For details, see Protocol 4, Article 3, in Council of EU' Convention on Human Rights)

### *The 'Brain Drain' Phenomenon*

Although migration obviously has two directions (immigration and emigration), on defining migration, countries tend to specify the circle of immigrants and consider immigration as a relevant concept while they pay less attention to the migration of their own citizens to other countries. The so-called brain drain phenomenon – or in a wider sense and with a nowadays more popularly applied term, skill drain – clearly refers to an attraction to the labour force, triggered by welfare effects, which carries significant economic advantages for the recipient country and major losses for the sending country. Consequently, receiving countries often accept skilled labour forces without reservation. The problem is that the greatest demand will appear for those (highly qualified, creative information specialists, computer specialists, researchers, etc.) who are also required at home. The graduates and skilled workers returning home from these brain drainer countries in large numbers do not directly improve the standard and effectiveness of the domestic middle class and the intellectual elite. After their return, they engage in lengthy, individual search, which is not effective. Their first months or even years are spent on establishing their personal contacts in an almost unknown medium. Their country is a land they have to get re-acquainted with.

One possibility is to encourage mobility within the country by providing information and resolutely improving the content of education. Women's opportunities should be expanded with regard to the reconciliation of family life and work. The enormous wage-level differences between the European and Hungarian wages may be compensated by popularizing the fact (and this is an aspect of country image) that Hungarian education, health care and child-care benefits (e.g. nurseries) are more easily available than in the European Union countries. (Of course, a comprehensive reform is needed in these fields as well.)

Here we would like to introduce a Hungarian civil organization that has approximately been in existence for half a year (it is called Project Retour) and primarily deals with phenomena related to migration and returning home. We recommend that both private and state spheres should support their work and objectives because it may relieve the problem of the brain drain phenomenon and may increase social profit. As an exemplary, smoothly functioning civil organization promoting education and training, and providing self- and mutual assistance, Project Retour aims at helping the integration of young professionals who wish to return to Hungary. It follows long-term principles and instead of financial profit it puts social profit in the foreground. It helps young professionals whom higher education, the economic sphere, and the majority of governmental or European Union assistances and scholarships would pass over. To help integration, fellow-workers of the civil organization provide these people who live abroad or have just returned home with personal and collective counselling, printed and on-line information. Project Retour regularly estimates demands, monitors competitions, takes part in competitions, plans and implements services, holds lectures and training, provides support and builds contacts because it considers the support of the returning graduates a national, economic interest, a question of equal opportunity, education and employment.<sup>7</sup> If educated young persons – after an unsuccessful attempt for integration – leave the country again taking their intellectual capital with them, it is disadvantageous to the country, especially if alternative expenses are taken into account. By launching a

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<sup>7</sup> Saphier Regina [2003] The activities of Project Retour  
<http://www.projectretour.org.hu>

private enterprise or even in the framework of higher education, those returning home may train the unemployed or who fall behind the society or whose knowledge is not competitive here.<sup>8</sup> Thus, they may become employers and contribute to the promoting of the Hungarian economy with their innovative ideas.

#### IV. The Relationship of Communication, Flow of Information, Social Acceptance and Migration

It is a widely accepted notion that social positions may be changed through geographical change of positions. This cultural concept is something that global mass communications has produced.<sup>9</sup> Today's Hungarian emigrants who were the first in their families to leave the country over the last ten years had already had certain information on the target country before leaving. Information appeared to be the most comprehensive in economic questions, especially in the case of men. Surprisingly few emigrants knew anything about admission regulations. Given the changes in the European Union member countries' admission regulations (the regulations have become stricter) and the long migration traditions of the groups, one would expect emigrants to be better informed about admission issues. As a source of information, families come first (and friends to a lesser extent). Agencies of the country of origin and the target country do not usually provide useful information on the receiving country for the emigrants. Personal information always takes precedence over information given by agencies.

Decision-makers have to consider the migrants' needs and demands to the largest possible extent and make correct reports on problems, and possible solutions; they should generate discussions so that the migrants' situation may receive proportionate attention in the communication, and the discussion on migration may reach broad social circles. What messages and values should be conveyed in the various communicational interactions? We consider exemplification as the best mechanism to convey values and therefore think migrants with experience should be initiated into the discussions (e.g. the experience of returning, complex contacts in more than one society, etc.) and the communication of migration towards the general public.

European and Hungarian citizens have a right to a dependable public administration. Yet, numerous non-transparent administrative methods have been developed over the years. Since legal protection also requires the clarification of citizens' rights in connection with the European institutions and their officers, procedural law should be codified and made clear. Better access to public administration should be provided particularly with respect to legal disputes concerning more countries and therefore plans for extensive, probably on-line, alternative means of legal settlement should be encouraged. The information already contained in the NEPINFO<sup>10</sup> database could be

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.fn.hu/cikk.php?id=179&cid=74532> *Hazatér magyarok-kinek kellene?* (Hungarians returning home – Who need them?) February, 2004 Molnár Zsuzsanna

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.replika.c3.hu/38/07nieder.htm>, *Etnicitás és politika a késő modern nagyvárosokban* (Ethnicity and politics in the late modern large cities) Niedermüller Péter

<sup>10</sup> A new development in Hungary is that on April 1, 2004, in a special session the secretary of the Government Committee on Demography introduced an internet-based population databank called NEPINFO (Demographic Information System). This unique on-line database guarantees that information on demographic issues will be available for anyone interested. The first phase of the development of the system has come to an end while the development of tools for interactive

used as a basis for social research, which would provide background information on the reasons for and motivations of migration (e.g. financial, educational, employment, marriage opportunities, that is, economic, cultural and sociological factors).

#### V. Educational Objectives

We have seen that numerous problems arise from a lack of information in society. In Hungary, a particular problem is that the general secondary school curriculum contains no reference to equal opportunities between men and women, basic human rights, and migration as a decisive phenomenon of our age. This problem also seems to be a timely one as a rise in migration may be expected after our accession to the European Union.

Education, its content and social role should also be approached through an integrated attitude since the economic and social role of the schools is more and more significant as is that of those educational and training functions that help the socialization and integration of the young generation into the labour market and society. We would stress two values that – with respect to the current discussion – appear as challenges for the education sphere. One is social acceptance of the migrants' point of view, the second is the principle of equal opportunity between women and men.

In the formation of education policy current changes in the world should be taken into consideration since teaching is to some extent always occurs in a certain intercultural social-economic-political environment. In intercultural education, educated migrant women who possess languages and are familiar with cultures may also have an enormous role and may participate as mediators in the communication of sister schools and in exchange programs.

As a method, it might be the most useful if schools provided opportunity for exchange programs, within the compass of which students would become acquainted with the culture of a given country and, through meeting students of the same age class, with the experiences of communication, with the usefulness of a living language. This may increase their ability to tolerate otherness and may strengthen the positive role of collective experience in their personality through the realization of common problems. In addition, on the basis of their experience young people will be able to decide whether they want to live in another country. With respect to the success of equal opportunities between women and men, the most important tasks of the educational system are: greater information on equal opportunities policies and practices to be circulated by the institutional structures concerned, and encouraging the establishment of networks for comparing and exchanging different on-the-ground experiences.

Further efforts are needed to apply the *acquis* on the education of community employees' children.

### 3.2 *Bulgaria*

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modelling and an extensive search system will be continued as will be the expansion of data and information until 2005.

The conclusions and implications, based on the Bulgarian analytic material, are a significant contribution to the study of marriage, migration and gender in Bulgaria due to the approach which has been adopted in the research. As it has been acknowledged by representatives of IOM Bulgaria, the GRINE project differed in the way migration practices have more usually been regarded. This is because the research team dealt with analysis of the material with an emphasis on women as subjects of their own lives and as agents who can articulate their own experience, and thus regard themselves – and can be perceived by others - not as victims but as subjects pursuing their own rights and desires. This is of course not to deny the very real conditions of constraint, eg legal and economic, that for many women – and men – is a feature of their migration.

Whereas the larger focus in Bulgaria was put on the issues of illegal migration, trafficking in women and violence against women, the GRINE project sought to base research on a wider range of actors. Questions of transnational marriage and migration have previously been topics of analysis but the issues of emotional investment, communication, attitudes to work and tradition have not been brought together as done in GRINE, evidencing the complexity of ‘reasons’ for migration, and the intertwining of the economic and the emotional in terms of human relationships and other forms of attachment, eg to place.

Many of the papers produced in the project include observations and analyses based on both Bulgarian and Hungarian interview material which is an effort to find similarities in the migration experience of women who have lived in ex-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Yet the material included also insights for possible differences and for different ways to write the history of migration of the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century in Bulgaria and Hungary. It is not only the history of migration but also the history of the attitude to Europe that can be a recommendation for further research.

### **3. The receiving countries**

#### *3.1 Italy*

It has been already stressed how the specific cultural approach of the research based on life story interviews conducted with women from different background in terms of nationality, age, education, class and social status, coupled with the participation of researchers from five European countries allowed us to address many different fields and spaces around the configuration of gender, subjectivity, migration and Europe, which also have policy implications. Here we start by focussing on the 18 interviews conducted with Italian women and by so doing point mainly to dynamics and interventions related to the 'receiving' society and culture.

#### Italian society and culture

The project confirms the weakness of a collective debate concerning multiculturalism and intercultural relations in the Italian public sphere. Although we have highlighted in our book the positive potential of intersubjective encounters within Italy and Europe, the testimonies reflect and often reproduce stereotypes, prejudice and a lack of knowledge of women coming from different Eastern European countries. What we want to stress is the need for resources able to introduce in the public sphere

knowledge about, and representations and voices of migrants and diasporic groups living in Italy. In particular, here is urgent need for organised cultural interventions and the elaboration of cultural policy directed to the mass media (TV in primis), to the education system, to be incorporated into professional training in the specific field of public service (health system, housing, education, communication, law and so on).

### Mass media

All the testimonies have referred to Italian TV to denounce its transmission and reinforcing of the more widespread stereotypes concerning eastern European women, associated almost exclusively with sex-work and more recently with domestic service and care-work in private houses. Similarly the press write about presence of women from eastern Europe in Italy only when they are involved in specific experience such as trafficking, violence and insecurity. These factors are significant elements of the common idea of women from the European East either as victims or as sexually dangerous individuals threatening the community.

A key element of the functioning of the mass media in Italy is the monopolistic ownership of the communication systems. The interconnections between ownership of key mass media and political engagement in right-wing parties with governmental roles support the dominance of a right-wing agenda (besides of course collusion of economic and political interests). This propagandistic function emerges evidently in the field of migration: criminalization, stereotypization and lack of recognition dominate mass media treatment of migrants and migration; terms as *clandestino* (clandestine) and *extra-comunitario* (no EU citizen) dominate the vocabulary; attention is directed mainly toward issues of expulsion and of repression. Racism is hugely widespread in Italian mass media.

What we want to point out is the need of an intervention at the European level able to influence the agenda of the media system in Italy. Although monitoring systems and data collection already exist (see the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) [http://eumc.eu.int/eumc/material/pub/media\\_report/MR-CH4-8-Italy.pdf](http://eumc.eu.int/eumc/material/pub/media_report/MR-CH4-8-Italy.pdf)), what is needed is a more efficient collaboration between different public and private resources in Italy and at EU level. Educational programmes as well as programmes directly created by so-called minority groups should be supported. In addition, they can be productively interconnected with strategic actions supporting entering the field of training, mobility, employment.

### Education

Culture is the fundamental battleground in which meanings, ideas and experiences of the identified 'others' are organised and transmitted. Besides, schools and educational institutions (from the kindergarten to University) are an important space of encounters between women and men, of different generations and of various backgrounds. In our testimonies schools offered one significant place of meeting between migrants and native women shaped by the possibility of more equal relations (the role being that of the parent), by the sharing of a common interest (children's education), or by the recognition of a public institution. Of course we do not claim the possibility of transforming the space of schooling into a 'paradise' for the solution of social tensions, yet, we suggest the importance of a multiple investment concerning the various subjects involved in the system: the students, the teachers, the parents. Actions

should be taken in order to support a positive attitude and experience of intercultural relations of all subjects and during all grades of the educational career.

### Training

The interviews, both with migrants and with 'native' women, confirm the need for further interventions to train professionals in the public sector to deal with multicultural issues. Although the testimonies are produced by subjects living within a common European space - characteristic that in most interviews has been stressed referring to common religion (Christianity), similar familiar and educational models, - public sites (police offices, hospitals, social security offices among others) are places in which the condition of 'being a migrant' is felt in more acute negative way. If in the last decade training in multicultural issues has been organised, evidence confirms that it has privileged the idea of having a 'intercultural mediator' (usually from a non Italian background) instead of training the Italian professionals occupied in key institutions. A study of the effect of this policy is very much needed to re-orient public intervention in the field. While the figure of the 'intercultural mediator' is highly valuable it cannot substitute and prevent a wider and deeper policy actively involving Italian workers and training them to a wide spectrum of variables.

To conclude we want to stress that our emphasis on the cultural dimension of policy interventions is due to two main considerations:

- the centrality of culture as a battlefield in which identities, recognition of self and other, fears and curiosity are negotiated and elaborated. Culture in our understanding is a key element which shapes, influences and conditions social, political and economic issues;
- the marginal position and relevance given to culture in contemporary European policy and political agendas.

Having stressed these factors, we want also to stress a further element, that is the necessity to think and act through the different levels that shape human existence. In fact, if culture is central, an effective political culture cannot be achieved without considering and entering the field of material equality, wealth, job opportunities, social services, housing, and so on. Many times we have heard migrant women claiming full citizenship not only on the level of cultural recognition but also of access to economic, social and political resources. We re-assert the claim made by migrant women themselves that cultural recognition is often possible only in terms of cultural essentialism (i.e. migrant women are often asked to cook and perform their 'very culture' in terms of food, music, style of dress). Our emphasis on culture is critical of essentialism and naturalisation and rather sees culture as a theory and practice able to transform other levels of life; a practice of citizenship which includes work, political rights, social rights such as housing, education and the recognition of the multiple desires and location of each subject.

## *3.2 The Netherlands*

### Organisation of policy-fields

The production of knowledge takes place in different, often interconnected realms. Knowledge and 'truth' produced in policy-making is informed by the law and often by the social sciences field. In turn, policies have impact on people's lives materially

as well as symbolically. Culture and representation are directly affected by policy-making – and vice-versa. The fact that the production of knowledge and policy is often artificially separated in different ‘sections’ or disciplines (in science as well as in politics) causes contradictions, which effect in very concrete problems for different groups of people. A striking example is the contrast – even antithesis – between the field of immigration policy, integration policy and emancipation policy.

#### (In)dependent residency

The example of the dependent residence permit for migrant women married to a Dutch citizen or a permanent resident in the Netherlands, is striking in this context. Marriage became an important means of legal entrance into the Netherlands (as well as to other countries in the EU). After the recruitment of labour from abroad officially stopped, family reunification or formation became, along with entry through the asylum procedure, the most common means of legal entry. The dependent spouse is not granted independent residence permit until after three years into the marriage. If the marriage breaks up before the end of that period, the spouse has no legal status, no residence permit, and no right to work or receive social benefit.

Formally entry legislation is gender-neutral, but because of its features the effects differ greatly for women and men. Through the income requirements for the permanent resident partner, the ‘male breadwinner’ model is reinforced through aliens law. This creates, because of changing patterns and gender roles in the indigenous population, a gap between ‘modern’ indigenous population and ‘traditional’ immigrant population. Secondly, marriage as the ‘gatekeeper’ in immigration law creates inequalities between immigrants and indigenous population, and forces immigrant women in a vulnerable position dependent on their husbands – in sharp contrast with the model of ‘modern and emancipated’ European women.

Although this law applies to both women and men, women are most affected. First, because more women than men have right to residence through this specific construction. Secondly, women are vulnerable in this position of dependence from their husbands: in case of abuse, women have the choice to either leave her husband with the risk to loose her right to residence, or stay with her abuser. Dutch government, in their emancipation policy, encourages and propagates women’s right to autonomy, choice and independence, but at the same time the emancipation – and thus also the ‘integration in Dutch society with all its merits’, as is one of the aims of the integration policy – of migrant women is endangered by the dependent residence right.

#### (Gender) mainstreaming

The effects of the new immigration policy under the current government are different for women and men. And whereas in the field of emancipation policy, the new direction is that all attention should go to the emancipation of women of ‘allochtone’ (literally: ‘from elsewhere’) background – in practice, the target group referred to by this term is Muslim women – it is these women who are most effected by the new, more restrictive immigration policies that are being proposed and installed. Restrictive criteria for family formation and unification affect women most; asylum is often not granted on gender-sensitive criteria; the position of labour migrants from the

new EU countries – a growing number of whom are women – is undermined by the decision to gain no free entry of people to (most of) the new EU member states.

### The construction of ‘illegality’

Notwithstanding the concern for victims of trafficking in many European governments, the effects of the concrete measures taken to fight trafficking are often not in the benefit of the women concerned. The illegalization of people combined with the gendered dimension of trafficking and prostitution, combines external circumstances, force and exploitation (from traffickers), and law and policies in the country of immigration to cause an extremely vulnerable and impossible situation for women. The choice between sustaining the situation of exploitation, or ending the situation of sexual and financial exploitation by reporting to the police – thereby taking the risk to be forced to leave the country because of their undocumented status – takes agency away from women. Faced with a ‘choice’ which is an impossible one, and women either remain in the country of immigration ‘illegally’ with all consequences connected to that status.<sup>11</sup> The result is that often the struggle against traffickers is, in practice, just another anti-immigration measure: trafficking networks are occasionally stopped, traffickers get punished but new ones appear, and women are deported to where they don’t want to be for a variety of reasons.

### Conclusions

Fields of policy that are intrinsically interconnected should not be separated. Both ‘intersectionality’ – the fact that different dimensions of one’s identity and position such as gender, nationality, ethnicity, educational background, are interconnected – and ‘mainstreaming’ – the notion that all policies should be screened for their impact on different groups of people – are relevant here. As is happening more and more in research, policymaking should happen in a more interdisciplinary way, combining different ‘disciplines’ or fields of policy, in order to ensure that no internal contradictions appear between the different fields, for any group.

Some concrete changes that would follow from the above change of framework are the following:

1. The *dependent* residence permit – whereby the ‘foreign’ partner’s residence permit is dependent on her or his marriage with the (native) partner – should be changed into *individual* residence permit in order to ensure that women and men alike can remain independent and autonomous, which is the only possible basis to become full and actively participating citizens.
2. Trafficking does not cause illegality, the construction of illegal citizens enables trafficking. Therefore the notion of ‘illegal people’ should be abandoned. Undocumented people should not be in risk of being removed from the country or be punished by the system in any other way.
3. Terminology used in policies in different fields should be transparent and systemised. Politicians should not borrow terms used in the press and popular discourse resulting in false use of terms like ‘allochtoon’ when a specific group of (often Dutch by nationality) citizens is meant (often, for example in case of third-generation children of migrant grandparents, not even officially belonging to the category used). This helps to clarify and understand what and who it is that is

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<sup>11</sup> This issue also came up in the interviews with Dutch women doing social and political work with and for undocumented migrant women and/or migrant sex workers (ref. NL 09 Sandra; NL 14 Ellen).

being discussed, and what the consequences of certain policies are for which groups.

4. Emancipation policy should be based on facts, not on the ideology of 'free choice'. The facts (number of women on the labour market; number of women in high positions in all realms of the labour market; availability of childcare facilities; division of paid and unpaid labour between women and men and between Dutch women and immigrant women) show that Dutch women are by far not 'emancipated' as popular discourse and concrete policy wants. Visibility of these facts should be the basis for a new and form emancipation policy, targeting all women and men, not only specific (minority) groups.

## **Research recommendations**

The principal recommendations that emerge from this research are both methodological and thematic. In the proposals we indicate below, we pay attention to topics that we recommend should be addressed, and to the approaches to them that would best answer key questions.

### Interdisciplinary research on gender and mobility

We would like to underline the need for interdisciplinary research specifically on issues of gender and mobility, since it is especially important that the EU takes a leading role in developing new forms of research in these areas, as it cannot be expected that topics of this kind may get sufficient backing on a national scale.

It is very important that more interdisciplinary gender research is done in Europe if we want to contribute to the creation of a more democratic and contemporary European research culture, and create useful networks and frames of reference for further work. An emerging European research culture in gender studies might hopefully both inspire and support local and national studies and communities and create results which may be useful in emerging European politics.

Whilst in this project we privileged women as the subjects of our research, it would in a future project be very important to make direct comparisons with men, on the one hand, and explorations of masculinity in migration, gender relationships, and subjectivity on the other.

### The symbolic in everyday life

We insist on the importance of future research paying attention to the place and role of the symbolic in everyday life such as in political, social and economic processes that underlie migration. The work of this project has highlighted the richness that this kind of analysis produced which lead us to gain better understandings of the phenomenon of migration. In addition, oral history and ethnographic studies of contemporary subjects and processes should be privileged for their capacity to problematise the ordinary, common assumptions and fixed understandings.

### Networks

The role of different networks (official and informal such as friends, family, partners) in shaping mobility and its understanding is an area of research that we recommend for deeper exploration.

### European space

The plurality of subjects, cultures and subject locations that are already part of the European space should be better recognised in research – and in calls for research on the part of the EC. The European space is populated by a plurality of religions, relationships, identifications that should be highlighted, both politically and culturally, and used against any claim for fixed European traditions, values and borders.

This might be made visible through comparative research on migrant subjectivity with non-European migrants in Europe.

European space needs to be better understood historically. Since the 19th both individual women and women's associations of many European countries combined the issues of suffrage, human rights, peace and a united Europe. Their efforts have been ignored in the last decades, while they and their work would constitute a precious antecedent to the present understanding of the relationships between gender and Europe. In particular the contribution of the Europeanist women in the construction of Europe might be developed in a single proposal (building on the limited work we were able to conduct on this topic within the current project).

Furthermore, we suggest more research on the role of affective relationships in determining political positions and positionalities in Europe today.

Finally, more in depth historical research is needed on utopian thinking, visions of the West, and visions of the future that developed in Eastern Europe during communism. A comparative history of hope between Eastern and Western Europe could inform productively the ways in which we could today conceptualize today Europeaness.

#### Cultural activities and art

We recommend that the role of culture and art in constructing a postcolonial and post-national European entity should be better taken into consideration. This would involve the expansion of the research agenda on subjectivity to material other than oral sources, ie films, performances, visual material, icons and images.

#### Transnational and comparative EU research

Further research along the lines we have developed for a few countries is very much needed for other countries, such as all those that have just acceded to the EU and those who have applied – again in a comparative perspective with comparative methodologies.

A new project might also be conceived as an anthropology of EU research and policy implementation Programmes themselves, how these impact in the production of knowledge (what is valued by them, what is discounted...) and the definition of what Europe (and the EU) means in everyday life.

Finally, research is recommended in the direction of teaching and learning about Europe, for instance through the study of school text-books.

#### Action research

We might also need some research which develops innovative approaches to deal with (administrative and legal) issues stemming from a Europe characterized by many forms of diversity and gendered mobility. We need to think in terms of problem-solving research linked to problem-defining and conceptual research. We need to think in terms of research which may allow us as researchers to participate and contribute to the creation of a Europe in the 21st century, open to the rest of the world.

## **5. Dissemination and/or exploitation of results, 6. Acknowledgements and references**

During the life-time of the project we have adopted a strategy for dissemination that was two-fold: i) shared between some or all members of the project; and ii) based on the priorities of each country. Below we present first the key collective publications and other dissemination activities. Then we continue with a description of each partner's dissemination activities.

We would like to acknowledge the very helpful comments and feedback from all those mentioned below who have participated in events where we have presented our work. In addition, we thank the institutions which have supported these events and our work more generally.

### **1. Collective publication of results**

The primary key publication of the project is a collective book edited by the members of the GRINE team at the coordinating institution, the EUI. We have signed a contract with Berghahn Books and the manuscript is due to be delivered in July 2004. It will be published in Oxford in 2005. (See table of contents overleaf.) We are also in discussion with publishers in Hungary and Bulgaria for the translation and publication of this book in Bulgarian and Hungarian. In Hungary the book will be published by Balassi Publishing House in the series on Feminism and History. As agreed by all participants in GRINE, once the final manuscript has been accepted for publication, we can go ahead and publish other essays and writings from the project in journals and elsewhere.

### **2. Digital archive**

All the interviews collected are indexed and are under publication in an on-line archive which will allow their wide consultation and use. Access will be given to all individuals who agree to register within the site and whose interest is for research, education, training, policy-development, or work in connection with migrants' associations. Considerable care has been taken to anonymise the interviews, eg changing the locations of residence where it was a small town and the profession in the case that it would make the person easily recognisable.

The archive is an important outcome of the project for the documentation of women migrants lives. These interviews are organised by sending and receiving country and are searchable by the social characteristics of the interviewee (age, education etc) and by place of residence etc. They will be available both in the language in which they were conducted (Hungarian or Bulgarian) and in the English translation. In addition, a map will indicate the trajectories taken by these women. The interviews with native women will also be available on the website, in the original language and in translation (with the exception of several Dutch interviews not translated into English.)

Archive address: <http://www.iue.it/GRINE> - active from September 2004.

**Women from East to West:**  
**Problematising migration, gender, and inter-nationality in Europe**  
*Luisa Passerini, Dawn Lyon, Enrica Capussotti, Ioanna Laliotou (editors)*

**Introduction** – editors

**Part I: Subjectivity and migration**

Introduction – editors

Chapter 1 Feminist theories of subjectivity in a European perspective - Esther Vonk and Rosi Braidotti

Chapter 2 Mobility and Subjectivity in a European context - Ioanna Laliotou

Chapter 3 From the subjection of women to the privileged subject - Hanne Petersen

*Intermezzo*

*Memory of the past in Eastern Europe - Andrea Peto*

**Part II: Subjectivity in motion: migrant women**

Introduction - editors

Chapter 4 "My hobby is people": Migration and communication - Miglena Nikolchina

Chapter 5 The topos of love in the life-stories of migrant women - Nadejda Alexandrova

Chapter 6 Migrant women in work - Enrica Capussotti, Ioanna Laliotou & Dawn Lyon

Chapter 7 Imaginary geographies: border-places and 'home' in the narratives of migrant women - Nadejda Alexandrova & Dawn Lyon

Chapter 8 Food-talk: markers of identity and imaginary belongings- Andrea Peto

*Intermezzo*

*Experiences of migrant women - Nadejda Alexandrova & Anna Hortobagyi*

**Part III: Relationships in the making**

Introduction - editors

Chapter 9 Women's relationships and the representation of 'self' and 'other' - Esther Vonk

Chapter 10 Transnational migration and new forms of Italianess - Enrica Capussotti

Chapter 11 Moral and cultural boundaries in representations of migrants - Dawn Lyon

*Intermezzo*

*Comparison of a Dutch and an Italian native woman*  
*- Enrica Capussotti & Esther Vonk*

**Part IV: Becoming European**

Introduction - editors

Chapter 12 Visions of Europe in a feminist perspective - Rosi Braidotti & Esther Vonk

Chapter 13 Gender, Subjectivity, Europe: A Constellation for the Future - Luisa Passerini

Chapter 14 Changing Matrimonial Law in the Image of Immigration Law - Annette Kronborg & Inger Marie Conradsen

**Conclusions** - editors

### **3. Final Conference, Sofia, 4-6 March 2004**

This event was organised by the Bulgarian team in collaboration with the EUI team. Along with the preparation for the conference another way to prepare the local academic audience for the papers and discussions was the initiative of organizing preliminary seminars among students and specialists to discuss the work of the project's leading feminist scholars – Luisa Passerini and Rosi Braidotti. These seminars were held from January 2004 until March 2004. Luisa Passerini's seminar was concentrated more on the issues of oral history, narrative, Europe and migration. The seminar on the works of Rosi Braidotti was dealing mainly with issues of gender, subjectivity and hybridity. On the day before the conference both the seminars had their open and conclusive meetings. Several well-known scholars from the CEE region were invited as speakers and discussants to this event: Jelisaveta Blagojevic (Belgrade Women's Studies Center, Yugoslavia), Daniela Koleva (Sofia University, Bulgaria), Katarina Kolozova (Euro-Balkan Research Center, Skopje, Macedonia), Irina Zhrebkina (Kharkov Center for Gender Studies, Ukraine), Alenka Zupan (Slovene Academy of Sciences).

The conference also provided the opportunity not only to GRINE members but to the audience at Sofia University where it was held, to listen and reflect on the perspectives of distinguished scholars in the field of migration who were invited as discussants to this event: Anne-Marie Fortier (Lancaster University, UK), Agnes Hars (Kopint Datorg Economic Research Institute, Hungary), Eleonore Kofman (Nottingham Trent University, UK), Helma Lutz (Muenster University, Germany).

The event was well-announced in the Bulgarian media. There were several interviews with the organizers - on 8<sup>th</sup> March in one of the national TV stations "Nova televisia" and on the Bulgarian National Radio. Another outcome of the conference was the interview with Luisa Passerini done by Nadezhda Alexandrova, "Europe, Gender, Subjectivity, a Constellation for the Future", published in "Kultura" newspaper in April 2004.

In order to keep this pace of dissemination of GRINE results the members of the team accept invitations for publication in several forthcoming Bulgarian collections on the issues of migration and oral history and communication.

### **4. Workshop, EUI, Florence, 19 April 2004**

This event was organised by the GRINE team at the EUI and the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies to give visibility to the research at the EUI. It took place with the financial support of the EUI.

List of speakers and discussants:

- Mark Bell JMF, RSCAS-EUI)
- Enrica Capussotti EUI, Florence, Italy
- Jean-Pierre Cassarino JMF, Mediterranean Programme, RSCAS-EUI
- Frank Duvell JMF, RSCAS-EUI & Organiser of the Working Group 'Migration - Mobility - Minorities – Membership'
- Ioanna Laliotou EUI, Florence, Italy
- Dawn Lyon EUI, Florence, Italy
- Miglena Nikolchina Sofia University, Bulgaria

- Luisa Passerini EUI, Florence, Italy & Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut, Essen, Germany
- Hanne Petersen University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- Andrea Peto ELTE and CEU, Budapest, Hungary
- Enrica Rigo JMF, European Forum, RSCAS-EUI
- Ruba Salih Università di Bologna, Italy
- Bo Strath Professor of Contemporary History, EUI)
- Esther Vonk Utrecht University, Netherlands

### **5. International Oral History Conference, Rome, 23-26 June 2004, Workshop: Women from East to West: Gender, migration, subjectivity, Europe.**

Several members of the GRINE team presented a panel at this international conference on oral history. Speakers and titles:

Luisa Passerini (Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut and University of Turin): *Notes on the research: the European dimension.*

Andrea Peto (ELTE, Budapest): *Political migrants and narratives about communist past*

Dawn Lyon (IUE, Firenze): *Forms of belonging: ideas of home and nation*

Enrica Capussotti (IUE, Firenze): *The triumphant Italian women: backwardness and emancipation in the construction of the "Eastern European woman"*

### **6. Presentation to Hungarian embassy, Rome, 25 June 2004**

The same team members as listed above presented the research at the Hungarian cultural academy with the financial support of the Hungarian embassy.

### **Other dissemination, by team**

#### **1. Co-ordinator: Italy**

Contacts and networking with:

- Caritas
- Sportello informativo per immigrati del Comune di Firenze
- Cospe NGO (Florence and Bologna)
- Arcolableno NGO (Florence)
- Hungarian Cultural Association, Florence and Rome
- Bulgarian Cultural Association, Rome
- Ires Turin (Centre for the study of immigration in Italy)
- Department of Hungarian Studies (University of Florence)
- Nosotras (migrant women association)

Participation at the following meetings:

- Servants and Changes in Mentality, 16th-20th Centuries, Conference organized by Regina Schulte and Pothiti Hantzaroula, 14-16 February 2002, European University Institute and a network of the EC Fifth Framework Programme, with a specific focus on contemporary and historical forms of domestic work performed by migrant women in western Europe;
- Does implementation matter? Informal administration practices and shifting

immigrant strategies in four member states – IAPASIS project, meeting held at the EUI, 22-23 February 2002.

- 2003-2004 Participation in the Working group on Migration at the IUE/RSCAS.

Presentations at the following conferences:

- 15 May 2003, Master in Gender Studies, Bologna University, Lecture on the Balkans: migration and women history, Enrica Capussotti
- 20 May 2003, Third Annual Ursula Hirschmann Lecture on Gender and Europe, Gender Studies Programme, Robert Schuman Centre, EUI, Luisa Passerini on “Europe and Love”.
- 1-8 June 2003, Zagreb and Porec, Croatia, conference ‘Comparative Perspectives on Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Nation in Post-Socialist Societies and the United States’.
- 4-5 July 2003, Institute of Romance Studies London, conference ‘Mobilizing the Mediterranean: Migration, Alterity, Identity’, Enrica Capussotti and Dawn Lyon<sup>12</sup>
- June 2003, Lecture in context of Dublin Summer School, EUI, on “Narratives about migrants and the experience of migration from the East of Europe to the West”, Dawn Lyon
- 15 September 2003, organization of workshop “Methodological reflection on oral history”, EUI, Florence, Enrica Capussotti
- 25-28 September 2003, Murcia, Spain, 6th European Conference of Sociology (Stream: Biographical Perspectives on European Societies), Dawn Lyon on “Boundary-work in narratives about migrants in Italy”.
- 25-27 September 2003, Lecce, Enrica Capussotti on Corpi e/migranti: memoria e migrazioni contemporanee.
- 6 October 2003, Working Group – Migration – Mobility – Minorities – Membership, European University Institute, Florence, Dawn Lyon on “Moral and Cultural Boundaries in Representations of Migrants”
- May 2004 Lecture in context of Dublin Summer School, EUI, on “Home and forms of belonging in the narratives of migrant women”, Dawn Lyon
- 6 May 2004, "Europe, Love and Gender: Women on the Move between East and West", Institut fuer Soziale Bewegungen, Bochum, Germany, Luisa Passerini

## **Partner 2: The Netherlands**

- Project presentation and discussion at Utrecht University in the ‘Intellectual Atelier’, a monthly seminar where researcher scan present their project and discuss the theoretical implications, exchange knowledge and methods
- Meetings with the interdisciplinary working group on family relations at Utrecht University
- Meetings with researchers in the Netherlands who work on similar issues, in research institutes as well as in women’s organisations and NGOs.
- Postgraduate Research Seminar Netherlands Research School of Women’s Studies, Fall 2002: session devoted to the GRINE project. Presentation: ‘Feminist theories of subjectivity in a European perspective: women’s migration and multiple positionings’.
- Postgraduate Research Seminar Netherlands Research School of Women’s

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<sup>12</sup> Special thanks to Jacqueline Andall for her comments on the GRINE research presented at this event.

Studies, Fall 2003: session devoted to the GRINE project. Presentation: 'Dutch women in 'intercultural relationships' in the context of European East-West relations. Debates, narratives, strategies.'

- Public lecture in the series 'The Next Gender-ations: New Perspective in gender research', organised by Utrecht University in the context of the 15-year Lustrum of Women's Studies at Utrecht University. November 2003. Title of the evening: 'The theoretical is political. Women's Studies and/as feminist intervention'.
- Contribution to 'The Making of European Women's Studies', Volume V. January 2004.
- Lecture in course 'Gender and Ethnicity in Europe' in Women's Studies MA programme, Utrecht University, 12 May 2004 on integration policies in the Netherlands and the representation of different groups of migrants.

### **Partner 3: Denmark**

- The team has met regularly with various key-persons from the administration as well as NGOs in order to inform about the project as well as to exchange ideas regarding the direction of the research.
- The research assistant attended the European Conference on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (organised by IOM, the European Parliament and the European Commission (STOP II)), 18 – 20 September 2002 in Brussels.
- Presentation of the project at the Law Faculty of the University of Copenhagen.
- 7-8 November 2003, Roskilde University Center, Hanne Petersen on "Privileges, Rights and Advantages. Inuit, Nordic and European Examples" at the Network Seminar for Nordic-Baltic Russian Network. Legal Traditions in the Baltic Sea Area conference "Nation and - state building. Citizenship and minority rights in the Baltic Sea Region: Continuity and Change".
- Law Faculty of University of Copenhagen, Annette Kronborg on The marriage conditions in Danish law.
- Inger Marie Conradsen has contributed with an essay in Danish immigration law to the book 'Internationale konventioner' (forthcoming, Djøf's Forlag, 2003).
- Inger Marie Conradsen has contributed with an essay on the legal aspects of cross-border relationships 'Kærlighed og konventioner. Historien om et bebudet kærestevisum' in Jørgensen et al. (eds.) Nye retlige design. Dansk ret under konkurrence, Jurist- og Økonomforbundets forlag, 2003. And with another essay on spouses' access to citizenship 'Anakronisme eller avantgardisme. Meddelelse af dansk indødsret til Mary Elizabeth Donaldson' in Koch (ed.): Festskrift til Ole Espersen, Thomsons Forlag, 2004.
- Hanne Petersen has held a lecture at the School of Law at the University of Westminster, London on the GRINE-project from a legal perspective, April 28, 2004
- Hanne Petersen has held a lecture for ph.d. students at the Law Faculty of the University of Lund, Sweden on the GRINE-project focusing on issues of privilege, May 3, 2004
- Hanne Petersen has contributed with an article on "Privileges, Rights And Advantages. Inuit, Danish, And European Subjects In The Making" (forthcoming in Martine Spensky (ed): Citoyennete, empires et mondialisation)

#### **Partner 4: Hungary**

Networking with:

- Hungarian Italian Cultural Associations all around in Italy
- Hungarian political migrants, mostly who left Hungary after 1956
- Hungarian Cultural Association in Florence
- Hungarian Club in Florence
- Hungarian women living in The Netherlands and who are in contact with the Hungarian Embassy
- different Hungarian cultural and religious associations operating in The Netherlands

Presentations:

*Borbala Juhasz:*

- September 2002, Nyiregyhaza, Hungary: Annual Conference of the Hajnal Istvan Circle, the Association of Hungarian Social Historians: paper delivered under the title "Hungarian women in the EU- migration narratives"
- October 2002, Budapest, Hungary: Conference on the Hungarian Diaspora in the West organized by the Minority Studies Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
- January 2003, The Hague, Holland, special talk at the Mikes Kelemen Circle, the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Holland.

*Andrea Peto:*

- 18-20 April, 2002, EUI, Florence: "Hungarian 1956 as a Civil War. Narratives, Identity and Gender", for the conference: Civil Wars and Political Violence in the 20th Century
- 23-25 May, 2002, Berlin, Organized by Institute fuer Geschichte und Biographie der Fernuniversitaet Hagen, Stiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED Diktatur, Bundeszentrale fuer politische Bildung. "Conservative and Extreme rightist women in Contemporary Hungary" for the conference: "The Presence of the Past. Transformation and Dealing with the Past in Eastern and Central Europe"
- 3-6 October, 2002, Guadalajara, Mexico: Report on the GRINE Project, AWID 9th International Forum on Women's Rights and Development: Reinventing Globalisation
- 3 December 2002, Department of Philosophy, University of Miskolc: "The European Union Enlargement and Gender Equality. The Normative Power?" at Conference: Social Justice and Social Contracts
- January 2003 one week workshop and meeting held in Utrecht (Borbála Juhász, Andrea Pet )
- 24 February 2003, European Council, Parliamentary Assembly, Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. Hearing on the Situation of women in the post communist countries of post communist transition  
[http://stars.coe.fr/communication/TemporaryDocs/Event%20programmes/2003.02.25\\_Women in post-communist countries\\_b.htm](http://stars.coe.fr/communication/TemporaryDocs/Event%20programmes/2003.02.25_Women%20in%20post-communist%20countries_b.htm)
- 6-7 June 2003, Barcelona, Spain "Gender Indicators Against Social Exclusion" Meeting Organised by Centro Ricerche Affari Sociali (Rome), Association de Dones per la Insercio Laboral (Barcelona).
- 15 September 2003, Workshop on "Methodological reflection on oral history", EUI, Florence.

## **Partner 5: Bulgaria**

Networking with:

- Migrant associations in Italy and the Netherlands and with NGOs working in Italy, the NL and Bulgaria which helped in the collection of the sample and are potential users of the outcome of the research.
- Representatives of governmental (The Agency for Bulgarians Abroad) and non-governmental organizations (IOM) to discuss possibilities of dissemination of the achieved results as well as the collection of new material
- Other teams from Sofia University who work on similar matters (professor Petya Kabakchieva, research assistant Rossica Guencheva)
- Collaboration with the website of the 'Centre for Gender Studies', Sofia University.
- Regularly the team meets a team representative will present the general frame of the project on one of the national TV channels (bTV) in October.
- 20-23 February 2003, Graz, Austria, Nadejda Alexandrova has participated 2<sup>nd</sup> InASEA conference "Becoming Citizens of United Europe". A version of this paper is going to be published in Bulgarian in "Bulgarsika ethnologia".
- 26 September 2003, The Bulgarian team of GRINE gave a presentation of the Project's goals and result at the meeting of Bulgarian Association of University Women (BAUW).
- 21 October 2003, Sofia, Miglena Nikolchina presented the project in an interview for Radio France International (RFI).
- 6 Nov. 2003, Ljubljana, Slovenia, Miglena Nikolchina on 'Migration, Gender and Communication' at the conference 'Participation Opportunities: Perspectives for Inclusion of Marginalized Groups'.
- 17-21 November 2003, Nedyalka Videva, Miglena Nikolchina Nadezhda Radulova gave talks on the GRINE project at a meeting organized by another member of GRINE - Ioanna Laliotou at the University of Volos, Greece.
- 4-5 March 2004, Two seminars connected with the work of Luisa Passerini and Rosi Braidotti on "Europe" and "subjectivity" were held at the Gender Studies centre in Sofia University during the Fall semester. These regular meetings will serve two objectives: Dissemination of GRINE results among students and academics in Bulgaria; Preparation for the final conference in Sofia in 6-7 March 2004.
- 29-30 March 2004, Miglena Nikolchina on 'My hobby is people: Migration and Communication' at the International Symposium Migration Issues and Minorities Rights in Europe", held in Bucharest.
- Information about GRINE and the final conference can be found at Gender Studies Centre website <http://www.uni-sofia.bg/resources/gsc/>

## Deliverables

The project can be considered to be highly successful not only on the basis of publications and other dissemination, but also insofar as it met all of the promised deliverables.

DL no	Description of deliverable	Status
D1	Creation of website.	Completed
D2	Literature search reports.	Completed
D3	Draft interview schedules.	Completed
D4	Historical report on 'Women for Europe' group.	Partially completed (see below)
D5	Theoretical innovation – one essay and widespread input.	Completed
D6	Archive of the testimonies of migrant women.	Under construction – available on-line, September 2004
D7	Internal reports on interview analysis for later use in preparation of publications.	Completed
D8&D9	Essays on legal theory and the legal aspects of this study; doing oral history and other methodological and interdisciplinary reflections.	Completed
D10	Final project report.	Completed
D11	Final conference.	Completed
D12	The papers presented at the conference will provide the basis for a book collection.	Partially completed, due Nov. 2004
D13	Recommendations, notably legal, will be put forward to legislators, both at national levels and for use in the development of EU legislation, regulations and directives.	Completed
D14	Further dissemination which is difficult to specify at this stage will include other publications, and teaching outcomes – short courses, a dedicated Summer school etc.	Completed and still in implementation

### Notes.

**D4.** The planned research on the group *Femmes pour l'Europe* established by Ursula Hirschmann was less successful than hoped. We conducted two sets of work for this: archival work amongst the papers of Fausta Deshormes (a member of *Femmes pour l'Europe*); and interviews with Deshormes and one other member of the group, Jacqueline de Groote, and with another person close to Ursula Hirschmann, Edmondo Paolini. Whilst the results were sufficient to be incorporated into the discussion of Europe by Luisa Passerini, they were not, alone, sufficient to develop into a separate piece of writing. We hope that future additional research will allow us to do this.

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This report presented the main findings of the project “Gender relationships in Europe at the turn of the millennium: women as subjects in migration and marriage”. Its main objective were to formulate a well-founded theory on the working of gender in social practice in Europe and to draw conclusions about new contemporary forms of women’s subjectivity through the study of women as agents of change in their own lives (in the domains of marriage and migration).



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