



**Women Migrants
from East to West**

Gender, Mobility and Belonging in Contemporary Europe

Edited by

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Contents

Acknowledgements	vii	
Editors' Introduction	1	
Part I	Subjectivity, Mobility and Gender in Europe	
Chapter 1	On Becoming Europeans <i>Rosi Braidotti</i>	23
Chapter 2	'I want to see the world': Mobility and Subjectivity in the European Context <i>Joanna Lahorou</i>	45
Chapter 3	Transformations of Legal Subjectivity in Europe: From the Subjection of Women to Privileged Subjects <i>Hanna Pitloron</i>	68
<i>Intermezzo</i>	<i>'A Dance through Life': Narratives of Migrant Women</i> <i>Nadejda Alexandrova and Anna Horroby</i>	84
Part II	Subjectivity in Motion: Analysing the Lives of Migrant Women	
Chapter 4	Imaginary Geographies: Border-places and 'Home' in the Narratives of Migrant Women <i>Nadejda Alexandrova and Dawn Lyon</i>	95
Chapter 5	'My hobby is people': Migration and Communication in the Light of Late Totalitarianism <i>Miguelan Nikolshina</i>	111
Chapter 6	Migrant Women in Work <i>Fritca Capussotti, Joanna Lahorou and Dawn Lyon</i>	122

Chapter 7	The <i>Topos</i> of Love in the Life-stories of Migrant Women <i>Nadejda Alexandrova</i>	138
Chapter 8	Food-talk: Markers of Identity and Imaginary Belongings <i>Andrea Peró</i>	152
<i>Intermezzo</i>	<i>Relationships in the Making: Accounts of Native Women</i> <i>Enrica Capussotti and Esther Vank</i>	165
Part III:	Processes of Identification: Inclusion and Exclusion of Migrant Women	
Chapter 9	Migration, Integration and Emancipation: Women's Positioning in the Debate in the Netherlands <i>Esther Vank</i>	177
Chapter 10	Modernity versus Backwardness: Italian Women's Perceptions of Self and Other <i>Enrica Capussotti</i>	195
Chapter 11	Moral and Cultural Boundaries in Representations of Migrants: Italy and the Netherlands in Comparative Perspective <i>Damon Lyon</i>	212
Chapter 12	Changing Matrimonial Law in the Image of Immigration Law <i>Inger Marie Conradsen and Annette Konborg</i>	228
<i>Intermezzo</i>	<i>In Transit: Space, People, Identities</i> <i>Andrea Peró</i>	243
Conclusions	Gender, Subjectivity, Europe: A Constellation for the Future <i>Luisa Passerini</i>	251
Appendix 1	Summary of individual interviewees	275
Appendix 2	Summary of interviewees' characteristics by nationality	304
Notes on Contributors		314
Index		317

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Luisa Passerini, Dawn Lyon, Enrica Capussotti and Ioanna Lalitton
October 2006

Editors' Introduction

Luisa Passerini, Dawn Lyon, Enrica Capussotti
and Ioanna Lalitton

Gender, Mobility and Belonging in Europe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Methodological Choices

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 1 Interviews by country (n equals 110)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Structure of the Book

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes

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

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Part I

Subjectivity, Mobility and Gender in Europe