

Moral Economies of Reproductive Labour

An Ethnography of Migrant Domestic
and Care Labour in Naples, Italy

Lena Näre

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List of Original Publications

This thesis is based on the following publications:

- I Näre, Lena 2011, “The Informal Economy of Paid Domestic Work – The Case of Ukrainian and Polish Migrants in Naples” in *Foggy Social Structures: Irregular Migration and Informal Economy in Western Europe*, eds. M. Bommès & G. Sciortino, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, pp. 67-87.
- II Näre, Lena 2011, “The Moral Economy of Paid Domestic and Care Work: Migrant Workers in Naples, Italy”, *Sociology*, vol. 45, no. 3, pp. 396-412.
- III Näre, Lena forthcoming, “Migrancy, Gender and Social Class in Domestic and Social Care Labour in Italy- An Intersectional Analysis of Demand”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (accepted for publication, reviewed).
- IV Näre, Lena 2010, “Sri Lankan Men as Cleaners and Carers – Negotiating Masculinity in Naples”, *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 65-86.
- V Näre, Lena 2009, “The Making of ‘Proper’ Homes – Everyday Practices of Migrant Domestic Work in Naples”, *Modern Italy*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 1–17.

1 Introduction

‘The servant role, it is argued, is obsolete in modern society. Even when formally based on contract, it is in essence rooted in ascribed status, particularistic standards, and diffuse obligations. The master’s family “greedily” attempts to absorb the total personality of the servant, and ties him to the household in a totalistic manner. Such premodern relationships can exist only as long as religious legitimations for it are accepted by the servant, and no alternative employment opportunities are available. When this is no longer the case, the role becomes obsolescent and only persons suffering from marked inferiorities and peculiar stigmas can be induced to enter it.’ (Coser 1973: 31).

In this much cited article from 1973, Lewis Coser following Talcott Parson’s (1954[1949]) dichotomy between premodern vs. modern social organisation describes the characteristics of a servant occupation. It is typically an ascribed status (vs. achieved), based on particularistic standards (vs. universalistic) and requires diffused (vs. specialised) obligations from the servant. Coser leaves out Parson’s fourth characteristic of pre-modern social relations: affective vs. affective-neutral, although affectiveness is also typical of a servant occupation.

Coser’s conclusion that modernity has got rid of the servant role was, however, clearly premature, as the recent research literature on the subject has demonstrated (see e.g. Anderson 2000; Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2003; Gamburd 2002; Gregson and Lowe 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Isaksen 2010a; Lutz 2008a; Parreñas 2001).¹ On the contrary, there has been a clear increase in the employment of *domestic and care workers in private households* in high-income countries in Europe, particularly in Mediterranean countries, but also globally. Domestic service has then become a true migrant labour niche (Moya 2007).

This article-based thesis examines the case of Naples, Italy as one site where there has been an increase in the number of migrant domestic and care workers in private households. Like Coser, I argue that the

¹ Coser was not alone in predicting the disappearance of servants, the feminist economist Esther Boserup (1970) also saw this as a result of modernisation.

relationships inherent to paid domestic work resemble pre-modern labour relations, but they do not need to rely on religious legitimations but rather on a moral economy. The labour relations inherent to migrant domestic and care labour are understood as based on moral contracts, i.e. forms of dependencies and gratitude that go beyond the conventional labour contract.

I approach paid domestic and care work as a form of reproductive labour and hence a crucial issue for contemporary social sciences. This research stems from the understanding of international migration as an important social phenomenon, which is transforming societies everywhere in the world. In a globalising world, nation-states are connected not only through the mobility of capital and goods but also through migrant networks that span across the globe. Significantly, reproductive labour and care become one of the 'products' transferred in these connections from poorer to rich countries and vice versa (cf. Hochschild 2000).

In policy debates and migration theory, the relationships between migration, reproduction and welfare state have usually been on migration as a means of obtaining labour power for which the receiving state has not paid the so-called 'reproductive costs', especially educational costs. Similarly, another common thread in the literature is the potential burden migrants place on the welfare state (Sciortino 2004). However, much less attention has been given to the fact that migrant workers have in increasing numbers become important providers of welfare services both in public and private realms (see, e.g., Gavanas 2010; Isaksen 2010b; Lutz 2008b). Italy is a country where there has been a significant increase in demand for privately employed domestic and care workers, especially in elder care work (Degiuli 2007). It is a country with a strong familistic welfare regime, vast informal labour markets and a large number of irregular migrants constituting a pool of inexpensive and available labour force (Reyneri 1998; 2004). Moreover, in Naples the imprint of the feudal past continues in various forms of clientelism and *raccomandazione* (recommendation) (Dickie 1999; Zinn 2001). Therefore, Italy is an interesting case for the study of the transformations of the relations between state, markets and households in the global migrant divisions of care and domestic labour, and Naples a particularly telling case when it comes to the study of pre-modern labour relations in a global context.

The thesis is based on ethnographic research conducted in Naples, Italy in 2003–2005 during which I interviewed migrant domestic and care workers from Sri Lanka, Ukraine and Poland and conducted participant observation in various public places among the migrant communities and in private households employing cleaners and carers. In a previous academic dissertation, a monograph written for a degree in Migration Studies at the University of Sussex (Näre 2008), I analysed the phenomenon as a form of transnational labour migration from a migration theory perspective. The articles and the summary chapter included in the present doctoral dissertation concentrate on analysing migrant paid reproductive labour from a sociological perspective and further develop the theme of moral economy. Moreover, most of the publications included in this dissertation have been written after finalising the previous dissertation.

The main objective of the research is to examine the phenomenon of the private employment of migrant household and care workers from a perspective that combines a macro-level view to a micro-level ethnographic data collected in Naples, South Italy. The thesis examines the *demand for migrant workers to perform paid domestic and care labour* and the *labour practices and relationships* inherent to paid care and domestic work. It *proposes a new theoretical conceptualisation of these labour relationships and practices*. In more detail, the thesis seeks answers to the following research questions:

- How has the shift from Italian domestic and care workers to migrant workers occurred?
- How do the employers explain their demand for migrant care and domestic workers?
- How are the labour relationships and practices organised in Naples and what kind of moral norms govern these relationships and practices?
- How do the intersections of gender/sexuality, ‘race’/ethnicity, migrancy, social class and national background configure in the employment of migrant workers?

The first part of the thesis introduces, summarises and contextualises the following five research articles on the subject. In the first subsection of the first part, I outline the background to the Italian case study by

discussing previous research on the subject and introducing the main research concepts as well as introducing the overall socio-political context of the research. The second subsection discusses the theoretical approaches that have guided my research, namely intersectional analysis, the notion of moral economy and transnational perspectives to labour migration. In the third subsection, I present the methodology and data used in this thesis. In the fourth subsection, I discuss the research findings and in the fifth subsection I reflect on the significance of these results. Finally, in the sixth subsection, I conclude the main arguments of the whole thesis and suggest new avenues for future research.

The second part of the thesis consists of five articles that concentrate on different aspects of the phenomenon and seek to address gaps in the existing research literature. The first article analyses the phenomenon of paid reproductive labour in the context of irregular migration and informal economy. Typically, the research literature on domestic labour examines either one migrant group or several groups without differentiating how the national and ethnic background affects migrants' position in the stratified local labour markets. This article proposes a comparative perspective that looks at the differences between Ukrainian and Polish women's situation in Italy. The article also touches upon the cultural and moral aspects related to the work relationship, which is a theme that is further elaborated in the second article.

There have been relatively few attempts to conceptualise paid reproductive labour relationships. In the second article, I seek a novel way to theorise the organisation of paid reproductive labour as a form of moral economy rather than merely economic profit maximisation. In this form of moral economy, an unwritten moral contract is established between the employer and worker.

For long, the existing research literature has overlooked employers' perspectives (see however Anderson 2007) and the demand for domestic and care work has been analysed mainly relying on information from the workers themselves. Furthermore, it has been common for research to analyse the demand for domestic work inseparably from care labour. The third article addresses these issues by analysing the demand for care services separately from domestic work. The focus changes from migrant workers to Neapolitan employers.

Male domestic workers have been overlooked in the research literature until very recently (Manalasan 2006, see however Scinzi 2005; Sarti &

Scrinzi 2010). The fourth article contributes to this emerging literature by examining the experiences of Sri Lankan men working as domestic workers and carers in Naples. The article analyses the ways in which men negotiate their masculinity in a job that is socially constructed as 'feminine'.

Finally, most data available on the paid domestic work draws on interviews. The fifth article presents unique participant observation data gathered in a Neapolitan household where a Ukrainian live-in domestic worker is employed. This final article looks at the mundane, everyday practices of Neapolitan housekeeping and the ways in which a sense of 'home' is reproduced through the routine 'housekeeping'.

Next, let us move on to discuss in more detail the context of this research.

2 Research Framework

The question of paid domestic and care labour is of crucial interest for contemporary social sciences due to its relation to several important themes. Firstly, it is related to the future of employment and to the nature of work in post-industrial societies. Secondly, it is related to the welfare mix between the household, markets and the state, and thirdly it is related to questions of gendered, racial, ethnic and migrant divisions of labour (cf. Bittman et al. 1999: 249-250). Fourthly, it is related to globalisation processes, although, for long, social reproduction was omitted from the mainstream debates on globalisation (Katz 2001; see however Sassen 1998; 2003a; 2003b).

Keeping these dimensions in mind, in the following I first discuss how paid domestic and care labour has been approached in the research literature. Secondly, I concentrate on the relationship between paid domestic work and the Italian welfare, gender and migration regimes (cf. Williams and Gavanas 2008). Finally, I present the migration patterns of the three groups studied in this research: Sri Lankans, Ukrainians and Poles.

2.1 Reproductive Labour in Local and Global Contexts

The literature on domestic work and care has developed in different directions depending on the ways in which the subject matter is defined and how it is understood as a form of work. Noticeable in the contemporary literature on globalising paid domestic work is that the historical continuities of the subject as an old social phenomenon, but also as an object of research interest, are often rendered invisible. A common image conveyed in much of the current research is that this is a completely new phenomenon. Although there is a great deal that is novel in the ways in which paid domestic work is configured in the contemporary global orders, there are also important historical continuities. In this subsection, I discuss the main research concepts of the thesis by giving an overview of the past and present research

traditions. These research traditions are somewhat geographically specific, and it is possible to distinguish – at least – an Anglo-American, Nordic and Italian tradition (Leira and Saraceno 2002). In what follows, I rely on literature from all three traditions and seek to find continuities and convergences in these research strands that have often developed in different directions.

2.1.1 Reclaiming the Value of Unpaid Care

In all research, but maybe even more when dealing with a subject such as labour migration, the choice of language and concepts that researchers decide to use are political choices. In this research, I approach paid domestic and care work as reproductive labour (or social reproductive labour/social reproduction). This is in order to be explicit about the economic as well as sociological significance of domestic and care work. According to the classic definition by Barbara Laslett and Johanna Brenner, social reproduction entails:

‘the activities and attitudes, behaviors and emotions, responsibilities and relationships directly involved in the maintenance of life on a daily basis, and intergenerationally. Among other things, social reproduction includes how food, clothing, and shelter are made available for immediate consumption, the ways in which the care and socialization of children are provided, the care of the infirm and elderly, and the social organization of sexuality.’ (Laslett & Brenner 1989: 382–383).

Reproductive labour can then be divided into the 1) biological reproduction of human beings, 2) the everyday maintenance of life and individuals, and 3) the reproduction of the social system through primary socialisation and education (see also Yeates 2009: 5). In practice, the three dimensions of reproductive labour often overlap, but I think it is important to keep them analytically separate. I understand domestic and care labour as part of the second dimension.

Reproductive labour was one of the key notions for second-wave feminists who argued that the root of women’s oppression lies in the division between private versus public spheres of life (Firestone 1971; Friedan 1963; Pateman 1988; Rubin 1975) and especially in the sexual

division of labour, particularly in the unpaid reproductive work done by women (Mackintosh 1981; Stolcke 1981). The socialist-feminist version of this critique emphasised how unpaid domestic work was a way for capitalism to extort value from women (e.g. Eisenstein 1979; Luxton 1980; Smith 1987a). In the Italian context, Laura Balbo (1978) proposed the notion of ‘family work’ as a wider concept referring to all unpaid work performed by a family member for the family, or its individual members. Family work entailed then not only household tasks but also relational work with/for family members and with services and institutions outside the family. Some years later Balbo (1982) also spoke of the ‘servicing work of women’ as a broader term to describe both women’s unpaid labour in the families, but also their paid service work within the welfare state context. I will return to the question of servicing in welfare state contexts.

The distinction between private/public continues to be relevant, although in contemporary discussions on social policy, ‘private’ has often become to signify ‘market’ instead of the household. However, in this thesis, I want to hold on to the notion of private in the original sense of the term, as there is a significant qualitative difference as to whether the reproductive labour takes place in homes or institutions.

2.1.2 Paid Domestic Work

Second-wave feminist thinking was criticised by black feminists who questioned the white, middle-class feminist notion of global sisterhood and the assumption that the private/public distinction was at the root of discrimination of *all* women regardless of their ‘race’, ethnicity or class. Black feminists such as Patricia Hill Collins (1991), Angela Davis (1981) and bell hooks (1981; 1984) criticised white middle-class feminism for its blind universalism. Regarding the understanding of private/public distinction, bell hooks and Aida Hurtado argued that whilst white feminists claimed that family signified a place of oppressive gender relations, for black women it offered a safe haven from the discrimination of a racist society (hooks 1991: 41–49; Hurtado 1989 cited in Mohanty 2003: 51; see also Glenn 1999: 3).

One site where the blind universalism of second-wave feminism was obvious was the middle-and upper-class household that employed paid

domestic workers. The debates on the value of unpaid reproductive labour made the experiences of maids invisible. Hence, an important strand of literature regarding reproductive labour concerns *paid domestic and care work within the private sphere* performed mainly by women of colour and working class women (e.g. Colen 1995; Dill 1988; Glenn 1992; Graham 1991; Hansen 1989; Rollins 1985; Romero 1992; Sanjek and Colen 1990). These studies approached paid domestic work done by mostly women of colour (see however Hansen 1990) from the perspective of the 'racial division of reproductive labour' (Colen 1995; Colen and Sanjek 1990; Glenn 1992): 'according to inequalities that are based on hierarchies of class, race, ethnicity, gender, place in a global economy, and migration status and that are structured by social, economic, and political forces' (Colen 1995: 78). This perspective also challenges notions of family and motherhood as privatised and isolated within the domestic sphere and the conflation of family, women, reproduction and nurturance (cf. Glenn et al. 1994; Thorne and Yalom 1982).

Although I agree with the critique presented by Shellee Colen and Roger Sanjek (1990) on the prerogative connotations of domestic, *domestic work* has now become the most commonly used term in English language literature. I prefer the terms domestic work and domestic labour when speaking of the phenomenon in contemporary times, whilst *domestic service* is used when emphasising the historical continuities in this labour sector. Moreover, there are authors who choose to speak of servants in order to highlight the unequal power relations underlying domestic work (e.g. Cox 2006; Morini 2001; Parreñas 2001). However, one of my arguments in this thesis is that the experiences of migrant domestic workers are much more heterogeneous than what would comfortably fit under the notion of a 'servant'.

The choice of terminology is also supported by the fact that domestic work translates best into Italian. *Lavoro domestico* is the Italian term for this kind of work and a domestic worker is commonly known as *collaboratore/collaboratrice familiare* (masc./fem.), abbreviated as *colf* or family collaborator. The term was introduced in 1964 by the National Catholic Worker's Organisation ACLI in an attempt to better reflect the professionalism of the sector (Andall 2000: 98). It emphasises the contribution of domestic workers to family life. The changes in the connotations of the term reflect the social changes of this labour sector:

whilst prior (before the 1990s) the term mainly referred to Italian workers, nowadays *colf* is associated with migrancy.

More recently there has been a trend to include domestic work and all forms of paid domestic work under the notion of *social care* as an intention to revalue this kind of labour (Kofman forthcoming). Although I agree with the importance to revalue paid domestic work, and I use the notion of social care in one of the articles, I nevertheless insist on the importance of keeping domestic work separate from care as differently valued dimensions of reproductive labour. This brings us to examine the notion of care in more detail.

2.1.3 The Concept of Care

The early feminist debates on reproductive labour perceived women's domestic and care labour mainly in negative terms. In response to this, as well as a reaction to gender-biased theories of moral development, feminist social psychologists and philosophers argued for a more positive view of care and nurturing (Gilligan 1982). Inspired by Gilligan's work, North American feminists called for a moral philosophy based on caring (see e.g. Held 1995; Noddings 1984; Ruddick 1989; Tronto 1993). This care ethic is based on 'values of caring – attentiveness, responsibility, nurturance, compassion, meeting other's needs – traditionally associated with women and traditionally excluded from public consideration' (Tronto 1993: 2–3). Care ethic discussion is an important alternative for the Rawlsian moral theory; however, some versions of it problematically propose essentialist notions of caring as a feminine attribute, as was also formulated in the notion of care as a 'labour of love' (see e.g. Finch and Groves 1983; Graham 1983). Moreover, this strand of the literature, in line with the early feminist debate on the value of reproductive labour, treated care implicitly as childcare and idealised the biological mother-child relationship as the highest form of caring. This not only left the care of the ageing and infirm invisible, but it also overlooked historical forms of mothering as paid labour, e.g. in the role of wet-nurses (cf. Badinter 1980). Finally, conflating care with innate femininity, it excluded men's roles as carers (Arber & Gilbert 1989). Nevertheless, the attempt to develop alternative social theories, in taking the care

ethic and relatedness as the starting point, is an important alternative to individualistic moral theories.

However, what about the concept of care? Since the pioneering work of feminist researchers in the 1970s, there has been an expanding debate on *care*, which has had a different geographical and cultural emphasis. In the following, I will take into account the different ways in which care has been conceptualised in the Anglo-American, Nordic (*omsorg*) and Italian context (*cura*). Although my research is on Italy, I include the Nordic debate in this discussion, as it has significantly influenced the Italian and Anglo-American discussion (Leira and Saraceno 2002).

The early Anglo-American literature focused on informal care, mainly unpaid informal care performed in the private realm. In this regard, it was important to distinguish between *caring about* and *caring for* (Graham 1983; Ungerson 1983), which emphasised the fact that a person performing caring may, or may not, feel caring towards the care-receiver (see also Hugman et al. 1997). Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto (1990: 35–65) identified four phases in the care process, each accompanied by different skills and values: 1) *caring about* involves being aware and paying attention to the need for care, 2) *caring for* means assuming responsibility to meet a need that has been identified, 3) *care-giving* includes both individuals and organisations that meet the caring needs, and 4) *care-receiving* as the response of those obtaining the attention and care. I find this definition of the caring process useful in taking into account the different competencies involved in caring, as well as the fact that caring is always relational. However, the model leaves limited agency to those receiving care – a trait that is rather common for care research, as many commentators have observed (Cockburn 2005; Keith 1992; Morris 1992; Thomas 1993).

From very early on in the Anglo-American literature, it has been argued that care does not easily fit the capitalist economy of time (Geissler & Pfau-Effinger 2005: 6). This idea was expressed in very direct terms by Bettio and Prechal (1998: 43) as follows: ‘Care is not a market good because it too closely concerns the most intimate needs of human beings.’ However, in the Nordic and Italian contexts, care was always understood as part of the public provision of the welfare state (Balbo 1978, 1982, 1987; Borchorst & Siim 1987; Hernes 1987; Holter 1984; Leira 1992; Saraceno 1984a; Saraceno 1984b; Siim 1987;

Simonen 1991; Waerness 1984, 1987) and, therefore, was commodified in different ways.

The concept of *social care* was then developed to overcome the public/private dichotomy and to relate the notion of care more firmly within the welfare state context (Daly and Lewis 1998, 2000; Knijn & Kremer 1997; O'Connor 1996, see also Daly and Rake 2003; Jenson & Sineau 2001; Sainsbury 1999). Mary Daly and Jane Lewis (1998: 6) defined social care as 'the activities involved in meeting the physical and emotional requirements of dependent adults and children, and the normative, cost and social frameworks within which this work is assigned and carried out.' Hence, the authors emphasise three dimensions of social care: care as labour, as 'located within a normative framework of obligation' and as 'an activity with costs both financial and emotional, which extend across public/private boundaries' (Daly and Lewis 2000: 285). In this framework, research has applied Esping-Andersen's welfare state analysis to care, identifying particular 'caring regimes' (Anttonen and Sipilä 1996) and 'caring cultures' (Leira & Saraceno 2002, see also Williams and Gavanas 2008). I return to this issue in the next subsection, when I analyse the Italian care regime in the context of the welfare state and gender.

In the context of formalised care, scholars have analysed specific care professions such as nursing, and the role that gender plays in these professions (e.g. Bolton 2001; Davies 1995; Witz 1990). An important influence on the literature on care professions has been Arlie Hochschild's (1983) work on 'emotional labour'. In her study on the professional requirements of air-stewardesses, Hochschild (1983) uses the term to describe how, in some jobs, feelings need to be managed and controlled in exchange for wages. According to Hochschild's (1983: 7) definition, it is 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display'. Another important conceptualisation is care work as bodywork, i.e., as labour that 'takes place on bodies' and involves intimacy and bodily contact (Twigg 2000: 17; Wolkowitz 2006). The literature on formalised care draws attention to the social construction of caring as feminine through the gendering of welfare professions such as nursing (Davies 1995; Henriksson et al. 2006; Henriksson & Wrede 2008). Moreover, as neoliberal restructurings are eroding public welfare provision, and the dichotomy between private/public realms of care in Western countries is less clear-cut, the focus has increasingly

turned towards analysing the ‘commodification of care’ through various ‘cash-for-care’ welfare schemes (Ungerson 1997) and different forms of ‘welfare mixing’ (Evers & Svetlik 1993; Harrington Meyer 2000; Sipilä et al. 2003; Ungerson 1999; 2005). I discuss what the cash-for-care welfare model means in the Italian context in more detail in the next subsection.

I have so far discussed different perspectives on care, but I have stated very little about how care is understood in this research. I have found a broad approach to care most useful. Following Knijn and Kremer’s (1997: 330) definition, I understand care as ‘the provision of daily social, psychological, emotional, and physical attention for people. This can be provided by paid or unpaid work, on the basis of an agreement or voluntarily, and it can also be given professionally or on the basis of moral obligation’. In this definition it is important that it emphasises the different dimensions of caring (social, psychological, emotional and physical), and takes into account the different ways of organising care. These reflect different *logics of care*, as Trude Knijn and Stijn Verhagen (2007: 461) have distinguished in a more recent article on home care: professional, market, state and family logic. In the case of migrant domestic and care work, where care is provided by often informal carers in the context of the family for pay, there is an inherent tension between the family and market logic – a tension that I have captured with the notion of moral economy.

As a summary of the insights of the literature that has been discussed so far herein, and as an elaboration of the various models that classify reproductive labour (Geissler & Pfau-Effinger 2005; Knijn & Verhagen 2007: 461), I have compiled a table of the different forms of reproductive labour.² The table applies various dichotomies, such as formal/informal, private/public and paid/unpaid care in order to map the variety of types of work, their socio-economic base, and their location in society as well as the organisational logic that organises the work. In the first column, I have differentiated the two principle social domains where care can take place, i.e., the private or public domain and whether the care is family-, market-, welfare state or voluntary work based. I have identified three types of work: informal, semi-formal and formal reproductive labour

2 Birgit Geissler and Birgit Pfau-Effinger (2005: 9) have presented a model that differentiates between formal and informal care work, type of work-relation, pay and sphere of economy.

that can be paid or unpaid. The main purpose of this classification is to exemplify where the subject of this research, *the informal paid reproductive labour provided by migrant workers* is situated in relation to other forms of reproductive labour. The conceptual analysis conducted through this mapping of range of possible forms of reproductive labour has aided me in formulating the research topic in relation to other dimensions of reproductive labour.

Table 2.1 Classification of Reproductive Labour

Domain and sphere	Type of work	Pay	Organisational logic of labour	Examples
Private-family	Informal reproductive labour	no	Moral obligations, family bonding	Family members and friends providing care
Private-family	Semi-formal reproductive labour	yes	Moral obligations, family bonding	Parents on parental leave, cash for the care of relatives
Private-market	Informal reproductive labour	yes	Moral economic logic	Baby sitters, cleaners, elderly-care takers (migrant/nationals)
Private-welfare state or market	Formal reproductive labour	yes	Market logic	Home-based professional care takers and nurses
Public-welfare state or market	Formal reproductive labour	yes	Professional logic	Care professionals (e.g. nurses, child minders in nurseries)
Public-voluntary	Informal or formal reproductive labour	no	Group solidarity	Volunteer care workers either professionals or informal carers

Carol Thomas (1993: 651-653) has discerned seven dimensions that should be taken into account in research on care, namely 1) the social identity of the carer, 2) the social identity of the care recipient, 3) the inter-personal relationship between the carer and care recipient, 4) the nature of care, 5) the social domain within which the caring relationship is located, 6) the economic character of the care relationship and the institutional setting in which care is delivered. Table 1 summarises the different dimensions outlined by Thomas. This research focuses then on marketised informal reproductive labour, which takes place in the private domain of the household and includes care for children, the

elderly and the infirm, as well as housekeeping and other domestic tasks. The social identity of the carer can be a migrant or a national, woman or a man, having a regular or irregular work permit, and with or without a labour contract. Moreover, in the Italian context there is a continuum of possible modes of employment from a live-in (24 hours/6 days a week) or *notte e giorno* – form of work to an hourly based *lavoro ad ore*, where the worker does not live with the employer. In Italy, the common term applied to an elderly caretaker is *badante*, which is considered demeaning, whilst *assistente familiare* (care assistant) is the more correct term. Child minders are commonly referred to as baby sitters or *tata*.

2.1.4 Globalising Reproductive Labour

Care and domestic labour migrations have added an important dimension to the ways in which care is commodified in the context of globalisation. Reproductive labour is increasingly commodified across nation-state borders, as the growing research literature on the subject has demonstrated (e.g. Anderson 2000; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Hochschild 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Isaksen 2010a; Lutz 2002; Lutz 2008a; Parreñas 2001; Yeates 2009). Globalising capitalist economy encompasses not only production but also reproduction (Sassen 1998; 2003a; 2003b). However, unlike manufacturing goods, where production can be relocated to parts of the world with lower labour costs, care and domestic work is a non-transferable, labour-intensive form of (re)production that requires the availability of cheap labour *in situ* (Yeates 2004: 93).

In this strand of the literature, globalising care has been defined as a ‘global commodification of reproductive labour’ (Anderson 2000); ‘globalising mothering’ (Parreñas 2001); ‘transnational motherhood’ (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Lutz 2002), ‘new international division of reproductive labour’ (Yeates 2009) and ‘global care chains’ (Hochschild 2000). These perspectives emphasise the global or international divisions of reproductive labour, but some focus on motherhood and overlook other forms of caregiving, especially elderly care and skilled care labour.

The notion that has found the most resonance within the research community is ‘global care chain’ (as an example of this is a special issue

dedicated to the concept in *Gender and Society* 2002). Arlie Hochschild's concept is valuable in being easily adapted to different forms of globalised care, although in her original definition the emphasis is on motherly care. Hochschild (2000: 131) defines global care chains as a 'series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring'. She gives an example of such a chain as 'an older daughter from a poor family who cares for her siblings while her mother works as a nanny caring for the children of a migrating nanny who, in turn, cares for the child of a family in a rich country'. Hochschild's concept has then been revisited and expanded to apply to skilled forms of care work and professional workers (Yeates 2009).

Hochschild's concept is useful in being gender-neutral, and in pointing out the interconnectedness of *unpaid* and *paid* forms of domestic and care work. It also draws attention to the importance of transnational networks in the globalisation of care. However, what is problematic in the notion is the univocal idea of transfers in a chain where the start of the chain in the global South suffers from care drain, whilst at the end of the chain in the global North people are getting 'care richer'. This gives a too-straightforward picture of globalising care processes. It connotes a simplistic and unilateral dependency between households in the developing and developed countries. 'Care markets' are globalised and care is 'commodified' not only in the countries of the 'centre', but also in the 'periphery', as several historical and contemporary analyses from different parts of the world have shown (e.g. Constable 1997; Hansen 1989; Moya 2007; Sanjek and Colen 1990; Sarti 2008). Moreover, the literature on transnational care and transnational families has demonstrated that migrant care workers continue providing care transnationally in their home countries (see e.g. Baldassar et al. 2007; Bryceson & Vuorela 2002). The 'global care chain' – perspective overlooks how migrant care workers manage to combine their own reproductive labour and continue to care transnationally. Finally, the original formulation of global care chains portrays these as feminine chains, overlooking care work done by men, both paid as well as unpaid (see e.g. Manalansan 2006 for critique). In my view, the 'global care chain' framework should explicitly analyse how the globalising of care is gendered in multiple ways. 'Global care chains' should not only be contextualised historically, but also geographically. Care chains involve different countries and cultures with different,

culturally specific logics of exchange (cf. Williams and Gavanas 2008). In order to grasp how global care chains and the globalisation of care are embedded in culturally specific forms of exchange, I propose the notion of ‘moral economy’ as a useful addition to this conceptual tool kit.

2.2 Paid Reproductive Labour in Italy: Continuities and Changes

Domestic service and the de-familialisation of reproductive labour has historically been a part of the lifestyle of wealthy families in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. Domestic service has long traditions as an occupation and social role (Sarti 2005: 408). In nineteenth-century Europe, domestic service was more common in the urbanised north than in the agrarian south (Reher 1998: 209, 229; Sarti 2006a: 223). However, in the big cities of the south such as Naples, domestic service was widespread. According to the census of 1871, 15.9 per cent of the active population was working in domestic service (as servants, cooks and gardeners) (Galasso 1978: 70). In the past, servants were often internal migrants who came from the countryside to work in cities, though with exceptions (Sarti 2006b). Moreover, in the colonies there were international migrant domestic workers already in early modern times (Sarti 2008). Thus, there are clear historical continuities in this form of labour from the past to present.

Domestic service has not always been a typically female occupation in Italy. Historian Angiolina Arru (1996: 253; see also Arru 1990) shows that in eighteenth-century Rome, for instance, the majority of servants were men. The feminisation of the occupation occurred during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Sarti 2010). Interestingly, with international migration it has become again a possible occupation for men, as the case of the Asian migrations to Italy show (Bartolomei 2005; Knights 1996; Näre 2010; Sarti 2006b; Sarti 2010; Scrinzi 2005; see also Gallo 2006).

Domestic service was disappearing in post-war Italy like in many other Western countries (Colombo 2005; Coser 1973), apart from the highest social classes. However, since the 1980s, and especially during the 1990s, there has been a steadily increasing demand in domestic and care workers in private households – demand that cuts across all

social strata (Alemani 2004; Näre forthcoming). This demand is due to a combination of factors, including demographic changes, familistic welfare regime, changes in women's labour and educational roles and limited changes in men's reproductive roles. The demand is also induced by an increased supply of relatively inexpensive migrant workers, which combined with state subsidies has made the private employment of migrant care workers also available to those social strata with limited income.³

There has then been a clear ethnification of paid reproductive labour in Italy: until the early 1980s, only 6 per cent of the domestic and care workers registered at the National Social Security Institute (INPS – Istituto Nazionale di Previdenza Sociale) were of migrant origin, by 1999 more than half were migrants, and by 2008 the ratio was already 78 per cent (INPS 2011; Sarti 2004: 18). Moreover, there has been a clear increase in the actual numbers of people working in paid reproductive labour in Italy.

It is difficult to acquire reliable data on immigration in Italy due to the high number of irregularly present migrants (see King 2002a for discussion), which is why the figures presented in the articles in this thesis also vary. In trying to find out data on the number of domestic and care workers in Italy, there is a huge variation in the figures presented by different entities. The Italian Social Security Institute (INPS) has data on the number of *registered* workers, i.e. for whom the employers pay social security taxes. According to INPS data there were over 660,000 domestic and care workers working in Italian households in 2008 (INPS 2011).⁴ However, the Social Study and Research Institute Censis drawing on data from the National Institute of Statistics in Italy (ISTAT) present a figure of 1.538 million domestic workers in 2009 (Censis 2010). According to ISTAT data, the number of domestic and care workers has increased by 500,000 people in less than ten years.

3 Using notions such as 'supply' and 'demand' is problematic, as they are simplistic and overtly economic terms. However, lacking better terms, I use the notions keeping in mind that the focus here is not on the economy in the traditional sense, but rather on the *moral* economy.

4 The figures from INPS underestimate the numbers of workers employed in this labour sector, as they are based on information provided by employers (Reyneri 2004: 73) and they exclude all irregular workers.

Nowadays, 10 per cent of Italian families or 2,412,000 employ a domestic or care worker in their home (Censis 2010: 5–6).

What are the reasons then behind the increase in the demand and supply for paid reproductive labour in Italy? To answer this let us take a closer look at the Italian gender, welfare and migration regimes.

2.2.1 Italian welfare and gender regimes

Italy, together with Spain, Portugal and Greece, constitute a specific Mediterranean welfare regime characterised by a high fragmentation of social policies, low level of public services and benefits for families with children, and lack of policies that would explicitly aim to ease the reconciliation of family-life and wage labour (Ferrera 1996; Gonzalez et al. 2000; Trifiletti 1999).⁵ Moreover, the gendered analyses of the Mediterranean welfare regime (Gonzalez et al. 2000; Trifiletti 1999) have emphasised that the Mediterranean states continue to treat women primarily as wives and mothers at the same time that there is a lack of labour market protection:

'If the state treats women (and other family members) principally on the basis of family roles as regards their duties but sends them unprotected onto the labour market in case of economic need, in a sense it exerts control over their paid and unpaid work because of the lack of minimum provisions and because care work is taken for granted.' (Trifiletti 1999: 54).

The Mediterranean welfare organisation can be termed as *familistic*,⁶ as family is given a fundamental role in providing the basic welfare services and protecting workers from labour market risks (such as unemployment), whereas the public service sector and social security systems remain undeveloped (Esping-Andersen 1996: 51; 2001: 139–140). Nevertheless, although Italy's welfare regime remains in many ways familistic compared to other European countries, there have been

5 By welfare regime, I understand the configuration of practices and policies regarding the production of care, including home and the market.

6 I use the terms familistic and familialistic interchangeably, as both are used in the research literature.

significant changes in welfare policies and gender orders, i.e. ‘cultural or legal assumptions about the rules, rights and obligations differently attributed to women and men’ (Gonzalez et al. 2000: 5). Italian gender orders have transformed over the past twenty years, which has created a generational gap: younger women are more economically independent and educated than their mothers. Moreover, there are significant regional differences in these developments, with the South lagging somewhat behind. I now briefly summarise the main changes that have affected the Italian gender regime.

The move from a Fordist economy to post-Fordist service economy, especially the growth of public welfare services in the later 1970s and early 1980s, created new employment opportunities for women in Italy (Ginsborg 2001: 34). With industrial employment declining, male employment came to a standstill in the 1980s, while female employment expanded (Bettio and Villa 2000: 163–165). Women’s occupational levels have continued to increase and, during 1997–2007, women’s occupation increased by 7.8 per cent (ISTAT 2008). This has altered the traditional male breadwinner model and weakened the figure of a unitary male provider. However, women’s employment rate in Italy, 46.6 per cent, is still significantly lower than the EU average of 58.3 per cent (EUROSTAT 2008). Again there are important regional differences: in South Italy less than a third (31.1 per cent) of women aged 15–64 are employed, in North-East Italy the corresponding figure is 57 per cent (ISTAT 2007a: 102). The female labour participation rates are even lower in Campania, the region of Naples (28.4 per cent) and in the City of Naples (24.8 per cent) (ISTAT 2007a: 108).

The increasing female labour participation has affected fertility rates that have dropped from an average of 1.6 children per woman in 1981 to 1.35 in 2006 (ISTAT 2008: 23). In recent years, the rate has increased slightly from the ultimate low of 1.19 children in 1995; however, 1.35 remains significantly lower than the EU-average of 1.52. The fertility rate in the South has dropped even more dramatically in the past two decades from 2.08 children per woman in 1985 to 1.33 in 2006. Simultaneously, the age at the birth of the first child has risen: in 1994 it was 27.7 years, in 2004 it was 28.3 (EUROSTAT 2006). In order to tackle the low fertility rates, which are closely related to women’s educational and employment expectations, to the continuity of maternal employment, and childcare and maternity-leave policies,

Italy has started to develop more family-friendly policies (Barbagli et al. 2003: 257–258; Meyers et al. 1999: 121).

Regarding maternity leave, Italy has quite a good coverage on a European level. The paid maternity leave in Italy is 20 weeks with a wage replacement rate of 80 per cent, which can be extended to 136 weeks (Meyers et al. 1999: 125). Italy has also paternity benefits, although according to my interviewees they are not very popular.⁷ However, there is no guaranteed childcare coverage for 0–2 year old children and only one in ten (11.3 per cent) of Italian infants between 0–2 years were in publicly funded childcare in 2004 (ISTAT 2008: 97, see also Saraceno 2003: 160). Again there are significant regional differences in the development of childcare. In Campania, the services for infants under 3 years are practically non-existent: only 1.5 per cent of children are in such care, whilst in Emilia-Romagna the rate is 27.5 per cent (ISTAT 2008: 97). The need to develop public early-age care services has finally been acknowledged by the government and it has launched a seven-year plan (2007–2013) to address these deficiencies. Moreover, the situation changes drastically at 3 years: 88 per cent of Italian children from that age onwards are in publicly funded childcare (Meyers et al. 1999: 125). In total, however, the expenditure for family support amounts only to 1.2 per cent of the GDP (ISTAT 2008: 28).

Although there have been significant transformations in the Italian gender regime, many aspects have remained unchanged. Firstly, whilst women's roles have undergone important changes, much less has changed for men. There are persistent gender inequalities regarding the time used for domestic and care work. According to time use surveys, Italian women spend 5 hours 20 minutes per day for domestic work and childcare, whilst men manage barely 1 hour 35 minutes a day (EUROSTAT 2006).

Thus, the lack of public childcare services, combined with women's increased labour participation and little help from male partners partly explains the increased demand for paid childcare and domestic work (see e.g. Anthias 2000: 25–27; Da Roit 2002: 40; Hoskyns and Orsini-Jones 1994: 11). However, women's labour participation remains low in Southern Italy. Thus, although these structural reasons are important

7 Following changes in the EU legislation, Italy is introducing an obligatory paternity leave of four days in order to encourage fathers to get more involved in the care of a newborn.

in explaining the demand for migrant carers and domestic workers, they need to be complemented with cultural factors. Many households employ live-in domestic workers even though the women are not working outside the home (Anderson 2000; Miranda 2002; Näre 2009). Hence, we need to understand the employment of a domestic worker (also) as a class-related phenomenon. It is closely connected to an upper-middle-class lifestyle according to which certain forms of household work are not considered proper for the *signore*, or madams of the households (Näre forthcoming). In these cases, the tensions between the domestic workers and their employers have the potential to become rather accentuated because of the close proximity of the women and the status difference between them (Rollins 1985). Moreover, a culture that emphasises the importance of home makes domestic chores such as cooking and cleaning much more laborious compared to Northern European countries (Näre 2009).

With decreasing fertility, Italy has the fastest ageing population in Europe. Life expectancy in Italy is the second longest in Europe: 78.3 years for men and 84 years for women (ISTAT 2008: 22). Whilst in 1961, less than ten per cent of the population were over 65 years old, in 1996 the percentage was 17 and in 2006 it was almost 20 (ISTAT 1997; ISTAT 2007b: 45). In fact, Italy alongside Germany has the highest rate of over 65-year-olds in Europe (ISTAT 2008: 18). Again there are some regional differences regarding ageing. Life expectancy in Campania is lower than in the north: 76.9 years for men and 82.7 years for women (ISTAT 2008: 22), and it is the only region in Italy that still has more young people under 15 than over 65-year-olds (ISTAT 2007b: 45). Nevertheless, Southern Italy is no exception regarding the demand for carers and domestic workers in households, as in the South public care services are even scarcer than in the North (Saraceno 2003: 12).

The Italian state has done little to deal with care provisions for the ageing population. This has created one of the factors from which this research stems: the growing marketising of care services in private households. Public care services for the elderly include public care homes and governmental allowances (*indennità di accompagnamento*, or attendance allowance) and municipal care allowances (*assegni di cura*) to compensate for the costs of care of old people who are not self-sufficient. Care allowances that are direct financial transfers to families encourage the private organisation of elderly care. Care allowances are

need-based subventions given to the care-receiver or her/his family and used to pay for private care assistance or given directly to the carer. The governmental allowances were originally intended for all disabled people but were extended to old people in the mid-1980s. In 2006, 1,490,000 people or 2.5 per cent of the total population were receiving care allowance from the state in Italy and the level of the allowance was 457.66 euro in 2007 (Da Roit et al. 2007: 657–659).⁸ However, regarding the *assegni di cura*, not all municipalities have such measures and they are more available in the North than in the South of Italy (Gori 2007). It has been argued that as these allowances have not been accompanied with ulterior measures to formalise care for the elderly, they also contribute to the informality of paid private care (Gori 2002: 28; see also Ungerson 2005).

Public care homes, on the other hand, are unevenly distributed in the territory and are seen negatively as the last solution for the ‘abandoned *nonni*’ (grandparents). Hence, the analysis also needs to consider the particular ‘care culture’, i.e. shared notions of what consists ‘good’ care (Williams and Gavanas 2008: 15–16). As the culture of home care – ideally by family members – lives on strongly, putting one’s parents in a care home is perceived as a demonstration of great disrespect. The same applies to private care homes, which are very expensive, often double or even triple the monthly salary of a live-in migrant carer (Dell’Oste 2007). This combination of deficient public services aimed at old people, high cost of private rest homes and especially a familistic culture that privileges home care over institutional care, produces what has been termed the Mediterranean form of ‘care drain’ (Bettio et al. 2006). Employing migrant workers has become one of the most common ways to address this ‘care drain’, which brings us to consider the Italian migration regime in general and the migration patterns of the three groups (Sri Lankan, Polish and Ukrainian) studied for this thesis in particular.

8 In Southern Italy, this payment can cover the pay of an irregular live-in migrant carer, which can be as low as 450 euro and that on average for regularised workers is 600-700 euro.

2.3 Italian Migration Regime and the Gendered Migrations from Sri Lanka, Ukraine and Poland

In order to understand Italian migration in its current forms we need to take into account Italy's long traditions as a country of emigration, which is why it took long for the country to acknowledge the presence of immigrants in its territory and to develop legislation to deal with immigration (King et al. 1997: 2; Zincone 2006). The year 1971 signalled for Italy a change from a country of emigration to one of immigration (King 2002b). The first immigrants to Italy were mainly Tunisian and Moroccan men who came to work in the fishing industry and agriculture in Sicily; Latin American refugees from Chile, Argentina and Uruguay; and female domestic workers from different countries, such as Eritrea, Cape Verde, Somalia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines (Andall 2000: 113–142; Chell 1997: 75–77; Parreñas 2001: 5; Petrillo 1999: 234; Pugliese 1996: 108). In fact, domestic work was one of the few established routes to enter the country regularly as a jobseeker. A so-called nominative system (*chiamata nominativa*) existed for domestic work until 1999 (Allasino et al. 2004: 7). Under this system, an employment contract could be established between the employer and a foreign national, but only after verifying the unavailability of Italian nationals for the job (Andall 2000: 120). However, although the Italian government tried to emphasise preferences for national employees, it was clear that there was a demand for foreign workers who were willing to work as live-ins and to whom it was not obligatory to pay insurance contributions (Andall 1998: 130–131).

When older migration countries in Europe were restricting immigration after the oil crisis of 1973, the Italian borders remained rather loosely controlled and it was easy to access the country both regularly (as tourists) and overstay, or in a clandestine manner from the long coastal border (King and Rybaczuk 1993: 178–179). In fact, an important factor in defining migration in Italy is the country's geographical position in the Mediterranean and its long shores, which contributes to the continuous presence of irregular migrants in the country.

Italy became a major destination country for immigrants in the mid-1980s, when it was estimated that more than 100,000 people migrated to the country yearly (Reyneri 1998). If immigration to Italy had gone relatively unnoticed in the 1970s and 1980s, the event that received huge public and media attention was the arrival of the Albanian migrants to the Italian shores in the beginning of the 1990s (see e.g. King & Mai 2008). This began an overall trend of Eastern Europeanisation of migration in Italy: while, in the early 1990s, a third of migrants in Italy were from other European countries, in 2009 the fraction was over half (51.9%) (Caritas/Migrantes, 2007; ISTAT demo).

From 1971 until the end of 1990s, the migrant population of Italy has approximately doubled every decade (from 156,000 in 1971 to 332,000 in 1981 to 649,000 in 1991 and to 1,252,000 in 1999) (King 2002a). Compared to the development in the 1990s, the first decade of the 2000s has meant an even stronger increase. From 1999 to 2009 the migrant population in Italy has more than tripled from 1.3 million to 4.2 million (ISTAT demo). Out of the top ten nationalities present in Italy today, half are Eastern European: Romanians are the biggest group, followed by Albanians, Moroccans, Chinese and Ukrainians. Poles are the eight biggest group in Italy nowadays, and Sri Lankans the fifteenth biggest group (ISTAT demo).⁹ In Naples, however, Ukrainians are the biggest group, followed by Romanians, Sri Lankans, Chinese and Polish. At the time of my fieldwork in 2005, the three main groups in Naples were Ukrainians (11,596), Polish (3,576) and Sri Lankans (3,147) (ISTAT demo).

Characteristic to the Italian migration space are the high levels of irregularity and labour market informality. Italy seeks to manage migration through regularising migrants that are illegally present in the territory and since 1997 through yearly planning quotas, which in recent years have started to resemble general amnesties in terms of volume. The annual quota system by which a migrant worker can be hired and regularised on an Italian employer's direct request is intended for migrant job seekers who are not yet present in the Italian territory.

9 According to the statistics from 2009, the ten biggest migrant communities in Italy were Romania (887,763), Albania (466,684), Morocco (431,529), China (188,352), Ukraine (174,129), Philippines (123,584), India (105,863), Poland (105,608), Moldova (105,600) and Tunisia (103,678). There were 75,343 Sri Lankans in 2009 in Italy.

However, in practice it is used by migrants who are already working in the country and seek legalisation (Smargiassi 2006). The length of the stay permit for non-EU-nationals is one year, if the labour contract he/she has is temporary, or two years, if the contract is permanent. Tying the stay permit to a work contract and given that the permits are short-term (1–2 years) and bureaucratic processes for renewing permits are very slow, it can be difficult to stay ‘regular’, even if one would have the stay permit in the first place. Moreover, tying the stay permit to an existing work contract, especially in the context of domestic work, enforces the workers dependency on their individual employers. Furthermore, during my research period, EU-nationals, such as Poles, were able to apply for a *carta di soggiorno*, a 5-year residence permit.¹⁰

Migrations are always gendered processes, i.e. migration is always influenced by the local and global gender structures and inequalities. The three migrant groups that I have studied are good examples of how gender configures in the structural reasons for migration and in actual migration patterns.

2.3.1 Sri Lankan Migrations

The reasons behind emigration from Sri Lanka are manifold, including the growth of income disparities due to structural adjustment programmes imposed by IMF and the World Bank (DeVotta 1998: 466–467), which fuelled existing ethnic disparities within Sri Lanka and were one of the triggers for the civil war between Tamil separatists and the Sinhalese government in 1983.¹¹ In the aftermath of the civil war, Sri Lanka endured a period of repression and terror by the right-wing government and nationalist Sinhala youth movement in 1987–1991 (De Alwis 1998: 185). During this period, thousands of left-wing activists were murdered, imprisoned and forced to flee the country – many ended up in Europe and Italy. In December 2004, Sri Lanka

10 This was in 2007 replaced by an EC Long-Term Residence Permit.

11 The civil war was fought between the Sinhalese government and the Tamil separatists mainly in the northern parts of the island in the Tamil districts. It cannot be reduced to an ethnic conflict, but needs to be understood as the outcome of a series of events that can be traced back to colonial heritage, to Sinhalese ethno-nationalist politics and to the neo-liberal economic restructuring (Bush 2003: 179–183; De Mel 2007: 35).

suffered again from a catastrophe. This time it was the tsunami that killed more than 30,000 on the island, left more than 6,300 missing and over 400,000 displaced. The aftermath of the tsunami was instrumental in inducing new conflicts between the Sinhalese government and the Tamil Tigers.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the economic boom in the Gulf fed the construction and service sectors and attracted labour migrants from various South and South-East Asian countries (Castles 1998: 3). Labour migration from Sri Lanka to oil-exporting countries in the Middle East began in the mid-1970s as male migration, which was soon followed by women migrating primarily for domestic work (Brochmann 1990: 81–82). Hence, these mobilities were clearly gendered in that men worked in typically masculine occupations whilst women worked in conventionally feminine jobs. In contrast, Sri Lankan migration to Italy is different in that both men and women predominantly work in the domestic labour sector – at least in the South where employment opportunities in the industry and construction are scarcer. In 1985, emigration became a government strategy to combat growing unemployment and worsening economic conditions in Sri Lanka. The state established the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) whose aim was to promote and manage foreign employment. Migration was made into an organised ‘industry’ involving government programmes for the promotion of migration and legal brokers (cf. Castles 2007: 361; Goss and Lindquist 1995; IOM 2005: 103–125).

Sri Lankan migration to Italy has taken different forms: it started mainly as female migration mediated by the Catholic Church through the ‘nominative calls’ and continued as family reunification (see e.g. De Filippo & Pugliese 2000; Näre 2007). When these ways of entries were closed or restricted by changes in immigration laws, aspiring immigrants had to resort to alternative ways of entry including tourist visas to other Schengen countries or irregular border crossings organised by smugglers. Thus, transnational kin networks and other social networks as well as formal and informal institutions have played an important role in Sri Lankan migration to Italy (cf. Boyd 1989, Faist 2000).

2.3.2 Ukrainian and Polish Migrations

One of the most dramatic transformations of the past twenty years in Europe has been the collapse of the Soviet regime and the ensuing migration movements from the Eastern bloc to various Southern and Western European countries due to political and economic reasons (see Tishkov et al. 2005; Wallace and Stola 2001). Italy has been a popular destination for Eastern European migrants. Next, I will discuss the reasons behind migrations from Poland followed by a similar discussion concerning Ukraine.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Poland underwent the first and most radical privatisation in the Eastern bloc under the so-called Balcerowicz plan (Bryant 1998: 16). The Balcerowicz plan meant 'leaping' to the market and making the 'transition' from a centralised economy to market capitalism in one 'big-bang' (De Boer-Ashworth 2000: 80).¹² According to the neo-liberal economists' theories, privatisation would be accompanied by 'spontaneous proliferation of benevolent market-activity' that would automatically lead to necessary socio-political changes (Bull and Ingham 1998: 2). History proved neo-liberal economists terribly wrong. The privatisation of state-owned enterprises was a complex matter in a country that had no rich entrepreneurs to buy the state companies (De Boer-Ashworth 2000: 93). With the closing down of state factories, unemployment skyrocketed from more or less nil in 1989 to 2 million in 1992 or 12 per cent of the total workforce (Mason 1993: 46–48). The social impacts of the 'transition' were even more dramatic. In 1992, the real family income was 71 per cent and the suicide rate was 162 per cent of what it was in 1989 (Bryant 1998: 17). According to figures from UNICEF, during the period 1990–96 seven per cent of the population lived under the poverty line of 1 dollar per day (UNICEF 1998: 116).

It is against the backdrop of these dramatic structural changes that the recent migration from Poland needs to be analysed. Migration and

12 I prefer to put the notion of 'transition' in inverted commas to highlight the problematic connotations that the term carries referring to a transition from an 'abnormal' state of affairs, i.e. socialism, to the 'normal' order of capitalism. Katherine Verdery (1996: 205) has argued that these metaphors of 'big bang' and 'shock therapy' portray Western economists as doctors who seek to cure the people from the mental illness of socialism.

various forms of mobility have become means to tackle unemployment and a general lack of future prospects for thousands of Poles. According to the data from the Central Population Register in Poland, from the 1990s onwards, long-term migration from Poland has constantly been over 20,000 people per year. Labour Force Survey data, which also reflects seasonal and other temporary migration, shows that in 2006 over 430,000 Poles stayed abroad for more than two months, which is the highest figure since 1994 (Kepinska 2006: 33–36). In 2006, the first five destinations for Polish migrants were the United Kingdom, Germany, United States, Italy and Ireland. These recent labour migration flows have also been described as brain drain as it is estimated that half of the Polish migrants are graduates (Longarzo 2006: 28).

Like Poland, the roots of contemporary migration from Ukraine lie in the post-socialist 'transition' and the economic crises that followed. For Ukraine, which was fully integrated into the Soviet economy, the collapse of the Soviet regime caused a dramatic economic crisis: GDP fell by 14.2 per cent in the first two years of independence (and by 22.9 per cent in 1994) and the inflation rate skyrocketed to 5,371 per cent in 1993 (Wilson 2003: 106). Subsequently, economic reforms were made and a national currency was introduced in 1995. However, in 1998 the country experienced another financial crisis caused by foreign investors withdrawing their investments from the country (Segura 2002: 93–97). This led to the devaluation of the currency and to a new increase in inflation. It was not until 2000 that Ukraine experienced its first year of real growth since independence (Segura 2002: 94; Wilson 2003: 108).

The social and human costs of the economic collapse have been dramatic. In the decade 1990–2000, Ukraine's ranking in the Human Development Index dropped from 45th to 80th. This was due to decreases in both income (per capita income decreased by 42 per cent in 1992–2000) and life expectancy, which declined from 70.5 years in 1990 to 67.9 years in 2000 (UNDP 2003: 13). In recent years, the life expectancy in Ukraine has continued to stagnate – it was 67.7 years in 2005 (UNDP 2007/2008). Even more dramatic is the gender gap in life expectancy – 62 years for men compared to 73.6 for women. The reasons for men's high mortality lay in the poor lifestyles that include drinking, smoking and poor diet (Cockerham et al. 2005). Furthermore, one third of the population has suffered from mental disorders in their lifetime and again the gender differences are telling: men suffer from alcohol-

related and mood disorders, whereas the most common diagnoses for women are mood and anxiety disorders (Bromet et al. 2005). These human costs of 'transition' were reflected in my research.

The economic collapse and its social costs constitute the backdrop for the recent emigration from Ukraine. Estimates of the number of Ukrainians who have left the country in 1990–2002 vary widely from 1 to 7 million (Malynovska 2004: 14–15). According to UN statistics, between 1996 and 2001 over 1.16 million Ukrainians emigrated (UNDP 2003). Currently, according to the figures also confirmed by the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, there are 7 million Ukrainians living abroad, 4.5 million of these in the ex-Soviet Union (Ricci 2006: 53).¹³ According to a sociological study conducted at the Ukrainian Academy of Science in 2005, 12 per cent of Ukrainian families had at least one member working abroad; in western parts of Ukraine this figure was as high as 21 per cent. The study also reveals that especially Ukrainians from small cities have migrated (Ricci 2006: 50). Similarly, data on human development indicators show the regional disparities in Ukraine: the central regions around the capital Kyiv being much better off than the border regions to the west, south and south-east (UNDP 2003: 36–37). These facts were also reflected in my research: most informants came from cities in the border regions, such as Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Kherson and Donetsk.

During the first part of the 1990s, migration from Ukraine was characterised by long-term migration to the US, Germany and Israel. Around the turn of the millennium, migration patterns changed to more short-term labour migration and various new destination countries started to attract Ukrainians. Among these emerging destination countries were Southern European countries. Characteristic to this East-South migration is its gendered labour pattern (Morokvasic 2003; Näre 2011). The construction boom in Portugal in the early 2000s opened possibilities for Ukrainian men (Marques and Góis 2007). Concurrently, Ukrainian women left for Italy for domestic and care work. Moreover, the new EU-member states in Central Europe, notably Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary have become important destination countries for Ukrainian migrants (Ricci 2006: 53). In fact,

13 However, one should regard these figures with caution, as they might be overestimations (Michael Eve, personal communication, 4/9/2007).

manifold migration chains and networks have recently emerged in the Central and Eastern Europe, especially for seasonal and care labour. For instance, while Poles migrate to Germany for seasonal and domestic work, Ukrainians migrate to Poland to do these same jobs (Ricci 2006: 54).

Women are over-represented in both the Ukrainian and Polish community: 79 per cent of Ukrainian migrants and 71 per cent of Polish migrants in Italy are women (ISTAT demo). This reflects the fact that Ukrainians and Poles are mainly employed in labour sectors that are socially constructed as feminine, namely in care and domestic labour.

3. Theoretical Approaches

In this section, I discuss the theoretical resources of the thesis. Theoretical notions have influenced the research process, *a priori*, but they are also conceptualisations emerging from the empirical data. The epistemological starting point of my research is that objects of social research are constructed by social scientists (Bourdieu 2000: 9; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 5); they are not fixed ideas, existing ‘somewhere out there’, but rather negotiated and contested in the research and by researchers. Accordingly, the course of the research, from conducting fieldwork to the data analysis and writing-up, has been a reflexive process, in which there have been moves back and forth between data and theory, deduction and induction. For instance, the choice of using theories on moral economy to understand the phenomenon stem inductively from the data. I became initially interested in the multiple meanings of the notion of *brava* during the very first stages of my fieldwork. Moreover, it needs to be said that the research concepts used in this work starting from ‘migrant’ and ‘domestic worker’ to gender, ‘race’/ethnicity and social class, are all socially constructed in specific historical moments and across geographical spaces (cf. Banton 2011; Bourdieu 1991: 105). In the initial stages of the analysis I approached the research data in an inductive way. The result of this approach, the notions and the social categories, are presented in the following section. In the interview transcripts gendered notions, social class distinctions, references to national background and ethnic, cultural identities as well as racial descriptions abound. Moreover, an umbrella notion of ‘migrant’ *immigrato/straniero* was a powerful trope used by the research participants to describe their own subjectivities and positions, as well as the positions of others.

The first part of this section presents the intersectional framework as a fruitful approach to social categories. This is followed by an examination of moral economy as a theoretical approach. The third part examines how migration has been understood in this thesis through the lens of transnationalism.

3.1 An Intersectional Approach to Social Categories

Following Anthony Giddens' understanding of social structures, I understand social categories as generative rules and resources that:

'implies recognising the existence of a) knowledge – as memory traces– of “how things are to be done” (said, written), on the part of social actors; b) social practices organised through the recursive mobilisation of that knowledge; c) capabilities that the production of those practices presupposes.' (Giddens 1979: 64).

Social categories and structures are not external to individuals, neither should they be understood as the sum of the individual acts, nor is agent the mere 'bearer' of structures (Bryant and Jary 1991: 7–8). They are the outcome of a dual process of practices that are both enabling and constraining individual agents (Giddens 1984: 25). Social categories can be at the same time sources of recognition, pleasure and self-identity, as well as a means for discrimination and injustice. Although as analytical categories it is possible to define the concepts separately, in any individual's experiences they are mutually constitutive. This is the starting point for intersectional analysis.

Moreover, social categories are spatially and temporally located. Thus, there is no universal understanding of gender, sexuality, 'race', ethnicity or social class; what is meant by these concepts, and even the terminology used, varies across time and space.¹⁴ In the following discussion, I outline how I have understood the key social categories gender, social class, 'race'/ethnicity and migrancy and how I have applied intersectional analysis to my research.

14 For instance, in continental Europe the notion of 'race' is much less used in the academic literature than in the US and Britain due to its extremely negative connotations with the history of eugenics and holocaust.

3.1.1 Gender

In my research, I understand gender as the social meanings, relationships and identities that are based on reproductive differences and the division of people into male and female (Connell 1987: 140). Moreover, gender is quintessentially about power relationships (Scott 1986: 1067). However, this division to male/female is contingent and comes with a cost, as Judith Butler reminds us:

'Gender is not exactly what one "is" or precisely what one "has". (...) To assume that gender always and exclusively means the matrix of the "masculine" and "feminine" is precisely to miss the critical point that the production of that coherent binary is contingent, that it comes at a cost, and that those permutations of gender which do not fit the binary are as much a part of gender as its most normative instance' (Butler 2004: 42).

Drawing attention to how the masculine/feminine gender and male/female sex binary is laboured and performed at cost, Butler's definition opens up rather well as to what is meant by the statement that gender is socially constructed. It shows how these concepts are always relational: one is always 'doing' with or for another, even if the other is only imaginary (Butler 2004: 1). Central to this approach is the idea that the meanings and practices of 'doing-gender' vary not only across cultures and historical periods, but also within a given culture. It also emphasises that sex/gender is embedded in regulative power/knowledge practices. The need to 'do' one's gender is required not only from those who subvert the normative order, but also from those who are positioned as 'hegemonic'. As Raymond Williams (1977: 112) reminds, 'lived hegemony' is not passive but 'a process (...) [that] has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own'.

Furthermore, Butler (2004) shows that questions of gender and sex cannot be separated from sexuality nor from institutional norms of what constitutes kinship or a family. She demonstrates that the regulations of gender/sex/sexuality are connected to the materiality of bodies. In sum, gender is then culturally, socially, politically and individually maintained, reproduced and laboured and embedded in

power relations. All this provides a good starting point when thinking about 'race' and ethnicity.

3.1.2 'Race' and Ethnicity

Like gender, 'race' is a socially constructed, dynamic and historically and territorially bounded notion, which is used to inscribe certain 'racial markers' to bodies. However, differently to 'gender', the notion carries a heavy historical baggage of racial hierarchies, eugenics, racist practices and discourses that make its use highly problematic. It is a concept that is simultaneously totally arbitrary and socially constructed, yet referring to the materiality of bodies and visual differences. Writing about 'race' is problematic because in the process one easily inscribes bodies with racial markers that might transform into fixed identities (Nayak 2006). To mark the problematic nature of the concept, it has become common to use inverted commas when writing 'race' – a convention I also follow.¹⁵

There have been exhaustive analyses of the historical constructions of the idea of 'race' (e.g. Banton 1998; Barkan 1996; Stepan 1982) that show changes in the meanings of the concept of 'race' from 'any geographical, religious, class-based or color-based grouping' (Barkan 1996: 2) to the social Darwinist, scientific discourses (Malik 1996: 73–100). This latter, scientific discourse on 'race' emerged as an ideological defence and justification of the growing slave trade (Stocking 1968: 36–38). It occurred simultaneously and dialectically with the construction of a hegemonic notion of whiteness as an exclusively European category (Bonnett 2000: 19–26). Moreover, the scientific discourse on 'race' was inherently connected to discourses of social class, gender and sexuality (McClintock 1995: 42–51). In the aftermath of the war, in 1950, the biological and scientific basis of 'race' was rebutted in the UNESCO Statement on Race, which marked the end of scientific racism in the

15 This practice has been attributed to the influence of Robert Miles in Britain (Mason 1999: 19; Miles 1993: 3)

mainstream science (Barkan 1996: 341).¹⁶ Hence, the concept of 'race' can be said to be doubly socially constructed: as a category that has no biological basis and as a concept that has had different meanings in different times. Relating 'race' to skin colour is a quite recent use of the term. However, nowadays boundaries between concepts of 'race', ethnicity and national identity vary both in academic literature as well as in political and policy practices, such as Census categories.

Whilst 'race' is used as a term to refer to group distinctions and discriminations based on some kind of 'phenotypical' or biological markers, 'ethnicity' has been added to groups based on shared cultural origins. However, some authors have included a cultural dimension to the concept of 'race'. For instance, according to Floya Anthias (1990: 20), 'race' relies on a 'notion of a biological or cultural immutability of a group that has already been attributed as sharing a common origin', whilst ethnicity is 'the identification of particular cultures as ways of life or identity which are based on a historical notion of origin or fate, whether mythical or "real"'. This definition perceives 'race' as more immutable and fixed, whilst 'ethnicity' seems to refer to more contingent processes of identification.¹⁷ In fact, Stuart Hall (2000) has argued that binary opposition between the biological and the cultural in the meanings of 'race' and ethnicity is being disrupted by contemporary diasporas and multiculturalism:

'The biological referent is therefore never wholly absent from discourses of ethnicity, though it is more indirect. The more ethnicity matters, the more its characteristics are represented as relatively fixed, inherent within a group, transmitted from generation to generation, not just by culture and education, but by biological inheritance, stabilized above all by kinship and endogamous marriage rules that ensure that the ethnic group remains genetically, and therefore culturally 'pure'. (Hall 2000: 223).

16 However, as Jenny Reardon (2004: 42) has noted, despite humanists' and social scientists' declarations on the demise of scientific racism, several scientists continue to argue the contrary (see also Mason 1999 on discussions of biological theories of race in social sciences). It is thus important to be explicit in claiming that 'race' has no biological foundation, i.e. that it has no basis in genetics.

17 Such distinctions have sometimes led to debates over the hierarchical importance of the basis of exclusion (Mason 1999: 24). The tendency to rank forms of racism based on (cultural) ethnicity or (biological) 'race' was apparent in the debate over the use of the concept of 'black' in Britain (see e.g. Bonnett 2000b: 117; Modood 1988; 1990; Rattansi 1992; Werbner and Modood 1997).

However, focusing mainly on 'racism' and racial discrimination can easily overlook the fact that ethnic and racial identities could provide a positive basis for identification and collective action. Thus, Omi and Winant (1994) suggest a move from the study of 'races' to the study of racial formation, i.e. to 'race as an autonomous field of social conflict, political organization, and cultural/ideological meaning' (Omi and Winant 1994: 48). Howard Winant (2000: 185) has defined this critique of racial objectivism as a 'critical, processual theory of race', which needs to take into consideration political relationships, globalisation and changes in historical time. Similarly, drawing on Benedict Anderson's analysis of nation-states, Martin Bulmer and John Solomos (1999: 5) define racial and ethnic groups as 'imagined communities' – a notion that also resonates with Fredrik Barth's (1969) classic work on ethnic boundaries. According to Barth (1969: 15), the research focus should concentrate on 'the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses'. I agree with these moves away from the study of objectified 'racial' groups towards critical, processual conceptualisations of race. Focusing on the ways in which ethnic and racial groups are imagined and processual formations, shifts the attention from the 'essence' of such groups to the ways in which their boundaries are symbolically and practically constructed.

What about the concept of 'race' in the Italian context? In Italy, racial theories and racist thinking is intertwined with Italian colonial history and the Fascist regime. Italian racism culminated in the Racist Laws of the 1930s, which were first aimed at non-Europeans and people of mixed 'race' in the colonies, and then at the Jews (De Napoli 2012). In 1938, the fascist regime published a 'Manifesto of racial scientists', which outlined the nature of the Italian 'race'. According to the manifesto, Italians were an individual, Aryan 'race', and hence closely related to Germans (Gillette 2001). Racial thinking continues to be present in the contemporary Italian society, which is characteristically lacking of post-colonial reflection (Arnone 2011; Riccio 2002). Studies on second-generation youth in Italy, for instance, (see e.g. Andall 2002; Bianchi 2011) demonstrate that colour-line and existing racism continues to be a significant cause of marginalisation for the youth who are Italian citizens, but who have a migration background.

Finally, it is important to move the critical gaze from the racial 'others' to the hegemonic positions (see e.g. Dyer 1997; Frankenberg

1993; Lipsitz 1998), and to overcome binaries such as black/white by looking at the multiplicity of identifications and categorisations. This is the approach taken by feminists working within the framework of intersectionality, researchers working within the ‘mixed race’ paradigm and by postcolonial thinkers that theorise diasporic, métisse and hybrid identities and cultural forms (see e.g. Alcoff 2000; Anzaldúa 1987; Bhabha 1994; Brah 1996; Brah and Phoenix 2004; Clifford 1997; Collins 1998; Crenshaw 1994; Parker and Song 2001; Song 2003). Notions of diaspora and hybridity are used to refer to multiple belongings of mixed origins (e.g. Alcoff 2000; Anzaldúa 1987; Werbner and Modood 1997). In this research, I adopt the intersectional approach that analyses ‘race’ and ethnicity in conjunction with other social categories, such as migrancy to which I turn next.

3.1.3 Migrancy

According to the Oxford English Dictionary *migrancy* refers to ‘the state or condition of being a migrant; the existence of a migrant population; migrants as a class or group’. I use *migrancy* to refer to the socially constructed subjectivity of being a migrant that in the Italian context can be translated to *immigrato* or *extra-comunitario* = third country national, or *straniero/a* foreigner (*straniero/a*). Migrancy is the outcome of citizenship practices and the arbitrary ways in which nation-states define their boundaries. However, it is also related to racial, ethnic, religious and social class inscriptions, when, for instance, citizens who have no own migration history are still effected by the parents’ or grandparents’ migrations. Migrancy can then be understood as a social category that is inscribed to certain bodies by the larger society in everyday as well as legislative practices. Very seldom – if ever – it is a subjectivity embraced by those who have actually migrated, which is why migrants from wealthy countries prefer to call themselves expatriates. However, in many cases the common, shared experience of being a migrant can bring people together across citizenship and cultural boundaries (see also Ahmed 2000: 94). This was, for instance, apparent when in Naples people from different national backgrounds marched together for their right to obtain a stay permit or when they organised events to raise money for the victims of the tsunami. There are of course differences

within the category of migrants just as there are in other social categories. Sharham Khosravi (2010) illustrates captivately how he internalised the shame attached to being an ‘illegal’ migrant in Sweden and how he pretended to be a quota refugee in order to avoid the stigmatised subjectivities of being a ‘bogus’ asylum seeker or a ‘criminal’ who had paid smugglers for getting to Sweden. Hence, although the boundaries of migrancy are fluid and contingent, as a social category it has very concrete effects in people’s lives.

3.1.4 Social Class

Another key concept in my research is social class. I draw on Pierre Bourdieu’s social theory (1984; 1986; 2000) in my understanding of social class and especially Beverley Skeggs’s (2004a) elaboration of his theory. Central to Bourdieu’s theory is the acknowledgment of different forms of capital, social, cultural and symbolic, which exist besides for economic capital (Bourdieu 1986: 241–242). Beverley Skeggs (2004a: 1–26) has elaborated Bourdieu’s notion of class further in discussing how social class processes are gendered and racialised through the processes of inscription. Skeggs emphasises how categories of class, gender and ‘race’ are based on multiple forms of exchange whereby some characteristics are marked good, bad, valuable or valueless and then differently inscribed to individual bodies. These processes of value giving and exchange are both economic and moral. Skeggs’ elaboration draws attention to how inscription processes are evaluated differently depending on the cultural and social meaning attributed to certain bodies and on the logics of particular fields. This explains why some classifications and inscriptions can be a resource for some and restrictive for others (Skeggs 2004a: 3; cf. Giddens 1984). These elaborations are important because Bourdieu omitted gender and ‘race’ as central social categories from the main body of his work.¹⁸ This omission does not mean that his theoretical concepts could not be – and have not been –

18 When he has explicitly analysed gender relations in *Outline of a Theory of Practice, Logic of Practice* and *Masculine Domination* feminist theorists have been critical of his analysis of gender relations as overtly structuralist (Lovell 2000; Witz 2004: 213).

useful in analysing relations that involve multiple constructions not only of class relations, but also of gendered, racial and ethnic differences.¹⁹

3.1.5 Intersectionality

In order to think about the ways in which identities are multiple and formed by the simultaneous and mutually constitutive workings of social categories, such as gender, social class, ‘race’, ethnicity, nationality, age and sexuality etc., I have found the intersectional approach very useful (see e.g. Brah and Phoenix 2004; Collins 1998; Crenshaw 1994; Yuval-Davis 2006). Brah and Phoenix (2004) offer a useful definition of ‘intersectionality’:

‘We regard the concept of “intersectionality” as signifying the complex, irreducible, varied and variable effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts.’ (Brah and Phoenix 2004: 76).

This definition offers an alternative to thinking through fixed notions of bounded categories (gender, social, class etc.) by replacing them with the concept of ‘differentiation’. Hence, we should think of gendered, sexual, class, racial and ethnic differentiations as not only inter-acting and inter-secting, but also *intra*-acting and *intra*-secting (Lykke 2005). Nina Lykke argues that the notion of intra-action draws attention to how non-bounded phenomena mutually transform each other when in contact. Lykke’s formulation highlights how social categories that produce forms of in/ and ex/clusion are mutually constructed and already transformed. In a similar vein, Parker and Song (2001: 17) speak

19 Just to mention some of the appropriations of Bourdieu, Beverley Skeggs (1997; 2004a; 2004b), Steph Lawler (1999; 2000) and Diane Reay (1998; 2004) have used Bourdieu’s concepts of capital in their analysis of working class women and mothers. Lois McNay (1999; 2000) and Lisa Adkins (2003) have used Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and field to conceptualise agency from a feminist perspective. Bridget Fowler (1997; 2003); Terry Lovell (2000; 2004), Leslie McCall (1992) and Toril Moi (1991) have discussed Bourdieu’s usefulness for feminist thought. Paul Connolly (1987) has argued for the utility of Bourdieu’s theory of practice as way to conceptualise racism that goes beyond essentialism. Ghassan Hage (2000) has used Bourdieu’s theories in empirical research on white race and nationalism; G. Carter Bentley (1987) to discuss ethnic identification and mobilisation, and David Parker (2000) to analyse a ‘diasporic habitus’.

of transectional analysis that ‘brings home how racialisation is transected by other formative social relations: class, gender and sexuality.’

However, in practice, we tend to approach social categories separately as more or less bounded entities, as it is otherwise difficult to grasp them analytically. Hence, my analysis will be *intersectional* rather than *intra-sectional* in that it will analyse how distinct social categories configure in everyday practices.

Moreover, although I have discussed concepts of ‘race’/ethnicity, gender, social class and migrancy at length, this does not mean that other identity categories and bases of differentiation such as religion and ability would not be significant. For instance, the importance of religion as a basis of discrimination has been signalled by many researchers, especially in the form of anti-Muslim racism in the post-9/11 world (e.g. Allen 2005). In Catholic Italy, religion played an important role as an axis of in/exclusion. In Naples, I met Somali domestic workers who reported open intolerance and hostility due to their faith and recounted stories of symbolic and physical violence due to the particular intersections of racial and religious otherness. In contrast, Polish domestic workers sharing the Catholic religion with Italians operated as a clear resource and guarantor of a good reputation for Polish domestic workers.

3.2 Paid Reproductive Labour as a Moral Economy

The relationship between economy and the existing social system has been one of the most important questions in social theory starting from the classics of sociology and political economists. However, during the 19th and 20th century there was an attempt to ‘purify’ economics from its connections to ethical and moral questions, which according to Alvey (2000) is alien to the discipline (see also Kauppinen 2004). In fact, it is widely recognised that the ‘father’ of economic liberalism, Adam Smith, never perceived economics free from ethics and moral theory (Alvey 2000; Boulding 1969; Young 1997). The concept of moral economy draws attention to the fact that economic and labour relations are always embedded in moral and ethical notions, and this is also in the case of paid reproductive labour. What is meant by moral economy

differs according to the discipline from which we approach the idea. In what follows, I will discuss some of these approaches and explain how I have used the notion in my research.

In economic anthropology, the idea of 'moral economy' has been understood as a way to think about economic activity, which is not about profit maximisation but rather related to the maintenance of social values and relations (Polanyi 1977). Moral economy is then a central notion in economic anthropology, especially in the theorisation on 'cultural economics' (see e.g. Wilk 1996). According to David Cheal (1988: 15), moral economy refers to 'a system of transactions which are defined as socially desirable (i.e. moral), because through them social ties are recognized, and balanced social relationships are maintained.' In Cheal's definition, 'moral' equals something that is perceived as desirable by society. Moral economy is then functional in the maintaining of solidarity and social cohesion (see also Meillassaux 1981). As a form of 'reciprocity' and as gift economy, the notion has also been related to households (Silverstone et al. 1992). According to Silverstone et al. (1992), the household is a moral economy in that it is 'part of a transactional system, dynamically involved in the public world of the production and exchange of commodities and meanings' (Silverstone et al. 1992: 19). In these definitions, moral economy refers to transactional systems that are functional in themselves and that exist apart or in relation to the wider society. Households are commonly perceived as such moral economies in that they are more about solidarity than profit-maximising (Booth 1993; Jarva 2004; Wallerstein & Smith 1992). In these approaches, the term 'moral' is understood as referring to exchanges that have goals other than that of economic profit. Among such goals are maintaining social status and prestige, i.e. the accumulation of symbolic and social capital, social cohesion of a group, or long-term stability of an economic system.

Similar formulations of the concept derive from the work of the historian E.P. Thompson. Thompson (1971: 79) used moral economy to refer to 'a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community'. James Scott (1976: 3), a political scientist, has used the term in his analysis of peasant politics in Southeast Asia, as the peasants' notion of economic justice and exploitation. In other words, this understanding of moral economy relates to feelings of economic

injustice and exploitation of a group – feelings that then instigate collective protest and action. More recently, Didier Fassin (2005: 365) has applied this way of understanding moral economy to contemporary societies in his analysis of French migration policies and practices. Fassin (2005) defines moral economy as ‘the economy of the moral values and norms of a given group in a given moment’ (Fassin 2005: 365). This leads him to analyse ‘the values and norms by which immigration and asylum are thought and acted on and, in a broader sense, which define our moral world’ (Fassin 2005: 365). In Fassin’s definition of the term, ‘economy’ refers more so to ‘exchange’.

Recently, the concept of moral economy has also been adopted more broadly in social sciences (Booth 1994; Hollingsworth 2006; Sayer 2004). According to Andrew Sayer (2004: 2), moral economy is the ‘study of how economic activities of all kinds are influenced and structured by moral dispositions and norms, and how in turn those norms may be compromised, overridden or reinforced by economic pressures.’ In other words, the concept directs the attention to how market as well as non-market, informal as well as formal systems of transactions are laden with cultural norms and values (see also Ray and Sayer 1999). Instead of understanding moral economy as a ‘part-society’ that would be separable from political economy – which in this separation then becomes understood as non-moral or ‘value-free’ – it is important to acknowledge that rules, habits, norms, conventions and values influence economic practices of all sorts (Sayer 2004: 1; see also Sayer 2006: 77).

However, what constitutes moral or immoral and what rules and habits govern economic behaviour changes across space and time. What is understood as moral economic behaviour is debatable even within one culture at one given time. This has implications for the study of moral economy (Sayer 2004: 2). Thus, moral economy can be understood as the study of moral orders that regulate economic practices, on the one hand, and a normative study of what should constitute moral and just organisation of economic relations, on the other hand. As a normative study it would then require a formulation of some sort of universal moral principle. This is not my aim in this research. My intention is rather to examine the moral norms that characterise paid reproductive labour and how these configure in the negotiations over labour conditions.

There is a third strand of the literature regarding the notion of moral economy. Both of the above-mentioned approaches to moral economy, the anthropological and economic approaches, concern the principles of *exchange*. However, they say little about the norms and rules that concern *labour* itself. As Murphy (1993: 2) has argued, we should ask:

‘What moral norms ought to govern work if it is to promote human flourishing? And what norms of justice ought to govern access to such work? Moral and political debate about work is usually associated with concerns extrinsic to work itself— the wages of work, the availability of work, the hours of work (...) Yet it is rather the intrinsic aspects of work that seem to have the most profound effects on human happiness and well-being.’

Drawing on Aristotle’s philosophy, Murphy concludes that work which promotes worker’s self-realisation is morally desirable (1993: 225–234). Again, my aim in this thesis is not to offer a normative analysis of whether domestic and care work can allow for self-realisation, but rather to examine the notions that shape the constructions of domestic and care labour as good/bad, decent/indecent, clean/dirty, and so forth. This line of thought is also found in the classical texts of sociology of work, such as Everett Hughes discussion on ‘dirty work’. According to Hughes:

‘[An occupation] may be simply physically disgusting. It may be a symbol of degradation, something that wounds one’s dignity. Finally, it may be dirty work in that it in some way goes counter to the more heroic of our moral conceptions.’ (Hughes 1958: 49-50).

Finally, given the difficulty to define ‘morality’, some authors have preferred to address the question of morality from the viewpoint of trust (Hollingsworth 2006: 103). Trust is a central sociological concept (see e.g. Giddens 1990; Luhmann 1979; Sztompka 1999). Trust is crucial for all economic and social exchanges and without it modern societies would not function. In the most general understanding, trust is ‘a bet about the future contingent actions of others’ (Sztompka 1999: 25). Trust is then always future-oriented and related to others. Trust can be understood as the shared expectation that in a relationship neither part will exploit the vulnerability of the other (Sabel 1993). In a similar way, and drawing on Erving Goffman’s work, Anthony Giddens (1990: 83-

88) distinguishes between trust in systems and persons. Trust in persons ‘involves *facework commitments* in which indicators of the integrity of others (within given arenas of action) are sought’ (Giddens 1990: 88, emphasis in the original). Sztopka (1999: 27-28), moreover, distinguishes between three varieties of trust, of which responsive trust is of interest here.²⁰ According to Sztopka (1999: 27) responsive trust involves ‘the act of entrusting some valuable object to somebody else, with his or her consent; giving up one’s control over that object and placing it in somebody else’s hands, and expecting responsible care’. Both forms of trust, trust in persons and responsive trusting an object to somebody else’s care, are of central importance in domestic and care work that takes places in the private realm of the household and home. Trust is then an absolutely necessary prerequisite for labour relations in homes. I understand trust as a central component of moral economy.

In sum, I offer an analysis of migrant domestic and care labour as a moral economy by looking at how moral notions of good and bad, just and unjust, regard the actual labour practices, on the one hand, and labour relationships, on the other hand. Hence, the moral economy of domestic and care work is related to the nature of domestic and care work as social reproduction and the social construction of such work as traditionally feminised form of labour. As paid work performed by migrant women and men, it becomes intertwined with questions of social class, gender/sexuality, ‘race’/ethnicity and migrancy. I understand moral economy as a useful theoretical lens that sheds light on the particularities of paid reproductive labour relationships and practices. I do not understand it as the research object in itself – that it would state the ‘truth’ about the nature of paid reproductive labour. In other words, I do not claim that only paid reproductive labour would be based on a moral economy, obviously not. However, looking at the paid domestic and care work that migrants do in Italy *through the analytical lens of a moral economy* has provided a fruitful way to conceptualise the ways in which morality is incorporated to the paid reproductive labour relationships and practices.

20 The two other varieties of trust are anticipatory, or acting towards others for the belief that their actions will be favourable to one’s interests, needs and expectations, and evocative, which refers to acting ‘on the belief that the other person will reciprocate with trust toward ourselves’ (Sztopka 1999: 28, emphasis added).

3.3 Theorising Migration

In this research, I do not rely on a single migration theory that would explain reasons for migration but draw on several theoretical approaches. The combination of different approaches is important in order to grasp the macro-, meso- and micro-levels of migration. In this section, I discuss Saskia Sassen's (1988; 1998; 2003a; 2003b) work, which I find convincing on the macro-processes of migration. I then look at some conceptualisations relating to what Thomas Faist (1997) has termed the 'crucial meso-level of migration', i.e. social networks. Finally, I discuss how I have approached migration at the micro-level drawing especially on theories of transnationalism (Smith and Guarnizo 1998).

Regarding the macro-level forces explaining migration, Sassen (1988) analyses how the economic restructuring of the 1970s and 1980s induced internal and international migration through the internationalisation of production, increasing direct foreign investment and the growth of global cities. These globalising capitalist processes encompass not only production but also reproduction (Sassen 1998; 2003a). Domestic and care migration is hence embedded in globalising economic practices in at least two sets of ways (Sassen 2003a). Firstly, labour migration is partly a response to the insecurities brought by the structural changes of the globalising capitalist economy, thus producing what Sassen (2003a; 2003b) has termed 'alternative survival circuits'. Secondly, it sustains the lives of the people not only in 'global cities', but more or less everywhere where these forms of migration have reached. This globalising division of care and domestic work is gendered, 'racialised' and 'ethnicised', which can be seen in localised domestic labour 'niches' (Moya 2007, see also Glenn 1992).

The macro theories explain well the structural factors related to labour migration, but say little about the actual migration processes and dynamics. How do individual migrations develop into 'migration flows' and how are these localised into certain regions? In order to answer these questions, meso-level factors, especially social networks, need to

be examined. The idea that personal and family networks are important incentives for migration is not new.²¹ These migrant networks have been theorised as a form of social capital (e.g. Boyd 1989; Massey et al. 1994; Massey et al. 1998). The outcomes of social capital in migration are said to be cumulative, to the point that international migration tends to sustain itself over time (Boyd 1989; Massey 1990; Massey et al. 1994). As explained by Monica Boyd (1989: 661):

'Social networks based on kinship, friendship and community ties are central components in migration systems analysis. They mediate between individual actors and larger structural forces. They link sending and receiving countries. And they explain the continuation of migration long after the original impetus for migration has ended.'

The emphasis on social networks draws our attention to the role of families and households in migration (Kofman 2004). However, social networks not only consist of kin members but also link to employers in the countries of destination (in the form of patron–client relationships) and to mediating agents who facilitate migration (travel agents, recruiters, smugglers, etc.) (Massey et al. 1998: 186–187). Other important mediators in migration networks are ‘sponsors’ who arrange the migration of a subsequent worker (Shah and Menon 1999: 362). In my research, sponsors could be family members, friends or employers. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that social networks should not be understood as fixed, structural properties, but are, by definition, changing and fluid (Massey et al. 1998: 187). Once migration chains have been established, migration may develop into an industry that is no longer dependent on individual networks (Goss and Lindquist 1995; King 2002b).

Different forms of social networks and social capital were of crucial importance for the migrant groups I studied both in relation to actual migration as well as to finding work and ‘getting by’ in Naples. However, although social capital and cumulative migration theories have been developed in response to the insufficiencies in economic

21 Already in the 1920s, sociologists William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki (1958) showed the importance of networks with the family back home for Polish migrants living in the US and in Russia.

push and pull models of migration (see Massey et al. 1998: 15), they often assume a rational migrant decision-maker and tend to portray households as uniform actors in migration. They risk overlooking the views of those who are not heads of household, i.e. women and children (cf. Boyd 1989). This can be seen in statements such as 'if a family seeks to maximize foreign earnings by sending one worker abroad, the logical choice is the male household heir, or perhaps an older son' (Massey et al. 1994: 1497). Such understandings of households as coherent, profit-maximising units overlook the internal gendered and generational dynamics within households and families. The picture that arises from my research is that the motivations to migrate were more complex. Thus, in order to grasp migration dynamics more fully, we need conceptual tools that are gender-sensitive, micro-level and that go beyond the dichotomy of sending/receiving society. This is where micro-level transnational theories come in.

As the literature on transnationalism has proliferated in recent years, it is important to define what is meant by the term. According to the now-classical definition, the transnational approach to migration draws attention to the 'processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement' (Basch et al. 1994: 7). Early research on transnationalism was characterised by several shortcomings, including a lack of empirically grounded analysis, emphasis on the North American context, omission of gender and perceiving transnationalism as a static and ahistorical process (Grillo 2007: 200). Instead of analysing transnational migration as a static phenomenon, we should understand it as trajectories and projects, 'which are often unstable, always likely to become something else' (Grillo 2007: 200). Moreover, we should consider the roots that transnational migrations have in colonialism and in nineteenth-century migration flows. Many critics have argued that communication via letters, participation in homeland politics, saving for a house in the country of origin and even return and seasonal migration have been part of the lives of migrants long before the current era of globalisation (Brettell and Hollifield 2000: 16; Faist 2000: 211–212). However, new in the contemporary era are the quantitative and qualitative changes in these transnational connections (Faist 2000: 212), such as technological advances, notably in communication and the emergence of cheap mass

travel and tourism. As Steven Vertovec (2007: 151) has argued, ‘the matter of degree really counts’.

According to Roudometof (2005: 118–119), transnationalism is the outcome of economic and political and internal globalisation and it is not the sole property of migrants (see also Jackson et al. 2004; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). In particular, transnationalism is the *social* transformation that results from globalisation. Following Roudometof, I understand transnationalism as multiple social processes that transcend state borders, but do not only relate to migrant communities. The question is not whether a migrant group is or is not transnational, or how to operationalise transnational migration, but the ways in which transnational mobilities transform the lives and social spaces of migrants themselves and those whom we would normally call ‘native’. The concept of *diaspora space* (Brah 1996) also refers to such transformations. Avtar Brah (1996: 194–196) uses *diaspora* as a way to analyse ‘processes of *multilocality across geographical, cultural and psychic boundaries*’ (Brah 1996: 194, emphasis in the original). Moreover, in order to disrupt the dichotomy of ‘native’ and ‘diasporian’, she proposes the concept of *diaspora space*, which:

‘includes the entanglement, the intertwining of the genealogies of dispersion with those of “staying put”. The diaspora space is the site where the native is as much a diasporian as the diasporian is the native.’ (Brah 1996: 209).

Moreover, research on transnationalism is also to some extent haunted by a somewhat celebratory tone. There seems to be a common assumption that leading lives in more than one place would mean ‘more belonging’ and that transnational practices would be subversive in nature. On the contrary, as Parreñas (2001) importantly discusses, one aspect of transnational migration is a sense of dislocation (see also Salih 2002: 52).

Furthermore, as Thomas Faist (2000: 210–211) rightly points out, transnationalism by no means implies that nation-states have lost their power to control their borders, or that there would be a free movement of people and that location would somehow lose its meaning. On the contrary, the ‘lives of transmigrants remain highly localized, albeit characterized by profound bi- or sometimes even multifocality’ (Faist 2000: 211). If this is so, one can ask as to what transnationalism brings to migration theory that is new. In contrast to assimilationist theories,

the transnational perspective to migration does not assume that migration is permanent and that settlement is followed by assimilation to the country of migration. The transnational perspective to migration emphasises the importance of the contacts that migrants maintain with their countries of origin and the potential tensions between localised lives and multifocal horizons and practices. In my research, an important aspect of transnationalism was also *transnational care*, i.e., the continuing care responsibilities migrant workers had towards their families back home (see e.g. Baldassar et al. 2007).

4 Reflexive Ethnography of Migrant Domestic and Care Labour

In this section, I present the methodology of my research, from the methodological choices to the actual research practice and analysis of data. However, first let me discuss the methodological premises of my research and how these link to the theoretical concepts.

I understand fieldwork as constituted by a set of relationships and embodied practices, which requires focusing on the ways in which the research participants *and* researchers are socially situated (Haraway 1989). Reflexivity in sociological and anthropological fieldwork can be understood as the idea ‘that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them’ (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 16). Taking the idea further, Bourdieu has called for *epistemic reflexivity* (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 36–47) or *participant objectivity* (Bourdieu 2003), which refers to scrutinising the researcher’s positions and practices not only in the research site, but also within the specific epistemological field (Bourdieu 2003: 283). According to Bourdieu, to ‘practice reflexivity’ means turning the analytical gaze to the researcher by ‘situating him [sic] at a determinate point in social space-time – and so acquiring a more acute awareness and a greater mastery of the constraints that can be exerted on the scientific “subject” through the links which bind him to the empirical subject, his interests, drives, and presuppositions’ (Bourdieu 2000: 119–120).

However, the danger in such demands for reflexivity is that the research object is lost in endless self-examination. As Gergen and Gergen (1991: 77) have put it: ‘Is there nothing left but to reflect on our own subjectivities, and then to reflect upon the reflection in an infinitude of self-reflexive iterations?’ There is a point to the argument of over-emphasising the need for self-reflexivity and hence good research practice must be somewhere in-between the two extremes of researcher neutrality and self-centred reflexivity. Following Bourdieu, I acknowledge the importance of situating oneself in the academic field as

well as in the research field. However, academic fields and their products (theories, academics, empirical research, funding etc.) are not fixed but are rather in constant movement and evolving. Just as researchers, also theories and discourses travel across national academic settings (Kaplan 1996), and paradigms become fashionable (and hence more fundable and attractive).

There has then been an interesting cross-fertilisation between different academic settings and places of research in my study. I have conducted research in three diverse academic institutions. The research started and ended at the Discipline of Sociology at the University of Helsinki, where Bourdieu's theories have had high academic value. I spent a year at the Gender Studies Department at the 'Federico II', University of Naples, where historical gender research was highly regarded. This had an impact on my research in the form of acknowledging the historical continuities of the research phenomenon. The research was further developed at the University of Sussex, where I completed a degree in Migration Studies at the Department of Geography. The time in Sussex resulted in an earlier monograph on the subject, which had a markedly migration research imprint. After spending two years in Sussex, first as a Ph.D. candidate and then as a teacher, I returned to Sociology at the University of Helsinki where I finalised this article-based dissertation. This work further develops the sociological implications of the study. Apart from one (Näre 2009), all the articles, including this summary, have been written after I finished the monograph.

The ideas of value-free knowledge and the perceived universality and detachment that have governed Western scientific practice have for long been contested by feminist epistemology (Harding 1986; 1991; Hartsock 1987; Smith 1987b). Feminist research practice, which insists that disclosing 'the class, race, culture, and gender assumptions, beliefs, and behaviours of the researcher her/himself' and understanding these as part of the production of knowledge, actually increases 'objectivity of the research and decreases "objectivism" which hides this kind of evidence from the public' (Harding 1987: 9). What we know, and how we know it, depends on our position in social structures regarding different axes of power, such as gender, 'race', ethnicity and social class. This means abandoning the positivist ideal of a neutral, objective 'knower', and in its place accepting the idea that our knowing depends on the politics of our multiple locations and the intersections of identities and

social structures that construct these locations. My research setting is a demonstration of complex politics of location at play. A white, (then) unmarried woman from a Finnish middle-class urban and mainly non-religious background from the political left conducting research in the Catholic South of Italy, studying men and women from varied racial, ethnic, religious and class backgrounds with diverse migration histories, and Neapolitan men and women of different ages from different class backgrounds. In this kind of complex research setting, reflexivity meant being sensitive to the power relationships involved in the research process and adjusting the research methods accordingly. It also meant reflecting the theoretical tools and concepts applied in the research.

Hence, conducting research that involves a researcher and research participants with various migration histories and diasporic identities complicates research. What to say about the social class background of a domestic worker in Naples who has had a long career as an architect in Ukraine? What limitations does it pose to the research that the interviews are conducted in broken Italian that neither the researcher nor the research participant are fluent in? Or how to write about social categories and identities without essentialising, fixing and pretending to know the truth about the others?

Isn't it so that any 'attempt to think about social identities is based on an erasure of differences and divisions' (Sayyid 2000: 40), and hence per force essentialising and rectifying the political process (Gunaratnam 2003: 39)? However, it must be possible to be able to think and write about social identities. Maybe the answer lies in differentiating between theoretical and strategic categorisation and positioning. Following Gayatri Spivak's famous notion of "strategic essentialism", it is possible to think about subjectivities while at the same time acknowledging multiple, sometimes hybrid, mixed and shifting belongings and memberships. Gayatri Spivak's often misunderstood concept is not an invitation to embrace essentialism, but it refers to strategic moves between deconstruction and essentialism for political purposes: "strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest" (Spivak 1988: 205). Hence, talking about social identities and seemingly homogeneous groups, such as the Ukrainian, Polish and Sri Lankans can be justified when acknowledging that all research is inherently political. In a similar vein, Yasmin Gunaratnam (2003) speaks of research as a 'doubled-practice', by which she refers to:

'challenging and seeking to transform the essentialism of categorical approaches (...) connecting theory with lived experience, where the claiming of personhood through categories of 'race', ethnicity, gender and sexuality, for example, needs to be recognized and examined critically as part of a potential move towards social transformation.' (Gunaratnam 2003: 35).

Moreover, being attentive to the essentialism of categories also means taking into account those hegemonic categories that are not always articulated in specific situations. Previously, I have used the metaphor of *'silent and/or silenced category'* to describe this implicit and unarticulated existence of social categories in particular situations (Näre 2005). Understanding social categories as silent or silenced resonates with Althusser's ([1969]1995): 216–225) notion of *hailing*, meaning the work of ideology hailing people into subjects. However, as Ahmed (2000) has argued, we should understand hailing as sometimes missing its target: 'that the subject sexed or otherwise, may think she or he is being hailed or addressed (when they are not) or not think they are being hailed or addressed (when they are)' (Ahmed 2000: 114). I would add that sometimes some aspects of our subjectivities are hailed into *silence* (Näre 2005). For instance, whiteness is an invisible, taken-for-granted category (Dyer 1997; Frankenberg 1993), as is heterosexuality (Warner 1991). In my research, my own white and heterosexual subjectivities were often silenced categories, yet constantly present.

This short introduction has hopefully served to emphasise that calling qualitative research a messy experience (Marcus and Fischer 1986: 22) is to say the least. In what follows, I can only give an overview of the whole research process and the many choices it involved.

4.1. Pre-field Work, Methodological Choices and Negotiating Access

4.1.1 Pre-field Work

I moved to Naples in 2003 with a wish to establish a more or less permanent home there, because it was where my partner lived. I had no

research grant, so I did what many Neapolitans do: I tried to *arrangiarmi*, i.e. get by, by doing different jobs. My first job was giving English lessons to Neapolitan children from wealthy families. This proved to be a good way to visit upper-middle-class Neapolitan households. During the first months, I lived in my partner's home, with his mother and grandmother, *nonna* – both *casalinghe*, housewives. They introduced me to Neapolitan domestic culture, taught me housekeeping and cooking. On Tuesday mornings, I had to prepare the rooms before Sri Lankan Tharang²² arrived to do the 'heavy' weekly cleaning in the house. Before he started working I was told by *nonna* to prepare him an espresso. Our short coffee moments in the kitchen were hugely helpful when I started writing my research plan in the spring of 2003. With hindsight, my fieldwork had already begun before I had written my research proposal.

During this time, I also worked as a trainee at ACLI-COLF, a Catholic workers' association concerned with the recruitment of migrant domestic workers for Neapolitan households.²³ The placement was made possible through a traineeship organised by AIESEC, an international student association. The three-month period at ACLI-COLF was an excellent introduction to the field. I followed the work of Rosa, the employee of the organisation, who received migrant job-seekers and Neapolitan employers. I sat next to her desk observing and taking notes, chatting to migrant job-seekers and making my initial contacts. This experience gave me an initial glimpse into the stratified labour markets of migrant domestic work, the legal problems that migrant workers face, and the personal relationships involved in these work arrangements; all central themes in my research.

Naples was thus more for me than a separate site of fieldwork or a place of dwelling; it was a 'home away from home' (Clifford 1997: 23). However, it was very difficult to adapt to the everyday life in Naples, as I was constantly positioned as an outsider in everyday situations, such as at the local shop or at the university. I felt that in order to get by in everyday life, it wasn't enough to know the Italian language. I also had to know the Neapolitan dialect and a certain way of speaking in a loud,

22 All names are pseudonyms.

23 ²³ACLI (Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani) is an umbrella organisation that unites different associations promoting workers' rights. COLF (collaboratrice familiare) is an acronym for family collaborator, a term applied to domestic workers. ACLI-COLF was founded in 1946 to recruit domestic workers into Italian families (Andall 2000: 146).

assertive voice. This all was quite contrary to the Finnish culture that valued concise verbal communication and discreet self-presentation. Later on, in my interviews, I found that many of my informants had had similar difficulties. Interestingly, for many the local shop was the important site of encounter, where the new arrivals' social skills and wit were tested. Being cheated by shopkeepers were experiences recalled by many informants as examples of what it meant being a *straniera* (stranger) in Naples. In my learning how to live in Naples, I was frustrated by the fact that my encounters with Neapolitans were always defined by me being a foreigner, a *straniera*. Because not many people were familiar with Finland, my nationality was often replaced by more familiar categories such as *l'americana*, the American, or *tedesca*, German – both with quite unpleasant connotations deriving from the occupations of Naples during the Second World War. Moreover, if I explained that I had a Neapolitan partner, it was no longer my national identity that was relevant but my gender identity. I became re-categorised in sexual terms and my presence in Naples seemed to make more sense to people. However, I was no longer perceived as an independent researcher, but rather a girlfriend. These experiences of being seen as a foreigner, a *straniera*, and the fact of being gendered and sexualised in different contexts built common ground with the migrant workers, Ukrainian and Polish women in particular. At the same time, the fact that I was a *straniera* from a non-descript country like Finland helped me negotiate access to migrant communities.

I was not only an outsider to Naples, but also to the migrant communities that I studied and this position clearly had many advantages as well as limitations. On the one hand, my position as a non-Italian often helped me in my negotiations of access and in establishing rapport with the informants. I believe that my position as an outsider encouraged many informants to talk more openly than they would have done had I been a member of the local community in Naples. At least this was what many of my informants told me when they confided in me. I was an outsider to the internal social hierarchies in the migrant communities and had, therefore, more freedom to circulate between different groups and meet people from different social and ethnic backgrounds than would have been possible for someone from the community. On the other hand, the fact that I did not share a native language with any of

my research subjects clearly poses some limitations to the quality of my data.

I left Naples in the summer of 2005, but stayed in contact with my informants who had become friends (cf. Amit 2000). The mixing of personal and academic biographies has made it difficult to pinpoint when my fieldwork actually ended. I still return to Naples regularly and meet my informants-turned-into-friends and we occasionally write e-mail and chat on Skype. Ethnographic fieldwork is an emotional, subjective endeavour, which not only affects the research subjects but changes the investigator, who is 'never the same again' (Carter & Delmont 1996: x). To sum up, the ethnographic 'fields' in my research were made of sets of social relations, cultural and symbolic meanings and embodied practices rather than bounded physical locations (Clifford 1997: 69–72; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Okely 1992: 16–17). As such, they were structured by the inter- and intrasections of social class, gender, sexuality, 'race' and ethnicity (Bell et al. 1993).

4.1.2 Choice of Research Methods

The choice of research methods evolved during the research process. In the beginning, I wanted to study two migrant groups involved in domestic work: Ukrainians and Sri Lankans. These were statistically the two biggest migrant groups in Naples at the time and both were mainly employed in domestic and care work. Ukrainians were recent arrivals and predominantly female, whilst Sri Lankans had a longer presence in Naples, were an established community and both women and men worked in domestic and care work. I decided to add a third group in my research design after I had interviewed Neapolitan employers. I found out that many had employed Polish women and I had the opportunity to conduct participant observation at my colleague's relative's house, following the work of Monica, who was Polish. I became interested in Monica's case as I saw interesting similarities and differences compared to the Ukrainian women's experiences, especially in relation to legal status and migration patterns. Thus, in order to examine the meaning of freedom of travel for migrant workers, I decided to interview Polish migrants. Studying three different migrant groups has complicated the research setting, but this complexity has also provided richer data on

the phenomenon of migrant domestic work while also permitting me to analyse the intersections of gender, ethnicity, 'race', social class, and migrancy more accurately. Moreover, from the beginning, I wanted to include the employers' perspective in my study, as this has been an overlooked aspect in the existing research literature. I also interviewed some community workers and lawyers dealing with migration matters. However, the latter were additional to the main body of data.

In a similar fashion, my choice of methods evolved during the fieldwork. At first, I considered the possibility of making a questionnaire to distribute to migrant domestic workers. However, I decided to abandon the idea due to questions of translation and access. Having the questionnaire in Italian was unthinkable due to migrants' varied language skills. I would have had to translate the questionnaire into different languages and use the help of an interpreter in the distribution. As the question of negotiating a confidential rapport was crucial for the success of my research, I did not want a third person to be present in the interview situation. In addition, using a questionnaire would have made the interview situation more formal and, due to some informants' vulnerable position, I wanted to keep the interview situation as comfortable and conversational as possible (Burgess 1984). Therefore, in the end, I decided to collect thematic interviews that would cover a set of themes as fully as possible.

In order to obtain a fuller picture of the phenomenon of migrant domestic work, I decided to mix interviews with participant observation. Participant observation helped me understand the mundane level of migrant domestic work, which could easily be omitted as too 'insignificant' from the interviews. However, in most cases the two methods were inseparable in that conducting an interview was often the initial contact with the informant and a way to establish a rapport, which is obviously the requisite for being invited to someone's home.

4.1.3 Negotiating Access

Thomas Belmonte (1979: 53) writes about his fieldwork experience in Naples: 'most anthropological fieldworkers do not choose their informants. Their informants choose them, and in a place like central Naples one counts oneself lucky to have been chosen at all.' Belmonte's

experiences in Naples resembled mine. I encountered a lot of suspicion and diffidence. The question of access and rapport was, therefore, an ongoing process, and negotiation needed to be carried out repeatedly in different contexts, on different matters and with different groups (O'Reilly 2005: 88). With Ukrainian and Polish migrants, gaining access meant winning the trust of individual informants, whereas with Sri Lankans, I felt, there was a moment of accessing an entire community. The politics of location were crucial in these negotiations. In order to illustrate how the politics of location configured in my research, let me go back to the period when I was working at ACLI-COLF.

ACLI-COLF would have been the obvious place to recruit interviewees and my first three contacts with Ukrainian women were from there. However, after I conducted the third interview with Anna, I understood that she had associated me with the organisation and that this had affected the interview. I felt that Anna was reluctant to talk to me and I suspected that she felt obliged to agree to the interview because she thought I was working for ACLI-COLF. When I changed my tactic and started recruiting informants on a *piazza* (square) where Ukrainian women met on Thursday afternoons, my impression was proved correct. There, my queries for an interview were kindly denied by many women due to lack of free time. However, those who did agree were willing to help me find other interviewees and a good rapport was established. Although approaching Ukrainian women in public places was not very efficient, the encounters and little chats helped me to gain a better understanding of their situation. For instance, I met many women who refused to be interviewed because they had practically no free time. They had renounced their only day off a week to one day off *a month* in exchange for better pay.

The question of access is closely related to the issue of consent (cf. Smyth and Williamson 2004: 13–14). Throughout the research process, I found it important to reflect on whether the migrant informants felt they had the right to refuse being interviewed and whether they fully understood what my research was about. The informants' Italian language capacities varied greatly, which made communicating on matters such as academic research sometimes difficult. I noticed that I was often mistaken as a journalist and some informants thought I was working for the municipality. I did not have an introductory letter from

the University of Naples, because I was not formally affiliated with the university and I felt it might have caused more suspicion than help.

I tried to use as many different ways of access as possible in order to interview people from diverse backgrounds and at different stages of their migration project. This was a way to seek as diversified data as possible. I aimed to collect a sample that was gender-balanced (in the case of Sri Lankans) and representative in terms of age and stage in the migration project (including people who had just migrated as well as those who had been in Italy for longer). This approach has been called purposive sampling, meaning that the gathering of the sample is guided by a wish to illustrate some features important to the research objectives (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 250–251). I employed purposive sampling bearing in mind legal status (irregular/regular migrants) and work conditions (live-in vs. live-out workers). Adding Polish migrants to my research was purposive sampling in itself.

How did I go about finding informants and interviewees? I started contacting Ukrainian migrants first at ACLI, and then randomly in public places where women met during their days off. Some women I met through word of mouth, i.e. snowballing, others through my Neapolitan contacts and some I met randomly on the streets, as sometimes it was the Ukrainian women who mistook me as a fellow-citizen and initiated a conversation. I tried to avoid recruiting through my Neapolitan employer contacts, as this would easily jeopardise my neutrality in the informants' eyes. Moreover, through a Neapolitan association, I got to know a Ukrainian cultural mediator who became a key informant introducing me to many of her friends.

Finding Sri Lankan informants proved to be more difficult than I had initially thought. The contacts that Tharanga, the Sri Lankan cleaner employed by my boyfriend's mother, found did not take me very far. I interviewed two male members of his family and asked one of them, Sriyantha, if he could introduce me to his friends. However, he came back to me saying that nobody was interested. I also tried to approach Sri Lankan women in public places on Sundays after the Catholic mass. These efforts were also ineffective, as the women I met spoke very little Italian. Everything changed when I moved to live in Monteleone²⁴. I got to know Ruwan, the owner of a Sri Lankan restaurant on the same street,

24 Pseudonym for a street in the old centre of Naples.

and he became my key informant. I spent my days hanging around in his restaurant that was an excellent place to meet other Sri Lankans. Ruwan also invited me to different cultural events and parties where I met many informants. In other words, living within the Sri Lankan community was crucial for having access to the community. It also gave me credibility in my informants' eyes. My address in *Monteleone* served as important symbolic capital in legitimating my position within the research field. Moreover, living in the Sri Lankan community allowed me to establish close relationships with some of my informants. This also blurred the boundaries between fieldwork and personal life. My everyday life became mixed with the everyday life of my informants and I became involved in the tight social networks of the community. On the one hand, this was essential in order to conduct participant observation. On the other hand, I sometimes felt exposed to gossip and some attempts to social control. My Sri Lankan neighbours would, for instance, comment if they had seen from the curtains in my windows that I had been out late. However, my position as an outsider allowed me to remain unaffected by such gossiping.

Finally, recruiting Polish informants proved to be quite easy, once I had gained access to the Polish parish. In this case, my nationality worked to my advantage. When I asked for permission to visit the community centre on a regular basis to conduct interviews, I was told that, had I been Italian, I would not have received permission. The Polish parish offered an easy, structured place where I could recruit interviewees and conduct participant observation. I visited the parish regularly on Sundays and Thursday afternoons observing and participating in the different courses organised at the centre and listening to Catholic Sunday masses. Some of the women I interviewed became my friends and we would also meet outside the parish. The Polish centre offered easy access to informants from various backgrounds and, therefore, I did all but two interviews at the parish.

In the end, I found it much more difficult to interview Neapolitan employers and get permission to conduct participant observation in their households. This is partly due to the fact that I could not approach employers in public places and the main way to recruit employers was through my own social networks. Thus, in some cases I interviewed several members of the same family. This revealed how employing a domestic worker or a carer is a family affair. Some employers that I

wanted to interview refused because they were employing migrants irregularly – an interesting finding in itself. In the end, I could only interview the ‘good’ and decent employers who were employing domestic workers regularly, which can be seen as a bias in my sample.²⁵ Moreover, it is worth clarifying that in the case of elderly care, the employer is not always the care-receiver but often another family member, usually an adult child. Hence, in many cases there exists a triangular relationship between the employer, care-receiver and carer. In these cases negotiating access involved several parties.

4.2 Conducting Participant Observations in Private Homes and Public Places

William F. Whyte (1956) describes his classic urban ethnography on the Italian community of ‘Cornerville’ in Chicago as follows:

In the early months in Cornerville (...) I began as a nonparticipating observer. As I became accepted into the community, I found myself becoming almost a nonobserving participant. I got the feel of life in Cornerville, but that meant that I got to take for granted the same things that my Cornerville friends took for granted, I was immersed in it, but I could as yet make little sense out of it. I had a feeling that I was doing something important, but had yet to explain to myself what it was.’ (Whyte 1956: 321).

My fieldwork experience bore a resemblance to Whyte’s. As described above, in the beginning I felt like a complete stranger or in Whyte’s words a nonparticipant observer, in relation to the field but also to the whole city of Naples. Little by little, by establishing contacts and gaining confidence in the language and in the *savoir-faire* of the city, I was able to establish trustworthy contacts with informants. This meant different things: for instance, the implicit permission to visit a house on a regular basis to conduct participant observation, or to hang out at the Sri Lankan restaurant without the obvious reason of buying food. It did not take long to feel so immersed in the ‘field’ that my participating

25 Nayla Moukarbel, in her Sussex DPhil on Sri Lankan domestic worker migrants in Lebanon, faced the same dilemmas: see Moukarbel (2007).

was accompanied by less conscious observation. Like Whyte, I also moved from the position of non-participant observer to a participant observer and to non-observing participant. This is why the period *after* the fieldwork was crucial in order to give 'sense' to the participant observation data.

In practice, observation was often intertwined with interviewing. I understand the ethnographic interview as a dialogue in which the researcher is examined as much as the research participant (Bourdieu 1996: 18). Hence, it was crucial to establish a respectful relationship with the interviewees, "including enough rapport for there to be a genuine exchange of views and enough time and openness in the interviews for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds." (Heyl 2001: 369). My participant observation varied from ethnographic interviews to casual observations of the daily life in *Monteleone*, from participating in religious masses to more systematic observations conducted in households employing migrant workers. During my fieldwork, I participated in Buddhist ceremonies, Orthodox and Catholic masses, charity events for victims of the tsunami, and International Women's Day celebrations. I accompanied my informants to the doctor, and to the playground with the children they were caring for. The informal discussions around kitchen tables while eating food and discussing life, work and differences in cultural traditions, or the fragmented discussions in Ruwan's restaurant, at my informants' homes and in public spaces, were all part of the messy qualitative research experience and data. Although the majority of the collected data have not been explicitly used in the publications, they have nevertheless been important for acquiring a deeper understanding of migrant living in Naples.

I carried out systematic observation in five households in total, all of which I had access to through my personal networks. People's homes are quite specific research sites (cf. Cieraad 2006; Miller 2001). The question of trust, intimacy, rapport and the intrusive element of a researcher's presence are all accentuated when conducting research in someone's home. Firstly, permission is needed to visit other people's homes and in the case of migrant domestic work it was the employer who had to give the permission. This is why I had to rely on my own social networks to find households in which to conduct participant observation. The household where I did the longest period of participant

observation was at 88-year-old Giuseppe's household, on which the fifth article in the thesis is based. I visited Giuseppe and his Ukrainian carer, Alina, regularly over a period of two months in the spring of 2004. My visits usually varied from three to six hours. In the house, I chatted with Alina while she was doing her work and helped her in the household tasks, such as setting the table. My observations ended when I realised a certain saturation point was reached: the household routine had become familiar to me. At the same time, I understood that as the novelty of my visits had waned, my presence was kindly supported but not understood. I got the hint that I had exceeded my visits, when Alina opened the door and sighed in a slightly disappointed voice 'oh, it's only you'. Thus, being a 'guest-researcher' is a particular position that requires quite different involvement and sensitivity than participant observation done in more neutral spaces.

4.3 Thematic Interviews

I conducted in total 89 open-ended thematic interviews with migrant domestic workers, Neapolitan employers and 'experts' dealing with migration issues (see Appendix 1). Of these interviews, 80 were individual interviews and 9 pair-interviews. Thus, in total, I interviewed 98 people for this research. Of these 98, 74 were migrants. I interviewed 27 Sri Lankans (14 men and 13 women), 24 Ukrainian women and one Ukrainian man and 20 Polish migrants (all women). I also interviewed two Russian women. All migrant informants were working as domestic or care workers at the time of the interview or had done so previously. Moreover, I interviewed 15 Neapolitan employers (12 women and three men), all of middle class or upper-middle class background, aged from 29 to 80. I also interviewed nine experts²⁶ on migrant issues. The great majority of the Sri Lankan informants (25) were Sinhalese, of whom 13 were Catholics and 12 Buddhists. Unfortunately, I only had the chance to interview three Tamils, two domestic workers and a Catholic priest. I do not see this to be a great problem because the ethnic division within the Sri Lankan community was not a focus of this research and because

26 Four of these experts were members of religious communities working with migrants, three worked in migrant associations and two were lawyers working with migrants.

their positioning in the field of migrant domestic labour was based on their migrancy as Sri Lankans. Moreover, this also reflects the ethnic division of Sri Lankans in Naples, as the community in Naples is for the majority Sinhalese.²⁷ Thus, I will use the term Sri Lankans when I refer to all of these informants. The Sri Lankan informants were between 25 and 64 years of age, the median age being 41 years. My small sample reflects the Census data when it comes to the year of migration. The majority (18) of the Sri Lankans I interviewed had arrived in Naples in 1990–94, whilst in the Census data the main year of migrating for Sri Lankans was 1993–94 (ISTAT 2005).

The twenty Polish female domestic workers and carers that I interviewed were between 23 and 60 years of age, the median age being 28 years. This reflects the age composition of Polish women in the region: over 70 per cent of the Polish women in Campania are 19–40 years of age (Pittau and Ricci 2006: 198). The majority of my informants had arrived in Italy in 2000. I also interviewed a Polish nun and a monk both active in the community. The Ukrainian women I interviewed were between 24 and 58 years of age, median 45 years. This corresponds to the Caritas figures on the average age of Ukrainian women migrants in Italy (Ricci 2006: 56). Ukrainians in Italy are thus slightly older than other migrant groups.

The interviews were open-ended and thematic, meaning that I had a list of themes that needed to be covered in the interviews but otherwise I aimed for the interaction to flow freely and as conversationally as possible (Burgess 1984). The interview schedule evolved throughout the research process according to reflexive research principles. The interview questions with the migrants included themes regarding the background of the informant, migration history and status, finding work in Naples and changing jobs, working conditions and relationships, family and transnational practices. Finally, I always asked about their future plans and hopes. The employer interview themes included questions related to the employment of workers, reasons for employing a worker, their main duties and responsibilities, the most important qualities in a worker and general experiences of employing a domestic/care worker (see Appendix 2).

27 Kajan, the Tamil priest I interviewed, stated that there is an important Tamil community in Palermo. His guesstimation of its size was 6,000 (Kajan, 10/1/2005).

Creating a trustworthy and confidential relationship with interviewees is central in migration research. Many interviews brought back painful memories and it was common that both the informant and the researcher were in tears at some point of the interview. The reciprocal aspect of the interviews was reflected in the fact that many interviews started with a short interview of me. For instance, most of my Sri Lankan informants were interested in my marital status and whether my family lived in Naples. Many marvelled at the fact that, approaching my thirties, I was still unmarried. On the other hand, for some Sri Lankan women who were living alone in Naples, my marital status built common ground for us. Ukrainian and Polish interviewees were more interested in how and where I had learned to speak Italian. I was also often asked where I lived in Naples and how much I paid for rent. The questions that informants posed were in themselves interesting cues on what the informants considered as important matters for them. All but two interviews were recorded on a minidisk and then transcribed. Most were conducted in Italian, but some Sri Lankans preferred English. The question of confidentiality is also an important research ethical question especially when researching vulnerable subjects, such as irregular migrants. To protect the anonymity of the research participants, I have changed all their names, as well as the names of the places in Naples.

4.4. Translations, Analysis and Quality of Data

My research involved several languages. The interviews were conducted in Italian or English, sometimes mixed with sections in informants' mother tongue. I wrote my field notes mostly in Finnish, mixed with Italian, whilst the thesis and the publications are in English. The question of translation is thus central to this research. As Talal Asad (1986) has argued, cross-cultural translation is never neutral, but embedded in power relations shaped by the different locations of the parties involved. As Clifford (1997: 23; 182–183) reminds, 'a translation term' can never capture the entire meaning of what it stands for, and is thus bound to always fail. The quality of the interviews varied depending on the informants' language skills. However, I also wanted to include migrants who had arrived recently and whose language capacities were, therefore, poorer. If the interviewees could not find words in Italian to express

her/himself, I asked them to use their own language after which I asked a native speaker to translate these passages from the recording. Thus, some interviews included two or even three languages when we tried to find common ground past the language barriers. I acknowledge the fact that informants did not use their native language does pose limitations to the quality of the interview data. I would certainly have had much richer accounts if the interviews had been conducted in the informants' native language. This is one reason why I consider collecting participatory observation data alongside interviews crucial. However, the fact that the informants expressed themselves in a language they had learnt while working in the Neapolitan households, offered in itself a way to access the culturally condensed meanings of domestic work. Informants' language capacities were in themselves an indicator of the nature of the migrant belonging. Thus, even those interviewees who had limited formal language skills, proved to have an extensive vocabulary when it related to domestic duties. Often informants struggled much more in describing their life before migration or their hopes for the future than in revealing about their domestic duties. This is in itself telling about the migrants' subjectivities in relation to their work and Italy as a migration context.

Even if cross-cultural translation can never be 'authentic', it is important to specify the guidelines that I applied in my transcriptions and translations. I transcribed the interviews at word level accuracy. When translating interview quotes from Italian to English, I sought to find a middle ground between respecting informants' level of Italian and achieving an understandable and readable final result. I also consider it to be a research ethical question to portray the informants in a respectful light, so that they do not seem less intelligent just because their foreign language skills are not perfect. The informants' language skills affected the length of the interviews, which varied from half an hour to three hours. Unsurprisingly, interviews with informants with limited language skills tended to be shorter than with those who had good language skills. Another fact affecting the length of the interviews was domestic workers' limited free time. Especially for live-in workers, who only had approximately 15 hours free per week, spending time for an interview was a real sacrifice. However, the advantage of an extended fieldwork period is the possibility to conduct interviews when it best suits the research participants and do follow-up interviews.

The interviews were conducted in different places. As feminist geographers have argued, the socio-spatial context of the research encounter, e.g. the interview location, is not a mundane matter but affects knowledge production in various ways (Hanson 1997: 124–125), and it also affects the quality of the data. Clive Seale (2005: 80) has listed different ways to enhance the quality of qualitative research, including combining different research methods such as interviews and participant observation in order to add ‘rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth’ to research (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 5; see also Seale 2005: 77–78). In my research, I had to do several interviews in public places, because many of my informants were working *notte e giorno* (night and day) and the interview had to be done in between informants’ other activities, such as running errands, shopping, and going to the church.²⁸ This obviously affected informants’ concentration. When I felt that the actual interview was done in a hasty manner, I asked if I could accompany the interviewee on her/his errands in order to have time for a free conversation after the actual interview. This proved to be a good way to carry on the interview informally in a more relaxed way. Conducting interviews in a private space was easier for establishing a confidential relationship with the informant. Ethnographic interviews done in migrants’ homes were longer and complemented with activities such as looking at photos or videos, tasting sweets or teas from the home countries.

I found participant observation and ethnographic interviews useful in enhancing the quality of the data. For instance, I interviewed Ukrainian Maria in her workplace. She was quite reluctant to talk about her current job. It was quite clear that she omitted her negative feelings about her work from the interview. However, when I conducted participant observation in the household, I was able to detect that Maria’s days off were a matter of conflict in the relationship between Maria and the signora.

The data analysis was an integral part of my research right from the start. I started ‘analysing’ data, i.e. classifying information, already

28 Another obvious place would have been in a café, but because in the Neapolitan coffee culture it is common to drink a quick espresso *al banco*, at the bar rather than sitting down, there were few cafés where one could comfortably sit. The loud music that was also played in the cafés was another reason why park benches were often the best places to conduct interviews, at least for the first time.

during my 'pre-field work' at ACLI-COLF. I did not use computer programmes in the data analysis, so in order to control such a big amount of data, I made sure to classify data during the transcription process. In other words, after transcription I organised the interview transcript into separate themes by copying interview extracts to another file under thematic headings. After I had finished the transcriptions, I would read the transcripts critically and analytically according to reflexive close reading methods (Watson and Wilcox 2000). This meant reading the data and organising it with the theoretical concepts in mind. In other words, theoretical literature, conducting and transcribing interviews, doing participant observation, making notes and writing down observations from the data were all part of the research process right from the start. As I mentioned in the previous section, moving between induction and deduction, data and theory was crucial for developing theoretical notions from my data. Finally, after having classified my data, I critically assessed the data keeping in mind Hammerley's (1992: 34) point on 'anecdotalism' in ethnographic research, i.e. drawing generalisations based on one or two informants.

5 Research Findings

The task set to this research was to answer several research questions, concerning the demand for paid reproductive labour and the shift from Italian to migrant workers; the way in which labour relations are organised in Naples and what moral norms govern the employer-employee relationship and work practices; how different social categories intersectionally configure in paid reproductive labour and finally what are the daily practices of this kind of work. In this section I present how these research questions have been answered in the publications.

5.1 Experiences of Irregularity, Informality and the Materiality of Borders

The first article ‘The informal economy of paid domestic work: The case of Ukrainian and Polish migrants in Naples’ approaches the subject from the perspective of the migrant workers themselves. It gives an overview of the social conditions of Eastern European migrants in Naples, Italy and the reasons why Ukrainian and Polish women have decided to leave for Italy. By comparing the situations of Polish and Ukrainian migrants in Italy, the chapter discusses the meanings of irregular migration and informal labour more generally. The choice of comparison is justified by a number of similarities that the two migrant groups share in terms of the structural reasons behind migration and settlement in the local labour markets, as well as the important differences in their legal position in Italy due to Poles having a regular EU member status, while Ukrainians have to struggle with irregularity. The notion of ‘irregular migrant’ – as well as ‘migrant’ – emerges then as a contingent, socially constructed concept, a produced subjectivity, which is the outcome of governmental practices.

The article demonstrates that the possibility for acquiring a stay permit is a highly contingent process, which is dependent on the availability of government measures to legalise migrant workers either under a general amnesty (the last was released in 2002), or through annual quotas *and* from the goodwill of the employers to go through

the application process. Irregular legal status and informal employment do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. There could be willingness from the part of the employer to regularise the worker, but due to a high number of applications it is difficult to fit the annual quota. It also clearly shows how this kind of legal system, which requires that an applicant for a stay permit has an existing work contract, enforces workers' dependency on individual employers. Moreover, what emerges from the analysis is the hypocrisy of the regularisation system in Italy: annual quotas are not *meant* for migrant workers already present in the country, although in practice they are used in this way.

In the everyday experiences of irregularity in Naples, what counted for the informants the most was not so much the fear of deportation, but the impossibility to freely go back to Ukraine without having to pay for a new passport and visa in case of an eventual return to Italy. Difficulties of carrying out Ukrainian women's own reproductive labour and transnational care commitments without a stay permit were then the main motivations as to why Ukrainian women needed to apply for a permit. Ukrainian workers' situation contrasts strongly with the case of Polish women who enjoyed the freedom of crossing national borders. Unlike Ukrainians who were often 'stuck' in Italy sometimes for several years, many Polish women had formed flexible forms of rotation work where they could go back and forth between Poland and Italy and still keep their jobs by using substitutes. The everyday experiences of irregularity can also be taken as strong evidence against the most celebratory notions of transnationalism according to which the meaning of nation-state borders have ceased to matter.

Moreover, the article discusses the everyday practices of informal paid reproductive labour in Naples. It shows the vulnerability of migrant workers to different forms of abuse as well as forms of symbolic and physical violence, which range from being 'treated like a slave' and not being given enough food to eat. However, the article shows that migrant women are by no means passively accepting harsh working conditions but actively resist and seek best possible jobs. The article also introduces the finding of the importance of personal relationships based on decency and trustworthiness in paid domestic labour – a finding that will be further elaborated in the second and third article.

5.2 The Moral Economy and Moral Contracts in Domestic and Care Labour

The second article ‘The Moral Economy of Domestic and Care Labour: Migrant Workers in Naples, Italy’ examines paid reproductive labour relationships as a form of moral economy, i.e. how domestic and care work relationships are based on notions of good/bad and just/unjust. The paper offers a theoretical overview of the notion of moral economy in anthropology and sociology. It follows Andrew Sayer (2004) in stating that all sorts of economic activities and exchanges are influenced by moral dispositions and norms, and that approaching migrant domestic work as a form of moral economy is more accurate than the hitherto common way of describing paid reproductive labour relationships as based on maternalism or paternalism. It is argued that the labour contract is accompanied by a moral contract based on normative notions of familial duty, reciprocity and gratitude. I analyse the moral contract from the perspective of both employers and migrant workers.

The powerful trope expressing Neapolitan employers’ preferences for domestic and care workers was *brava persona*, a good person. The article discerns the multiple meanings of the notion of *brava/o* based on the interview data from the employers. The good people that employers are looking for are honest and (morally but also physically) clean workers who perform their work due to affection and commitment rather than for economic benefit. The temporal logic of the moral contract is cyclical, family time, which is contrasted to ‘punching the timecard’ – logic perceived as ill fitting for reproductive labour. There is then a tendency from the employers’ part to seek to transform the labour relationship into a family-like relationship based on a moral economy.

The logic of moral economy was not only confined to the employers’ perspective, but also the workers themselves were looking for employers who treated them with respect rather than for those who paid the most. This reflects the workers’ vulnerable situation in their jobs. Hence, a moral contract was also important for the workers themselves. Moreover, many informants used familial terms when describing the best possible work relationships. Contrary to most research literature on the topic, the article argues that, as researchers, we should respect such

descriptions and not rush to condemn them as another way in which poor migrant workers are exploited.

It can be argued that paid reproductive labour is typically a form of moral economy due to its locus in the private sphere of the household and the inherently personalised relationships that domestic and care work entail. However, these findings resonate with other research on low-wage labour sectors in which migrant work is widespread. Whether or not moral contracts are also typical to other economic spheres with higher wages is a question that requires further research. Moreover, taking the perspective of moral economy as a lens for the analysis of paid reproductive labour relationships directs attention to analyse how emotions carry value and how this value is transformed and utilised in labour relationships. It also opens up important new directions for the study of pre-modern forms of work in global capitalism – a theme that I will discuss in more detail in the next section.

5.3 Intersections of Gender, Migrancy and Social Class in the Demand for Domestic and Care Workers

The central question of the third article ‘Migrancy, Gender and Social Class in Domestic and Social Care Labour in Italy – An Intersectional Analysis of Demand’ is *why* and *how* has the transformation of an occupation from a lower-class women’s job to a migrant niche occurred in Italy. It is argued that in order to answer this question we need to focus on demand, and seek to approach the phenomenon at the intersection of gender, migration and welfare regimes, including also demographic changes and a specific culture of care and housekeeping. The article examines the demand for paid reproductive labour in Italy by drawing on interview data with Neapolitan employers and statistical data on migrant workers employed in this labour sector. The starting point in the article is that the demand for care workers, or social care as it is conceptualised in this article, needs to be analysed separately from the demand for cleaning and other household work, and that different forms of care work (care of the elderly, infirm and childcare) also benefit from distinct examination.

The theoretical framework relies on an intersectional perspective that emphasises the importance of taking into account the co-existence of diverse stratifying social factors. Accordingly, the demand for paid reproductive labour is analysed from a perspective in which gender, social class and *migrancy* are analysed as important explanatory aspects. The article develops the idea that migrancy, i.e. the socially constructed subjectivity of being a migrant has become as important social category as the classic social categories of the modern era: gender, social class and nationality. The article argues that *migrancy* importantly configures in paid reproductive labour and in the demand for domestic and care workers. This is apparent on different levels: on the juridical level when, for instance, the Italian migration legislation underpins labour migration towards paid reproductive labour sectors and, on the individual level, when Italian employers prefer migrant workers to nationals.

The first part of the article examines the expansion and ethnification of paid reproductive labour markets in Italy. The article shows that in less than ten years the number of people employed in this labour sector has increased by half a million. Concurrent with the expansion of this labour market is its ethnification: nowadays approximately 80 per cent of workers are of migrant origin. The article also shows that the sheer majority of workers in the labour sector are migrant women, followed by Italian women, but that approximately 10 per cent of the workforce comprises migrant men (whilst Italian men's share is only 1 per cent). The analysis then diversifies the image of paid reproductive labour being solely a women's job.

The second part of the article draws on Neapolitan employers' interviews to examine the reasons for hiring domestic and care workers. It shows that cleaning, which is considered culturally as dirty work, is closely linked to a higher social class lifestyle. Hence, the demand for household work has less to do with women's increased employment rates than it has to do with a certain class status. The demand for household workers maintains and reproduces the gendered division of labour in the household in which men's contribution remains limited.

Regarding the demand for care workers, home-based care is clearly perceived as the ideal form of care in Italy both for children under three and for the elderly. The analysis demonstrates that the demand for childminders is related to women's increased labour participation, especially when working hours in Italy are in many sectors very long

and inflexible, but the way in which this form of care is organised also points to a certain class lifestyle. Hence, the demand for nannies does not cease when the parents are on holiday, but on the contrary, it may increase, as childcare is perceived as laborious work. Moreover, the demand for private elderly caretakers correlates closely with the lack of public care structures, a culture that prioritises homecare over other care arrangements, and public subsidies, which encourage the privatisation of elderly care.

Finally, the article discusses employers' choices regarding the hiring of migrant or native workers. The analysis reveals that most employers had previously hired Neapolitan household workers and carers and some continued to do so. Whilst Neapolitan workers were employed for half-day cleaning or baby-sitting, the live-in workers were all migrants. Moreover, often the passage from a national to a migrant worker happened when the demand for domestic work or care increased. Hence, many employers had noticed that migrant workers were more malleable and they could be hired to work longer hours with lower pay than Neapolitans. The employers justified the differential treatment of migrant workers by relying on a perception of foreigners as strangers who are symbolically located in the 'past', in history. In other words, the employers not only perceived the workers as different from themselves, but also representing a different time.

5.4. Not Only Women's Work

The fourth article examines the phenomenon from both the employers' but especially from the workers' perspective. The article entitled 'Sri Lankan Men Working as Cleaners and Carers: Negotiating Masculinity in Naples' further develops the observation made in the previous article on paid reproductive labour being not only women's but also men's work. The article discusses the particular case of Sri Lankan men employed as domestic and care workers in Naples. Again using an intersectional perspective, it examines how Sri Lankan domestic workers' masculinities are constructed and negotiated in conjunction with 'race' and ethnicity by both Neapolitan employers and the men themselves. The article argues that Sri Lankan men have easier access to Neapolitan households than other migrant men, for instance, from Eastern Europe

due to the perceived racial and ethnic difference as it was constructed by the Neapolitan employers and to some extent strategically deployed by the Sri Lankan men. This racialisation operated in a way that cancelled out a potentially sexual relation between a female employer and a male worker. It also enabled some employers to negotiate a more distant and hierarchical employer-employee relationship than would otherwise been possible had the worker been ethnically and 'racially' similar. The finding presented here that some employers, especially those who hire cleaners on an hourly-basis, prefer a distanced labour relationship, might first seem to contradict the idea of labour relationships based on a moral economy. However, although Neapolitan employers preferred different degrees of intimacy – depending also on the job (care vs. cleaning) – the moral requirements for workers' honesty and trustworthiness, rather than skills, also governed the more distanced labour relationships.

Drawing on the interview data, the article analyses the Neapolitan employers' perceptions of Sri Lankan masculinity as docile, effeminate and culturally submissive. These perceptions of cultural submissiveness of Sri Lankan men were utilised by the employers to negotiate maternalistic and philanthropic employer-employee relationships. The female employers described their workers in highly affectionate, yet clearly asexual, terms. At the same time, however, Sri Lankan men were able to strategically make use of deference for their own benefit in order to safeguard their independence in an occupation characterised by personalised relationships and maternalism.

Quite contrary to the employers' descriptions, Sri Lankan men negotiated much more hegemonic forms of masculinity in their own private spheres, in relation to their own families. This created a tension in relation to their work that was socially constructed as a woman's job. Many interviewees were reluctant to discuss their work practices, and emphasised their roles as breadwinners for their families. Moreover, men compensated for the low occupational status through consumption and by being active members in their community.

Finally, the article discusses Sri Lankan men's experiences of finding work and doing the job. The interviewees who had no, or little, experience of household and caring tasks, needed a long time to learn the actual job. This finding calls into question the common status of domestic work as unskilled labour. Paid reproductive labour is shown to be a job that requires very particular and culturally specific skills that can

only be learnt *in situ* and in practice. Moreover, the men's experiences demonstrate well the contradictory nature of domestic and care work. The interviews contained stories of abuse and exploitation as well as positive narrations of affectionate and fulfilling care relationships. The examples show that male domestic workers are no less vulnerable to different forms of abuse, and that they are also capable of performing care work – commonly understood as more 'natural' for women.

5.5 Cleaning and Caring as a Complex Form of Reproductive Labour

The fifth article 'The making of 'proper' homes: Everyday practices in migrant domestic work in Naples' is a case study of Giuseppe's household where Alina, a Ukrainian live-in carer, is employed. The article draws on participant observation data conducted in Giuseppe's home. The article argues that in the Italian context, housekeeping is a highly heterogeneous activity through which not only is the physical environment of the 'house' (*casa*) maintained, but also the emotional sense of 'home' (*casa*) reproduced. Hence, the discussion emphasises that there is a close affinity between the maintenance of the household and the notions of a good home and the well-being of the family. The article describes the everyday household chores as a daily dance of home-making, which is collective and repetitive. There is a strict collectively orchestrated, ritualistic way of making homes in Naples, which defines which chores are performed in the mornings and when meals are eaten. Migrant workers are, therefore, employed to reproduce and maintain a proper, traditional notion of home. The article demonstrates how the rules and routines of the ritualistic home-making can potentially be endless, making the life of the housekeeper more or less burdensome.

The article also draws attention to the ways in which Alina as a live-in housekeeper and Giuseppe's carer manages to create her own space of belonging in the house. Applying Avtar Brah's (1996) notion of *diaspora space*, the article discusses how Alina's practices, such as inviting Ukrainian friends over, playing Ukrainian music and occasionally introducing Ukrainian foodstuff in the diet, transform Giuseppe's home space. These strategies were crucial for the well-being of Alina who otherwise could not leave the household freely, but only on Thursday

afternoons and Sundays. Concomitantly, they are also means through which Giuseppe's everyday was culturally transformed.

Moreover, the article examines the care relationship between Giuseppe and Alina. It demonstrates the complexities involved in the relationship, such as Giuseppe's downplaying of Alina's role. It also demonstrates how care work is a complex form of emotional labour, described by Alina as requiring a lot of patience. Migrant care labour is further complicated by the fact that it involves not only the care responsibilities towards the care-receiver but also towards the carer's own family in the country of origin.

6 Discussion

In this section I examine the analytical relevance of the research findings to the role of moral economy in the globalising paid reproductive labour. The discussion also takes the research results forward by putting them in dialogue with the relevant research literature. The section is followed by short, concluding remarks.

6.1 Migrancy as an Emerging Social Category and the Significance of Borders

Just as in the existing literature on the subject, this research also has shown in various ways that the subjectivity and figure of the migrant is constructed by the state (Anderson 2009; De Genova 2002; Ngai 2004). The need to control and channel people's movements and the ways in which people are categorised into 'illegal aliens', 'bogus asylum seekers', 'students', or in the Italian case 'stranieri', 'extra-comunitari' or 'immigrati' are manifestations of state relations to capital and labour (Hardt and Negri 2000). However, 'migrant' is not only a legal construction, but also a figure, which is 'imagined, defined and represented ... [by] a wider range of other actors, including academia, the media, NGOs, trade unions and the daily practices of individuals ...' (Anderson 2009: 409). I argue in this thesis that migrancy is emerging as an important social category, which is contingent, but with very clear effects on the people who are perceived as 'migrants'.

Therefore, contrary to the early literature on globalisation, which suggested that we are living in an increasingly 'borderless' world (Horsman & Marshall 1994; Ohmae 1990), or a network society based on space of flows (Castells 2000), and the celebratory literature on transnational migration as 'flows' of people and goods (see e.g. Basch et al. 1994), borders have become increasingly important, diffused and dispersed in globalisation (Rumford 2006). The character of borders has changed. Borders are no longer merely territorial and geographic, but there are very different kinds of borders, some which are drawn through visa practices far from the actual countries of migration.

In the lives of the research participants, borders had a very concrete significance that was demonstrated most clearly in the struggle for a regular stay permit. Take, for instance, the Ukrainian women's changing subjectivities in relation to the various borders: the first border they encounter is in Ukraine, where they apply for a tourist visa to Italy. If granted, they can cross the next border and enter the Italian territory with a valid document, which will expire in three months. They then find work and perhaps even a willing employer to give them a work contract and regularise them. However, unless they manage to enter within the annual quota, in which they actually need to pretend to still be in Ukraine, or unless there is a general amnesty, they remain irregular. Even if they manage to regularise their position, staying regular is not permanent. The stay permit needs to be renewed after the first year and then every two years and unless they manage to have a regular job, they fall out of legality. Hence, against the assumption that border controls keep migrants outside the state territory and exclude them from finding work, borders are best thought of as mechanisms through which 'deportability' is produced (De Genova 2002). Borders then create the conditions for migrants' inclusion in the informal labour markets (Andrijasevic 2009: 397).

Irregularity is then 'a social relation that is fundamentally inseparable from citizenship' (De Genova 2002: 422). Examining the practices of irregularity reveals the fluid and shifting nature of citizenship in a globalising and transnationally mobile world. Moreover, as the example of the Ukrainian labour migrants in Italy demonstrates, there is a clear interconnectedness between citizenship, reconfigurations of borders, and labour relations, as social citizenship is dependent on full-time paid employment. These transformations in the citizen-worker subjectivities go hand in hand with wider transformations in productive and reproductive labour, and in the increased precariousness of work (Andrijasevic 2009: 397), which is a theme that I discuss in more detail in the following sections. Moreover, irregularity also calls for a rethinking of the importance of physical mobility – and its constraints – in transnational migration. The case of Ukrainian women in Italy shows that for many migrants, transnational caregiving also required the possibility to go back and see one's family, in which staying in touch via telephone or Skype clearly is not enough. Hence, borders are also

significant in this respect in relation to migrants' possibilities to fulfil their own caring responsibilities towards their families.

6.2 Gendered Migrant Divisions of Paid Reproductive Labour: the Case of Italy

The research has demonstrated that paid reproductive labour has become one of the principal labour niches for migrants in Italy. People resort to mobility in order to struggle with increasing insecurities brought by neoliberal capitalist restructurings in the global South and in the European East. They find work in the informal labour markets of advanced capitalist societies, which then results in social divisions and ethnification of labour markets. This process can also be termed 'migrant divisions of labour' following Jane Wills et al.'s (2009; 2010) analysis of the developments in London as a global city. In this thesis, I have examined the migrant divisions of reproductive labour in Italy and Naples in particular.

However, Naples does not quite fit the figure of a global city. It is hardly a concentrated command point in the organisation of the world economy or a key location for finance and specialised services (Sassen 2001: 3-4), which then would require the employment of large numbers of cheap labour into various service jobs. In fact, one of the starting points in the thesis is the long historical continuities in paid reproductive labour in Italy. Therefore, rather than explaining the emerging migrant divisions of reproductive labour as a result of the concentration of top-level finances and services in Naples, it is apparent that migrant workers are being employed in jobs that used to be – and to some extent still are – performed by nationals. It is then not the global elite, which is purchasing the reproductive labour services, but the old and new bourgeoisie and increasingly also the middle-classes and lower-middle classes. Here, the role of the Italian welfare state system and the different forms of subventions are crucial. The state subsidies are creating jobs for private and informal elderly care and hindering the formalisation of care work and the development of public modes of organising care. Moreover, with migration legislation that makes it difficult for migrants who are regularly employed to apply for a stay permit and be entitled to social security, the Italian state is also inducing

workers' precariousness and vulnerability. Although it is against the law to employ an undocumented migrant worker, this law is not enforced, nor controlled, so that in practice employers bear little risk when employing an irregular migrant. In other words, the state is complicit in producing a pool of irregular and inexpensive labour force (see also Ruhs & Anderson 2010). Hence, when analysing migrant divisions of labour, or processes of ethnification of specific labour sectors, it is crucial to include an analysis of welfare, gender and migration regimes.

So what is attracting migrants to Italy and Naples, if they can be so easily exploited and there is little protection from the state? It is very difficult to give a comprehensive picture of the reasons why people decide to migrate and how they end up in some countries rather than others. It seems to be a combination of macro-level factors, such as global insecurities, meso-level factors, such as migration networks and then micro-level individual hopes, expectations and ambitions. One should not overlook the part that pure chance played in the informants' migration stories. Overall, the research participants were responding with mobility to economic and political insecurity. In Ukraine and Poland, the cause was the breakdown of the centralised economies and the difficult 'transition' from socialism to a market economy, whilst in Sri Lanka the reasons were the increasing economic disparities caused by the structural adjustment programmes and the civil war. However, established routes, such as the transnational migration networks initiated by the Catholic Church missionaries between Sri Lanka and Italy, or the tourist operators that organised trips to Italy from Ukraine, the smuggling routes from Sri Lanka to Italy and family reunification legislation were all crucial facilitating factors.

However, the economic and political insecurities affected women and men differently. Therefore, an examination of the gendered aspects of these migrations is necessary. In all three countries female unemployment increased more than male, and women were more affected by the dismantling of welfare services, due to their caring responsibilities in families. Moreover, there was a clear crisis in masculinity especially in Ukraine, but also to some extent in Poland. Men's high mortality rates, alcoholism and violence caused many women to resort to migration as a way to escape difficult domestic situations. Many Ukrainian and Polish women in Italy were lone breadwinners for their families. In addition, amongst Sri Lankan women, domestic violence is one of the

reasons why women migrated. Thus, the gendered impacts of economic crisis combined with patriarchal gender structures and the demand for female labour were all factors that led to particular gendered mobilities to Italy. For many women in my study, migration was hence to some extent emancipatory. Moreover, migration importantly transforms traditional gender roles, allowing Sri Lankan women to become the main breadwinners for their families (see also Gamburd 2000). Hence, in all groups women's autonomous migration was the initiator of migration flows. In the case of Sri Lankan migration, this transformed into a more gender-balanced migration when Sri Lankan men started following women.

Some authors have suggested that extensive informal labour markets might in fact operate as a 'pulling' factor for labour migration (see e.g. Reyneri 2004).²⁹ In the case of Naples, the job opportunities were in the informal paid reproductive labour, a feminised labour sector, which was clearly an incentive for women of all ages to migrate from Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the fact that Sri Lankan men had established a labour niche in this sector was clearly a factor facilitating migration. However, the assessment of potential 'pull' factors of informal labour markets needs to be contextualised in the framework of regular labour migration. Hence, for many of the Ukrainian and Sri Lankan research participants who had little opportunities to migrate regularly, Italy was an attractive option. However, for Poles who were free to travel within the EU after 2004, Italy was just one possible destination. In fact, many of the Polish research participants subsequently moved to other countries in Northern Europe.

Finally, when examining the emergence of a migrant division of reproductive labour, it is also important to analyse the reasons why employers' are employing migrant workers. My research findings demonstrated that many Neapolitan employers preferred migrant workers to nationals as they were willing to perform longer hours with lower pay, and because employing a person who is perceived as ethnically and racially other made it easier for them to negotiate a more

29 I use the inverted commas here to emphasise that pull/push terms are not used to refer to rational-choice theories of migration. They are used to refer to the incentives to migrate from particular places to certain countries.

hierarchical labour relationship (also Anderson 2007). Waldinger and Lichter (2003) refer to this as the ‘dual frame of reference’:

‘employers have a cognitive map that leads them to associate ethnic and national traits with the qualities that make for subordination. Operating from a “theory” of migrant labor, they perceive immigrants as workers distinctively characterized by a dual frame of reference, in which the treatment in the host society is always assessed relative to the treatment in the home society.’
(Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 40).

Not only does the employers’ dual frame of reference refer to the double standard in relation to the differential treatment between ‘home’ and ‘host’ societies, but it also operates in placing migrant workers in the ‘past’ due to the perception of ‘home’ society as being more archaic to the ‘host’ society. This dual frame of reference then serves to justify exploitation and differential treatment between migrants and nationals. All this is part and parcel of the moral economy of reproductive labour, which is the theme I examine closer in the following section.

6.3 The Moral Economies and Daily Practices of Reproductive Labour – Premodern Features in Contemporary Precariousness

As the vast research literature – both on historical and contemporary forms of paid reproductive labour – shows, there are some striking parallels across different geographical locations and historical periods.³⁰ Hence, there seems to be something almost universal in the paid

30 For contemporary, empirical research on paid domestic work across the globe, see e.g. Andall 2000; Anderson 2000; Chin 1998; Cock 1989; Colen 1986, 1995; Constable 1997; Cox 2004; Dill 1988; Gamburd 2002; Gill 1994; Glenn 1986, 1992; Gregson and Lowe 1994; Hansen 1989; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Mattila 2011; Parreñas 2001; Rollins 1985; Romero 1992; Scrinzi 2004; Spanò and Zaccaria 2003; Tucker 1988; Zontini 2002; for edited collections Adams and Dickey 2003; Bakan and Stasiulis 1997; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003a; Lutz 2008a; Sanjek and Colen 1990. See also special issues of *Gender and Society* 2003 17(2) and *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 2007 14(3). For historical accounts see e.g. Arru 1990; 1996; Davidoff 1979; Hill 1996; Horn 1975; Katzman 1978; McBride 1976; Meldrum 2000; Palmer 1989; Sarti 2004; 2005; 2006b.

reproductive labour relationships, in particular the highly emotional and personal relationships between employer and worker characterised by particular forms of dependencies (e.g. Anderson 2000; Lutz 2008b; Romero 1992). These contradictions derive from the fact that the paid reproductive labour relationship is not perceived as contractual (see Anderson 2000: 159–174 for discussion); there is instead a tendency to see it as a family-like, ‘maternalistic’ or ‘paternalistic’ relationship – or what I have conceptualised as based on a particular moral economy and moral contract (see also Mattila 2011 for similar analysis on India).

When domestic labour is performed by migrant workers, additional questions such as work and residence permits, right to family reunification and access to welfare and health services become more accentuated. In other words, in migrant paid reproductive labour, intersections of gender, ‘race’/ethnicity and migrancy, and issues such as language skills, become crucial markers of differentiation. Moreover, with migration, domestic and care work also becomes available for men. All these stratifications combine in the everyday relationships and practices of domestic work.

It can be argued that domestic and care labour can be understood as a moral economy on two accounts: firstly, regarding the relationship between the worker and employer and secondly, due to the status of the work itself (cf. Murphy 1993: 2–3). I will explore both dimensions in more detail here. Firstly, the economic and employment aspects of the work are obscured by the moral contract, i.e. the employers’ perceptions of reproductive labour as ideally performed by family members and by the expectation that workers should perform their jobs out of gratitude rather than for pay. In Naples, this is condensed in the moral notions used to describe the workers and employers (*brava persona/signora*) and in the common use of familial terms when addressing workers, which has also been noted elsewhere (e.g. Anderson 2000: 159–174; Colen 1995; Parreñas 2001: 179–187). Workers’ dependence on their employers is further enforced by Italian migration legislation, which ties the stay permit to a work contract. Therefore, the migrant’s subjectivity is equated with her/his ability to work, and in practice most migrants are dependent on the goodwill of their employers to apply for the stay permit. However, the research demonstrates that not all migrant workers experienced the moral contracts as purely negative. As researchers, we should respect informants’ statements of feeling part of

the family. However, this does not mean that we should take these as proof that such relationships are perceived as equal. On the contrary, it is important to acknowledge that power is part of *all* relationships, including – or especially – family relationships.

Secondly, analysing the moral economy of work and reproductive labour is a crucial question for workers' self-esteem, yet it has been strangely overlooked in the philosophy of justice (Murphy 1996: 2–5). Drawing on Mary Douglas' (1966) work on pollution and Everett C. Hughes' (1958) work on 'dirty work' it is possible to unravel the symbolic hierarchies of paid reproductive labour and their construction as 'dirty', feminine and polluting. In order to offer a critical perspective to the social construction of domestic and care work as unvalued, unskilled and 'dirty', it is important to examine the importance of paid reproductive labour for the production and reproduction of home as a complex sensory space.

The social spaces of home are culturally specific and class-bound. Thus, my discussion on the strict spatial and temporal organisation of homes is a depiction of upper-class Neapolitan households and, as such, sheds light on the linkages between upper-class domestic culture, gender and migration. However, as a cultural context where home is symbolically very highly valued, Naples offers a particularly interesting case for the study of meanings of home, and this analysis can shed light on other contexts as well. Moreover, there are significant skills involved in domestic and care work, although these skills continue to be overlooked in the social construction of paid reproductive labour as low-skilled.

At this point, I would like to go back to Lewis Coser's (1976) analysis of the servant role. Following Talcott Parson's modernisation theory, Coser argued that evolution and modernisation would get rid of pre-modern forms of labour, such as domestic service. However, it seems that quite the opposite has happened. In fact, paid reproductive labour – in the form that it has been discussed here – is by no means the only pre-modern trait of current globalisation dynamics. Consider, for instance, the increase in home-based production related to sub-contracting (Carr et al. 2000). Moreover, it can be argued that globalising neoliberal economic restructuring increases labour precariousness. The processes of precariousness in the contemporary labour markets of advanced capitalist states include: new forms of work as a result of sub-contracting,

outsourcing and relocations; the eroding of work times and work places due to increased flexibilisation; acceleration of the production process; putting increasing importance on workers' personal characteristics that are difficult to measure (such as looks, communicative skills, etc.); cuts in salaries and benefits; the erosion of the relationship between employer and employee; and finally, lack of basic labour security and safety (Precarias a la deriva 2009: 28-29). Some of these characteristics of precariousness are typical of labour relationships based on moral contracts, such as the erosion of the relationship between the employer and employee and the increasing importance of personal characteristics. Hence, it is possible that neoliberal economic globalising counter-intuitively increases not only labour precariousness but also labour relations in which moral contracts accompany conventional labour contracts, and where workers' rights and duties are stipulated.

All of this calls into question the evolutionary idea of a Western modernisation process (see also Bhambra 2007; Latour 1993). Instead of a linear progress from pre-modern to modern and post-/high-modern, it is possible then to think in line with Bruno Latour of the possibility to 'return to the multiple entities that have passed in a different way' (Latour 1993: 76). However, this is not to suggest that the pre-modern features of high-modernity would somehow be repeating historical forms of pre-modernity. I am not suggesting some return to the past, but rather that there is empirical evidence to question Parsonian modernisation theory in its linearity. There is then a need for a radical rethinking of what is meant and understood by development and modernisation within social sciences. This can also be taken as a call for an urgent rethinking of the tenets of neoliberal global economics that should form a platform for action.

7 Conclusions

The research task in this dissertation has been to answer, firstly, as to *why* and *how* paid reproductive labour has become one of the main labour niches for migrants in Italy and, secondly, what does this mean for the everyday labour relationships in private households and daily practices. I have developed the notion of moral economy as an analytical and theoretical tool for addressing these questions. In these concluding remarks, I would like to recap the answers to these two sets of questions.

First, answering the question of the growing demand for migrant domestic workers and carers, I have argued for the importance of considering demographic changes together with migration, welfare and gender regimes and in combination with a specific culture of housekeeping and care. I have also emphasised the need for a contextualised analysis that takes into consideration the history of domestic service and analyses it on a regional as well as national level. Although it is possible to distinguish these different regimes for analytical purposes, they are closely interconnected. I have also argued for the importance of treating the question of the demand for domestic work separately from the demand for care work.

The common argument for growth in the private employment of domestic workers is that women who are moving to full-time employment no longer have time for domestic chores. This argument takes for granted the fact that men's (limited) domestic roles have largely stayed intact. However, in South Italy, women's labour participation is less than 30 per cent and many women who are housewives employ domestic workers. Hence, an intersectional analysis is needed to examine how employing cleaners is connected to a certain social class lifestyle, to the social construction of paid reproductive labour as feminine, as well as to a moral economy of paid reproductive labour, i.e. the symbolic meanings of this kind of work as 'dirty' and polluting (see also Anderson 2000; Hughes 1958). As 'dirty' work, it is not considered suitable for the signora to do and, therefore, employing domestic workers is a tradition that is passed down from mother to daughter in upper-class families. Moreover, domestic work employment needs to be analysed in relation to a specific culture of housekeeping. Drawing on participant

observation conducted in households, I have shown the amount of time and labour that is put into housekeeping and the strict routines regarding the temporal and spatial ordering of Neapolitan upper-class households. Practices such as buying all the ingredients fresh from different local shops, high standards of cleanliness, and requirements of not only having ironed shirts, but ironed sheets and underwear too, make it clear that maintaining a proper Neapolitan house requires a lot of time and hard work. As *la casa* (home/household) is understood as a feminine notion and realm, this work is considered women's work. The absence of men from household tasks is a strikingly omnipresent factor across generations. In sum, there is a long tradition of employing domestic workers in upper-class households. Therefore, rather than substituting *Italian women*, as some commentators have argued (Anthias 2000: 25–27; Hoskyns and Orsini-Jones 1994: 11), migrant workers are replacing the *native domestic workers* of the past.

The picture is slightly different when we look at care work. Here, the connection with the private employment of care workers and high social class status is less obvious, yet it is there to some extent. The Mediterranean welfare regime, combined with women's labour participation and the availability of a relatively cheap migrant labour force are the main reasons for the growing demand of care workers. Here again, we need to take into consideration the social construction of caring as feminine labour and the social acceptance of men's limited participation in relation to care of children and the elderly. Moreover, there are significant regional differences when it comes to the public provision of child and elderly care services. For example, in South Italy, public services for children under the age of 3 are practically non-existent, whilst in some regions of the north almost a third of children in the age of 0–2 years are in such care (ISTAT 2008).

Elderly care demonstrates how migrant and welfare regimes are interconnected (Sciortino 2004). Care allowances to cover the cost of private elderly care, combined with a lack of formalising such care, encourage private and informal employment of migrant carers in households (Gori 2002). This, combined with high regional differences in the distribution of care homes for the elderly, a cultural preference of familial care over institutional care and the availability of relatively inexpensive migrant labour force, have created the 'Italian model' of elderly care (Dell'Oste 2007), i.e. the private employment of migrant

carers. The care allowances combined with low wages paid for migrant carers have made the private employment of carers available for lower middle classes and working classes, i.e. to social strata that do not have the culture of employing household workers. Characteristic to the Italian and Neapolitan case is the high incidence of undocumented migrants created by the restrictive migration legislation, which makes it difficult for migrant workers to be regularised outside annual quotas or periodic amnesties. This results in informal and segmented labour markets that are stratified by gender and migrancy.

Secondly, the examination of labour relationships inherent to gendered migrant divisions of reproductive labour has revealed some parallels with premodern labour relationships, as Talcott Parsons (1954[1949]) described them. These include: 1) the ascribed status, i.e. the dual frame of reference according to which migrants are naturally inclined to perform inferior and 'dirty work' (cf. Hughes 1954; Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 40); 2) particularistic standards according to which there are limitless possibilities to perform household and care duties in the 'proper' Neapolitan way; 3) diffused obligations, for instance, the need for the migrant worker to adopt the employer's complete lifestyle and 4) the affective quality of the work, which is very apparent in the highly personalised and family-like relationships typical for paid reproductive labour, especially care work (see also Hartmann & Honneth 2006 for a complementary discussion in relation to capitalism). Joan Tronto (2002: 37) has argued that a personal relationship is one of the 'products' of care and the quality of this relationship is its prime criterion. Due to this inherent quality of care labour, the tension between market-logic and family-logic, or the moral contract, is more accentuated in paid reproductive labour.

Hence, the question then is to what extent these moral economies and premodern characteristics of the paid reproductive labour apply to other labour sectors as well. Many of my findings resonate with the research conducted on other low-wage, predominantly migrant labour sectors, such as agriculture (see Cole and Booth 2007; Preibisch 2008). In addition, berry-picking in Finland, which is predominantly performed by migrants, would seem to be embedded in similar moral economic forms of labour relationships (Mika Helander, personal communication 22/8/2011). However, more research would be needed to unravel these similarities and linkages, as well as the possible differences.

This dissertation is the culmination point of a long project that started in 2002 when I first visited my distant relatives in Naples and found out that they were employing servants in their households. For someone born in a Nordic welfare state in the 1970s, servants in a maid's uniform were figures encountered in films, not in real life. Now, a decade later, there is evidence of similar processes of privatisation and ethnification of care labour and household work also in the welfare states of Northern Europe. A recent publication on global care work in the Nordic countries (Isaksen 2010a) confirms this well. Is the Italian model then the future of Nordic and other European countries? It seems that many European countries have already for long resorted to migrant labour as an answer to care shortages (e.g. Cancedda 2001). In the Nordic countries, the dismantling of welfare services and the adoption of neoliberal doctrines since the 1990s, combined with the weakening of the dependency ratio due to the ageing population are all pushing towards the Italian model.

I believe that research is a political activity, which is why I would like to take the liberty to reflect whether this is a positive or a negative development. I have so far avoided making normative judgements, and one of my aims in this thesis has been to demonstrate the value and skills involved in domestic and care labour. I have also emphasised the importance of taking it seriously when the research participants themselves value labour relationships, which for the researcher might appear as exploitative. However, even though on an individual level it is important to restrain from making normative judgments, it is also crucial to be able to assess the implications of these forms of labour relations on a macro-level. From a macro-level perspective then, any kind of labour market segmentation, where workers with a migrant background are over-represented in low-status and low-paid jobs is problematic in terms of social justice. Stratified labour market segmentation is characteristic of unequal societies with high-income differences, and it is a path that Nordic welfare states can either follow or not. There is no nature of law that would lead towards the Italian model, and it is possible to find alternatives. But to do so requires political will and a rethinking of the tenets of welfare provision in global capitalism.

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Appendix 1: Profiles of the Research Participants

Polish Research Participants

Pseudonym	Age	To Italy	Migrant status
Monica	27	1998	student visa
Ewa	60	2003	no permit
Jolanta	32	2000	no permit
Eliza	23	2001	stay permit
Dana	32	1994	no permit
Janina	27	1998	no permit
Drota	42	1999	no permit
Vera	25	2000	no permit
Elsbieta	38	2002	stay permit
Sylwia	53	1997	stay permit
Joanna	23	2001/2002*	stay permit
Wirke	52	2003	no permit
Aneta	26	2003	no permit
Marta	26	2003	no permit
Lila	26	1999/2005*	student visa
Zofia	25	2004	no permit
Elwira	33	2002	no permit
Weronika	26	2003	no permit
Mariola	30	1995/1996*	stay permit
Alicja	28	1995/1997*	stay permit

* the person moved to Italy once and then returned back to Poland, and re-migrated again.

Ukrainian Research Participants

Pseudonym	Age	To Italy	Migrant status
Svitlana	55	2000	stay permit
Valentyna	52	1997	stay permit
Ludmila	53	1998	no permit
Anna	50	2003	no permit
Silvana	41	2000	stay permit
Elina	32	2000	stay permit
Natasha	45	2001	stay permit
Elina	38	2000	no permit
Nadja	39	2002	no permit
Alina	47	2000	stay permit
Oksana	38	2000	stay permit
Tonia	48	2000	stay permit
Maria	35	1999	stay permit
Lidia	27	2004	no permit
Tatyana	45	2000	stay permit
Katya	33	2000	stay permit
Rossana	47	2001	no permit
Larisa	45	2000	stay permit
Olga	50	2002	stay permit
Lyubov	54	2003	no permit
Maria	58	2000	stay permit
Natalya	38	2001	stay permit
Julia	24	2001	stay permit
Alla	51	1999	stay permit

Profiles of Sri Lankan Migrants

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	To Italy	Migration status
Sriyantha	M	25	Sinhalese	2004	no permit
Malan	M	56	Sinhalese	2001	stay permit
Tharanga	M	37	Sinhalese	1990,	stay permit
Sunil	M	48	Sinhalese	1989	stay permit
Upul	M	46	Sinhalese	1990	stay permit
Chamika	F	42	Sinhalese	1994	stay permit
Sahan	M	44	Sinhalese	1994	stay permit
Claude	M	37	Sinhalese	1991	stay permit
Helen	F	40	Sinhalese	1992	stay permit
Namal	F	64	Sinhalese	1991	stay permit
Makali	F	39	Tamil	1993	stay permit
Neela	F	50	Tamil	1980	stay permit
Roshani	F	31	Sinhalese	2001	stay permit
Amal	M	31	Sinhalese	1991	stay permit
Ranil	M	33	Sinhalese	1999	stay permit
Malka	F	41	Sinhalese	1994	stay permit
Hasith	M	42	Sinhalese	1991	stay permit
Debra	F	43	Sinhalese	1989	stay 'card'
Kumari	F	51	Sinhalese	2004	no permit
Pradeep	M	41	Sinhalese	1990	stay 'card'
Nadeeka	F	35	Sinhalese	1999	carta di soggiorno
Sumal	F	36	Sinhalese	1990	stay permit
Lakshman	M	43	Sinhalese	1990	stay permit
Rohini	F	33	Sinhalese	1998	stay permit
Jayamal	M	50	Sinhalese	1991	stay permit
Priyani	F	53	Sinhalese	1992	stay permit
Ruwan	M	33	Sinhalese	1993	stay permit

Neapolitan Employers (pseudonyms)

Lucia Bruno, 74 yrs, widow, upper-middle class, employs a Sri Lankan cleaner who comes once a week for a day. Lives with her daughter who is a housewife and does the light cleaning in the house.

Giuseppe Giordano, 88 yrs, widow, upper-middle class, employs a Ukrainian live-in carer.

Caterina Rossi, 60 yrs, married, middle-class, employs a Neapolitan cleaner who comes to do half a day cleaning and a Ukrainian live-in carer for her mother.

Giovanna Marrone, 37 yrs, married, middle-class, employs a Polish carer for her two children, who used to work as live-in, now only half-days. Her sister also employs a Ukrainian live-in babysitter.

Signora Esposito, 84 yrs, married, originally lower-middle class, but children middle- and upper-middle class. Employs a Neapolitan woman for half-day cooking and a live-in Ukrainian carer for her husband who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. At the time of the interview, she was looking to hire a live-in couple.

Signora Napolitano, 54 yrs, married, middle-class with lower-middle class background, secretarial job. Has employed Italian nurses to assist her mother when she had an accident, now when the mother is better she employs a Ukrainian live-in carer to take care of her and her father who suffers from Alzheimer's disease. Also employs a Neapolitan cleaner who does hourly cleaning in her own house.

Rosaria Caruso, 55 yrs, married, works for the commune, middle-class, used to employ an Italian domestic worker who did cleaning for other houses and lived with them, employed also Italian babysitters when her children were young. Now employs a Ukrainian live-in carer for her elderly mother who lives with her.

Elisabetta Capasso, 37 yrs, married, owns her own company, upper-middle class, has employed a Polish nurse for her father, employs a Sri Lankan cleaner who does weekly cleaning and is looking for a Polish live-in carer for her baby after he is born.

Signora Rizzo, 65 yrs, university teacher, married, upper-middle class background. Employs a Sri Lankan cleaner who comes every day for half-day cleaning.

Rita Monti, 60 yrs, teacher, middle class, employs a Sri Lankan cleaner who comes once a week for a day. Contributes also to paying the salary of a Ukrainian live-in carer for her mother.

Lilli Russo, 55 yrs, widow, upper-middle class, originally from Milan, employs a Sri Lankan cleaner who comes daily and Ukrainian live-in caretaker for her mother who lives with her.

Signora Conti, 58 yrs, works as a secretary, middle-class, has employed Polish live-in carers for her mother, now employs a Sri Lankan cleaner who comes every day to do half-day cleaning.

Francesco De Filippo, 45 yrs, teacher, upper-middle-class background, single, employs a Sri Lankan cleaner who comes once a week, his childhood family had live-in servants who were Italian.

Teresa De Luca, 63 yrs, a sculptor, single, employs a Sri Lankan cleaner, and pays the salary of a Ukrainian live-in carer for her mother.

Gianluca D'Amato, 26 yrs, lawyer, upper-middle-class background, employs a Sri Lankan cleaner, who comes once a week for a day.

Franca Martini, 35 yrs, teacher, married, employs a Ukrainian babysitter for her two children. Comes every day but isn't live-in.

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Appendix 2: Interview Themes

Interviews/migrant workers (*italics signal questions that have been added during the course of the research*)

Background details: name, age, country, place of origin, religion and marital status. Occupation and education in the country of origin.

Migration history:

When and where did you migrate first? What were your reasons for migrating? How did the actual migration take place, how was it organised and how much did it cost? How did you pay for it?

Migration status: Do you have a stay permit, what is the permit, when did you get it and how? Was it difficult to obtain one? How long is it valid for?

Finding employment in Naples: What was your first employment and how did you find it? *Did you pay for the employment, if so, how much did it cost?*

Work:

Tell me about all the jobs you have done in Italy. What kind of work have you done? What are your duties? What are the working hours and the pay? Do you have a contract? Do you enjoy your work? What do you enjoy about the work? What don't you enjoy about your work?

How is your relationship with the employer/family/care-receiver(s)?

Describe a typical day at work. Where do you sleep? Do you have your own room?

Changing work

Reasons for changing jobs? How have you found new jobs in Naples?

Family

Who is your family? Where do they live? How do you keep in touch? How often?

Transnational practices and home

What do you do with the money you earn in Naples? Do you send gifts or anything else back home? If so, how do you do it?

What are your plans and hopes for the future?

Interview themes/employers

Background information on age, occupation, marital status, family members.

When did you first employ a domestic worker/carer? How did you find the person? Who have you employed in the past? Who do you employ currently? Did your childhood family employ a domestic worker?

Reasons for employing a domestic worker/carer?

Main duties, hours and pay of the domestic worker/carer?

What are the most important qualities a domestic worker/carer should have?

Experiences of employing a domestic worker. Possible positive and negative aspects.

What do you think of the reasons as to why it is common to employ domestic workers/elderly carers/baby sitters in Italy?

