Female labour migration towards Italy: 
the case of Romanian female domestic workers in Trieste

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Introduction

The present thesis intends to deal with the process of female migration, concentrating more specifically on how this phenomenon occurred in Italy throughout the past century and taking as an example the case of Romanian women who come towards Italy acting as “primary migrants”, i.e., moving on their own, independently from their families, in search of work and often in order to provide a higher income to their families and relatives back in Romania.

The subject of this research is the result of some years of reflexion over three general concepts and over the interactions between them: labour migration, female migration and acculturation strategies, i.e., integration or assimilation into the receiving society. The study was triggered, firstly, by the growing interest in the field of female migration – an area of migration research which was completely ignored until very recently – and, secondly, by my growing personal interest in the way Romanian female migrants in Italy experienced the act of migration and, more specifically, on the way in which these female migrants managed to integrate in the Italian society, assuming that an integration process actually took place.

I chose to approach the case of Romanian female domestic workers in Italy, a topic on which quite a few articles have been written, not to mention a lot of media articles and news which can be read or heard almost daily on this argument. However, aside from listening to and spreading the stories told by these women, it was my impression that very little interest was shown in literature with regard to the way in which these women managed to integrate in the Italian society.

Furthermore, Romanian female domestic workers have not been studied yet as an individual group. This is why my intention is to analyse this group and to reveal the motives which trigger migration, the social and economic background, the daily life and difficulties this group encounters in Italy and how all this has repercussions on the way in
which Romanian female migrants manage to integrate in the Italian society. It is my assumption that, in spite of the much-praised adaptability of Romanian female domestic workers, they do not always manage to integrate perfectly into the hosting environment and that this is also due to the atypical nature of domestic work. Moreover, it is my impression that elder Romanian female domestic workers in particular experience more difficulties in communicating with the majority group and thus integration into the Italian society occurs much more slowly in their case.

As a matter of fact, Romanian women are expected to integrate very rapidly into the new environment. They are believed to be very fast learners and to adapt very easily – or at least with less difficulties than other migrant women – to the new surrounding reality. This is partly due to the cultural resemblances between Romania and Italy and to the so highly-praised “Latinity” of Romania. Yet, little is known about the way in which this adaptation occurs and about the fact that the behavioural flexibility of these women is not always accompanied by a process of integration or assimilation. Instead, adaptation often occurs too abruptly, triggering a whole set of emotional and personal transformations which affect irrevocably one’s identity. Furthermore, the feeling of belonging to one particular culture, rather than another, and the identity changes suffered by these migrant women seemed equally interesting and worth exploring.

As a consequence, I decided to focus my research on the situation of Romanian domestic workers living and working in the province of Trieste. The location was chosen because of my vicinity to this area (this is the place were I lived during the past 4 years) and thus better understanding of the features of this province and of its historic multiculturalism, given by it being a “border land” and thus home to many migrants.

In order to better expose and analyse all the concepts related to the topic, I chose to structure my research into three parts, starting from a more general framework that analyses the theoretical aspects, continuing with a more specific approach towards the main concepts of the thesis, and ending with a methodological framework that describes the techniques used and further elaborates and interprets the data gathered.
In the first part, the theoretical aspects which are connected to the concepts of “migration” and “gender”, nonetheless the aspects related to the ideas of “gender migration” and “identity” are described and analysed. All these are key-concepts that will help prove the hypothesis of the thesis, i.e., demonstrating that the level of integration of Romanian female domestic workers in Italy is very much connected to their social and economic background and to the motives that underpin the decision to migrate and that, in most cases, a true phenomenon of integration does not occur at all or it occurs to a very small extent, in spite of the immigrants’ learning the language of the host country and even adopting a whole new set of values and behavioural assets belonging to the receiving society. In order to do that, a general picture of the phenomenon of migration will be presented, describing the actors which are involved in the process, the causes which trigger migration, the various theories explaining the decision to migrate, and the migrants’ profiles according to the motive of migration.

As far as the concept of “gender” is concerned, I decided to make a brief review of a great amount of literature explaining the evolution of gender in migration research and outlining the fact that researchers and policy-makers did not study migration in relation to gender until very recently. Traditional migration theory was largely gender-blind, using models of migration based exclusively on the experiences of men. Even later, when female independent migration for work was recognized as an empirical phenomenon, it was still not given sufficient attention because it was simply thought to mirror the independent economic migration of men. In other words, women were not considered because they were seen as either following men as accompanying dependants, migrating under family reunification, or behaving like men.

Furthermore, I will explain how the concept of “identity” evolves in the context of international labour migration, and more specifically in the context of female migration for domestic work. The idea is that migrants’ identities are shaped not only according to gender, class or ethnicity, but also by the experience of migration itself. Migration is thus a crucial aspect for both individual development and wider social change.

In the second part of the thesis, i.e. the analytical part, some aspects related to the labour migration legislative framework will be evaluated as these particular details prove to be
very important when it comes to analysing the status of international labour workers, both in cases of legal migration and also in cases of clandestine labour migrants.

In addition to this, I will further expose and analyse specific topics related to the case study. Firstly, I will present the evolution of the domestic work sector in Italy, starting from the post-war period when the need for domestic work was satisfied either locally or through the process of internal migration of Italian women performing these activities, and until the period following the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and the opening of the Italian labour market towards foreign domestic workers.

Secondly, I will briefly describe the interesting case of the Italian migratory paths towards Romania in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I found this brief chapter to be particularly useful in order to understand the resemblances with the reverse migratory process which took place a century later, this time from Romania towards Italy. Finally, as a parallel to the evolution of things in Italy, I will include a presentation of Romanian emigration in recent history, exposing both the situation before the fall of Communism, as well as the evolution of Romanian emigration throughout the 1990s, and analysing the specific features of Romanian migration towards Italy.

The consequences that the Romanian female labour migration towards Italy has both on the Italian and the Romanian societies are further unveiled. The conclusions of this chapter can be particularly interesting, as the phenomenon of female migration for domestic work often creates positive effects in the receiving country, being seen as a “care gain”, whereas it triggers an opposite effect, i.e., a “care drain”, in sending countries, where children and elderly in particular are deprived of the skills and care of millions of mothers and daughters. These effects are also important when it comes to the level of integration of Romanian domestic workers in Italy, as, in most of the cases when a mother emigrates on her own, having to provide for the family which remains in Romania, integration takes place very slowly.

To conclude the analytical part of this research, a brief description of the immigration past of the province of Trieste will be made. In order to better understand the features of this
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territory, the migratory flows which had this location as a final destination will be presented and shortly analysed.

The third part of the thesis is dedicated to the methodological aspects of the research and to the presentation and interpretation of the data gathered. With regard to the investigation technique used in order to verify the hypothesis, the in-depth semi-structured interview was applied. I found this instrument to be the most appropriate, as my intention was to investigate the individual inner conceptions, behaviour and perceptions, as well as the interpersonal relationships of Romanian female domestic workers residing in the province of Trieste.

Since one of the most striking features of migrant domestic workers in Italy is the fact they usually find employment throughout unconventional job searching methods such as the suggestions and vacancy ads they receive from their networks of friends, relatives and acquaintances, it only came natural to use the snowball sampling technique in order to find the interviewees. Firstly, four interviews were carried out with Romanian female domestic workers with whom I came in contact through various methods: two of them I met throughout my own network of friends, the third was recommended to me by the ACLI-COLF in Trieste and with the forth person I came in contact thanks to the Family Assistants Office of the Province of Trieste. I subsequently applied the snowball technique in order to find the other respondents. Moreover, the advantages and limitations of the investigation and sampling techniques were presented, as well as their influence on the gathered data.

Nonetheless, the last chapter of the research exposes the data gathered as a result of the interviews conducted during the months of July 2009 until February 2010, with 15 Romanian migrant women working in the province of Trieste as family assistants. Based on these data, I was able to draw some conclusions regarding their level of integration and identity changes which had occurred since their arrival in Italy.

As for the hypothesis, the research expects to unveil the fact that Romanian female migrants working as family assistants manage to integrate into the Italian society only after undergoing a very difficult adaptation period when communication with the majority
group is very difficult due to the nature of their work and to the fact that they often migrate independently in order to offer a better life to their families in Romania. Therefore the elder migrants and the ones who have the household and family centre in Romania are expected to face more difficulties in adapting to the new environment due to the fact that they perceive migration as a hardship that has to be endured rather than as an opportunity for personal growth and emancipation.
PART I:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Chapter 1
International migration and gender

1.1 Concepts of migration

Defining the concept of migration may prove to be quite problematic as we are dealing with a phenomenon that includes people who move for different reasons across different spaces. Because it occurs under different conditions, demographers lack a universal definition of this concept. A migrant can be a person who moves to another city or town within a nation; a jobseeker who crosses an international border in search of better economic opportunities; a refugee who flees his/her country in order to escape religious or political persecution; a victim of human trafficking who is forcibly moved; or a person displaced by war or natural disaster.

However, although heterogeneous factors make a single, operational, definition impossible, in general, we can say that migration is a process in which an individual or a group shifts residence from one population (or place) to another. Apart from the spatial dimension, migration also implies the disruption of daily life activities such as work, schooling, social life, and other patterns. A migrant is someone who breaks off activities and associations in one place and reorganizes his or her daily life in another place. This is why many consider that a move within the same area is not migration, but mobility, because the mover can continue day-to-day life (speak the same language, attend the same school or schooling system, shop at the same stores, and socialize with the same people) without any significant disruption [Weeks 1999].
Chapter 1: International migration and gender

The number of international migrants worldwide is estimated to reach 213 million persons in 2010, or approximately 3.1 per cent of the global population currently estimated by the United Nations at over 6.5 billion\(^1\). While the numbers themselves are high – in the past 40 years, the number of international migrants has more than doubled –, the actual percentage of the global population migrating has remained relatively constant over the last four decades. Moreover, statistics show that the tendency to move internationally is limited to a relatively small share of the population. Among these migrants, there are a few categories that stand out. The most important ones include: economic migrants that decide to leave their home countries in order provide for their families; refugees and internally displaced persons fleeing persecution; and victims of human trafficking. The vast majority, though, are economic migrants who have few possibilities to achieve a decent living in their countries of origin. The International Labour Organization estimated that 86 million of the 175 million international migrants in the year 2000 were economically active migrant workers\(^2\). Today the number of international migrant workers is estimated to have reached the 100 million figure, meaning that almost half of the people that migrate is in search of work opportunities.

1.1.1 The “actors” involved in the decision to migrate

One erroneous supposition people sometimes make when discussing the process of migration is considering that migrants are the only players involved in this phenomenon. Instead, the size and direction of population flows across countries is determined by three major players: the people contemplating whether or not to leave their countries of origin, i.e., the potential migrants; the governments of these countries of origin, and the governments of the countries of destination [Borjas 1999:2]. These three sets of players usually have different objectives and it is precisely the interaction between them that leads to a particular distribution of migrants among countries.

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\(^2\) International Labour Organization Press release of 21 May 2004, reference: ILO/04/09
People living in a particular country of origin may ponder the idea of remaining where they are or that of migrating elsewhere. When taking their decision, they sometimes make a comparison between the benefits offered by various destination countries and, in order to make the best selection, they often consider the financial and legal constraints that regulate the international migration process.

The decision taken by the potential migrants is influenced not only by economic considerations, but it depends also on “non-economic” factors such as the political conditions of the destination country and the existence of cultural and social networks that might link the two countries.

There is also a series of legal and financial constraints which influence migrants’ options for a particular destination country. One of them is the financial cost of migrating which includes direct expenses (such as transportation costs and living costs in the destination country which are often superior to those in the source country, which the migrant presumably can afford) and indirect expenses (such as the income losses migrants might suffer until they manage to find employment in the destination country). Moreover, there is also a “psychic constraint” associated with the migration act, as migrants often have to leave behind families and friends and adjust to a completely new environment, a new language, new customs and traditions. This constraint might be softened in cases where the cultural and social links between the two countries are strong.

The second actors of the international migration process are the governments of the destination countries. To be more precise, the immigration policies pursued by these governments are the ones to play an important role in the migration decision taking. These policies can encourage, discourage or even forbid the entry of certain groups of people. Some host countries regulate the size of immigrant flows by imposing restrictions related to migrants’ occupation, skills, wealth, national origin or familial relationship with the country’s residents. In such cases, immigration policies act as a screening device used to filter out “less desirable” persons from the entry pool [Borjas 1999:3].

The role played by the home countries of potential migrants can be of major importance especially in those cases where the governments try to put obstacles in front of its own
population’s efforts to move away from the country. In some countries, citizens are free to migrate whenever they wish, for any duration and for whatever reason, whereas in other countries, migration is seen as a threat and governments impose high costs such as penalties or even freedom threats to those who attempt to flee the country. For example, some countries consider multiple citizenship to be undesirable and they consequently take measures to prevent it. In such cases, migrants that acquire the citizenship of another country, lose their former nationality and all the rights that derive from it\(^3\).

1.1.2 Causes

International migration is neither a new phenomenon, nor is it in itself a crisis or a disaster. On the contrary, migration occurs in response to specific situations in both sending and receiving countries. On the one hand, it may occur in response to poverty, injustice and armed conflict, displacing millions of people across the globe. On the other hand, it may also be an opportunity for mutually beneficial relationships between sending and receiving countries, enhancing cultural diversity, establishing ties among peoples and contributing to peace. For example, such a win-win case is represented by the rapidly ageing wealthy countries in need of labour force which can only be supplied by migration from poorer countries. The latter, in turn, benefit from better employment opportunities and better wages offered by the destination countries. At the same time, migration contributes to home country development through worker remittances, the transfer of capital and skills through returning migration and transfers of skills and technology and investments by transnational communities abroad.

However, migration raises a number of important concerns. On the one hand, it provides a valuable source of income via remittances for developing country households, as well as a channel for employment for low- and medium-skilled labour in developing countries. On the other hand, it can have adverse effects on migrant-exporting countries if it results in a steady exodus of skilled labour.

\[^3\] For example, in countries such as China, Denmark, Japan, and Singapore, these laws translate in an automatic loss of citizenship if another citizenship is acquired voluntarily. Furthermore, in countries such as Saudi Arabia, criminal penalties are foreseen for exercising another citizenship.
The causes of migrations have also modified over the time. While some motives remained constant, others have registered significant changes. If before the World War I, it was the time of transoceanic emigration from Europe towards Central and North Americas, later, after World War II, labour migration gained more importance and many people moved towards northern European countries. Actually, in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century and during the first half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, labour migration had different features and did not carry the same importance as it does today. In a process linked to economic development, new emigration flows have emerged from countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Even if nowadays the flows towards the North face increasingly restrictive immigration control from governments fearful of unwanted immigration, still the South to North migration can be assumed to grow further in the future [Hammar and Tamas 1997:1]. Other factors that modified over time are related to ageing populations and low fertility rates in industrialized countries both of which have resulted in a substantial decline in “replacement workers” entering the workforce, while also creating greater demand for service-sector jobs and low-skill employment. The result is that developed countries have come to rely on migrants to fill their labour needs for workers and for tax-payers.

Also, we have to consider the fact that inequalities between and within countries have accelerated in recent years. The ratio of the average income of the five richest countries to the five poorest was 9 to 1 in terms of purchasing power in 1900, by 1960 it was 30 to 1, whereas in the 2000s it was an estimated 100 to 1 [Birdsall 2004]. The main reason for this increasing divergence is that a large number of countries that were poor in 1960 have grown much more slowly, or have hardly grown at all in per capita terms. These countries are concentrated mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and South and Central Asia.

In this context, one of the most important phenomena contributing to the increase in migration flows since the mid-twentieth century has been globalization. Although this is a recent process, it is increasingly becoming one of the major driving forces behind labour migration. Economic globalization and integration enable the free movement of goods and capital, as well as the free movement of services and labour, in short, of people. Moreover, the migratory movements that come along with the globalization process are driven by four major phenomena: the existence of transnational networks enabling the exchange of
Chapter 1: International migration and gender

goods, services and information at the macro level; technological advances in electronic communication that strengthen migrant support networks at the micro level; greater access to information via internet and mass media that nourish perceptions of a better life elsewhere; and advances in transportation technology resulting in a significant reduction of travel times and distances. Though globalization has caused the number of people on the move to rise, the relative increase is consistent with the rise in the rate of population growth. The more significant influence of globalization on migration can be seen in relation to the origin, composition and the respective profiles of migrants.

One first categorization of the causes of migration can be done on a macro level, dividing the causes into two main categories: one regarding the security dimension of migration (e.g., natural disasters, conflicts, threats to individual safety, poor political prospects) and the other dealing with the economic dimension of migration (e.g. poor economic situation, poor situation of national market).

1.1.3 Migration decision-making theories

Detailed analyses of how individuals or family units come to make the decision to migrate have emerged along the time. There is not one single decision-making model of migration but a number of different theories that tackle the question of what kind of mental processes people go through when they take the decision to move. In particular the main questions these theories try to answer are related to the factors that influence people to move, the way people make the decision to move to a particular place, and also the reason why some people decide not to move [Daugherty and Kammeyer 1995:115].

One of the first papers trying to study the migration process and actually identifying some rules which seem to govern this phenomenon was delivered to the Journal of the Statistical Society in England in 1885 by E.G. Ravenstein, nowadays widely regarded as the earliest migration theorist. He outlined a series of "laws of migration" based on the information obtained by comparing census data from the Kingdom of England and Wales gathered in 1871 and 1881, the most recent tabulations available at the time. Starting from the results obtained, Ravenstein attempted to explain and predict migration patterns both within and
between nations. The conclusion of this early work was that migration was governed by a “push-pull” process, meaning that unfavourable conditions in one place (oppressive laws, heavy taxation, etc.) “push” people out, and favourable conditions in an external location “pull” them in. The primary cause for migration was considered to be better external economic opportunities; the volume of migration decreased as distance increased; migration occurred in stages instead of one long move; population movements were bilateral; and migration differentials (e.g., gender, social class, age) influenced a person's mobility [Ravenstein 1885:167-235]. His findings were largely confirmed later by other theorists, the dominant theories in contemporary scholarship being more or less variations of his conclusions.

In order to better analyse the root causes of migration, many scholars got their inspiration from Ravenstein, dividing these causes in two categories: migration push and pull factors. Migration push factors are the ones that drive people away from their countries of origin, whereas pull factors draw people to certain destination countries which offer better living conditions compared to those offered by the countries of origin. For example, low wages and low expectations of dignified employment in the country of origin is one reason which triggers labour migration, pushing people outside the borders of their country. According to the World Bank Development Indications in 2005 there were 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty\(^4\). Many of them decide to migrate to more developed countries which are often envisaged as a sort of “promised lands” where the chance of decent employment and remuneration would allow them to have a better life and, at the same time, send remittances back home to their families. Other factors triggering labour migration are the absence of access to credit, insurance, unemployment benefits and social welfare protections in the country of origin.

The second set of determinants of migration is represented by the pull factors. They are the ones that encourage people to move away from their native country into another country of residence. Migration pull factors are extremely relevant to the broader topic of migration as they are the fuel behind people moving around the world, in acts of globalization. In

\(^4\) The data refers to the global poverty measured by the World Bank at $1.25 a day. The World Development Indicators 2008 provides for the first time since 1999 a re-evaluation of the“$1 a day” poverty line which is recalibrated at $1.25 a day.
order to pack up and migrate to a new country, people have to have the hope that the new nation will provide for them more efficiently than their home nation. Some reasons for people to migrate to another country are: better chances of attaining employment, better education opportunities, better quality or standard of living, political and/or religious freedom; better medical care and security.

It is quite easy to observe that there is a close link between migration push and pull factors. Most of the time the same factors that push a person away from his or her country are the pull factors that draw them to another. People leave their original nations of residence because there is something lacking in their home nation, that can be offered elsewhere. So, firstly, something initiates a push, prior to migration. Following the initial push, the final place of destination is chosen depending on different pull factors. To illustrate this, I’ll take for example the topic of employment. Developing countries often have large labour forces coupled with limited demand and capital, while developed countries usually have limited labour forces and large demand and capital. In plain language this means that, if there is a lack of jobs in one country, that would push a person to leave. Following the push, the person would seek a new nation of residence that pulls its attention because it offers promising employment opportunities.

These two factors have influenced migration patterns with different intensities during the years. At the end of the 18th century when industrial revolution was starting to develop, and soon after the Second World War when Europe was struggling to regain its economic forces, the influence of the pull factors coming from economically developed countries was very high, while the push factors were less significant. Nowadays migrants leave their countries rather as a response to push factors and events occurring in the country of origin, than as a result of real opportunities in the destination countries. That’s way migration today is largely an act of “emigration”, rather than “immigration”, a sort of running away from underdevelopment, oppression and poverty [Ambrosini 2005:34].

A third factor influencing migrants decision-making had been advanced by Samuel Stouffer in 1940. He suggested that “intervening opportunities” might be important in determining a migrant’s eventual destination. His hypothesis is that the likelihood of migration is highly influenced by the opportunities to settle at the destination, and less by
distance or population pressure at the starting point. His Law of intervening opportunities states the following:

"The number of persons going a given distance is directly proportional to the number of opportunities at that distance and inversely proportional to the number of intervening opportunities." [Stouffer 1940:845-867]

Stouffer theorises that the amount of migration over a given distance is directly proportional to the number of opportunities at the place of destination, and inversely proportional to the number of opportunities between the place of departure and the place of destination. These intervening opportunities may persuade a migrant to settle in a place he encounters on his/her way, rather than proceeding to the planned destination. One example illustrating this point is that of Jewish people moving from Eastern Europe to the USA, but stopping in London.

While Stouffer argued that the volume of migration had more to do with the opportunities in each location than with distance and population totals, George Zipf's Inverse distance law formulated in 1946 stated quite the opposite. Zipf suggested that the number, sizes, and locations of communities theoretically depend on the minimization of the work of transporting mass over distance. In other words:

“The interchange of items between communities P1 and P2 will be inversely proportionate to their intervening easiest transportation distance D. Given knowledge of D, the interchange of the masses (given knowledge of price-quantity relationships) will be directly proportionate to P1P2/D for any two cities in the economy”. [Zipf 1946:677-689]

Therefore, migration between two places depends upon the size of their populations and the distance between them: the larger the populations of two places, and the nearer they are to each other, the bigger the expected flow of people and vice versa.

Ravenstein’s early decision-making theory of migration was also advanced by Everett Lee who identified the push and pull factors as determinants of migration. Along with the factors associated with the place of origin (i.e. push factors) and the ones associated with the place of destination (i.e., pull factors), Lee identified other two general factors that underpin the decision to migrate: intervening obstacles and personal factors.
Intervening obstacles are factors that make the actual migration from one place to another difficult. These include physical barriers (e.g., mountain ranges, oceans, deserts) and political barriers (e.g., immigration laws that keep people out of the country or national laws that prohibit migration within or out of the country) [Daugherty and Kammeyer 1995:114].

Personal factors refer to the characteristics of a person, such as education, knowledge of a potential receiver population, family ties, size of a family or the stage of the family life cycle, and the like, that can facilitate or retard migration. Furthermore, the concept has a second meaning, referring to the “personal sensitivities, intelligence, and awareness of conditions elsewhere” [Lee 1966:51]. This has a special importance as it means that the first three factors must always be filtered through this forth factor which includes the knowledge, perceptions and awareness of an individual. The positive and negative values attached to the origin and destination, as well as the perceptions of intervening obstacles, can only have meaning as they exist in the minds of the potential migrants. As Lee states, “the set of pluses and minuses at both the origin and destination is differently defined for every migrant or prospective migrant” [Lee 1969]. Lee also points out that the migration process is selective because differentials such as age, gender, and social class affect how persons respond to push-pull factors, and these conditions also shape their ability to overcome intervening obstacles.

Lee’s model is particularly useful because it pinpoints the factors that should be examined if one wants to understand why people move. At the same time, we have to pay attention to the circumstances which prevail in the countries from which migrants come from and in the areas where they intend to migrate.

Several other theories addressing the international patterns of migration have been developed subsequently, but these too are variants of the push-pull theory. However, two important aspects regarding these theories have to be stressed. First, all the suppositions made are relevant only if people are free to make their choice, meaning that they are not reacting to coercive government policies that either force people to migrate or prevent them from doing so. Second, these theories assume that the decision to migrate involves
“rationality”. Even if most people behave in a rational manner most of the time, it is not said that one will take perfectly rational decisions all the time [Daugherty and Kammeyer 1995:115-116].

1.1.4 Migration patterns and migrants’ profiles

There are two basic types of migration which are commonly studied by demographers:

1. *Internal migration*. This refers to a change of residence within national boundaries, such as between states, provinces, cities, or municipalities. Therefore, an internal migrant is someone who moves to a different administrative territory. Assimilated to this category are also the internally-displaced persons who will be further presented in this chapter.

2. *International migration*. This refers to change of residence over national boundaries. An international migrant is someone who moves to a different country. International migrants can be further classified as legal immigrants, illegal immigrants, and refugees.

The distinction between these two categories consists in the fact that they happen for different reasons. Structural barriers are more likely to impede the mobility of a potential international migrant, as international migration involves more administrative procedures, greater expenses, and more difficulties associated with obtaining employment, accessing state services, learning a new language, and the like. Therefore, the motivations behind international migration are usually stronger than those behind internal migration.

I will focus now on the patterns of international migration as this is the topic which will help me further elaborate my thesis. In order to make the analysis of the various types of international migrants’ profiles easier, I will break them down into two categories: those moving in an act of voluntary migration and those migrating forcefully.

As far as voluntary migration is concerned, there are a few important types of migrants that fall into this category. The most representative of this category are the so-called economic migrants. Often referred to as “labour migrants” or “migrant workers”, they are
essentially people working outside their home country\textsuperscript{5}. The term may also be used to describe someone who migrates within a country, possibly their own, in an act of internal migration, for example moving from rural to urban areas, in order to pursue permanent or seasonal work. In 2005 there were 191 million international migrants, including those migrating for employment, their dependants, refugees and asylum seekers. ILO estimated that 86 million of the 175 million international migrants in the year 2000 were economically active migrant workers\textsuperscript{6}. Labour migration contributes to growth and development in both source and destination countries, having a great impact on the world economy. Every year, migrant workers send home to developing countries large volumes of remittances meant to support their families and communities, while at the same time contributing to the economic growth and prosperity in host countries\textsuperscript{7}.

A second type of migrants moving voluntarily refers to those who want to reach the destination country in order to get \textit{reunited with their families}. The presence of one or more family members in a certain country, therefore, enables the members of the rest of the family to immigrate to that country as well. In Europe this category has grown in importance once the immigration requisites got very rigid during the 1970s. At that time labour migration was getting harder to achieve and, for this reason, family reunification became a frequent motive of migration. In this context, the percentage of migrants who did not participate actively in the labour market has started to rise, along with the demand for social services and assistance. The migrants’ profile has started to resemble more and more to that of the native population, and gender equilibrium was established. As many of the persons migrating for this motive were women, a birth rate increase was registered among migrant families, which often surpassed that registered by the native population [Ambrosini 2005:21].

In strong relation to this type of migration pattern, we can also talk about \textit{chain migration}. This phenomenon usually takes place within a family or defined group of people and it

\textsuperscript{5} According to the \textit{United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families} a migrant worker is defined as “a person who is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.”

\textsuperscript{6} International Labour Organization Press release of 21 May 2004, reference: ILO/04/09

\textsuperscript{7} ILO (June 2006), \textit{Facts on Labour Migration}, (Source: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_067570.pdf)
involves social arrangements with people already at the destination who help newcomers to find a job and housing. The system operates like a transmission belt, bringing newcomers from one area to a particular location [Page Moch 2003]. It often begins with one family member who sends money to bring other family members to the new location. Chain migration might also result in the clustering of people from a specific region into certain neighbourhoods or small towns.

As far as forced migration is concerned, the term refers to the coerced movement of a person or group away from their home or home region. A more complete definition of forced migration was given by the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration which described it as referring to “the movements of refugees and internally displaced people (those displaced by conflicts) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects”

There are a few separate types of forced migration that can be identified, although sometimes they are inter-related, occurring simultaneously. I will make a short description of the various migration patterns and the types of migrants that result from these patterns. They can be categorized according to the factors causing them, as follows:

a) Conflict-induced migration. It refers to the situations when people are forced to flee their homes for one or more of the following reasons and where the state authorities are unable or unwilling to protect them: armed conflict including civil war; generalized violence; and persecution on the grounds of nationality, race, religion, political opinion or social group. A few types of migrants can be identified:

- Refugees. This category of migrants has increased significantly in the last decades, even if at different paces, being influenced by events such as wars and civil conflicts. Actually refugees were defined as a legal group in response to the large numbers of people fleeing Eastern Europe following World War II. The term “refugee”, as enshrined in the 1951 Geneva Convention, refers to a person who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social

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8 See What is forced migration? available at http://www.forcedmigration.org/whatisfm.htm
group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.\(^9\)

- Unlike refugees, *asylum seekers* are people who have moved across an international border in search of protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention, but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined, because they are unable to prove that they are the victims of direct persecution. Asylum migration is clearly a result of mixed motivations. There are asylum seekers who do not come from the world’s poorest states, while there are also many who come from failed or failing states enduring civil war and with high degrees of human rights abuses and significant levels of poverty. Western nations usually make a distinction between “political” refugees and so-called “economic” refugees, who are said to be escaping from poverty rather than persecution, particularly when the refugees come from low-income countries. These people often become illegal immigrants, as international law recognizes their right to seek asylum but does not oblige states to provide it.

- *Internally-displaced persons* are people forced to flee their homes but who, unlike refugees or asylum seekers, remain within their country's borders. At the end of 2006 estimates of the world IDP population rose to 24.5 million in some 52 countries. The region with the largest IDP population is Africa with some 11.8 million in 21 countries.\(^{10}\) Sometimes referred to as “internal refugees”, these people are in similar need for protection and assistance as refugees are, but do not have the same legal and institutional support as those who have managed to cross an international border. The *1992 Report of the UN Secretary General* Boutros-Ghali identifies IDPs as “persons who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers, as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, and who are within the territory of their own country.”\(^{11}\) However, this definition proved to have various flaws and, as a consequence, in 1998 an updated

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9 Article 1, paragraph A(2), of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (available at http://www.unhcr.org/)


definition was given in the Guidelines Principles on Internal Displacement which define the internally displaced as “persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border”\textsuperscript{12}. There is no specifically-mandated body to provide assistance to IDPs, as there is with refugees. Although they are guaranteed certain basic rights under international humanitarian law (the Geneva Conventions), ensuring these rights are secured is often the responsibility of authorities which were responsible for their displacement in the first place, or ones that are unable or unwilling to do so\textsuperscript{13}.

b) Development-induced displacement. In this case, communities and individuals are forced to move out of their homes, as a result of policies and projects whose aim is supposedly to “enhance” development. It has been historically associated with the construction of dams for hydroelectric power and irrigation purposes but also appears due to many other activities, such as mining, constructing roads, ports, airports; urban clearance initiatives, and the introduction of conservation parks/reserves and biosphere projects. Development displacees usually remain within the borders of their home country. The most well-known examples of development-induced displacement is a result of the construction of the Three Gorges Dam in China.

c) Disaster-induced displacement. This category includes people displaced as a result of natural disasters (floods, volcanoes, landslides, earthquakes), environmental change (deforestation, desertification, land degradation, global warming) and human-made disasters (industrial accidents, radioactivity). Clearly, these different types of disaster-induced displacements are very much inter-related. For example, the impact of floods and landslides can be greatly exacerbated by deforestation and agricultural activities. Environmental and disaster displacees are sometimes referred to as “environmental refugees” or “disaster refugees”. Just as in the case of development-induced displacees, these migrants usually do not leave the borders of their homeland.


\textsuperscript{13} See http://www.forcedmigration.org/whatisfm.htm
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d) Population transfer. This is a specific form of forced migration that connotes violent coercion and refers to a policy to move unwanted persons, sometimes in an attempt of ethnic cleansing. Often the affected population is transferred by force to a distant region, perhaps not suited to their way of life, causing them substantial harm. In addition, the loss of all property is often implied. A specific form of population transfer is population exchange which refers to the transfer of two populations in opposite directions at about the same time.

1.2 Gender and migration

“On ne naît pas femme, on le devient”
Simone de Beauvoir, Le Deuxième Sexe

The term “gender” was introduced to social science in order to underline the difference between socially and biologically determined sex [Carling 2005:3]. “Gender relations” is a concept that refers to the role of men and women in society and the way in which these roles are connected to the ideas of “maleness” and “femaleness”.

The distinction between “gender” and “sex” can be significant. Biological sex-linked differences are not easily changed, whereas gender-related differences and gender relations can change, and are affected by policies, regulations, and legislation. “Gender” does not necessarily refer to differences or concerns linked to the biological characteristics of women and men, although gender-related differences and sex-linked differences are often interrelated.\textsuperscript{14}

Even though population movements are a gender-neutral process, they are related to gender because women and men migrate for different reasons, use different channels, and have different experiences. The social context, within which migration takes place, is strongly influenced by gender and family relations. This, in turn, strongly influences

\textsuperscript{14} See IOM, Migration and Gender. Section 2.10
migration behaviour, and also affects the experiences men and women undergo. The role that gender plays in the decision of an individual to migrate or not also illustrates why it is important to consider gender issues when considering and formulating migration policy options - regardless of whether these focus on immigration, family reunification, labour migration, resettlement, or asylum.

Nowadays it is clear that the mobility of women affects the roles of both female and male migrants, families left behind in the migration process, and source and destination communities. In particular, migration of women from developing countries affects the development process itself taking place in those countries. It also raises a number of challenges to immigration and refugee policies that address issues such as family reunification and formation, labour migration, trafficking and smuggling, and forced migration.

1.2.1 A gap in migration literature

The relation between gender and migration was, until a few years ago, a seriously neglected area amongst both academic researchers and policy-makers. Despite the fact that much progress has been made with respect to the study of gender and migration, many questions and issues remain unanswered and need to be further explored. Overall, there has been a bias on the economic aspects of labour migration often reproducing a public/private dichotomy of husband, sphere of production, waged labour versus wife, sphere of reproduction and domestic labour [Boyle and Halfacree 1999:2]. There are various issues which need further exploration, among which aspects related to citizenship and ethnicity, social exclusion and inclusion and every-day strategies of female and male migrants.

Not only was the relation between gender and migration almost completely ignored, but there had also been until recently a lack of gender analysis in the literature on international migration and development. Migration was not studied in relation to gender until the 1970s. Until that moment traditional migration theory was largely gender-blind, using models of migration based exclusively on the experiences of men. Even later, when female
independent migration for work was recognized as an empirical phenomenon, it was still not given sufficient attention because it was simply thought to mirror the independent economic migration of men. In other words, women were not considered because they were seen as either following men as accompanying dependants, migrating under family reunification, or behaving like men. Therefore their contribution to economies and societies of destination countries was ignored and they were not given much attention in theoretical accounts of migration [Carling 2005]. Only recently feminists have highlighted the heterogeneity of women’s position within the migration stream, their presence in the labour market, their contribution to welfare and their increasing political activities [Kofman et al. 2000:3].

Greater interest in migrant women arouse in the mid-1970s. During the following decade, the main concern was to increase the visibility of migrant women. Researchers emphasized that not only did women constitute a significant share of many migration flows, but they were often primary migrants themselves. Women also had different experiences of migration than men. Since then, a multitude of case studies on migrant women in different parts of the world have been published. However, these studies have rarely treated gender as a central theoretical concern, and the insights from case studies on female migrants have had little impact on migration theory in general.

In spite of the continuous growth of the amount of research on female migration starting from the mid-1970s, this topic was often seen as a “woman’s issue” and a sub-theme in migration studies. Until the beginning of the 1990s researchers had rarely done more than noting numerical sex differences in migration, their work was primarily empirical and included little or no substantive theoretical analysis of gender. The need to move beyond discussion of the different migration patterns of men and women persisted.

Awareness of the tendency to associate “gender” with “women” does not always translate itself into a balanced approach in actual migration research [Carling 2005]. There are many publications that announce in their titles a study on gender and migration, when in fact they contain studies of migrant women rather than analyses of gender relations. Such case studies are important in their own right, but should not be wrongly labelled. On the whole, gender has rarely been considered a significant category within migration literature,
which has on several occasions proved to be gender-blind. Migrants have been treated as asexual categories and feminists researching women have often focussed on nationals rather than immigrant women [Kofman et al. 2000:18].

Recently the interest in the study of gender and migration has risen considerably. However, difficulties in assessing the full implications of migration and mobility for women persist. Statistics on migration in general, internal as well as international, are frequently poor and deal only with very recent periods. Most data are collected by governments as part of their administrative management of migration flows, although useful surveys do exist in many locations. While doing this, different governments use different definitions when referring to migrants, making it very hard to compare data across countries. These variations are due mainly to differences in policies. For example, in countries with expansive notions of birthright citizenship – i.e., *jus soli*, such as the United States, Ireland or France, all children of immigrants born on the territory are granted citizenship. In other countries, *jus sanguinis* is observed and thus citizenship derives from a parent’s nationality, and children of immigrants born in the country are considered to be “foreigners”. At the same time, data on certain categories of migrants who cross borders without the authorisation of host countries are particularly difficult to collect. Many of these migrants without legal status are also fearful of stepping forward for censuses and surveys.

**1.2.2 The phenomenon of feminization of migration**

It is hard to say whether a process of “feminization of migration” actually existed given the lack of statistical data on this phenomenon. One thing we can be certain of, though, is that during the past couple of decades, the gender balance of international migration flows has developed in response to factors such as immigration legislation, gender-selective demand for foreign labour, and changing gender relations in countries of origin. Different factors have often worked together to increase the share of women in migration flows, while others have worked in the opposite way [Carling 2005:2]. As a result, some scholars
have recognized the feminization of migration as a tendency at the global level\textsuperscript{15}. Even though drawing a line that would show the evolution in time of this phenomenon is practically impossible, I tend to agree with those who argue that a growth tendency can be observed in the last decades. And, more importantly, what everyone seems to fully acknowledge is the idea that there has been a change in “quality” as far as this process is concerned. And by stating this, I refer to women acting more and more as primary, independent migrants.

As previously stated, this phenomenon is often called “feminization of migration”, suggesting that it is a new tendency. It is though accepted, and I incline towards this approach, that this phenomenon is not a new one\textsuperscript{16}. The novelty consists in the fact that researches have only started to focus on this issue in the 80’s and it has become a widespread topic in the more recent years. The interest for women migration is high not only because of the size and share in the international migration flow, but also because of its specificity concerning migration reasons, strategies, and impact on women’s professional and personal life.

However, the fact that the demographics of migration are changing should not be dismissed so easily. Women have always migrated but in the past they were only passively involved in the process of international migration: their movement was often directly related to family reunification or depended on a male migrant. Recently though, one of the most significant trends in migration has been the entry of women into migration streams that had previously been primarily male.

Women today make up about half of all migrants in the world, and this has been the case for several decades. They include both international migrants, who move to other countries, as well as internal migrants, who relocate in other parts of their own countries. While many women accompany or join family members, increasing numbers of female migrants migrate on their own. They are the principal wage earners for themselves and their families. Most women move voluntarily, but a significant number are forced migrants who have fled conflict, persecution, environmental degradation, natural disasters and other

\textsuperscript{15} See Carling [2005] and Castles and Miller [2003:67]

\textsuperscript{16} See the next paragraph presenting Ravenstein’s early findings on female migration.
Chapter 1: International migration and gender

situations that affect their habitat and livelihood. The increase in the share of women migrants is often considered to be the result of the growing importance of family and refugee migration, in which women usually outnumber men.

Alongside women’s increasing participation in conventional labour migration, specifically female forms of migration have emerged. Some examples include the commercialized migration of domestic workers (sometimes labelled as “the maid trade”), the migration and trafficking of women in the sex industry, and the organized migration of women for marriage (sometimes labelled as “mail-order brides”) [Carling 2005:2].

The existence of gender-specific economic niches for immigrants and the tendency of migration to sustain itself in particular forms has produced overwhelmingly male or female migratory linkages between certain pairs of countries. In Italy, for instance, according to the estimates calculated by the Dossier Caritas/Migrantes, at the end of 2007, even if the incidence of women in the total immigrant population equalled that of men, women constituted 80.4 percent of the Ukrainian immigrants while men constitute 80.6 percent of the Senegalese\(^\text{17}\).

1.2.3 Evolution of gender in migration research

In spite of old-date migration literature lagging clearly behind when gender is concerned, Ravenstein’s 1885 paper establishing the “laws of migration” is a paper worth mentioning. With regards to gender, Ravenstein’s findings were perhaps the most surprising for that period. He stated that “woman is a greater migrator than man” [Ravenstein 1885:196]. This he attributed to women seeking work outside of their homes, migrating from rural districts into towns, in search of domestic service, as well as to women’s migration towards manufacturing districts in search of jobs in the shops and factories. In comparison to men, the findings clearly showed that: “females are more migratory than males within the kingdom of their birth, but that males more frequently venture beyond” [Ravenstein 1885:197]. In other words more females than males leave the county in which they were

\(^{17}\) See Appendix 1, Table 1 “Foreign residents in Italy on 31 December 2007 by citizenship and gender” (source: Dossier Statistico Immigratione Caritas/Migrantes 2008. XVIII Rapporto and ISTAT data)
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born in order to seek employment in some other country of the same kingdom, whereas males tend to travel longer distances, leaving the kingdom of their birth in search of employment in one of the sister kingdoms.

Even if the trends acknowledged by the findings of Ravenstein might have changed during the last decades, the important fact is that there was, already at that time, an acknowledgement of differences in migration behaviour by gender within migration data sets. Nowadays it is common practice to disaggregate by gender as well as by other key categories, such as class and age, all the data sets obtained from censuses, migration records, surveys, and other such sources.

In spite of Ravenstein’s early findings on gender migration, real interest in the study of gender and migration only appeared in the 1970s. Research was initiated both from a developmental and feminist perspective. The issue of gender first gained importance in the context of the development theory and practice, during the United Nations Decade for Women in the 1970s [Chant and Gutmann 2001:6]. In parallel with developments on the international scene, a number of theoretical approaches have been initiated to examine issues related to women, and subsequently to gender, that were gradually incorporated into programmatic activities. The Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD) programmes reflect three development-focused theories that were put forward sequentially [Razavi and Miller 1995]. On the one hand, the first two theories evolved from simply following the approach “add women, mix, and stir” – which reflected neither the societal roles and relationships between men and women, nor the impact of the variable of “power relations” – to an analysis that included a gender dimension. On the other hand, in the GAD theory, the analysis starts by assuming that the behaviour, roles, and relations between men and women are conditioned by societal structures and expectations, and therefore have to be addressed as a totality and not in isolation.

At later stages other two theories\textsuperscript{18} were developed in order to address forced migration situations and assess impact on women and gender: the Women in Forced Migration Theory (WIFM) and Gender and Forced Migration Theory (GAFM). The first approaches

\textsuperscript{18} Source: IOM website
looks into women refugees’ needs in isolation while the second includes in its analysis the roles and relationships as determined by societies and how the needs of women refugees impact on them.

Drawing on these first theories, a few major weaknesses in gender research can be easily identified. First, there was a general tendency in gender research to be centred on women only, rather than on the two genders, male and female, and the relation between the two. The WID Programme mirrored the error of focussing on women, instead of on the relation male-female. Concepts of “gender and development” and “women and development” have been frequently constructed as one and the same thing. Since the late 1980s, there has been a growing awareness of this bias, and a subsequent shift from “Women in Development” to “Gender and Development”, as the dominant approach.

Second, there was and still is an underlying assumption in much gender research that women-in-general are everywhere oppressed by men-in-general [Cornwall 2000]. Academic research in the early 70s revealed that gender-blindness in the design and execution of development projects resulted in women being overlooked, sidelined, and even harmed by these interventions. This approach is misleading for various reasons. One reason is that women are not always the losers. Certain groups of men are particularly vulnerable to insecurity and marginalization, for instance those who are unable to fill the culturally prescribed role of “breadwinner” in times of economic restructuring [Chant and Gutmann 2001:1]. Another reason underlies in the widespread and narrow understanding of “gender relations” which excludes many kinds of relations between men and women, such as that between mothers and sons, brothers and sisters, and a female boss and a male employee. Rather, it is founded on a model relationship which is invariably oppressive and heterosexual [Cornwall 2000].

Another reason is that gender relations are always mediated by other socially constructed categories such as class, age, “race” and ethnicity [Carling 2005]. As I will later expose in my research when discussing the consequences of women’s emancipation, being a woman means different things to a migrant domestic worker than to the wealthy woman who employs her.
1.2.4 Regional evolution and differences in the migration of women

The first set of global estimates permitting an assessment of the extent of female migration was released by the United Nations Population Division in 1998. It contained estimates at the country level for the period 1965-1990 which derived from the number of foreign-born persons enumerated by population censuses, complemented by information on the number of refugees. In 2002, the UN extended estimates of the overall number of migrants (both sexes combined) to 2000, setting the stage for a similar extension of the estimates by sex. As a result, it is now possible to trace the evolution of the number of female migrants from 1960 to 2000.\(^1^9\)

According to UN statistics, a few revelations emerged which tend to contradict the idea that a process of feminization of migration has been underway. The data clearly show that women have accounted for a very high proportion of all international migrants for a long time. Already in 1960, female migrants accounted for nearly 47 percent out of all migrants living outside of their countries of birth.\(^2^0\) The share of female migrants has risen steadily since then, reaching 48 percent in 1990 and nearly 49 percent in 2000. If we look more closely at the data, we can observe that in the “less developed regions” there has actually been no change at all in the share of female migrant, while in the “more developed regions” the increase in the observed period has been of 3.2 percent, managing to surpass the share of male migrants. Although this trend is consistent with an increasing “feminization” of international migration, the increase recorded is small compared to the high level of feminization that already existed in 1960.

If we analyse more closely the UN statistics, we draw some conclusions regarding the

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\(^{20}\) See Appendix 1, Table 2 “Percentage of female migrants among the total number of international migrants, by major area, 1960-2000”
level of attractiveness of the world regions. The most appealing destinations for female migrants seem to be the ones located in Western Asia, among the oil-rich countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and in the countries of the Pacific Rim, in Eastern and South-eastern Asia. In both of those regions, the proportion of women among all international migrants has been rising steadily since 1980 and, by 2000, the number of female migrants outnumbered that of male migrants in Eastern and South-eastern Asia. It must be stressed that not all the female migrants in those regions are migrant workers. In the oil-producing countries of Western Asia, for instance, already by 1975 the number of female migrants was significant. Most of those female migrants were probably admitted as dependents of male migrant workers, although some may have been hired as teachers or nurses, or to work in other occupations reserved for women.

As far as Northern Africa and Southern Asia are concerned, female migrants have been particularly under-represented among migrants in these two regions. In Northern Africa, the proportion of female migrants has declined since 1970, partly because most countries in this part of the world are sources rather than receivers of emigrants. In Southern Asia, forced migration has led to important flows within the region, but data on the sex composition of the migrant stock are scarce.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, data on the stock of international migrants is abundant and the trend toward the increasing feminization of international migration is well established. Actually, Latin America was the first region of the developing world to record parity in the number of female and male migrants: in 1990, three million of the region's six million international migrants were women. The number of migrants in the region is estimated to have declined during the 1990s, but by 2000 women still constituted slightly more than half of the five million migrants in the region.

Among the developed regions, Northern America, which includes Canada and the United States, is exceptional in that female migrants have outnumbered male migrants since 1970, but the female numerical advantage declined somewhat during the 1980s, largely as a result of the high levels of undocumented migration converging on the United States. As the regularization program carried out under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 revealed, women constituted a somewhat low proportion of all those regularized (34
percent). However, women have tended to outnumber men among all legally admitted immigrants.

Both Europe and Oceania have displayed an increasing proportion of female migrants since 1970. In Oceania, female migrants constituted slightly more than half of all migrants present in the region in 2000 (2.9 million out of 5.8 million). In Europe, female migrants became more numerous than male migrants were earlier. By 1990, nearly 52 percent of all migrants in Europe were women (25 million out of 48 million).
Chapter 2
The identity path: evolution in the context of international migration

“If postmodern societies are to move towards a more serious discussion of identity, they will need to uncover those positive virtues that define what it means to be a member of the wider society. If they do not, they may be overwhelmed by people who are more sure about who they are.”

(F. Fukuyama, Identity and migration)

The purpose of this chapter is to present the various facets of the concept of identity, starting from the definition of personal identity, explaining how the national identity was constructed and how the concept of “identity” – comprising both its personal and politically created sides – evolves and changes in the context of international labour migration and, more specifically, in the context of female migration for domestic work.

2.1 Personal identity

Although the purpose of this thesis is not to offer an in-depth analysis of the concept of “identity”, this being rather the objective a more philosophical discussion, some aspects regarding the meaning and the use of this term can prove to be very useful when it comes to understanding how the individual’s identity continuously evolves and/or changes in
relation to society and to other conditioning factors. In order to give a very simple definition of this term, one should give an answer to the question “who am I?”. Actually, when academic authors offer brief clarification of what they mean by this word, this is often the way they do it: “a person’s identity is how the person defines who he or she is”.

In spite of a very frequent use of the word “identity” in recent discussions and literature written on the topic of either culture, political, or social issues, its recurrence is of relatively recent origin and dates back no further than the 1950s. Psychoanalyst Erik H. Erikson is considered to be the architect of the term “identity”, being responsible for the large usage of this term which he introduced as part of his attempt to apply psychoanalytic categories to social and historical issues. For Erikson, the concept of identity referred to the point at which the demands of the developing individual - the adolescent - were met or failed to be met by the forms of social life in which he or she lived. It was Erikson’s influential thesis that modern American society failed to provide the secure sense of adult identity which was necessary for young people to resolve the various conflicts of childhood and adolescence, and this led to what he called an “identity crisis” in which they more or less literally did not know who they were [Fearon 1999]. One definition of this term given by Erikson in 1970 was the following:

“[identity is] a subjective sense as well as an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in the sameness and continuity of some shared world image. As a quality of unself-conscious living, this can be gloriously obvious in a young person who has found himself as he has found his communality. In him we see emerge a unique unification of what is irreversibly given – that is, body type and temperament, giftedness and vulnerability, infantile models and acquired ideals – with the open choices provided in available roles, occupational possibilities, values offered, mentors met, friendships made, and first sexual encounters.”

The main idea is that the concept of identity is not a static one, but it rather evolves or changes continuously according to the environment, to given moments in time and places we are in and according to the resources provided for us by the forms of social life within which we exist. Identity is thus a process of continuous negotiation between the various parts that form the self, the various moments of time in which this self lives and different environments or relationship systems of which each one of us is a part [Melucci 1991]. To
make it simpler, the individual’s personality is a result of features irreversible given plus the choices he or she makes at certain moments, either consciously or unconsciously. Actually, in philosophy, personal identity refers to the number of different personal identities experienced by the individual through time. That is to say: the conditions under which a person is said to be identical to himself or herself through time. This concept is also known as “personal continuity” and it refers to the conditions under which a person feels at one time to be similar to the same person at another time.

A more complex definition of “cultural identity” was given by the *Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights* launched in 2007. This Declaration meant to present in one text the rights which had already been recognised in a dispersed manner by several relevant universal and regional instruments, but which were not distinctly assembled in one document, but crumbled among civil, political, economic and social rights. Article 2 of the Fribourg Declaration thus reads:

> “The expression "cultural identity" is understood as the sum of all cultural references through which a person, alone or in community with others, defines or constitutes oneself, communicates and wishes to be recognized in one's dignity.”

This definition admits that “cultural identity” should be understood on the individual level – a concept compatible with human rights – as well as on the collective level – an idea linked to the concept of “cultural community” which “denotes a group of persons who share references that constitute a common cultural identity that they intend to preserve and develop”, and therefore associable with forms of culturalism, and even with ideologies founded on homogenous cultural groups.

An earlier version of this definition, provided during the works of the Group de Fribourg, the author of the Declaration, there were specific references to a constant integration process of three elements which form the identity: cultural diversity, which refers to the fact that the self, or the Ego is formed by a plurality of Alter, the universalism-particularism dialectic, that is, the relation between individuals and society; the temporal

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22 Article 2, letter c, of the Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights
perception of the self, given by memory (past) and project (future) [Perotti 2001] [Gatti 2008]. Starting from this definition, Perotti [2001: 839] indicates two important aspects of the concept of “personal identity”: the “factual identity”, which describes what a person thinks he or she is, and the “value identity”, which indicates what a person would like to be. Therefore, in this definition also, identity is conceived as a process that develops in time and affects not only the single individual, but also the individual in his social interactions, seen as a member of a larger community. This observation is particularly useful when analysing the developments registered by immigrants’ identities. As I will later explain in my work, the difference between the present and future image one has of the own self is particularly relevant in the case of migrants, as they often tend to have very concrete projects which at times might lead them to having a biased image of the present self.

Furthermore, there are two features which characterize the identities of each citizen, and these are commonness and will. According to these features, personal identities have four dimensions: the involuntarily and specific dimension of each citizen; the involuntarily dimension, common to all citizens; and the voluntarily dimensions which can also be either specific to each citizen or common to everyone, according to the different situations [Viola 1999:8]. An example of involuntarily or irreversible factors are those features of one’s identity linked to biologic, cultural and historic factors, such as racial, ethnic or cultural diversities, which are received at birth and are thus involuntarily “assigned” to each person. Despite this involuntary act, one still has the possibility to choose the degree of importance he or she wants to assign to these factors. As for the voluntarily factors, they refer to all the choices one makes and which are guided by moral autonomy. However, the latter are often conditioned by the former: while the act of being born and living in a given cultural environment is inevitable for each one of us, the opposite is not entirely true as far as the choice of moral values is concerned. We almost never get to make our choices from a position of absolute cultural neutrality and thus the image of the man who is the creator of his own existence and destiny is rather utopian.

Another distinction Perotti makes is that between personal identity and collective identity as he describes the community as “the place where personal and collective identities form
and establish themselves and where they are being recognized, confirmed, fomented and transformed.”

He goes on to say that:

“It is the collective rights, linked to the own personal identity, the ones which are nowadays subject to in-depth attention and analysis, as well as to a more and more precise definition, at the point where these rights are entering among the basic common assets of a political society in the same way as other two basic common assets, which are equality and liberty. In addition to these two assets that the political society has to protect and promote, the personal and collective identity has been added.”

All this considered, there are some aspects related to the meaning of “personal identity” that I wish to emphasize as they can prove to be very useful in analysing the identity changes registered by migrants – seen as individuals who move away from the involuntarily factors which contribute to the formation of identity, such as the country of origin, culture, ethnicity, ecc. Therefore, to sum up, I would pinpoint that:

a. identity is not stable, but subject to a continuous process of change;

b. identity is linked to involuntarily and most of the times irreversible factors and at the same time is determined by the voluntarily choices one makes;

c. it is important to make the distinction between factual and value identities, that is, what a person thinks he or she is and what a person would like to be;

d. identity is commonly expressed throughout social interactions at the level of communities, thus resulting in a collective identity.

If we accept these assumptions, this means that we have to analyse individuals not as isolated beings, but as beings in interaction, as parts of larger communities. Now, for the purpose of the present research, I am interested in two kinds of processes which together are able to shape the concept of identity when it comes to migrants:

23 “il luogo nel quale le identità personali e collettive si formano e si costituiscono, nel quale esse sono riconosciute, confermate, si alimentano e si trasformano” [Perotti 2001: 839; my translation]

24 Sono i diritti collettivi, legati alla propria identità personale ad essere, oggi, oggetto di profonda attenzione ed analisi nonché di una sempre più precisa formulazione, fino a farli rientrare tra i beni comuni primari di una società politica, alla stregua degli altri due beni comuni primari che sono l’uguaglianza e la libertà. A questi due beni che la società politica deve proteggere e promuovere si è aggiunto, infatti, l’identità personale e collettiva.” [Perotti 2001:833; my translation]
a. the interaction occurring among people migrating away from their country of origin and those who they encounter in the receiving countries;

b. the way in which migrants perceive the changes in their own identity as a result of the migration process.

To set the theoretical framework of the research, I will now talk about the more specific concepts of “national identity” and what I call “moving identity”. The former is essential in the process of migration as it represents the initial identity, the whole set of values a migrant brings to the receiving society, while the latter describes how the act of migrating intervenes upon the initial identity, by changing the original assets and/or by adding up new values to the pre-existing ones.

### 2.2 National identity

Starting from a dictionary definition of the word “identity” perceived as “the sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances; the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else; individuality, personality”, Fearon [1999] compares personal identity to national identity concluding that the latter has to do rather with the content of the differences:

"Is national identity the sameness of a nation in all times and places, or the condition of being this nation and not another? Certainly the idea of national identity entails an idea of temporal and spatial continuity of a nation, but this isn't what an essay on the national identity of the Russians (for example) would be focused on. Nor is national identity the fact or condition of being different from other nations, but rather something about the content of the differences.” [Fearon 1999:7]

The content of the differences Fearon probably refers to is made up of all the features which make a nation singular and differentiate it from other nations, such as descent, language, culture, history, religion. A requirement of the national identity is for all these features to be shared by all members of the nation – a group of people with nothing in common cannot be a nation. Because they are shared, the national population also has a degree of uniformity and homogeneity. Additionally to being common to all members of
the group, these elements must also be exclusive, in order to distinguish the nation from other nations. Obviously, not all of the features which make up a nation have to be different from those of other nations. Sometimes a single element – a different language, for example – might be sufficient.

Furthermore, the concept of a national identity refers both to the distinguishing features of the group, and to the individual's sense of belonging to it. A very wide range of criteria is used, with very different applications, in order to assign one individual to a particular group and to set out the features which differentiate him or her from other individuals. On the one hand, even small differences in pronunciation may be enough to categorize someone as a member of another nation. On the other hand, two people may be separated by differences in personalities, belief systems, geographical locations, time and even spoken language, yet they may perceive themselves and be seen by others as members of the same nation.

The concept of national identity is complex, and its intensity, character, and origins vary with time and place. Along the centuries, some areas of Europe were completely ambivalent to national sentiment, while populations elsewhere could be considered exceedingly patriotic. Different classes could display varying degrees of national identification, and there could be differences between urban and rural populations as well. While the development of national identity remains a difficult historical problem, several general conclusions may be offered. In the early modern mind, “nation” primarily referred to the place of birth, yet it also carried cultural weight: one's nation connoted perhaps ethnicity, perhaps language, but almost certainly religion [Hadley 2004]. Religious homogeneity played a vital role in the construction of national identity, in the case of British and Dutch who contrasted themselves with their neighbours, and also for the Scandinavian states and for Russia and much of Eastern Europe. One can state with fair certainty that most people saw themselves as part of a wider community, one that was occasionally national in scope, and that religion, language, and local political structures played prominent roles in determining that identity.

The appearance, extent, and character of nationalism in European society have attracted much debate among historians and sociologists. Consequently, there are many theories
dealing with the meaning of national identity and its formation. For example, primordialism argues that shared characteristics have an ancient root, and nations are natural phenomena over different historical eras, whereas modernism claims that “nations are modern constructs, that nationalism preceded (and indeed led to) the creation of nations, and that nationalism is primarily a political ideology concerned with power and the modern state” [Cinpoes 2008:4]. My approach is close to that of the modernists who believe that nationalism is an essentially modern phenomenon which appeared in the late eighteenth century in South America and Europe. *Three theorists* stand out in the modern debate over nationalism.

**Eric J. Hobsbawm** defined nationalism as the popular realization of political rights in a sovereign state. A populace linked itself to a limited national territory and was embodied through a centralized government, an event Hobsbawm believed first occurred during the French Revolution. He argues that nations are a modern construction and that they are not unchanging social entities. Hobsbawm views the development of nations as "situated at the point of intersection of politics, technology and social transformation" and he argues that they must be seen as such. He claims that nations have traditionally been understood as top-down constructions and argues that they must also be looked at from the bottom up. Building on this idea, he claims that: ideologies of states are not guides to how the people feel; we cannot assume that most people place national identity above other identities which constitute the social being; and, that national identification changes over time. He devotes particular attention on the importance of language and on the development of class consciousness which, in turn, led to the development of the mass politics which made nations possible [Hobsbawm 1990].

**Ernest Gellner** adopted an economically reductionist approach, deeming nationalism a necessary function of industrialization. Because industry required skilled labour, a common vernacular, and high rates of literacy, he argued, the need developed for a national "high culture," promoted by a state-run educational system. Simultaneously, the old agrarian order faded away and societal anonymity replaced provincial distinctness, facilitating the creation of a homogenous national culture. To follow this logic through, Gellner [2006] asserts that industrial change brings division of labour and with a requisite educational system that must be provided by the state we have an element of social
mobility as people are trained to a certain standard of literacy and language/communication skills. This creates a climate of standard homogenized culture which cements itself in a national identity or sense of belonging. Identity is no longer determined by social standing, but by other factors such as skills. Also, the education system increases political awareness and the desire to participate. Each individual strives to achieve more not just for himself, but also for the community – the nation. This in turn spurs further industrial growth, creating a virtuous circle – the process is self-reinforcing. Furthermore, Gellner considers that “nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist” [1964:168].

The theory of the nation as an invention was taken further by Benedict Anderson who saw the nation as an "imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" [1991:6]. The reason for which Anderson imagined nations as communities was because:

“The nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.” [Anderson 1991:7]

The decline of universal religious paradigms and the rise of “print capitalism” allowed for this cultural construction to flourish in the eighteenth century. The mass consumption of newspapers and novels enforced a common vernacular, linked a populace to urban centres, and encouraged common participation in a shared (imagined) culture. Differently from Gellner, Anderson implied that the Reformation and the printing press did more to encourage nationalism than the advent of industrialization did.

Despite their differences, all three of these prominent theoreticians identified nationalism, and by association, the nation-state, as a phenomenon of the last few centuries. At the same time, all these theories consider national identity to be based on a set of common values shared by all members of the community. For the purpose of this research, it is thus interesting to see which the effects on national identity are when resemblances are
disrupted, for example by the arrival of migrants who often share a completely different cultural and historic background. Two kinds of effects of this disruption should be taken into account:

a. the way members of a nation sharing a common identity react to the arrival of immigrants and the possible changes registered by their identity as a result of this phenomenon, and, most importantly;

b. the effects the phenomenon of migration has on the identity of migrants who, all of a sudden, find themselves in the middle of a community which might share very few of the features which characterize migrants’ identity.

2.3 Moving identities: reconciling personal and national identities when migrating

I will now try to capture the complex cultural outcomes that result from the process of migration or, to put it differently, the consequences migration has on the identity of those who leave their “home”. They could abandon their roots consciously, lose them through gradual assimilation, or seek to reaffirm them. Sometimes this is a “survival” or “retention” of an old identity, but more often a new identity gets created in “the diaspora”.

As far as the term “diaspora” is concerned, it has been a subject of debate. Some scholars argue that when economic migrants gather in significant numbers outside their home region, they form an effective Diaspora: for instance, the Turkish Gastarbeiter in Germany; South Asians in the Persian Gulf; Filipinos worldwide; and Chinese workers in Japan. Hispanics or Latinos in the USA are sometimes referred to as a newly developed “diaspora” or dispersions of immigrant peoples from Latin America into the United States.

At their arrival in the new country, immigrant groups, as well as immigrant individuals, have different attitudes about retaining their culture of origin and about becoming part of the new society, about how much of their identity they are willing to give away and to what extent they are willing to replace old habits with new ones. Of course the transition is supposedly easier and less problematic in those cases in which the old and the new country share common, or very similar, culture and values. Phinney et al. [2001] argue that ethnic
and national identities and their role in adaptation can be best understood in terms of an interaction between the attitudes and characteristics of immigrants and the responses of the receiving societies, moderated by the particular circumstances of the immigrant group within the new society. In the new country, immigrants’ attitudes interact with the actual and perceived level of acceptance of immigrants and with state policies towards immigration. Therefore, ethnic identity is likely to be strong when immigrants wish to maintain their identity and when pluralism is encouraged and accepted in the new society. On the contrary, when there is pressure towards assimilation, national identity – that is, the identity shaped by the destination country – prevails over the ethnic identity. Faced with a hostile reaction towards immigration, migrants may react in two possible ways: either reject their own ethnic identity and subscribe to the new one, or assert their pride and strengthen their belonging to a cultural group, emphasizing solidarity as a way of dealing with negative attitudes.

The process that takes place when immigrants enter a new society and consequently give up some elements of their culture of origin and assimilate into the new culture is referred to as a process of acculturation. Phinney et al. [2001] point out that acculturation, rather than being a linear process of change, is best understood as a two-dimensional process. The idea is that the two dominant aspects of acculturation – namely, preservation of one’s heritage culture and adaptation to the host society – are conceptually distinct and can vary independently.

Four acculturation strategies can be defined, based on the degree to which the two abovementioned factors – cultural heritage and assimilation to the new culture – modify themselves:

1. integration: the cultural background is maintained and, at the same time, relations are being developed with the larger society;
2. marginalization: is the exact opposite of integration, as the cultural heritage is gradually lost, but new cultural values are not being acquired from the host society;
3. assimilation: immigrants give up most of those elements belonging to the cultural heritage and gradually assimilate elements belonging to the new culture;
4. separation: immigrants stick to their cultural background and refuse to acquire any element belonging to the host society.
In Europe the two most outstanding examples of the way migrants either integrate or get assimilated into the new society are those of Great Britain and France, respectively. The English example is that of integration, allowing the immigrants to express their historic identity, encouraging them to live in an environment similar to that of their home countries, thus creating the so-called multicultural society. Furthermore, integration is a two-ways process meaning that not only immigrants are totally accepted and given space and flexibility, but the host culture also takes on board some elements of the immigrants’ culture (e.g. food, clothing, words). The French example, on the contrary, has a one-way approach to integration, as immigrants have to assimilate French culture and leave their origins behind, thus asserting a national identity everybody can refer to: “French republican tradition obliges every immigrant to get assimilated, to forget its past, to leave its cultural baggage at the frontier”\textsuperscript{25}.

When these two forms of insertion of migrants into the host society are too extreme, some problems may arise. As far as the Great Britain’s model of integration is concerned, it has to be said that this also results in the creation of ethnic or religious ghettos, i.e., small communities where immigrants conduct a life almost parallel to that of national citizens, and all this is done in the name of multiculturalism. Therefore, by encouraging immigrants and ethnic minorities to live in their own communities, a host society can evolve towards a segregationist society in which conflicts can arise very easily between the ethnic minority and the majority and also, more dramatically, between ethnic minorities. Such was the case in 2005 Birmingham riots when a conflict arose between the Black British and the Brown British communities, i.e., the African-Caribbeans and Asians originating from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Critics of this kind of approach to migrants’ integration argue that what we actually witness is not a form of multiculturalism, but rather a plea for plural monoculturalism [Sen 2006]. In many modern European countries we hear nowadays news of young girls belonging to conservative immigrant families, who want to go out on a date with local boys. This act is certainly a multicultural initiative. However, in contrast to this, a common

\textsuperscript{25} Excerpt from Le Monde (12 November 2005): “… la tradition républicaine française qui oblige chaque immigrant à s'assimiler, à oublier son passé, à laisser ses bagages culturels à la frontière …” (my translation)
enough occurrence is the attempt by the girls’ parents to stop them from doing so. This act is hardly a multicultural move, since it seeks to keep the cultures separate. And yet, Sen emphasizes, “it is the parents’ prohibition, which contributes to plural monoculturalism, that seems to garner the loudest and most vocal defence from alleged multiculturalists, on the ground of the importance of honouring traditional cultures - as if the cultural freedom of the young women were of no relevance whatever, and as if the distinct cultures must somehow remain in secluded boxes” [Sen 2006b].

In the French case, conflicts also arise when assimilation occurs too abruptly and immigrants are denied any customs and values which allude to a culture or religion different from that generally accepted in France. A recurrent example is the headscarves banning, preventing Muslim girls from wearing their headscarves in public educational institutions. The reason for this decision was that of preserving the republic and its democratic and secular tradition.

The French example draws very much on the assimilation experienced by the immigrants in the United States. The existing literature shows that today’s immigrants are largely assimilating into American society. Researchers make use of four primary benchmarks in order to measure the level of assimilation: (a) socioeconomic status, defined as educational attainment, occupational specialization, and parity in earnings; (b) spatial concentration, defined in terms of dissimilarity in spatial distribution and of suburbanization; (c) language assimilation, defined in terms of language ability and loss of mother tongue; and (d) intermarriage [Waters and Jiménez 2005: 107-108].

In order to define the level of assimilation of immigrants, other factors have to be considered also. An example is the educational attainment of second-generation children which in some countries tend to do better in grades and behavioural aspects than their native-schoolmates. Residential patterns are also important as sometimes patterns of migrants’ segregation can be observed in large cities and their suburbs. The assimilation model states that all ethnic groups tend to be drawn into the economic mainstream and gain social acceptance through their educational and occupational achievements. The initial establishment of an ethnic enclave - ethnic segregation - is regarded primarily as an adaptive strategy to enable ethnic members to survive and overcome initial disadvantages.
and constraints in the early stages of assimilation [Zhou and Logan 1991]. Segregation is only temporary, and will diminish as group members, having improved their labour market position and absorbed mainstream values, choose residences in new areas. This differentiation does not always occur with all minorities and at times it can even be voluntary. For example such is the case of the Chinese population living in the United States which has shown over the years a tendency to concentrate in segregated communities within the cities, in the so called “Chinatowns” [Yuan 1963].

Language assimilation is another indicator of the level of integration/assimilation. The three-generation model of language assimilation can be applied to most of today’s immigrants: the immigrant generation makes some progress but remains dominant in their native tongue, the second generation is bilingual, and the third generation speaks English only. Along with language learning, intermarriage is often seen as the ultimate proof of assimilation [Waters and Jiménez 2005: 110].

Assimilation or integration of migrants both have important consequences on migrant’s identities and sometimes can result in an “identity crisis”\(^\text{26}\). When it comes to discussing the effects migration has on the identity of migrants, Park [1937] makes some significant remarks as he talks about the “marginal man”. He explains that:

\[
\text{“the marginal man ... is one whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic cultures ... his mind is the crucible in which two different and refractory cultures may be said to melt and, either wholly or in part, fuse.”}
\]

Park coined the term "the marginal man" during his studies of human migration. He conceived the migrant as a person at the margin of two cultures and two societies. According to him, different ethnic groups coexisting in an urban area would ultimately merge into a single entity. This theory is what we now call the “melting pot” theory of multiethnic integration.

\(^{26}\text{Erikson, responsible for coining this term, suggested that people experience an identity crisis when they lose “a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity” [Erikson 1963:153].}\)
Based on his observation of immigrant groups in the United States, Park developed his theory of group behaviour. He postulated that the loyalties that bind persons together in primitive societies are in direct proportion to the intensity of the fears and hatreds with which they view other societies. In other words, group solidarity correlates to a great extent with animosity toward an out-group. This concept was further developed as theories of ethnocentrism and in-group/out-group propensities. Park proposed four universal types of interaction in intergroup relations:

1. **competition**: type of interaction where all individuals or groups pursue their own interests, without paying attention to other individuals or groups;
2. **conflict**: type of interaction where individuals or groups consciously try to eliminate other individuals or groups;
3. **accommodation**: adjustment toward reducing the conflict and achieving the interest of mutual security;
4. **assimilation**: process whereby once separate groups acquire each other’s culture, or become part of a common culture.

Sharing the same ideas as those of Park, Stonequist [1937: 8] stresses that:

>“The marginal person is poised in the psychological uncertainty between two (or more) social worlds; reflecting in his soul the discords and harmonies, repulsions and attractions of these worlds ... within which membership is implicitly if not explicitly based upon birth or ancestry ... and where exclusion removes the individual from a system of group relations.”

These remarks are particularly useful when analysing the interpretation migrants give to their identity status in the receiving country, as well as in their country of origin. In many cases, migrants no longer identify themselves with the way in which the society from which they left perceives them. While distancing themselves from this image, these migrants are also situated in a marginal position in the receiving societies, being unable to integrate and to be fully accepted by the members of the new group, mainly because they are perceived as being different. A good example of such a situation is given by Kazmierska [2003] in an analysis of an autobiographical narrative interview with Hülya, a Turkish woman living in Germany:
“The narrator does not accept the way in which Turkish society evaluates her status as a (divorced) woman. Therefore, Hülya chooses the role of marginal person in Turkish society. She distances herself from its values, and she is not up to date to what is going on in Turkish life, politics, economy etc. Whereas in Germany she is situated in a marginal position of not being accepted in German society because of her being different.”

As it is the case for many migrants who come from clearly antagonistic cultures, Hülya “represents a minority which is partially assimilated and psychologically identified with the dominant group without being fully accepted” [Kazmierska 2003: 88]. She becomes a stranger in her homeland, but she also remains a stranger in the country where she migrated. Therefore, the paradox in these cases is that migrants no longer perceive themselves as representatives of the society they come from and, at the same time, they are not accepted as full citizens of the new societies, even if ultimately this is what they strive for. This might also explain the reason why, in their narrations, many migrants sometimes allude to the idea of one day going back to the countries they came from, in spite of them no longer sharing the values which form these societies.

As far as the process of assimilation and deletion of migrants’ original identity is concerned, a more optimistic perspective is presented by some researchers. Fukuyama [2007] believes that modern liberal societies have weak collective identities and that postmodern elites, especially in Europe, feel that they have evolved beyond identities defined by religion and nation. On the contrary, migrants tend to be more sure of who they are and can thus challenge these societies:

"If postmodern societies are to move towards a more serious discussion of identity, they will need to uncover those positive virtues that define what it means to be a member of the wider society. If they do not, they may be overwhelmed by people who are more sure about who they are.”

What Fukuyama actually argues is that Europe’s failure to better integrate into its societies certain groups of migrants, such as Muslims, is a ticking bomb, which has already exploded for instance in Madrid, London and on the streets of Amsterdam. The suggestion is that it is high time for a new approach towards the integration of migrants, as the old approaches have not been very successful.
I consider all this observations on the differences between integrating and assimilating migrants, that is, between plural monocultural and multicultural societies, to be particularly helpful in my research when analysing the way migrants integrate into the new society. Very important aspects that have to be dealt with are related to: how much from the ethnic identity of migrants is preserved and how much is replaced by new values; to what extent the transformations that occur are voluntary; and what are the difficulties that migrants face in the process of shaping their new identity or maintaining the old one in a different surrounding.
PART II:

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK
Chapter 3
Labour migration legislative framework

“We asked for workers and we got human beings instead”\textsuperscript{27}

(Swiss writer, Max Frisch, on labour migration)

3.1 International labour migration legislative framework

As I explained in the previous chapters, international migration has become an intrinsic feature of globalization. Nearly all countries are nowadays concerned by migration, whether as sending, transit, or receiving countries, or as a combination of these. However, in spite of international migration importance being recognized by regional and international actors, migrants’ protection at the international level is fragmentary, as migration is perceived as an issue that has to be dealt with at a national level, rather than internationally. [Stratti 2009]

All migrants share one common characteristic: they live and work in a country of which they are not nationals. Therefore they face the challenge of adapting to a society that is not their own and that may reject them.

Moreover, as noncitizens, they usually have fewer rights than the native population. Migrants do not always enjoy the protection provided by specific institutions or legal provisions. For example, workers’ rights are defended by unions, but these do not always

\textsuperscript{27}“Wir riefen Arbeitskräfte und es kamen Menschen” (original language)
include migrant workers\textsuperscript{28}. Similarly, women and children have been recognized as vulnerable groups, and have benefited from several forms of legal protection, including UN Conventions, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Both of these Conventions have been widely ratified; this is not the case for the Convention on Migrants’ Rights.

Human flows have always been a concern of the international community and of UN agencies. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol constituted a crucial step in improving the fate of refugees, and in establishing global management of this issue. The International Labour Organization has also elaborated two Conventions that aim at protecting migrant workers: Convention 97 (1949) and Convention 143 (1975).

### 3.1.1 International Labour Organization conventions

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that deals with labour issues and one of its specific purposes is to manage labour migration so that it contributes positively to the growth and development of both home and host societies, as well as to the well being of the migrants themselves\textsuperscript{29}. Already at the moment of its founding, in 1919, the ILO approved a recommendation that called for equality of treatment between migrants and other workers, and for coordination between governments to ensure orderly migration flows.

The ILO has elaborated two major international conventions concerning migrant workers, both of which aspire to normalize migration policies and enhance migrants’ protection. The first is the \textit{1949 Migration for Employment Convention (Revised)}. The ratifying States have to take specific measures for facilitating the departure, journey and reception of migrants for employment. The convention defines the “migrant for employment” as “a person who migrates from one country to another with a view to being employed otherwise than on his own account and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant

\textsuperscript{28} Source: www.portal.unesco.org

\textsuperscript{29} Source: www.ilo.org
for employment”\textsuperscript{30}. Some noteworthy obligations under the 1949 Convention include: providing accurate information relating to emigration and immigration; taking appropriate steps against misleading propaganda relating to emigration and immigration; maintaining appropriate medical services; treating immigrants on equal terms with nationals. Equality should be guaranteed in terms of: remuneration, including family allowance, hours of work, overtime arrangements, holidays with pay, minimum age for employment, apprenticeship and training, work by women and young persons and restrictions on home work; membership of trade unions and benefits of collective bargaining. The Annexes to this Convention deal with private and public recruitment, stressing that there should be a no-fee public option, and that “any person who promotes clandestine or illegal immigration shall be subject to appropriate penalties”.

The second ILO convention, dealing both with migration in abusive conditions and equality of opportunity and treatment of migrant workers, is the 1975 Migrant Workers Convention (Supplementary Provisions). The Convention opens with a call for member nations to “seek to determine whether there are illegally employed migrant workers on its territory”. Under article 1 of the Convention, each Member which has ratified this document is obliged to respect the basic human rights of all migrant workers. Article 6 calls for employer sanctions and penalties on traffickers, while Article 9 calls for “equality of treatment” in wages, social security and other benefits for unauthorized migrants who are employed. Beside having to determine legal status of migrant workers\textsuperscript{31}, ratifying States are also obliged to verify whether migrants are being subjected to conditions that contravene relevant international, multilateral or bilateral agreements or instruments or national laws and regulations; take appropriate measures to suppress clandestine movements for employment and illegal employment of migrants; and take steps against organizers of clandestine or illicit movements of migrants, authors of manpower trafficking and employers of workers who have immigrated in illegal conditions.

\textsuperscript{30} Article 11, comma 1, of the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (ILO No. 97)

\textsuperscript{31} Article 11, comma 1, of the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions), 1975 (ILO No. 143) defines the migrant worker as a person “who migrates or who has migrated from one country to another with a view to being employed otherwise than on his own account and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant worker”.
3.1.2 UN Convention on the rights of migrant workers

In the 1970s, it was recognized that migrants constitute a vulnerable group and that the promotion of human rights for this population required a special United Nations convention. A working group responsible for drawing up the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was created in 1980 at the United Nations. Given the vulnerability of migrant workers and their families, the primary objective of this document was to protect this category of population from exploitation and the violation of their human rights. Although it was signed on 18 December 1990, it entered into force only in July 2003, after the required threshold of 20 ratifying states was reached.

The Convention does not create new rights for migrants but aims at guaranteeing equality of treatment, and the same working conditions for migrants and nationals. It also states that migrants should have the right to remain connected to their country of origin. This implies: ensuring that migrants can return to their country of origin if they so wish, and that they are allowed to pay occasional visits and are encouraged to maintain cultural links (articles 8, 31, 38); guaranteeing migrants’ political participation in the country of origin (articles 41-42); ensuring migrants’ right to transfer their earnings to their home country. The UN migrant convention also aims to "contribute to the harmonization of the attitudes of States through the acceptance of basic principles concerning the treatment of migrant workers and members of their families". Therefore it requires states to adhere to basic human rights standards –including freedom of religion and freedom from arbitrary arrest or imprisonment – whenever they have to deal with authorized and unauthorized migrants. Furthermore, it seeks to reduce illegal migration and trafficking and to ensure equal rights for migrants, including border commuters or frontier workers, seasonal workers, project-tied workers, and self-employed workers32.

Legal migrants’ legitimacy to claim more rights than undocumented migrants is recognized, although it is also stressed that undocumented migrants must see their fundamental human rights respected, like all human beings. In the meantime, several

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32 Source: http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=2964_0_5_0
actions meant to eradicate clandestine movements are proposed. Some examples are the
fight against misleading information inciting people to migrate irregularly, and through
sanctions against traffickers and employers of undocumented migrants.

One of the most innovative parts of the Convention was Part IV, Article 44, which
foresees that “recognizing that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of
society” obliges states to “take appropriate measures to ensure the protection of the unity
of the families of migrant workers ... to facilitate the reunification of migrant workers with
their spouses ... as well as with their minor dependent unmarried children”. Migrant family
members are to have “equality of treatment with nationals” in access to education, social
and health services, and “states of employment shall endeavor to facilitate for the children
of migrant workers the teaching of their mother tongue and culture”.

The ratification of the Convention by a State means that the legislative or law-making
branch of its government has adopted the Convention, and promised to incorporate it into
its national laws. The adoption of a convention by the UN General Assembly entails in
itself no binding commitment for individual States. States become committed only once
they have ratified the convention. This is why the impact of the Convention on Migrants’
Rights remains limited, as the majority of States have not yet ratified it.33

So far, countries that have ratified the Convention are primarily countries of origin of
migrants (such as Mexico, Morocco and the Philippines). For these countries, the
Convention is an important vehicle to protect their citizens living abroad. However, no
Western migrant-receiving State has ratified the Convention, even though the majority of
migrants live in Europe and North America. Other important receiving countries, such as
Australia, the Gulf States and India have not ratified the Convention either.

33 Countries which have ratified the Convention by August 2009: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan,
Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, El
Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Libya, Mali, Mauritania,
Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri
Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Timor Leste, Turkey, Uganda and Uruguay

Countries which have only signed the Convention by August 2009: Bangladesh, Benin, Cambodia, Comoros,
Congo, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Indonesia, Liberia, Montenegro, São Tomé and Príncipe, Serbia,
Sierra Leone, Togo (source: the United Nations)
3.1.3 Labour migration policies in the European Union

During the 1950s and 1960s the lobby for the free movement of workers was minimal, as the establishment and development of the free movement of workers did not receive much public support. On the contrary, strong objections arise among national governments and social partners [Goedings 1999:9]. Supranational actors such as the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Commission advocated establishing legislation enforcing the free movement of workers, while the large majority of national governments opposed the idea as they feared it would lead to large, uncontrolled migration flows, which would undermine domestic labour market policies of full employment. Not surprisingly, Italy was one of the strongest supporters of the liberalization of intra-Community labour movements, because it saw free movement as a method to increase Italian emigration to North-western Europe and thus as a European solution to the country’s unemployment problem [Romero 1993], which had previously been dealt with through emigration to the Americas.

Immigration policy was regulated exclusively at the nation level by Member states of the European Union until 1999, the year when the Treaty of Amsterdam came into force. The Treaty implemented the ideal of people’s freedom of movement within the area of the European common market and set an agenda for the homogenization of policies concerning not only immigrants but also asylum seekers\(^\text{34}\). Legal frontiers against intra-EU labour migration are abolished under the principle of free movement of workers within the European Union. Also, the introduction of free movement for the purpose of employment gives the right to EU citizens to receive the same treatment as national workers, allowing them to seek and accept employment in any Member State.

Realising that a new approach to managing migration was necessary, the leaders of the EU set out at the October 1999 European Council in Tampere (Finland) the elements for a common EU immigration policy. Based on the milestones of the Tampere European Council, the EU reconfirmed its intentions in 2004 with the adoption of The Hague programme, which sets the objectives for strengthening freedom, security and justice in the

\(^{34}\) Source:
EU for the period 2005-2010. As a result, the EU and its Member States have gradually established the foundations of a common legal framework on immigration and asylum. EU laws set out the minimum standards in areas concerning matters such as: family reunification, admission and treatment of researchers and students long-term resident, third-country nationals, coordination of social security systems and common rules on expulsion, etc. However one aspect that has not been tackled fully concerns the first admission to the territory and the labour market of third-country nationals.

Even though the domains concerned by the Hague Programme have fallen under the shared competence between the EU and the Member States since 1999, the latter have been reluctant to allow too much decision-making move to the EU level in this sensitive field. In fact, the common EU immigration policy has been characterised by the predominance of the principle of subsidiarity intergovernmentalism, with Member States sometimes struggling to preserve their primary role in the management of the admission, stay and inclusion of non-EU nationals. As a consequence, the EU common legal framework on immigration developed so far provides “minimum standards”, giving broad discretion to Member States. A telling example of the large discrepancies between various Member States is that of the fees paid for family reunification, which vary from a symbolic sum applied by Belgium and Spain and a 35 EUR fee applied by the Czech Republic for administrative costs to 1,368 EUR requested in the Netherlands. On average the fee ranges between €50 and €150\(^\text{35}\). However, the most important aspects of immigration such as long-term resident status and family reunification law now fall within the competence of EU law, being covered by the EU principles of transparency, proportionality and rule of law.

Some important limitations of this system are of great importance and concern mainly third-country nationals who encounter even more obstacles on their way when trying to pursue employment in an EU country. Considering that the free movement of workers is meant to bring advantages to EU citizens who want to work in a European country other than their own, it becomes clear that citizens who do not belong to one of the Member

States – such as citizens of third countries, refugees, and stateless persons - are left out of the system and remain subject to national restrictions in their movements within the EU.

Another advantage guaranteed to European citizens is equal treatment regarding employment. This implies equal access to the labour market, meaning the right to seek and accept employment under the same conditions as the local workers. After commencing employment workers are entitled to reside in the country of employment and enjoy the same rights regarding pay, terms of employment, social security benefits, occupational training, and trade union membership, as national workers. There are some limitations to this aspect though, as the right to equal treatment is at the same time a safeguard against social dumping. Equal employment conditions regarding pay and dismissal were established not only to protect foreign workers from being exploited, but also because the provision would protect the national labour forces against immigrants prepared to work for lower wages and in worse conditions. Critics argue that this system also fosters illegal work, as it presents also some impediments for migrant workers to be assumed. The requirement of equal wages and working conditions does not allow employers to offer less favourable terms of employment to EU immigrants. Apparently, this looks beneficial both for the immigrants - as they are guaranteed equal rights – and for the national workers – as they do not have to compete with cheaper workers. However, what often happens in reality is that, because foreign workers have to be offered the same wages as the national workers, while the cost of their recruitment remains fairly constant, migrant workers become more expensive than local workers or cheap labour from third countries and thus less attractive to employers. This is the main reason why many European migrants, in spite of having the freedom to access the EU labour market unconditionally, are either employed illegally, or manage to find legal employment only in those sectors in which the offer of workforce coming from nationals is below the needs of the labour market.
3.2 Legislation concerning migrant women protection and domestic migrant workers

3.2.1 International instruments dealing with female migration

It is important to stress that migrant women often face a double vulnerability: both as migrants and as women. In spite of this particular condition, there is not one comprehensive international instrument governing specifically the rights of migrant women. Yet, this does not mean that they are guaranteed no rights, as all the core human rights treaties respond to the needs of either women, migrants, or workers.

The reference point and the most comprehensive human rights instrument dealing with migration is the *International Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*. The Convention addresses the whole migration process – departure, transit, host country and return – and it deals with migrants generally, thus finding applications also for the specific case of migrant women. Therefore the Convention represents a large step forward in the protection of migrant workers generally. It also responds to a number of the challenges faced by migrant women during the migration process. However, although the rights granted by this document can be applied to both migrant men and women, it still does not address directly the specific needs of migrant women.

However, there are some core human rights treaties that consider the case of women in particular, although this time they refer to women generally, and not to female migrants in particular. One of these instruments is the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. Of relevance are also the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and the *International Covenant on Economic Cultural and Social Rights*.

Among other international instruments of importance to women migrants is the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children*, adopted by the United Nations in 2000, and which supplements the Convention against
Transnational Organised Crime\textsuperscript{36}. The Protocol creates comprehensive national anti-trafficking strategies and assists with resources to implement them, offering practical help to states with drafting legislation. Although it is not a human rights instrument, it requires states to take a number of measures that indirectly promote the rights of migrant women. For example, the Protocol calls upon states to establish trafficking in human beings and involvement in the process, as a criminal offence and mandates a number of measures by states to prevent and combat it, both unilaterally and in cooperation with others\textsuperscript{37}. It also recommends states to consider implementing measures which provide for the physical, psychological and social recovery of victims, measures guaranteeing counselling and medical services, psychological and material assistance, and measures meant to provide employment, training and educational opportunities.

A review of the international instruments providing protection for migrant women shows that the success of these instruments lies in their implementation at the national level, particularly in regard to migrant women in an irregular situation. Indeed, the effectiveness of international standards protecting the rights of migrant women is only as good as the domestic legislation, policy and practices implementing them. Effective protection requires political will at the national level\textsuperscript{38}.

\textbf{3.2.2 Other policy instruments for migrant women protection in the European Union}

Once the Treaty of Amsterdam entered into force on 1 May 1999, gender equality was integrated into the principles and objectives of the Community legal order\textsuperscript{39}. In addition to


\textsuperscript{37} Source: United Nations Population Fund: www.unfpa.org

\textsuperscript{38} Ibidem

\textsuperscript{39} Article 2 of the Treaty of Amsterdam reads: “The Community shall have as its task (…) to promote throughout the Community a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic activities, a high level of employment and of social protection, equality between men and women (…)”
Chapter 3: Labour migration legislative framework

dthis, Article 3 of the Treaty requires the Community to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between men and women.\(^40\)

The process of fostering equality between women and men started already in 1975 when a set of directives which intervene in the area of work and access to goods and services was adopted, with the purpose of fighting discrimination against women and promoting gender equality\(^41\). These directives applied to all women, including female migrants. The only exception, however, was represented by undocumented migrant women. As a matter of fact, many of the obstacles to the empowerment of migrant women in the host country derive precisely from the legal status these women hold at their arrival in the EU. Consequently, in many cases, female migrants cannot benefit from European legislation on equality between women and men. The legal status granted to migrants in general is therefore a key criterion for successful integration in the host country.

Not surprisingly, there are no official statistics on the number of undocumented migrants living in the EU. Also, little is known with regard to their country of origin and their migratory path. Yet, although undocumented migrants are unable to benefit from the European legislation protecting them, they still have some rights guaranteed by international Human Rights instruments, including the right to health care, fair labour conditions, education and training, shelter, the right to family life and to moral and physical integrity.

Official debates concerning undocumented migrants at the European level focus on the development of European standards that ensure the return of clandestine third-country nationals to their countries of origin. In 2005 the European Commission presented a proposal for a directive on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning “illegal” third-country nationals, also called the “return directive”. The directive establishes a common discipline for all Member States which have to either expel every

\(^{40}\) Article 3 of the Treaty of Amsterdam reads: “(…) In all the activities referred to in this Article, the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women.(…)”

\(^{41}\) An example is the 1975 Equal Pay Directive which bans discrimination on grounds of gender with regard to all aspects and conditions of pay. In particular, where a job classification system is used for determining pay, it must be based on the same criteria for both men and women and so drawn up as to exclude any discrimination on grounds of gender.
illegal resident migrant or grant him/her a definite legal status. Its objective is to standardise the procedures regulating the expulsion of illegal immigrants and close loopholes in national legislation. It establishes common rules concerning voluntary return, deportation, use of coercive measures, temporary custody and re-entry, while respecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the persons concerned.

Amnesty International considers that the text approved by the European Parliament does not guarantee the return of irregular migrants in safety and dignity. The NGO further claims that the added value of this EU directive is hard to see, and that the agreed text risks promoting prolonged detention practices in EU Member States and impacting negatively upon access to EU territory. Moreover, critics of this directive argue that the text fails to integrate a gender perspective. They stress that women’s decision to migrate is often based on “push” factors closely related to gender, such as the feminization of poverty, oppressive gender relations, sexual violence notably in situations of armed conflict and more generally, political and cultural structures and practices in the country of origin that violate women’s human rights. It is therefore essential that any legislation which aims to regulate the return of undocumented third-country nationals considers this important factor of the migration process.

As explained in the previous chapters, the relationship between gender and migration is complex. Women who migrate under family reunification programmes often find themselves in a situation where they depend on their husbands socially, financially and legally and they can also be in danger of being isolated and marginalised. In the meantime, for other migrant women entering the country legally and working outside the home, migration can be a positive experience. The report of the UNFPA-IOM Expert Group meeting specifies that “in societies where women’s power to move autonomously is limited, the act of migration is in itself empowering” and can become a force for “removing existing gender imbalances and inequities”. The report concludes that women’s

Source: www.euractiv.com (Fighting illegal immigration: The Return Directive, Published: Tuesday 26 August 2008)
migration is “a powerful force for positive change in countries both of origin and of destination”.  

### 3.2.3 The case of female migrant domestic workers

The majority of female migrant workers find employment in the service sector, performing catering, domestic or healthcare occupations. In some regions, migrant women can also find employment in the manufacturing sector. Furthermore, significant numbers of migrant women are involved in prostitution and the sex industry – some of them involuntarily through trafficking for sexual exploitation. As far as the services sector is concerned, studies of worldwide female migration have shown that the demand for female migrant labour is increasing in low-skilled jobs such as domestic work – including cleaning and child care, hotel cleaners and waitresses - as well as in skilled occupations such as nurses and other health care workers.

In order to regulate the activities performed by domestic workers, one should be able to rely on a complete definition of the term “domestic work”. There are many expressions currently in use, including “housework”, “domestic work”, “domestic help”, and “cleaning lady”. The terminology varies from one country to another, but it is hard to tell what exactly this job comprises. Having this in mind, the ILO, in its Home Work Convention\(^{45}\), defined home work as “the work carried out by a person, to be referred to as a homeworker, in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other that the workplace of the employer, for remuneration, which results in a product or service as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provides the equipment, materials or other inputs used”. The definition of “domestic and cleaners”\(^{46}\), which is also provided by the ILO, seems closer to the occupation of domestic migrant workers: “domestic helpers and

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\(^{45}\) ILO 1996 Home Work Convention (No. 177)

cleaners sweep, vacuum clean, wash and polish, take care of household linen, purchase household supplies, prepare food, serve meals and perform various other domestic duties”.

In the European Union the demand for domestic workers is growing mainly as a result of economic and social changes. The two most important factors on which this growth draws are: firstly, women’s growing employment rate – and women emancipation, for that matter – and, secondly, the ageing population

In most countries, domestic workers are used to overcome the problem of a lack of child-minding and/or care facilities. These workers are mainly women, often migrants, sometimes undocumented and often under-paid. An increasing number of families is now paying for household services where previously it relied on unpaid family labour. The nature of these services and their relative scope varies within and between states, and includes work that ranges from childcare to elder care, to all-inclusive domestic work and garden maintenance.

Migrant domestic workers tend to concentrate in live-in work, which is particularly unpopular with EU nationals, hence employers prefer giving this job to foreign workers, preferably on lower wages. However, in some cases, migrants also perform live-out work, making a living by working for several employers/households. As far as migrants’ provenience is concerned, they come from many different countries of origin - Asia, Africa and Latin America and more recently from Eastern Europe and CIS countries. Certain EU states attract different nationalities than others – for example, in Italy, Romanian and Ukrainian domestic workers are more common than in the UK. Domestic workers are predominantly female, but not always – male domestic workers may be preferred in for certain activities where heavy lifting is required. Migrant domestic workers may range from the young to those more senior. Some of them have already had previous professional experience in this field acquired in their country of origin, while most of them come from completely different professional backgrounds.

Given the European agenda for growth and jobs which specifically calls for the facilitation of female participation to the labour market, the skills and capacity that all women provide European economies are increasingly significant. In this context, it has to be acknowledged that until now many women’s growing participation at work has been

47 In EU-25 out of a total population of 450 million, there are 80 million elderly people.
facilitated precisely by migrant women’s increasing participation in the caring and domestic work that, in most households, was traditionally the province of native-born women. These migrant women, in a sense, are increasingly providing the infrastructure that facilitates higher numbers of native-born women to enter paid employment, especially in medium and high skill occupations.\textsuperscript{48}

The fact that many of these domestic workers are undocumented increases their vulnerability even more. Also, the nature of the work itself implies very complex relationships. Bridget Anderson \cite{Anderson2005} explains that:

\begin{quote}
“There are many advantages for migrants to work in private households. It is work that is accessible through the informal networks, by word-of-mouth. The “home” can be a refuge from the State and other authorities, or from other individuals and groups. It can provide accommodation – which is of crucial importance to understanding the demand and supply of migrant labour in many sectors. (…) It might be seen at first sight that there is a coincidence of interests between those who employ migrant workers and the workers. They both avoid State control; there is informality between them; the one gains flexibility while the other gains accommodation. But it is often not such a win-win situation. (…) The impact on domestic workers, especially those that live in, is the power their employers have over them, (for example) the power to withdraw accommodation or access to hot water. (…) It is this kind of power that is largely unacknowledged and not captured by employment regulations. ”
\end{quote}

A study of the Migrant Rights Centre in Ireland\textsuperscript{49} emphasises that in those cases where the private home is also a workplace, events of abuse and discrimination often occur. The migrant women workers frequently refer to themselves as “household objects”, with the expectation that the employee “belongs” to the employer. Employers tend to consider that migrant workers are more “hardworking” than other citizens, more “willing and cooperative”, and “prepared to work more flexible hours”. This image employers have of their migrant domestic employees can be found in other European countries.

\textsuperscript{49} Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (December 2004) Private Homes, a Public Concern – The Experience of Twenty Migrant Women Employed in the Private Home in Ireland (available at: http://www.mrci.ie/)
Chapter 3: Labour migration legislative framework

The Committee on Women’s Rights and Equal Opportunities of the European Parliament adopted in 2000 a report regulating domestic help in the informal sector. The aim of this report was to examine the EU’s legislative framework in relation to domestic workers who are paid but not declared, and therefore have a considerable impact on the black economy. This form of work, which is hidden and not easily quantifiable, provides a significant proportion of women with a source of income which is not subject to any form of state control. The document acknowledges the fact that “there has been an increase in the number of elderly people living alone and needing domestic help” and recognised the specific employment relationships of domestic workers, “including their isolation and their atypical relationship with their employers”. Therefore it calls for domestic work to be recognised as an occupation in its own right, with the adoption of European rules on the social rights of workers. Regarding women migrant domestic workers in particular, it recommends that “specialised reception centres be set up for female migrant workers to provide the psychological and psychiatric help required by migrant women who have suffered mental or physical or sexual abuse and any assistance needed to draw up applications to regularise their situation if they have temporary residence permits”.

So, in the first place, it is important to highlight the strong link between the growing needs of European households for domestic services and the feminization of migration. This is why any legislation regulating this occupation should be able to organise domestic work in a sustainable way, by providing those in need of domestic support with appropriate services and, at the same time, guaranteeing protection and proper employment opportunities to those who perform these services. Secondly, priority should be given to the protection of domestic and care workers. The numerous testimonials of these workers suggest that the undocumented and insecure nature of migrant women’s domestic services leaves them vulnerable, facilitating the occurrence of labour exploitation and human rights abuses. This is why practical measures and policy instruments are needed also in order to re-evaluate domestic and care work, its role in the society and economy, and its contribution to the welfare of communities.

Chapter 4

Labour migration policies in Italy. The case of female domestic workers

“...it is a vicious circle (...) she has been living in Italy for over 30 years and it seems as though she arrived yesterday. And she gets tired, she gets old (...) and the only thing left for her is to return to her country (...) but she stays because she has already lost a great part of that identity which is recognized within the family group.”

(Tatiana Gutierrez, founder of the” NoDi – I Nostri Diritti” Association)

4.1 The immigration phenomenon in Italy and its legislative framework

Italy was a relative late-comer among immigration countries. As Colombo and Sciortino [2004] remark the adjective commonly used to describe immigration in Italy is “new”. It is used in order to refer to the beginning of the influx, which is usually fixed at the middle of the 1970s when the migratory balance in Italy became positive, and it also implies a difference between old and new immigrations, thus underlining the difference of the current influx compared to those of the past.

Migrant flows increased soon after the 1973-74 oil shock, when major migrants’ destinations such as Britain, Germany, and neighbouring France started to close their
borders. Therefore, migrants were partially diverted towards Southern Europe. The beginning of immigration in Italy is thus viewed as a fallback choice in response to the closing of traditional European destinations [Colombo and Sciortino 2004]. Yet, the 1981 census data revealed an unexpectedly high number of foreign residents – more than 200,000. However, the first big migrant flows date from later, between 1984 and 1989, when approximately 700-800,000 people entered the country. Of these, it is estimated that 300-350,000 entered or remained in Italy without a valid residence permit [Zincone 2005].

Two significant features of migration processes in Italy can be, therefore, identified: rapid flows of immigrants with substantial volumes, and a high proportion of undocumented immigrants. The motives which trigger these features of the migration process are due not only to the geographical location of the country, but, as I will further try to explain, are also strongly connected to the immigration policies and instruments used either for encouraging or discouraging migration.

4.1.1 Italy’s state-building and first experiences of migration

The relatively late Italian state-building process took place against the background of liberal-nationalist ideologies, which spread throughout Europe in the 19th century, and was not completed with a single strategic move [Zincone 2005]. The Kingdom of Italy born in 1861 initially did not include important areas whose population was entirely or mostly Italian, such as Veneto with Venice (1866), Rome (1870), Trento and Trieste (1919), Zara (1920) Fiume and Dalmatia (1924).

Maintaining close links with communities of Italian descent was judged to be useful for a set of reasons. The Italian community abroad was considered a vital vehicle for the country’s economic and strategic interests in the international arena. Moreover, there was a growing concern about the permanent population loss implied by the “Great Migration”, though an important percentage of emigrants eventually returned. Therefore, one of the measures used in order to maintain ties with the Italian expatriates was allowing the maintenance of the legal status as Italian citizens.
Chapter 4: Labour migration policies in Italy. The case of female domestic workers

The main obstacle to this strategy was the acquisition of a foreign nationality, which would have implied the loss of the Italian one. On the one hand, the main destination countries of Italian migrants applied the *jus soli* principle, and even automatic naturalisation of residents, while, on the other hand, the *1865 Italian Civil Code* did not officially permit dual nationality. Thus, *Law n. 555 of 13 June 1912* was designed to encourage the repatriation of emigrants, aiming at reforming the institution of nationality. It reiterated the principle of *jus sanguinis* as the main criterion of access to nationality, complementing it with the principle of *jus soli* in partial imitation of the French model of the time\(^{51}\). While this mild co-ethnic preference characterised Italian legislation in the Liberal age, ethnic nationalism was explicitly stated and strengthened under the Fascist regime.

To sum up, I would briefly indicate the motives for which Italian nationality laws have always relied on the *jus sanguinis* principle, as I consider them to be very useful in understanding the afterwards evolution of national legislation dealing with migration. The reasons are multiple and Zincone (2005) pinpoints them accurately:

- first we have to consider the history of Italy which was born as a nation in search of a state\(^{52}\);
- second, historically the principle of *jus sanguinis* was present in Roman law, a topic that the decision-makers, mostly legal scholars, had studied and admired;
- third, the Napoleonic Code also adopted the principle of *jus sanguinis*, which subsequently spread in many Continental European legal systems;
- forth, mass emigration triggered the desire of Italian law-makers to keep strong ties with expatriate communities for economic and international relations reasons.

\(^{51}\) dual nationality was allowed for minors, but they could choose between the two nationalities (without having to, as in the French case) on coming of age

\(^{52}\) The descent-based criterion (*jus sanguinis*) was introduced in the 1865 Civil Code, embodying the public values of a State founded and based on an idea of nation. The criterion was reinforced over time by the increasing adoption of measures favouring the retention and reacquisition of nationality for expatriates and their descendants, giving foreigners of national origins the same rights as citizens in relevant matters. The Italian nationality law still in force is characterised by this co-ethnic principle.
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As already mentioned, in the unified Italy, the flows of migrants were regulated by the Civil Code of 1865 and the law of 1869 which guaranteed to foreigners the same rights recognized to Italian. At the beginning of the twentieth century, no visa was needed to enter the country. Foreigners could be denied the entrance if they did not possess valid identification documents or if they were believed not to have a sufficient income for their stay. As for the foreigners who already resided in Italy, they could be expelled in case of a prison sentence or if they were considered dangerous to the public order. The decisions in these cases were taken by the police as an administrative sanction [Stratti 2009].

It was during the World War I that the majority of European countries decided to make use of legislative instruments that would regulate migration flows by applying a different treatment to immigrants. The motives that triggered these decisions were mainly related to the consequences of war, the need to control borders in order to avoid the entrance of enemies and also in order to regulate the entrance of foreign workers.

In 1926 a law on public security introduces territorial offices which are controlled by a central office that supervises foreigners. After three years, a central record of permits of stay was established and the territorial offices had to give data on the number of foreigners present in their area of supervision and on their movements [Leenders 1995].

In 1930, further instruments are introduced in order to strengthen border control. Foreigners were requested to go to the police authorities and announce their entry during the first three days from their arrival. A permit of stay was issued indicating the identity, the place and duration of stay, as well as the profession and the properties possessed by the foreigner.

4.1.2 “Old” and “new” immigration paths: the evolution of immigration in Italy before and after World War II

In spite Italy’s number of emigrants being overwhelmingly higher compared with that of immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th century, history shows that even in this period the presence of foreign residents has been a feature of the Italian society. Undoubtedly
foreigners at the beginning of the post-unification period were very different from those we now call immigrants. They were not very numerous, but still far more heterogeneous, having different motives for migrating and coming from different locations.

One example of immigrants is represented by refugees, very present in the post-unification period as at that time Italian migratory policies were quite liberal, substantially in line with those of other European countries. Between 1861 and the beginning of World War I, many foreigners transferred to Italy in the attempt to escape conflicts in their countries of origin. Such is the case of Hungarians – who transferred to Turin after the revolutionary movements of 1848 – and exiled Russians who found refuge along the Ligurian coast. Between World War I and 1933 another category of migrants present in Italy was that of immigrants from the growing Soviet Union. As many other migrants they settled in many Italian urban centres, primarily in Milan where they established businesses, Italian-Russian social clubs and Orthodox churches, some of which still exist today. Furthermore, the Armenian genocide of 1915 produced another influx of refugees, who became part of the economic and commercial fabric of many cities. As in many other countries where they migrated – such as France, the United States or Eastern Europe - Armenians even came to dominate certain commercial niches. In the same period, students, merchants and industrialists arrived from Albania and also a significant number of Jews settled in Italy. However, related to the Jew minority, racial laws were approved between 1933 and 1938. In 1938 the first discriminatory decree was adopted against the Jews, prohibiting the exercise of certain professions and throwing out of universities and schools Jew professors and teachers [Colombo and Sciortino 2004:51]. In addition mixed marriages between white and black people or between Italians and Jews were prohibited. This affected the situation and all foreign Jews were forced to abandon Italy and its colonies. German Jews were the only ones accepted in the country on the condition that they did not carry out anti-fascist political activity.

The flows of refugees are a characteristic of the immigration phenomenon undergoing in the present day Italy. However the present flows are very different from the past ones, the countries where they originate have changed and immigration policies are also stricter. At the same time human rights and protection of immigrants are aspects of the “new” migration which aim to secure the life of those who are forced to escape conflicts.
Lendeers [1995] argues that the past flows of refugees are at the root of the Italian legislation on immigration and on the presence of foreigners.

Moreover, other categories of migrants were present in Italy in this period. Beside refugees, Italian censuses show that between 1871 and the beginning of World War II, foreigners represented about 2.5 per thousand of the Italian population\(^5\). These are very small numbers compared with the present situation: at the latest census foreign population reached 22.0 per one thousand Italians. Among the most represented foreigners before World War II many came from bordering countries: Austria-Hungary, Germany, France, Yugoslavia and Switzerland appear regularly on the list of main nationalities. The categories of migrants that came from these countries were often professionals, landowners, industrialists and members of the ecclesiastical orders. But so too did farm hands, sailors and domestic workers employed by families in Milan or other northern cities. Foreigners also arrived from non-European countries: Americans, Russians, Argentines, Brazilians and Turks. Chinese also began to arrive in Italy in the 1920s. They were small businessmen and they first established themselves in Milan and then moved to Bologna or Tuscany where they entered the silk and fertilizer industries [Colombo and Sciortino 2004].

The first settlements of foreigners structured by area and profession were the “elective residence” immigrants. This group of migrants was less studied, probably because its members were not considered to represent any problem or threat to the Italian society. Contrary to refugees and workers, these migrants came to Italy because they were attracted by the country’s Mediterranean land, rich in history and natural beauties. One example is represented by the German, English and Russian communities which established themselves on the island of Capri after Italy’s unification. The members of these communities belonged to the upper middle classes and the lesser nobility and, according to Barbagli and Colombo [2001], they were attracted by the less repressive social customs and laws regarding sexual behaviour which were more permissive compared with other countries where certain “behaviours” such as homosexuality were punished. Though quantitatively modest, these exiles, dissidents, revolutionaries, nobles and professionals (but also sailors, farm hands, domestic workers and nannies) have played a significant role

\(^5\) See Appendix 1, Table 3 “Foreigners in Italian censuses 1871-2001” (Source: ISTAT data)
in the administrative management of the influx of foreign workers, as they represented the first group addressed by Italian migratory policies.

In the post-war period, contrary to other European countries, immigration in Italy did not seem to follow the traditional path. This is because Italy never had a policy of active recruitment aimed at searching for new workers on the international labour market. The absence of this feature of the Italian migratory process is to be connected to the nature of the Italian economy, and to the fragmented character of the demand for foreign workers. However, aside from this, immigration in Italy is quite similar to the traditional migrations of workers. It all began with the arrival of seasonal workers at the end of the 1960s – most of whom, at the beginning, were coming from Tunisia – who were employed in fishing and agriculture in Sicily. They were recruited by local landowners interested in cheaper labour. Over time, similar waves of seasonal work linked sub-Saharan Africa and Campania through the tomato harvest, and, after 1989, Eastern European countries and Trentino were connected through the apple harvest [Colombo and Sciortino 2004]. In the 1970s it was the turn of cross-border commuters coming from Yugoslavia to North-Eastern Italy, and of domestic workers settling in the big cities.

Other waves of workers arrived in this period from Eastern Africa – linked to Italy by its colonial past – as well as from the Philippines and the former Portuguese territories [Andall 2000; Parrenas 2001]. These immigrations, initiated by organizations connected to the Catholic Church, were made up of workers with work contracts, often through Italian agencies in their home countries, as well as workers with tourist visas.

Another element of labour migration is connected to the development of industry. In 1977, the hiring of Middle Eastern workers in factories in Reggio Emilia caused quite a stir. Immigrants from Senegal and Ghana were subsequently hired as unskilled labourers in quarries, small and mid-size steel mills, textile and food factories in the Northern provinces of Bergamo, Brescia and in Veneto [Colombo and Sciortino 2004:57].

While these types of employment became a stable component of the labour market, the craft and building industries started to develop and many temporary or semi-legal workers were absorbed by these sectors. Yugoslav workers were hired for reconstruction work
following the 1976 earthquake in Friuli, leading to a new evolution of an influx which has united Italy and the Balkans for more than a century.

Aside from the Yugoslav immigration, the migratory flow in the 1970s Italy was not characterized by spatial proximity. Over the years, one can also observe significant variations of the composition by nationality of foreigners in Italy. Only one of the ten nationalities with the largest presence in 1999 was included on an analogous list in 1970, while only five of the most numerous nationalities in 1980 were as represented ten years earlier. In 1970, Yugoslavs were indeed the largest immigrant group, followed by Argentines (some of whom were probably second- or third-generation Italians), Iranians and Poles. Twenty years later, however, it was the southern Mediterranean that dominated the Italian immigration scene. In 1999, an equally significant change began with a marked increase of foreigners from the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

4.1.3 Legislative framework: from the 1948 Constitutional provisions to the present national legislation

Given the fact that Italy was for a long time an emigration country, legislation dealing with the phenomenon of immigration issue was pretty much ignored in the first half of the twentieth century. Actually, important pieces of legislation concerning migration had been promoted, but they always dealt with this issue from the point of view of Italian emigration and return of Italian migrants.

The foundation of the Italian Republic after World War II also gave life to new migration policies aimed at regulating migration flows, although at the beginning emphasis was put on the process of emigration. The fall of Fascism which promoted rather racial and political discrimination policies was followed by the introduction of a new democratic Constitution which came into force in 1948. The Constitution, built in strong antithesis to the Fascist racist and repressive norms, forbade any kind of political, gender-based,
religious or racial discrimination\textsuperscript{55}. Even if this article was not specifically extended to foreigners, a possible interpretation might also cover foreigners living legally in Italy. However, Italian citizenship continues to be awarded according to the \textit{jus sanguinis} principle.

Two laws, one in 1949 and the other in 1961, established criteria of entry and work in Italy for foreign workers. At that time it was almost impossible to hire a foreign worker from abroad as one had first to make sure there were no Italian workers available for that particular job. However, the entry in Italy at the end of the 1960s was relatively easy, as visas were not required for tourism. The border control police checked only identification documents and the necessary income for the stay. In this circumstances, given on the one hand the difficulties to be employed and, on the other hand, the easiness to enter the country as a tourist, many foreigners entered the country legally as tourists and remained and found employment illegally. For this reason, already in the mid-Sixties, a decree of the Ministry of Labour permitted the regularization of foreigners [Stratti 2009].

The first relevant law dealing with the treatment of immigrants was very much in continuity with the prevailing view of policy-makers on Italian emigration, seen fundamentally as people leaving their country in search of work (\textit{Law n. 943 of 30 December 1986}). The law’s title is “Norms in the matter of placement and treatment of non-EU workers and against clandestine immigration”, being very suggestive of the fact that immigrants were predominantly seen and addressed as workers\textsuperscript{56}. Some of the most important achievements of this piece of legislation were: the implementation of the principles of the ILO International Convention n. 143/1975\textsuperscript{57} on the protection of immigrants on the labour market and the repression of trafficking; the introduction of equal treatment for foreign workers in relation to labour market and access to services; and

\textsuperscript{55} Article 3 of the Constitution reads: “Tutti i cittadini hanno pari dignità sociale e sono eguali davanti alla legge, senza distinzione di sesso, di razza, di lingua, di religione, di opinioni politiche, di condizioni personali e sociali.” (All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions.)


\textsuperscript{57} Italy ratified the 1977 ILO Convention in 1981.
the recognition of the claim of family reunifications. However, the Law also pursued the political goal of avoiding competition with the Italian workforce, by giving priority in employment to Italian and EU workers, and by thoroughly limiting and planning flows. Also, the cost of contributions for non EU workers was made 0.5 percent higher than for the national ones, in order to provide resources for repatriation in case of dismissal [Zincone 2005]. By doing so, the legislation also made foreign labour less appealing economically.

The second major piece of legislation dealing with immigrant flows is the Law n. 39/1990, also known as the “Martelli Law”\(^\text{58}\) by the name of the Vice President of the Council of Ministers at the time the Law came into force. This document represented a first attempt to regulate immigration in a systematic way, by introducing a quota system regulated by inter-ministerial decrees and based on a lower level of selectivity. Also, as far as asylum seekers are concerned, the geographical reserve is abolished, allowing prosecuted people from all over the world to seek asylum in Italy.

New types of permit of stay were introduced: a permit of stay for autonomous work, for street merchants, for tourism and for religious motives. Visas were introduced for many states which had a significant number of nationals intending to migrate towards Italy. Yet, what the law lacked in were adequate measures for the integration of immigrants, as it focussed only on the control of entry and the expulsion of undocumented migrants. The policies of expulsion created polemics and media’s attention made them visible revealing the inability of the administrative and political class to handle all the measures planned for by the Martelli law.

In 1998, the centre-left government issued Law no. 40/98 (the so-called “Turco-Napolitano law”) which was an attempt to regularise the position of non-EU immigrants and improve their integration. It introduced changes related to the regularisation of migrants, integration policies and control systems. The expulsion procedure was also modified – immigrants could be immediately expelled if caught trying to enter the country illegally or, in

alternative, could be kept in identification and expulsion centres. It also established procedures for the deportation of illegal immigrants who, after being arrested by the police, would have to wait for their case to be judged by a magistrate. If the magistrate issued an order of deportation, the illegal immigrant had two weeks to appeal against the decision. In many cases, immigrants reportedly often used this time to go underground\textsuperscript{59}.

Immigrants from third countries also benefited of some improvements brought by the Turco-Napolitano Law. The most important was the introduction of the \textit{carta di soggiorno}, an identification document having a longer validity than the usual permit of stay, which was released to long time residents\textsuperscript{60}. In addition to this, preferential quotas were introduces for those citizens coming from countries with which Italy had special agreements.

The Law had several critics and just as many supporters. Critics were discontent with what seemed to be the principal preoccupation of the Law, i.e. fighting illegal immigration. The aim itself was not considered to be wrong but the means used by the Italian state were accused of being in conflict with human rights legislation. The opening of detention centres\textsuperscript{61} for immigrants and the “fear of migrants” created with the help of the mass media did not bring the social consensus much need by the government. On the other hand, supporters argued that the expulsion system fostered cooperation between Italy and sending countries encouraging legal migration.

The Law acknowledged that the flow of illegal immigrants increased partially due to the inability of the controlling police forces, but also due to the rising demand for foreign workers determined by the ageing of the society. Consequently, more realistic procedures were introduces in order to regulate the flow of migrants. For the first time the number of

\textsuperscript{59} www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro

\textsuperscript{60} The \textit{carta di soggiorno} is granted to migrants who have legally lived in Italy for at least five years.

\textsuperscript{61} The Temporary Detention Centres (Centri di permanenza temporanea) were foreseen by article 12 of the Law no. 40 of 1998 and were meant to host foreigners who illegally entered Italy and who are waiting either for an expulsion order or for the documents attesting they can legally stay on the Italian territory. Many critics of these centres – among which Amnesty International, a non-governmental organization aiming to prevent abuses of human rights – have denounced the inhuman conditions migrants have to put up with while waiting for a decision on their status.
annual entrances was determined both for seasonal and long term workers. As a result, the employment of a foreign person can now be asked by any employer who can guarantee a certain level of living standards. This procedure also helped the employment of women as domestic workers. Still, the number of annual entrances established yearly with a Decree of the President of the Council was inferior to the real need of the market. This, coupled with the long and slow bureaucratic mechanism, resulted in a persistence of a high number of undocumented migrants.

During its successful campaign for the May 2001 general election, the centre-right coalition drew a lot of public attention on the perceived failings of the immigration legislation. Once it gained power, immigration became a priority issue that needed to be “solved”. The centre-right government thus issued a law which regulates immigration and a decree on the “regularisation” of undocumented immigrants already living in Italy.

Law No. 189 of 30 July 2002, known as the “Bossi-Fini law”, after the names of the two politicians who proposed it, amends the 1998 Turco-Napolitano law and introduces new clauses. Some of the most significant innovations brought by this law were: the highly-skilled workers had no limitation to enter Italy; each year, before 30 November, the Prime Minister will issue a decree laying down the number of non-EU workers who can be admitted into Italy in the following year; a specific immigration office called Sportello unico per l’immigrazione had to be set up in each province of Italy with the aim of overseeing the entire recruitment procedure for immigrant workers, as well as the procedures regarding family reunification; an amnesty allowing the regularisation of their status was provided for those irregular immigrants who had been working in Italy for at least three months.

However, many benefits brought by the previous law were either cancelled by the Bossi-Fini law or replaced by harsher conditions. Permits of stay issued for employment reasons lasted for a maximum of two years, even if the worker concerned had an open-ended working contract, the immigrant workers having to request a further temporary permit of stay once the old one expired. Also, when their permit of stay was issued, immigrant workers had their fingerprints taken. A permanent permit of stay would now be issued to non-EU citizens only after six years of regular residence in Italy and only if they were able
to prove they possessed the economic requisites to sustain themselves and their families. Undocumented immigrants once discovered were immediately deported and accompanied to Italy’s borders. Deportation could no longer be suspended even if the immigrant appealed to the courts. In addition, people suspected of being illegal immigrants would be taken to specific centres where they were held for a maximum of 60 days until the authorities were able to identity them. If they were found to be illegal immigrants, they would be ordered to leave the country within five days. If they fail to do so, they would be arrested for a period of six to twelve months or deported and accompanied to the borders. If illegal immigrants returned to Italy, they risked being arrested and tried by the courts.

However, a positive decision, as far as the regularisation of migrants was concerned, was taken soon after the approval of the Bossi-Fini law. On 6 September 2002 a decree-law was issued in order to regularise the status of two types of irregular immigrant workers: those employed as domestic workers and home-helpers (the so called “badanti” and “colf”); and dependent workers exercising other kinds of subordinate employment. Immigrants whose permits of stay had expired were also able to acquire a legal status as long as they could be legally employed.

In order to be regularised, domestic workers and home-helpers, as well as the families that wished to employ them, had to meet certain requirements. The monthly salary had to be of at least EUR 439, in addition to which employers would have to pay social security contributions to the National Institute for Social Insurance amounting to EUR 290 per month, plus other EUR 40 in expenses. Also, families could only hire one domestic worker belonging to this category (i.e., undocumented migrants that had to be regularised) and they had to produce a certification attesting the presence of old or disabled people in need of assistance.

Back to power once again in March 2008, the right-wing coalition reiterated its determination to tackle one of the central issues upon which the entire pre-election campaign was based: the claim that Italy was facing an exceptional “national security emergency”, largely caused by irregular immigrants [Merlino 2009]. As soon as it came to power, the new interior minister, Roberto Maroni, of the right-wing party Northern League
(Lega Nord) presented the so-called Pacchetto sicurezza (Security package)\(^{62}\) which was meant to “make citizens’ lives safer”. A complex set of legislative measures\(^{63}\) was adopted on 21 May 2008 in order to address specific categories of citizens, ranging from EU citizens to third-country nationals, and most particularly, the Roma minority [Clarks 2009].

The staying in Italy for undocumented migrants became more difficult as the new law was adopted with the aim, among others, of facilitating expulsions. Irregular immigration was thus transformed into a crime and the period of detention of irregular immigrants was extended. Moreover, the government declared a “state of emergency” in relation to the settlements of nomadic communities in the regions of Campania, Lazio and Lombardia. Actually talks about security and the supposedly high criminality registered among Romanian and Roma-ethnics had already featured strongly in the election campaign, partly as a result of the high-profile murder of an Italian woman by a Romanian citizen in Rome\(^{64}\). In order to ensure security, new and increased police-related powers were conferred to the prefects of the concerned regions. The prefects were also given the competence to conduct a census of Roma and Sinti communities. A lot of media-debate was provoked by the fact that in Naples, the census was implemented – at least during its initial phase – through a collection of fingerprints, including those of minors. This set of emergency measures has also managed to render legitimate a series of derogations and exceptions to the standard national and EU legislation. However, a certain tension arose

\(^{62}\) Decree-Law No. 92 of 23 May 2008 converted into Law No. 125/2008

\(^{63}\) The package of legislative measures proposed by Interior Minister Roberto Maroni includes:

- Law Decree (Decreto Legge) No. 92 on “Urgent measures in the field of public security”, which was amended and converted into law by Law No. 125 of 24 July 2008;


- a governmental draft law on “Provisions in the field of public security” (Act of Senate No. 733);

- a decree of the president of the Council of Ministers – declaring the state of emergency in relation to the settlements of nomadic communities in the regions of Campania, Latium and Lombardia.

\(^{64}\) Romulus Mailat, a Romanian citizen of Roma ethnicity was accused of having raped Giovanna Reggiani a 47-year-old on 30 October 2007. She later died in hospital while receiving medical care. Romulus Mailat was tried and condemned to life in prison.
when these exceptions were put in place in relation to the rule of law and fundamental rights as recognised in the EU legal system.

At the time this thesis was written the last legislative decree amending the “Unified Text of measures on immigration, and norms on the condition of foreign nationals”\(^{65}\) was Law No. 94 of 15 July 2009. The law has been in force since August 2009 and since that date contestations never ceased to arrive. Critics of the law and defenders of human rights have denounced cases in which illegal immigrants were “subject of xenophobic threats, abuse or physical and psychological violence from intolerant persons and organised groups of racists authorised by the law”\(^{66}\). These concerns spring from the fact that the law created a national framework for “citizens' vigilant groups” – the so-called “ronde”\(^{67}\) – and it provided general guidelines with respect to membership and responsibilities. Given the climate of hostility against migrants and Roma, and the connection constantly made by the government and media between "foreigners" and "criminality," contesters of this law feared that the authorization of vigilante groups across Italy would create a real risk of what would be state-sanctioned violence against migrants and Roma.

In addition to authorizing the creation of vigilante groups, the law makes undocumented entry and stay in Italy a criminal offense, punishable with a fine of up to EUR 10,000\(^{68}\). Moreover, under Italian law, all public officials are required to report criminal conduct. This has led to concerns that public health and education officials, as well as others, may


\(^{66}\) Source: Everyone Group, Italy: Law 94/2009 is a serious violation of Human Rights, October 17, 2009

\(^{67}\) Article 3, comma 40, of the Law 94/2009 reads: “I sindaci, previa intesa con il prefetto, possono avvalersi della collaborazione di associazioni tra cittadini non armati al fine di segnalare alle Forze di polizia dello Stato o locali eventi che possano arrecare danno alla sicurezza urbana ovvero situazioni di disagio sociale.”

\(^{68}\) Article 1, comma 16, letter a, reads “(…) Io straniero che fa ingresso ovvero si trattiene nel territorio dello Stato, in violazione delle disposizioni del presente testo unico (…) è punito con l’ammenda da 5.000 a 10.000 euro.(…)”
report undocumented migrants who seek medical attention or other services they are entitled to receive under Italian law irrespective of their status. Some extreme cases have been denounced in relation to this provision: immigrants without a residence permit refused access to pharmacological and health care, although in serious physical condition, fearing they would be reported by public officials and subsequently expelled from Italy or divided from their families. This fear is also justified by Article 331 of the Code of Criminal Procedure obliging Italian citizens employed by the public services to report illegal immigrants.

Other provisions of Law 94/2009 foresee that undocumented immigrants can now be kept in the Temporary Detention Centres (Centri di permanenza temporanea) for a maximum of 180 days.69 Also the law tries to avoid “convenience marriages” by establishing that in order to acquire the Italian citizenship the simple act of marriage is no longer sufficient. Instead, the foreign spouse will have to either legally reside in Italy for a period of at least two years after the date when the marriage took place or, in those cases when the foreigner concerned resides abroad, citizenship can be acquired only after three years from the date of matrimony.70

4.2 Female immigration in Italy and its legislative framework

4.2.1 The role of women as imagined by the Italian Constitution

Just as in other national realities, there has been a constant and unresolved tension between Italian women’s reproductive and productive roles. After World War II, the maternal role of Italian women was privileged above other roles [Andall 2000:23]. Recently though there have been trends showing a more equitable balance between Italian women’s various social identities and a steady growth of the productive identity. However, contrary to Italian women’s role in society, the identity of migrant women in Italy has historically privileged the labour identity above other social identities. For this reason the study of migrant women in Italy should start from analysing the nature of Italian legislative

69 Article 1, comma 22, letter l of the Law 94/2009
70 Article 1, comma 11 of the Law 94/2009
framework on migration and women, in order to be able to situate the experiences of migrant women in this gendered framework.

As far as the Constitutional provisions are regarded, it is interesting to note that in 1946, after the defeat of fascism, a Constituent Assembly formed of members from the dominant political parties – the Christian Democrat Party, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party – was elected with the purpose of establishing a new Italian Constitution. Therefore in different parts of the Constitution one can note the influence of Catholic and Marxist values. Above all, it was the Catholic values that had a strong influence on the role of women in society [Andall 2000:24]. There are several articles in the Italian Constitution which pertain specifically to women and in which this influence can be easily observed. Article 37 gives a clear statement of the way women’s reproductive and productive roles should be balanced:

“Working women are entitled to equal rights and, for comparable jobs, equal pay as men. Working conditions must allow women to fulfil their essential role in the family and ensure appropriate protection for the mother and child. (…)”

This paragraph basically reaffirms the importance of the women’s family role which should not be in conflict with women’s working conditions. It also clearly puts family functions which are defined as “essential” above any other roles women might assume in society.

Another part of the Constitution which contains references to women is Article 29 which talks about the legal and moral equality of spouses which is perceived as subordinated to the concept of family unity:

“The Republic recognises the rights of the family as a natural society founded on marriage. Marriage is based on the moral and legal equality of the spouses within the limits laid down by law to guarantee the unity of the family.”

71 Original text: “La donna lavoratrice ha gli stessi diritti e, a parità di lavoro, le stesse retribuzioni che spettano al lavoratore. Le condizioni di lavoro devono consentire l’adempimento della sua essenziale funzione familiare e assicurare alla madre e al bambino una speciale adeguata protezione.(…)”
Therefore, the in-depth analysis of those parts of the Constitution that concern women shows that the text is either ambiguous or tends to privilege women’s maternal role over other potential roles and social identities. This feature is actually considered to be representative of the enduring conflict regarding the social construction of women in post-war Italy [Bimbi 1993].

4.2.2 The status of domestic workers in Italy

The legal status of the domestic work sector in Italy has been for a long period a specific structural shortage. The Italian civil code categorised it as “atypical work”, meaning that it was the duty of the employing family to protect the worker. This obviously had as a prerequisite the existence of a harmonious relationship between employer and employee, and a protection guaranteed by the employing family to the domestic worker.

Contrary to nowadays main concerns when it comes to regulating this sector, the first piece of Italian legislation addressing domestic work in the fascist period was concerned not with the protection of domestic workers, but with the harm they could cause to the employing family. Of course, before drawing any conclusion, we have to consider the fact that the state of the domestic work sector in Italy at that time looked quite different from the current one. Most of the work force was provided locally and immigration was at very low levels. Given this context, Law n. 1239, introduced in June 1939, required domestic workers to acquire a health card in order to prevent them from infecting the families they worked for with contagious diseases.

Almost fifteen years later though, a new piece of legislation, Law n. 940, introduced in December 1953, concerned for the first time the working conditions of domestic workers. What it provided for was the right to the thirteenth month addition wage to the annual earnings of this group of workers.

Original text: “La Repubblica riconosce i diritti della famiglia come società naturale fondata sul matrimonio. Il matrimonio è ordinato sull’eguaglianza morale e giuridica dei coniugi, con i limiti stabiliti dalla legge a garanzia dell’unità familiare.”
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The first major piece of legislation introduced with the specific purpose of protecting the domestic service sector was Law n. 339 of 2 April 1958 which laid down detailed provisions concerning the drawing up of employment contracts. Reciprocal duties were outlined for both employees and employers. It regulated a number of rights, for instance concerning holidays, the length of rest periods during the day and night – that is a suitable rest period during the day and no less than eight consecutive hours of rest at night –, a thirteenth month's pay, sickness, etc. However, a critical aspect of domestic work was not addressed: no limits were imposed to the length of the working day, leaving domestic workers exposed to the possibility of a 16 hour day.

4.2.3 Shaping the domestic work sector in Italy: the role of the ACLI-COLF

ACLI (Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani – Christian Associations of Italian Workers, in English) is a national association protecting workers in Italy. A subgroup of the ACLI is the ACLI-COLF which represents the domestic work sector in Italy. Its foundation and existence is strongly related to the existence of other two “subcultures” which were highly politicized in post-war Italy: Catholicism and Communism [Andall 2000]. At its foundation, its main aim was to promote Christian values that could somehow be applied at the workplace. For example the Catholic social teaching based on conciliation of capital and labour was promoted. The organisation was strongly related to the ecclesiastical hierarchy and it initially acted as a representative of the Catholic workforce.

In 1945 the internal women’s committee proposed the setting up of Gruppi Acli Domestiche which later, in the 1960s, became ACLI-COLF. Its initial aim was to protect women who worked outside the home, while, at the same time, safeguarding the institution


74 Article 8 of the Law n. 339 of 2 April 1958 only provides that: “Il lavoratore ha diritto ad un conveniente riposo durante il giorno e a non meno di 8 ore consecutive di riposo notturno. In caso di necessarie prestazioni notturne spetta un adeguato riposo compensativo durante il giorno.”
of the family. At the beginning the association was highly centred on religion and morality and since, in the early post-war period, it was the only national body to occupy itself specifically with domestic workers, the result was that the domestic work sector came to be highly dominated by the Catholic doctrine pertaining to the role of the family. However, as I will further explain, some paradoxical situations occurred with respect to the family role.

First of all, domestic work was perceived as different from other types of work precisely for the role it performed in relation to the family. The role of women was perceived to be in tight relationship with the home and family. Thus the family was considered to be the ideal place of work for a woman. However, some contradictions appeared later and they are very visible in the present time, as many female domestic workers, while attending for other families, inevitably neglected their own. Of course this problem was not that poignant in post-war Italy because domestic workers were either local women or women migrating internally, so they were still able to live close to their own families and, in case of need, provide care to their children and relatives.

Promoters of this perception of domestic work emphasized that “the female domestic worker was not selling her labour; rather, she was collaborating with a family and thus facilitating the implementation of God’s plan” [Crippa 1961; Andall 2000]. Consequently, in 1964, a new appellation for domestic workers was coined, i.e. “family collaborator” or COLF, in its abbreviated form. This was meant to reflect more accurately the contribution domestic workers brought to families and the professional side of this sector.

The nowadays ACLI COLF is dealing with the protection and safeguard of the social and professional interests of all domestic workers. The main goal of the association is to promote a different future for this category, a future in which this kind of work will be correctly valued and adequately recognized and in which domestic workers will be protected by a national network of territorial services, thus changing domestic work and family assistants from private issue to a kind of social labour. At the moment the association is present in 40 Italian provinces and numbers 6,000 registered domestic workers.\footnote{Source: www.patronato.acli.it}
4.3 Evolution of the domestic work sector in Italy

For a long time domestic work had been associated with the concept of modernity. In the 19th century, in many Western European Countries, this sector was perceived as intrinsically modernizing as it facilitated urban acculturation and it fostered employment mobility. The use of domestic workers also reflected the growth of a new middle class\(^{76}\). A century later, though, domestic work was no longer considered to be in line with modernity in countries such as Britain and France. Modern societies were rather characterized by free labour, whereas domestic work was seen as a feature of the pre-industrial world. Meanwhile, as I will further explain, the evolution of this sector took a different turn in the Italian society. The reasons for which this happened are particularly useful for understanding the way this sector evolved and the historic concepts that have led to the present state of things.

4.3.1 Domestic work in post-war Italy

In post-war Italy the domestic work sector was at first reserved almost exclusively to Italian workers and it was mainly achieved through the classic process of internal migration. From the beginning of the century and up until 1970s, domestic work represented the principal employment sector for Italian women within the tertiary sector. Contrary to other European countries, the evolution of this sector in Italy had a different trajectory and it was largely influenced by the fascist perspectives and by a slower industrial growth [Andall 2000]. For example in France and Britain, WWI triggered the decline of the domestic work sector. This was due mainly to the fact that middle-class wealth had decreased as a result of the war and, at the same time, alternative employment sectors for women developed especially in the industrial sector which was growing rapidly also due to the after-war needs of reconstruction. While in the rest of the Western European countries, live-in domestic work was becoming obsolete, Italian women

\(^{76}\) By the middle of the 19th century about three-quarters of the middle-class families had at least one live-in servant [Davidoff and Hall 1987; Andall 2000]
continued to be employed as domestic workers for a longer period. It was only in the late 1960s that this sector – although continuing to grow and thus still in need of labour force – became less attractive for Italian women.

Many authors emphasise the difference between the “Mediterranean model” of immigration and the Northern European one [Campani 2007]. They explain that the transition of Italy and of other Mediterranean countries, from emigration to immigration, did not follow the scheme of post-colonial or temporary migrations that characterized the North of Europe. In order to point out the economic dynamics which triggered immigration in a country where the unemployment rates were very high, the female presence – concentrated in domestic work – is often used as an example. The economic assimilation of the new arrivals actually took place within “niches” of the labour market, i.e. sectors that were neglected by Italians, such as services to the person, agriculture, fishing and construction. Therefore, in the Mediterranean model, migration was not managed with the help of laws or policies; rather it took place in a spontaneous manner and in an irregular form, as a result of an existing demand within some niche sectors of the informal economy.

Other factors also contributed to the rise of the domestic work sector in Italy, while in the rest of Europe it was declining. Firstly, although many areas in Italy attested new forms of family behaviour, other regions were more reluctant to family modernization, thus the participation of the Italian men in the household work has remained quite low [Trifiletti 1995]. Secondly, we have to consider the growing elderly profile of Italian citizens, an aspect which is going to continue growing. More importantly, in Italy, the responsibility for the care of the elderly has been transferred to extended family members instead of being ensured by the welfare system. Consequently, family members are very likely to employ live-in carers who would help them with this task. Furthermore, economic factors connected to the existence of areas of poverty in Italy persisted even in the post-war era. As a consequence, the supply of national domestic work specifically coming from these poor areas of Italy was to be found until the late 1960s.

In the late 1960s domestic workers were not only substituting mothers that were employed outside the home, but they were also working for families with a high number of children.
in which the mother was more likely to be a housewife. From a survey conducted in 1967 by ACLI-COLF\textsuperscript{77} resulted that, in 64 per cent of the families that employed domestic workers, the wives and mothers were not employed outside the home. The interpretation of this data can be that, at that stage of the evolution of the domestic work sector, a high percentage of the families requiring domestic help, were not doing so out of necessity, but for reasons connected to social status. The data gathered also revealed the conditions domestic workers had to put up with: most of them worked to at least 10 hours a day, many were not allowed a daily rest period and had to perform a great variety of tasks depending on the family’s needs. However, there was one positive side: about 84 per cent of the interviewees were legally employed.

\textbf{4.3.2 The 1970s and 1980s: the arrival of foreign domestic workers}

In the 1970s, Italian domestic workers, who had until then ensured the necessary labour-force needed for the care of most of the Italian families, started refusing job offers in this sector. Their behaviour was triggered by the fact that other, more appealing, employment opportunities had come up. In a 1976 article De Paz alluded to a “servant crisis” where no Italian women were available for domestic work and families had to register on waiting lists in order to be able to employ a foreign domestic worker. However, the reason for the sudden increase of the demand for foreign workers was not connected exclusively to the absence of the local offer. Initially, Italian women began hiring female migrant workers also because they were more convenient financially. Although it was a given fact that foreign workers should enjoy the same rights and work conditions as their Italian colleagues, it was also true that many of them were employed illegally thus conferring more powers to employers who paid lower wages and established harsher schedules and work conditions for immigrants. Andall [2000: 115] argues that the preference for foreign domestic workers might have been connected also to the general perception that their primary function was intrinsically labour-related. While Italian women available to perform domestic work had a more difficult family and personal situation, foreign workers were expected to have less problems of this kind. Obviously the supposition was often proved to be wrong as many migrant women happened to be away from their families, by

\textsuperscript{77} ACLI-COLF \textit{Indagine statistica sul lavoro domestico}, Florence, April 1967
their own in a foreign country, and having to deal with so many new cultural and social elements. However, in the absence of a better alternative, they were also ready to work in worse conditions and for lower wages.

Moreover, the domestic work sector was considered to be poorly perceived by society.\textsuperscript{78} Italian workers tried to avoid the difficult conditions of live-in work and re-oriented towards factory work and the production of goods in the informal economy. And this in spite of the efforts made by the ACLI-COLF to convince domestic workers that their work was different from other types of work and intrinsically better thank to its role of caring for the family described as a kind of primordial role assigned to women. As factory workers, women were treated with more respect and had their rights protected\textsuperscript{79}.

The historical overview of migration flows in Italy shows that women have always played an important role in the evolution of this phenomenon. In addition, until the 1990s, they were perceived as a less problematic group than men\textsuperscript{80}. Evidence of the significance of women’s migration at that time can also be found in the 1978 Censis study of foreign workers in Italy [Andall 2000]. The study followed the migratory perceptions of that time. Thus, the main actors of immigration in Italy were considered to be men. Consequently men were divided by nationality and estimates of the number of foreign men in Italy were assigned to each nationality. Women, on the other hand, were all gathered under the category of COLF and their number was estimated at approximately 70,000-100,000. They were said to come from different cultural backgrounds: Cape Verde, Mauritius, Seychelles, Eritrea, The Philippines, Somalia, etc. This apparently insignificant detail comes to indicate that, from a very early stage, the social identity of migrant women was strongly related to an exclusive labour function, i.e. domestic work.

The nationalities indicated in the abovementioned study where soon to be replaced by other sending-countries. As worldwide migration movements accelerated and diversified in terms of incoming nationalities, the same phenomenon took place in Italy. Migrants

\textsuperscript{78} Source: results of a 1974 ACLI survey
\textsuperscript{79} Source: findings of a 1989 ACLI survey
\textsuperscript{80} This trend started changing direction in the 1990s as East European and African prostitution rose in those years.
coming from Yugoslavia and Iran dominated the immigration scene at the beginning of the 1980s. However, the demand for foreign domestic work remained a feature of the labour market and further increased. Furthermore, domestic work represented a relatively stable niche, in respect to the precarious forms of employment available for men – agriculture, fishing and construction. Thus the presence of flows of women that came alone, to be full time domestic servants in homes, constitute one feature of immigration towards Italy and, more in general, an element of the “Mediterranean model” [Campani 2007]. Moreover, work demand dynamics triggered an overlap between gender and ethnic separation: some national groups were composed almost entirely by women, as those from Cape Verde or the Philippines, while others national groups, as those from Senegal or Morocco, were made up mainly by men\textsuperscript{81}.

By the end of the 1980s, it was estimated that in major cities 50 per cent of the migrant workers were employed in the domestic services sector [Melotti 1990]. One has to consider also that the growth of immigration flows in the 1970s and 1980s determined a large-scale closure of legal entry points, making it almost impossible for foreigners to obtain a residency permit. Yet, the demand for local and foreign labour was increasing and foreign workers – many of whom searching for employment in the domestic work sector – often entered the country with a tourist visa and then stayed on illegally [Andall 2000; Parrenas 2001: 39–48].

### 4.3.3 The current state of things

In present day Italy the domestic work sector has become a significant part of the economy. Ever since the 1970s it has registered a substantial rise and specific caregivers’ figures developed along this process: the baby-sitter (caring for small children); the family assistant or badante (referring normally to those caring for non self-sufficient people such as the elderly, disabled or any kind of person who normally is unable to live at his/her home without assistance); and the family collaborator or COLF (mainly helping the family with domestic work such as cleaning, cooking, shopping, etc). The rise of this sector was

\textsuperscript{81} A more balanced link between men and women within each ethnic group will be achieved only after 1990, that is, after the introduction of the right to family reunion.
supported by a plurality of factors such as: the growth of women participation to the labour market; the persistence of traditional models of domestic work task-sharing among genders; the emphasis placed by the Italian welfare system on money transfers rather than on services supply; and the development of the process of internationalization of the labour market.

The present phenomenon of work migration and the features of the nowadays domestic work sector are quite different from the characteristics of domestic work in the past, although some things have remained partly unchanged. First of all, as I explained before, the actors are no longer the same: caregivers, as well as care receivers, belong now to completely different categories. The offer usually comes from migrant workers – women, in most of the cases – who do not necessarily belong to a low social group in their countries of origin. The demand, on the other hand, comes from various families representing different social statuses, not only the privileged, wealthy, classes. As a result, the requirements, in terms of tasks to be performed by domestic workers, have also changed with the diversification of care receivers.

The modalities of entering this sector of the labour marked have also changed, mainly due to the arrival of migrant women requiring different procedures in order to be legally employed and also due the new needs of the Italian families. Work relationships between employers and employees have also changed. The gap between the educational and social statuses of these two categories is not that great anymore; domestic workers and their employers are sometimes separated only by a different nationality.

In many Italian homes where elder people are present, next to the family female figures – such as the mother, the wife, the daughter – another one has been added up recently – the live-in female migrant. Nowadays this particular figure is preferred to hospitalization or to the early recovery of elder or non self-sufficient persons in hospices or nursing homes. Traditionally elder care had been the responsibility of family members and was provided within the extended family home. This feature of traditional families was gradually replaced in modern societies by assistance care provided by state or charitable institutions. The reasons for this change include greater life expectancy of elderly people, the decreasing family size, the geographical dispersion of families, and the tendency for women to be educated and work outside the home. All this reasons are also features of the
Italian modern society. However, as I pointed out earlier, the traditional family structure lived on in Italy either because families wanted to maintain the family dimension by not excluding those members who needed assistance, or because this was also a way of improving the quality of life for those who needed care and, at the same time, reducing institutionalizations and their costs [Amadei 2005].

All these transformations mirror the growing number of migration projects, migrants’ new aspirations, their legal status, the different conditions and ways of organizing domestic work, as well as the different working cultures. These factors are of great importance as only by understanding them one can be able to correctly draw up new policies meant to programme migration flows and labour-work formation.

4.3.4 Migrants’ integration and domestic work: a difficult task

As I pointed out in the fist chapter of this thesis, the relation between gender and migration was, until recently, a seriously neglected area amongst both academic researchers and policy-makers. Migration was not studied in relation to gender until the 1970s, so few data specifically regarding female migration were available before this moment. Traditional migration theories were largely gender-blind, using models of migration based almost exclusively on the experiences of men – who were imagined as the sphere of production and waged labour – and very little on the experiences of women – who were perceived as the sphere of reproduction and domestic labour 82.

Italian statistics and studies on female migration represent no exception to this rule. Recent statistics available show that, overall, the number of immigrant women is more or less the same as that of immigrant men in Italy 83. But this fact does not mean that Italy has given equal attention to women’s issues. Both in the workplace and the realm of social services women appear disadvantaged compared to men. Even the quota system for admission of

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83 See Annex 1, Table 5 “Foreign citizens in Italy. Resident population by sex and citizenship on 31 December 2008”
foreign workers, which is employer-driven, favours businesses which recruit mostly men [Chaloff 2005a]. Also, there are no attempts to recruit women for training in non-traditional sectors [Chaloff 2005b].

As far as integration opportunities for female migrant workers in Italy are concerned, the possibilities do not look too bright. The main area of women’s employment is represented by the domestic work sector and I argue that this is, unfortunately, the least likely to lead to long-term social integration. I will further describe three of the main reasons which I consider responsible for triggering the segregation of women working in this field.

Firstly, employment in the domestic work sector is still largely found through informal networks of friends and family. Even if recently local employment services and associations have intervened trying to help surface the work performed on the informal market, still an impressive percentage of the domestic work is undocumented. A survey performed by Censis in July 2009 has shown that the estimated number of “family assistants” in 2008 has reached almost 1,5 million, registering a 37 per cent growth compared to the same data in 2001. Furthermore the survey revealed that close to 2,5 million Italian families, representing 10.5 per cent of the Italian families, benefit from the assistance of such a caregiver. More than 70 per cent of these domestic workers are immigrants which. That is to say almost one million foreign domestic workers. These data are not in line with the number of domestic workers for which employers regularly paid contributions to the INPS (the Italian National Social Security Institute) at the end of 2008 – they numbered only about 600.000 domestic worker tax-payers. The organization ACLI-COLF, at its XVII national assembly held in Rome starting on May 22nd, 2009, has also emphasized that close to 60 per cent of foreign domestic workers declare that they perform their work entirely or partly without a working contract\(^8\). It is interesting to note that in Italy the so-called “black” work is not the only problem that the authorities supposedly try bring to light. A secondary phenomenon of undeclared work is ongoing, that is the “grey” work – meaning that domestic workers tend to declare less hours of work in order for their employers to pay fewer contributions and for them to be able to keep their jobs.

\(^8\) This data was obtained by adding the number of those who cannot have a working contract because they do not legally reside in Italy to those documented migrants that perform at least one informal activity.
Therefore, the high number of undocumented migrants testifies the fact that the main mean used for finding work is still the word-of-mouth technique, that is, women friends’ network which works as a place of information exchange and mediation with the Italian families [Campani 2007]. While it is true that church parishes and ethnic networks are essential for employment, they have also fostered segregation. One way of addressing the lack of integration of migrant women is by helping them to increase their social capital, through associations and contact with native women. Yet, Chaloff [2005b] argues that few associations claiming real representation have appeared, notwithstanding a strong demand from Italian institutions. The blame is to be put on the heterogeneous nature of the immigrant population and on the pre-existence of representative structures belonging to privileged Italian associations (church, trade unions, third sector).

Secondly, according to the 2009 Cenis survey, about 35 per cent of the foreign family assistants are live-in workers. This means that they share the same house with their employers, receiving room and board as part of their salaries. Contrary to Italian domestic workers, many foreign women prefer this kind of accommodation as it allows them to earn more money and do not have to spend anything for the usual current expenses. However, this kind of live-in work, with its long hours and cohabitation with the employer, makes migrant women less visible and slows down any form of social integration, either with the local community or with fellow immigrants. Live-in domestic workers often see their whole life evolve around the few members of the family they take care of. They perform all kind of tasks such as: cleaning, cooking, shopping, taking care of the elderly, assisting non self-sufficient persons and even offering specific paramedical care when needed. More than a third of family assistants declare that they also have to keep the persons they assist company, by simply listening to them, chatting or accompanying them for outside activities. This comes to confirm the fact that their tasks often cross the professional dimension and enter the sphere of the personal micro-welfare.

What I am trying to suggest is not that these activities are intrinsically negative. The truth is that they often help migrant women better integrate in and communicate with the family or members of the family they came to assist. My suggestion is, however, that all these

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activities, while keeping domestic workers in close touch with their employers and making them able to better respond to their employers’ needs, also alienates them from the outside reality, not allowing them to encounter new Italians or even learn customs or traditions others than those belonging to the people they assist.

Thirdly, as many studies have revealed, a further set of factors influence the feeling of “non-belonging” and constant “suffering” among female domestic workers. A research conducted by the Fondazione Andolfi in 2003 among the longest-standing groups of domestic workers revealed that many of these women were overqualified for the work they were performing. Furthermore 41.6 per cent were married and many of them came alone to Italy leaving their husbands, relatives and sometimes small children in their country of origin. One in four women was “suffering” in Italy and 17.4 per cent perceived their job as “humiliating”. In spite of their often high qualifications, the “badanti”, as well as the “colf”, rarely manage to escape domestic work segregation [Campani 2007].

The post-feminist paradigm was “successfully” applied to the Italian case. This means that the emancipation of middle-class Italian women was done at the cost of the freedom of their maids and care workers. In fact, as I often emphasised in my research, in the past, care of the elderly was the task of daughters and daughters-in-law, who are no longer willing to sacrifice themselves for parents and in-laws of increasing longevity. Given the new aspirations of emancipated Italian women, the domestic workers’ role, in fact, is to allow their employer to reconcile family and work. The latter must – at least temporarily – give up their own personal and family ambitions. Domestic work – at least in its live-in form – is not compatible with maintaining a family nearby, forcing immigrant women to either renounce motherhood or leave their children with husbands and relatives in their home country. Piperno [2007] argues that the “care gain” registered by Italian families is balanced by a “care drain” which affects the families of migrant caregivers. Indeed, women are generally the principal caregivers within their families and their departure deprives the neediest of care – i.e., children and elder parents. For instance, in Romania – the first care-provider country for Italian families – this phenomenon has received a lot of media attention following several suicides of children, normally aged 10-14 years old, who were left in the care of their grandparents and strongly felt the absence of their mothers’
In spite migrant domestic workers being forced to attend to families other than their one, some authors argue that, in some cases, the whole work abroad experience can help emancipate even domestic workers. This opinion is based on the fact that one part of “badanti” emigrates with a migratory project in mind which is limited in time. The project usually involves: earning a certain amount of money and then going back, and using the money for various purposes: investments, paying the children’s studies, paying debts, buying properties etc. Even if the work in itself does not allow domestic workers to emancipate, the results obtained at the end, i.e., the achievement of the migratory project, might represent an opportunity for personal growth. Campani [2007] uses as an example the Philippine women, who were gaining a guiding role in their families thanks to the money they earned in Italy. There is also a second path of migration followed by migrant women: there are those who, on the contrary, develop some integration strategies in Italy, manage to communicate better with the Italian community and can even end up meeting, engaging or marrying Italian men. In this case, they learn the Italian language more quickly with the help of Italian new acquired friends/relations and they tend to loose some features of their old identity, while, at the same time, acquiring new values.

Lastly, in strong relation to the condition of migrant women as described above, I would mention a key-concept which has been developed by Italian scholars: “integrazione subalterna” or “subordinated integration”. This concept was theorized by Ambrosini, Lodigiani and Zanfrini [1995] and was initially elaborated from empirical evidence from groups of domestic workers. Afterwards the notion was further developed as a specific form of interaction between Italian society and immigrants. The authors describe very accurately the isolation experienced by migrant domestic workers in Italy:

“These groups are actors in a pacific, effective and functional integration, in a specific sector of the labour market, remaining basically at the margin of the receiving society, forming isolated and auto-referential communities. A situation that can be explained more

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86 In response to this unprecedented phenomenon the Romanian Association “Alternative Sociale” published a “Guide for parents who went abroad for work” containing advice on how to prepare children for their parents’ leave and how to overcome the negative consequences of this departure [Luca, 2009]
by the type of work than by culture of origin, which makes these immigrants external to an experience of participation in a work community, and limits the relationship with the Italian society to the family by whom they work, and eventually, religious institutions (...)."\(^{87}\)

A research performed by Chiappelli and Cabral [2006] among representatives of public institutions, associations, NGOs and trade unions revealed that, indeed, migrant women working in the domestic/care sector in Italy experience deteriorated living/working conditions and social exclusion. Moreover, associations point out that, in most cases, these women choose to “suffer in silence”. A further lack of trust in rights recognition is perceived, as migrant women do not denounce exploitation and episodes of violence:

“(…) not because they do not believe justice can be done unto them, or because they do not trust legal institutions, but because they do not believe their rights are recognized in Italy. They are conscious that the legitimacy of rights is thoroughly negotiated (with the institutions), and never ‘given’ (…)”

\(^{87}\) [Zanfrini 1998:150; Chiappelli and Cabral 2006:16]
Chapter 5
An overview of Italian-Romanian migration paths in recent history

Last century’s history shows that migration flows between Romania and Italy have not always looked the way they do today. My intention is to make a brief overview of the migration flows between these two countries starting from the late 19th century. As I will further explain, contrary to the nowadays situation, in the late 1870s Italians were the ones to emigrate towards Romania. I find these aspects of Romanian-Italian relations to be very interesting as both migration flows – early 20th century Italian migration towards Romania and late 20th century Romanian migration towards Italy – have some common features and are, in my opinion, very important as the former flow has to some extent laid the basis for the latter. Besides exposing the factors that bring together the two migration flows, I will also try to identify possible factors that differentiate them. I will further consider the gender dimension of these two migration flows and research the case of Romanian female domestic workers migrating in Italy.

5.1 Romania: destination country for Italian emigrants

Italian emigration towards Eastern Europe has not risen that much interest compared to the more notorious migrations towards the Americas, Australia and Western Europe. Therefore, in spite of the many accounts of cases of Italian emigration towards Eastern Europe in the 19th century, there is a general dearth of empirical and research data. Romania’s case represents no exception. Still, a lot of case studies usually regarding specific communities of Italians settling in determinate area of Romania have been made by researchers of Romanian and/or Italian origin.
Italian migration flows in Romania can be divided into two migration waves very different from one another. The first one took place in the late 19th century – to be more accurate in the late 1870s, about a decade after the formation of the Romanian state and soon after the region of Dobruja was attached to Romania. This first wave lasted until WWII, after which the number of ethnic-Italians living in Romania decreased considerably. The second wave took place in the late 1990s, after the fall of Communism and the rise of capitalism with its free markets and the free movement of goods, services, capitals and persons.

5.1.1 Old-date Italian immigrants in Romania: the case of Italian commuters in Dobruja

All accounts refer to workers arriving in Romania from the North-Eastern Italian regions of Friuli and Veneto starting from the late 19th century. At the beginning migration was mainly temporary or seasonal, but during the 1878-1914 period thousands of Italian families have settled in different regions of Romania [Torre 2007].

Communities of Italians have reportedly settled in the Northern part of Dobruja (Romanian: Dobrogea), in the towns of Iași, Pitești, Tulcea, Fălticeni etc. A representative case is that of Italians from Friuli and Veneto who arrived after 1878 in the Romanian region of Dobruja. The year 1878 is used as a reference date because it what then that the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 ended with the decision of giving the Northern part of Dobruja to Romania, while the Southern part was given to Bulgaria. I find this case to be particularly interesting as migration in this newly acquired territory was to a certain extent wanted and gladly accepted by Romanian authorities.

The Dobruja, a territory situated in South-East Romania, confined by the Black Sea to the East and the Danube to its South, was populated by Turks and Tatars, many of whom were evacuated to Bulgaria and Turkey during the war. After 1878, the Romanian government encouraged Romanians from other regions to settle in Dobruja and even accepted the return of some Muslim population displaced by the war.
The process of colonization of this border region of Romania represents a key-moment in the evolution of migration flows towards Romania and, most importantly, it triggered the arrival of the first Italian immigrants. The new arrivals were given the possibility to work and to become owners of a piece of land. The Italians who chose to migrate to this area were coming from Veneto and Friuli – at that time two of the poorest regions of Italy. Torre [2007] argues that Italian migration to Romania was not driven only by economic circumstances but it was also instrumental in the process of "Romanianization" of Dobruja and its integration into Romanian national fabric. Two reasons determined Romanian authorities’ decision to encourage the arrival of Italians in Dobruja. Firstly, they were perceived as direct descendants of the Roman Empire and were thus contributing to the perpetuation of Latinity in an area which had for long been at the crossroads of many different cultures and languages. Romanian leaders felt threatened by the fact that this part of the country in particular was surrounded by Slavic populations and felt the urgent need to Romanianize the newly attached territory. Secondly, Italians were also perceived as being skilled and experienced workers who, in addition to their expertise and work dedication, were also coming from a newly formed State that did not pose any political threats [Torre 2007].

Many of the Italians who moved to Romania in this period were employed in the construction sector or as workers in the Comarnic and Teșila quarries, as tree feller in the area of Hațeg, or as farmers. Between the late 19th century and WWII about 130,000 Italians moved to Romania. They arrived in more waves and usually came on a temporary basis: many of these workers were called “rondini” (“golondrinas” in Friulian, or “barn swallows” in English) because they used to travel back and forth between Romania and Italy in order to take advantage of the work opportunities in Romania and also be able to maintain ties with their families and take care of their land in Italy [Caritas italiana 2008]. Communities of Italians were formed in towns such as Craiova – in the South-West of Romania – Bucharest, Sinaia and Iași. However, many people moved afterwards to the Dobruja region, and settled in the villages of Cataloi, Greci, Măcin, Turcoaia and in the towns of Galați, Constanța, Brăila. In Dobruja most Italians worked in the granite quarries.

Furthermore, the territory of today's Romania has been part of the Italians’ (especially Genoese and Venetians) trade routes on the Danube since at least the 13th century. They founded several ports on the Danube, including Vicina (near Isaccea), Sfântu Gheorghe, San Giorgio (Giurgiu) and Calafat.
of the Măcin Mountains, while some became farmers [Mihalcea 2005]. In 1880, when most of the population from the North-eastern parts of Italy decided to move towards the East due to famine and epidemics, there was a great demand for carpenters, builders, blacksmiths and other craftsmen among Romanian landowners [Berra 2008].

Quite a few surveys have focussed lately on the Italian community that settled in Greci, a village not far from the port-town Tulcea, on the banks of the Danube River. The village is spread on a surface of about 490 hectares and it lays at the base of the Măcin mountains whose quarries abound in granite and limestone. The mountain landscape around Greci is similar to the Italian region of Friuli Venezia Giulia [Berra 2008], thus probably Italians propensity to settle in this regions. At the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century the Greci village became an important economic centre of the region, thanks to its mineral resources and also to the thousands of acres of its fertile land. The Italians who settled in this area became famous for their skills in stone crafting. The demand for granite kept growing due to the infrastructure constructions that were undergoing in Dobruja and this fact generated a high number of employment opportunities (Toader, 2003). Other Italian families followed in the next couple of decades, coming from Campania and, after 1945, from Dalmatia.

Apparently at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century 111 Italians lived in Greci. Torre, who made an extensive research on the Italian community of Greci, points out that there were 40 families living in this village in 1972 – of which about 20 were descending from Belluno, Veneto and 15 from Friuli, while the remaining came from other parts of Italy. According to the 1992 census only 94 Italians seem to have been left in Greci, but Torre explains that there were actually about 70 families still living there, including mixed-marriages.

According to statistics, in 1899 there were 1,391 Italians living in Dobruja – representing approximately 15 per cent of the total number of Italians living in Romania, while in 1928 the number rose to 1,993, representing a fifth of the Italian citizens living in Romania [Petre 2003]. A census of Italian citizens living abroad presented the following data:
Chapter 5: An overview of Italian-Romanian migration paths in recent history

Figure 1. Number of Italians who settled in Romania according to census data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>1,762</td>
<td>5,300</td>
<td>8,841</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>12,246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: “Censimento degli italiani all’estero alla metà dell’anno 1927”, Rome, 1928 [Torre 2007]

According to historic research, between the late 19th century and WWII, 130,000 Italians migrated towards Romania either on a temporary or permanent basis. During this time their labour and skills were used in the process of industrialization of the country. Some of the most important achievements are the participation at the construction of Romanian railroads\(^89\) and of the Cernavodă railway bridge, over the Danube, which at the time of its building (1890-1895) was the longest in Europe\(^90\).

However, many of them returned to Italy after 1945 [Scagno 2008, Caritas italiana 2008]. At the end of WWII only 8,000 Italians were left. As a matter of fact, already in the 1930s, the economic crises which had reached Romania determined many Italians to go back to Italy where Mussolini had promised them land ownership in Lazio. The ones that, for various reasons, decided to remain had to put up with the harsh communist regime which came to power in 1948\(^91\). Once again many Italians returned home as a consequence of the difficult conditions and persecution of all citizens suspected of being supporters of the fascist regime.

As far as bureaucratic formalities were concerned, we learn from communications of that time that although a high number of Italian migrants tried to enter the country without a passport, the law was very clear and foresaw requirements that were – more or less – similar to the current documents requested by Italian authorities from migrants who wish

\(^89\) In 1945, 23 of the 116 engineers working for the Romanian railway company were Italian [Caritas italiana 2008]

\(^90\) 2000 Italian workers were employed for the construction of the Cernavodă bridge [Caritas italiana 2008]

\(^91\) Beside having many rights taken away by the communist regime, Italians who decided to stay in Romania after 1948 were also forced to give up their Italian citizenship
to enter Italy. Thus, from the news bulletin of the Ministry of foreign affairs dated March 1901 and which contained news regarding Italian emigration, we learn that:

“(...) groups of Italians cannot enter Romania if they do not have an employment which is secured throughout a contract and if the one who employed them did not ask and obtain in advance from this Ministry the permit to make them come, and that entrance in Romania is furthermore forbid to those who do not possess a regular passport authenticated by a Romanian consul.”

5.1.2 Integration process in the newly created “community”

The way the integration process evolved in the case of the Italian immigrant workers in Romania is not entirely similar to the case of Romanians who later moved to Italy. Even though in both cases the main push factor was economically related, the environment in the receiving country was quite different. In the case of Italians in Romania, integration and acceptance of new arrivals was a “natural” process. This was achieved thanks to the fact that Romania was a newly created state which needed to reaffirm and consolidate the identity of its citizens. And which better way to do this than by creating a feeling of belonging to a community? As Anderson [1991] explains, there are many ways in which a community can be created in the collective imaginary. The most effective one is throughout the press or any kind of widely-spread belief able to unite people who at a first glance have nothing in common.

One of the most important contexts of ethnicity creation is that of the State formation [Torre 2007]. Brubaker and Copper [2000] state that “the modern state has been one of the most important agents of identification and categorization” as it is capable of producing myths which help homogenize the population and create common notions of culture,
authenticity and tradition. The arrival of Italian migrants in Romania occurred at the same
time with the process of formation of the Romanian state. In this context, the identity of
Italians was strategically used in order to create a notion of commonness and similarity
with the Romanian population. Particularly the Latin roots of the two peoples were made
visible and authorities insisted on common origin and history. All this was done in order to
create the idea of a natural continuity between the two ethnic groups which would
facilitate their life together. The idea of Romanians and Italians having common origins is
still very much present in current public rhetoric and Romanian media, thus consolidating
the idea of Italians perceived as descending from the “land of our ancestors” [Petre, 1999].
Even if this myth was – to some extent – artificially created, it certainly had a positive
effect on the daily life of the villages and towns in which Italians migrated, leading to a
more rapid and peaceful integration.

Another interesting aspect in the evolution of the Italian community in Romania regards
the use of language. Italians perfectly integrated in the Romanian landscape while
maintaining their language, traditions and identity. Nowadays the remaining Italian
families are for the most the result of mixed marriages, so the language has also registered
modifications. I find this aspect to be particularly significant because the same
modifications affected the language spoken by the more recent Romanian migrants who
have settled in Italy. Thanks to the great linguistic affinity – Italian and Romanian derive
both from the Latin language – learning the language was quite an easy process for Italians
who settled in Romania, as well as for the Romanians who later settled in Italy. However,
this did not mean that as soon as Italians learned Romanian, they were assimilated by the
local identity. Torre, in her interviews with the third, fourth or even fifth generation Italians
living nowadays in Greci, emphasized that third generation Italians who were now aged
about 60 years old spoke fluent Italian with strong inflexions recalling the accents of the
dialects of Belluno and Friuli. Of course, a lot of Romanian expressions were added to the
language making it now harder to be understood in Italy.\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{93} In my research I also considered language modifications to be an important indicator showing the
willingness of the interviewees to maintain ties with their national identity. I have also remarked that usually
the closer the language spoken by female migrants was to the standard language spoken in their country of
origin – in this case, Romania - the keener they were to maintain their national identity.
5.1.3 New-date Italian immigrants in Romania: the case of Italian commuters in Timișoara

Ethnic-Italians who still live in Romania nowadays number only approximately 3,000 people, according to the 2002 census. They are fairly dispersed throughout the country, even though there is a relatively higher number of them in the western parts of the country (particularly in the Timiș County), and in Bucharest. The new Constitution of Romania officially recognises ethnic-minorities and, consequently, the Italian ethnic-minority has one seat reserved in the Romanian Parliament.

However the number of Italians of new-date migration has risen considerably in the last 20 years, after the fall of Communism. As of November 2007, there are some 12,000 Italians residing in and around the town of Timișoara and it is estimated that about 3,000 square kilometres of land (2% of the agricultural land of Romania) have been bought by Italians. Already before Romania’s entrance in the European Union, a lot of progress was done in order to ensure the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons. As a result, many Italian businessmen went to Romania where they set up enterprises or outsourced parts of their business, taking advantage of the cheaper labour and of the linguistic and cultural affinities. Timișoara in particular has become a symbol of the Italian presence in Romania. This town, located in the Western part of Romania, has always had a multiethnic identity and currently Romanians live peacefully along with ethnic-Hungarians and Germans. In 2004 about 10,000 Italians resided in the county of Timiș – whose inhabitants number close to 670,000 – and there were some 1,200 Italian enterprises registered in this county out of a total of 13,000 registered in Romania. Most of these businesses operate in the textile, clothing and shoemaking fields. The raw materials are usually imported from Italy, manufactured and transformed in almost end products. However, in order to maintain the “made in Italy” brand, products are usually sent to Italy before their final completion: for example, a piece of clothing can be manufactured in Romania, while the buttons are added in Italy [Iordache 2004].

In 2008, according to the Romanian National Institute of Statistics, Italy was the second most important commercial partner of Romania, with trade accounting for 11.56 billion
The motives triggering the flows of Italian entrepreneurs in Romania are related mostly to the cheap labour which can be used in order to make Italian businesses more competitive. However, this practice has had positive results for both partner countries. Romanians have gained as well because once the number of Italian firms investing in Romania increased, competition also grew and subsequently wages were raised. Another motive is related to the vicinity of the two countries and the fact that in recent years the airway infrastructure has been improved in order to bring the two regions closer in terms of time and costs. A lot of low-cost airway companies now connect Timișoara, as well as other cities in Romania – Bucharest, Iași, Bacău, Sibiu, Brașov, Craiova are a few examples – to Italy and especially to the North-eastern regions of Italy.

From many points of view the two waves of migration – the old-date and the new-date ones – were very different. The very push-factors were different, albeit in both cases the actors’ decision to migrate was economically-driven. The first wave of Italian immigrants in Romania was motivated by poverty and by the opportunity to gain an extra wage, whereas second-wave immigrants already had the financial resources and were attracted by the possibility of cutting costs and thus increasing profits for their businesses. I would say that the difference between the two waves can be looked at as a passage from a “blue collar” migration to a “white collar” migration.

Workers coming in Romania at the beginning of the 20th century as well as the current Italian entrepreneurs outsourcing their businesses in Romania first migrated on the temporary basis. However, the first started as commuter migrants who returned home where they still had their families and lands. In many cases though, temporary migration evolved in a permanent settling and integration in the Romanian landscape. New-wave immigrants are also commuters who generally come to Romania to take care of businesses, while their head office is usually located in Italy. However I was not able to find any data regarding these migrants’ tendency to settle down in Romania and therefore, taken also into account that there are about 10,000 Italians who currently reside in Timișoara, I do not exclude the possibility of a future evolution towards a permanent migration.

94 See Appendix 1, Table 6 “Romanian exports. The first 10 buyer countries” and Table 7 “Romanian exports. The first 10 supplier countries” (source: ICE elaboration of INS data, available at http://www.ice.it/paesi/pdf/romania.pdf, accessed in January 2010)
As far as the gender dimension is concerned, statistics regarding both waves of migration almost completely neglected this aspect. About Italian immigrants arriving in Romania in the late 19th century we can only imagine that they were mainly composed by male migrants given the kind of labour activities they performed in Romania. However, we also learn that many of them have brought their families afterwards. About the current wave of migration, available data does not consider women and men separately, probably because the phenomenon is not that considerable and migrants and their activities are very homogeneous.

5.2 Italy: destination country for Romanian emigrants

5.2.1 Romanian migration paths before the fall of Communism

During the last century, Romania was predominantly a country of emigration, with a rather impressive record regarding the number of persons involved, the outcomes and the varieties of migratory arrangements. In the 20th century the type of migration which mostly characterized the countries of Central and Southeastern Europe was either directly or indirectly connected with ethnic minorities. In Romania, as in other East European counties, minorities were not migrating as refugees, but they were rather moving to countries to which they had historical ties (e.g. Germany, Hungary), both as a reaction to ethnic-based discrimination they underwent in Romania, and because they hoped for a safer and better life in those states. In addition, during the communist era, a considerable number of Romanians also migrated primarily due to the political violence and deprivation generated by a largely ineffective and authoritarian administration. [Hortvath 2007]

Starting from the late 19th century and up to the early 20th century, Romania was predominantly a country of emigration. Just as in the case of Italy, in this period, the first large-scale migration wave occurred in the context of the great migration towards North America. However, the Romanian population that was engaged in this flow departed
especially from the region of Transylvania which at that time was still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire\textsuperscript{95}.

As a consequence of the territorial changes taking place in the course of the First and Second World Wars, Romania experienced large-scale population transfers. In 1918 Transylvania was attached to Romania and consequently Romanian authorities switched policy from the previous process of Magyarization which had been applied by Austro-Hungarian authorities to a new policy of Romanianization of the newly acquired territory\textsuperscript{96}. Therefore, approximately 200,000 ethnic Hungarians left Transylvania between 1918 and 1922. A reverse process took place in 1940, as a result of the temporary re-annexation of the northern part of Transylvania to Hungary. In the framework of a population exchange agreement between Hungary and Romania, 220,000 ethnic Romanians left Northern Transylvania and moved to territories under Romanian control, while 160,000 ethnic Hungarians relocated from Romanian to Hungarian territories [Horvath 2007]. During the Second World War, about half of the Jewish population living in Romania was deported. Following WWII, approximately 70,000 ethnic Germans were deported to the Soviet Union, and many more were forcibly relocated within Romanian territory.

Very soon after WWII was over, the Communist regime was established in Romania, lasting for more than 40 years, from 1947 to 1989. During this period very restrictive exit policies were exercised by the authorities, severely affecting citizens’ ability to cross the borders and travel anywhere outside Romania. However, as represented in Figure 1, the number of Romanian emigrants rose steadily starting from the 1970s, once the living conditions got harsher under the Communist regime.

\textsuperscript{95} In the first decade of the 20th century, about a quarter of a million inhabitants of Transylvania – which at that time had a total population of 4.8 million – migrated to the United States.

\textsuperscript{96} As a result of the Romanianization policies ethnic-Hungarians were turned from aristocrats and landowners – positions mainly acquired as a result of the Magyarization process previously applied by the Hungarian authorities – into peasants. Soon after WWII, although Romanians were the majority in Transylvania, Hungarians enjoyed a higher economic and social status forming the majority of urban and educated dwellers. During the interwar period, the newly formed Romanian state actively promoted the interests of the ethnic Romanians and strove to reduce the economic differentiation between Hungarians and Romanians living in Transylvania. [Verbal 2009]
During the Communist rule, Romanian authorities exercised rather restrictive exit policies, severely limiting the ability of citizens to travel internationally. In order to obtain a travel document, prior approval was needed from the authorities and passports were held by the police. Those who wanted to migrate and applied to various embassies in Romania had social and economic rights revoked and were stigmatised and harassed by authorities [Horvath 2007]. Despite the every rigid rules governing the process of migration, a relatively high amount of permanent, legal emigration took place under the regime. Although this might seem contradictory at first glance, the fact is that the actual purpose of these restrictive rules was not to prevent all forms of emigration, but rather to control outflows by restricting exit possibilities, while allowing certain groups to leave. As represented in Figure 3, a high percentage of ethnic Germans were able to leave the country. Actually only determinate ethnic-minorities were allowed to migrate legally, while others were forced to flee the country illegally. If departures had not been limited, authorities feared that a large number of Romanians would have sought asylum abroad and thus the regime would have been discredited in the eyes of both foreign governments and remaining Romanian citizens.
Figure 3. Ethnic structure of the emigrant population (1975-1989) compared to the ethnic composition of the Romanian population (1977 census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarians</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Insitutul Național de Statistică (INS)*

Considering that ethnic Germans represented only 1.6 per cent of the total population and given that this small percentage made up for as much as 44 per cent of the emigrant population between 1975 and 1989, it becomes clear that they were more or less “invited” to flee the country.

Other ethnic minorities (e.g., Jews and Hungarians) were also clearly over-represented among the group of people who legally emigrated from Romania during Communist rule. As far as the Jewish minority is concerned, its members started migrating immediately after WWII. By the end of the communist regime, the majority of the Jewish community had moved mainly to Israel or the United States. Meanwhile, ethnic Hungarians followed a different migration path. It was in 1985 that this minority started to migrate to the neighbouring Hungary. However, the migration of ethnic Hungarians was not tacitly approved by Romanian authorities, as in the case of ethnic Jews and Germans. As authorities felt threatened by the potential negative image of the regime which the migrants would promote abroad and, those who wanted to leave had to use irregular strategies, such as crossing the border illegally and staying in Hungary without a residence permit.

Other forms of temporary migration were characteristic of communist Romania. Especially migration for the purpose of work or education was allowed, albeit strictly controlled by the authorities. A large number of Romanian labour migrants were employed
by Middle East countries, especially those placed in the Persian Gulf area. Migrants were strictly monitored in these countries and migration had to be only temporary, while family reunification was not possible.

As for the flow of immigrants who wished to come to Romania, this phenomenon was also limited by the Communist regime as foreigners were perceived as potential threats who – just like Romanians who migrated abroad – would surely spread negative news about the situation in Romania. Given this fear concerning almost anything related to the world outside the borders of Romania, all foreign citizens visiting the country were closely monitored and Romanian citizens were obliged to report to the authorities any non-Romanian citizen they hosted in their homes.

However, migration flows coming to Romania for education purposes were more tolerated, especially in the case of foreign students arriving from Middle East and African countries. Starting from the 1970s, considerable amounts of foreign students enrolled in Romanian universities. In 1981 foreign students reached 16,900, representing 7-8% of all students registered at Romanian universities [SOPEMI 1994].

In spite of Romania’s inflows and outflows being severely limited during the Communist regime, another migrating phenomenon developed rapidly and involved a significant number of Romanian citizens. Internal migration from rural to urban areas was not only allowed to take place, but strongly encouraged by the Romanian Communist rulers. This process is important because, in the absence of an international migration phenomenon, internal migration laid the basis for future developments after the fall of Communism.

In 1950 only some 23 per cent of the Romanian population lived in urban areas, whereas the remaining three quarters were employed in the agriculture and farming sectors, thus living in the rural areas [Cingolani 2009]. However, soon after WWI, Romania’s predominantly agricultural profile seemed to be in line with the role which the Soviet Union wanted to assign to this country as a result of its desire to create the Comecon, an area which aimed at fostering joined development of the participating states throughout a
close economic co-operation\footnote{The Comecon (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) was founded in 1949 by the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. It was an economic organization of communist states considered to be a response of the Eastern Bloc to the formation of the OEEC (Organization of European Economic Co-operation). The organization dissolved in 1991.}. Therefore, in the late 1950s, Romania was assigned the role of agricultural products provider. However, the Ceauşescu regime did not agree with the concept of specialization of the international labour. Therefore, it envisaged a different development path for Romania: the creation a “multilaterally developed society”. This entailed a series of processes: industrialization, an intensive agricultural production, the raise of international commerce based on the export of final products, self-sufficiency in terms of raw materials, mass technical education, a centralized management and planning [Kideckel 1993]. Thanks to these policies, Romania experienced a considerable economic growth at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s. Yet this growth was obtained throughout the hard work of millions of citizens who were treated as a collective resource, detracting the labour force from single individuals who eventually ended up having no control over the way their own labour resources were utilized\footnote{A clear evidence of the extent to which the State invaded the personal sphere of each citizen was the 1966 law prohibiting abortion. The law is famous for having led to the creation of the numerous “1967 generation” and to the death and health complications endured by many Romanian women.}.

The long term goal of these policies was to achieve the passage to a more mature form of socialism where the same work opportunities would be available in all regions of the country, while there would be no economic differences between cities and villages. However, on the short term, all the investments were directed towards those areas that were already developed as this meant that smaller initial costs had to be borne. Consequently, the gap between rural and urban areas further increased leading to remarkable movements of population. Sandu [1984] identified four stages of the urban-rural migration in Romania:

- the first stage takes place once at the start of the industrial development, between 1951 and 1953 and is characterized by high migration flows;
- the second stage is related to the process of “cooperativization” or “collectivization” of Romanian agriculture which took place from 1954 to 1962 and led to minor migration flows as a result of decreasing industrial investments and increasing costs
which had to be borne in order to make the transition from the individual to the collective agricultural production;
- the third stage started in 1963 and lasted until 1970 and was related to the creation of new administrative units being characterized by an average level of migration flows;
- the forth stage is that of the industrial development which lasted all throughout the 1970s (from 1971 to 1980) and which registered considerable migration flows.

Besides the rural-to-urban internal migration, a form of rural-to-rural migration was also characteristic of communist Romania. The labour force employed in the agricultural sector migrated from the regions of Moldavia and Muntenia towards Constanţa and from the mountain to the valley areas. Also, Romanians from poor areas in the Western part of the country moved towards the Timiș County [Cingolani 2009]. Actually, as a result of the creation of cooperatives, peasants from the poor areas of Romania found themselves unemployed and were forced to move towards more developed regions of the country.

In the 1980s, the mass migration of young people led to a predominantly elder and feminine population engaged in the agricultural labour. For this reason, the government tried to limit the exodus of young persons from villages to cities by making it very difficult to obtain an urban residence. In this manner, internal migration was limited to rural-to-rural migration or, in some cases, to urban-to-rural migration. Peasants were asked to lend their work to the community and in those cases where the workforce abounded, they were demanded to give a hand to other rural areas in need.

A further form of internal migration was ongoing in the 1970s and 1980s and was represented by commuters who moved back and forth between the village and the city. Peasants maintained their residence in the village, while actually working in the urban plants. In relation to the urban attraction, Horea-Şerban [2007:8] explained that “the urban mirage and the attraction offered by its modern conveniences uprooted a huge mass of

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99 One had to show a valid working contract and a residence in order to be able to live in the city. Furthermore, students who finished gymnasium in a rural area had to register to high schools in the same area and preferably attend classes with an agricultural profile. Moreover, the administrative personnel working in rural areas had to transfer its residence from the urban areas to the place where they actually worked.
labour force from the rural areas, finally forcing the authorities to close the boundaries of the large towns and to set up some new small ones, which unfortunately didn’t manage to develop their own polarizing force”. Moreover, Shafir [1985] estimated that about 30 per cent of the urban population was living in this particular condition at the beginning of the 1980s. This fact led to the creation of a new social class: that of bureaucratic, proletarian, peasants. This category of workers, in spite of living and working in the cities, did not manage to integrate in the urban environment. They had a different background from their citizen colleagues, lower levels of education and different aspirations. Critics of the Communist regime argue that it was the political will to determine and encourage this situation, where the workforce was quite heterogeneous and, consequently, unable to put up a sustainable opposition to the system [Kideckel 1993].

As far as the role of females is concerned, it is important to remark that, during the communist period, this was connected to the household and to the family which was considered to be “the basic cell of society”. The spreading of this idea was done in order to justify State interventions in the private sphere and the control and, sometimes, destruction of traditional values. In the first two decades which followed WWII, a series of phenomena occurred inside family units leading to crisis situations: conflicts arose, fertility dropped and divorces increased. These events were the result of the social disruptions and major changes that took place in society (i.e., industrialization, urbanization, the collectivization of agriculture, the rural exodus, etc.) [Ghebre 2003]. The extensive feature of economy and the forced industrialization led to the demand for a numerous labour force. This resource was identified both in the rural areas – peasants were increasingly employed in the urban productive sphere – and in the female component of society. However, in order to be able to work, women needed to be “freed” from the household responsibilities. Consequently, in a first stage, some emancipating measures were taken: abortions became legal in 1957 and women received a series of incentives in order to be able to reconcile maternity and work. Fedel [2004] remarks that “historically the countries lead by a socialist system had tried to collectivize household chores up to a certain extent, by introducing canteens, kindergartens for working parents and other facilities which had the aim to relieve women from their double shifts”. However “socialist states were not so well off and given the expenditures needed to run these facilities, they couldn’t be successful in their endeavours”. Therefore, after 1965, Romanian authorities
changed attitude in their attempt to dissociate from the Soviet Union. The first step taken
was in order to consolidate families which the State sensed could be more easily
manipulated if they continued to stick to traditional values. Divorces were drastically
limited, while divorced people were discriminated against\textsuperscript{100}. Moreover, decree No. 770 of
1966 basically forbade abortions which were allowed only in motivated cases. In the
meantime, use of contraception was also limited.

Contrary to the much preached emancipation, women remained inferior to man. In their
private lives females had simultaneously responsibilities of “loving wife and mother”
while they were also “citizens and labourers”. Women were envisaged as some sort of
Eves, to be blamed every time something went wrong inside their families. The typical
domestic problems such as the husbands’ alcoholism problems, laziness, waste of money,
dissipation, they were all the fault of women who were not capable of managing family
affairs. Betea [2006] describes the following typical family portrait:

“A cliché image is the evening supper – with the head of the family seated at the head of a
table, and at least three children, all being served from the steaming bowl (prepared God
knows when) by the wife who had just come back from yet another glorious day of work,
just like her husband did. Head of industrial plant, zoo technician or depute in the MAN,
throughout all her obligations, the female of the communist regime is necessarily “more
equal” than the man."\textsuperscript{101.}

One can easily imagine that the emancipation of women promoted by the socialist
authorities was not part of an official ideology which aimed at empowering women, but
rather a requirement of the economic development model where male work was no longer
sufficient to ensure a decent level of living for the family. Whenever needed, women were
ready to work and even to migrate from villages to the cities living children in care of their
grandparents.

\textsuperscript{100} No divorces were registered in 1967 as access to housing was made more difficult for single and divorced
persons.

\textsuperscript{101} Approximate translation from Romanian: “O imagine-clișeu e cina de seară – cu șeful familiei în capul
unei mese, cu cel puțin trei copii, servit din castronul aburind (pregătit nu se știe când) de soția întoarsă ca și
el, de curând, din frontul unei glorioase zile de muncă. Directoare de combinat industrial, zootehnistă sau
deputat in MAN, prin toate obligațiile ei, femeia în regimul comunist e musai “mai egală” decât bărbatul”.
I found these features of the internal migration occurring during the communist era to be valuable information permitting the understanding of the following migration patterns which took place after the fall of Communism. As I will explain in the following paragraphs, women migration towards Western Europe in the 1990s was governed more or less by the same ideology: women left villages and poor areas of Romania migrating initially on a temporary basis, in order to provide for their families. Only this time they went a little bit further.

5.2.2 The evolution of Romanian migration throughout the 1990s

Communism fell in Romania at the end of 1989, when freedom from the dictatorial regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu was achieved through the Revolution of 21st-22nd December 1989. Immediately after the fall of the old regime, people’s hopes were very high, as the passage to democracy was thought to be almost instantaneous. However, the transition from a centrally planned economy to democracy and to a functioning market economy turned out to be a particularly slow, difficult and burdensome process. Romanian society had to face new challenges and deal with economic and social problems to which the newly formed democracy was completely unfamiliar. Economic crisis, as well as precariousness of employment and life in general, were all signs that the liberation from Communism meant dealing with a whole new set of aspects – both positive and negative.

In 1989, as a consequence of the political support offered to the industrial field – namely by the set up of “industrial giants” which provided jobs for 10 to 20 thousand people –, the industrial field represented almost 45% of the total economy, that is, much more than in the industrialized countries in West Europe [Horea-Șerban 2007]. As for the percentage of the population employed in primary activities, this was also rather high – reaching about 28 per cent, in spite of the communist government’s efforts of industrializing as much as possible a territory which was mainly rural. Meanwhile, the tertiary sector was underdeveloped, illustrating the population’s low purchasing power.
The first transformation to have significant repercussions on the social structure of Romania was the closedown or privatization of the major industrial production centres, as a result of the disappearance of the internal market demand and of the requests for international exports. Over the first decade that followed the fall of Communism, employment in the secondary sector dropped from 40 per cent in 1990 to 23 per cent in 2000 [Cingolani 2009]. The massive economic restructurings have left hundreds of thousands of people without a job, once they were dismissed from their urban, mainly industrial working places. Available resources to be invested in social protection of citizens also diminished dramatically and unemployment rose to unprecedented levels. Consequently, the demand for social protection coming from pensioners and unemployed augmented and soon became a burden for the Romanian fragile welfare system. Cingolani [2009] explains that the best word to describe the Romanian labour market after the 1989 Revolution was “flexibility”. This referred both to firms’ internal flexibility leading to mass firings and to wages flexibility. During the first decade after the fall of the regime 40 per cent of the employed population changed job and/or occupation. This process was often coupled by an increase in poverty and social exclusion [Stânculescu and Berevoescu 2002: 197-199].

As I outlined previously, the Communist regime tried to limit the economic gaps between cities and countryside, but failed to do so. Instead, measures taken by Romanian authorities contributed in particular to the development of those areas of the country which were already industrialized. By doing so, initial costs were cut off, while differences between poor and rich areas of the countries increased. In the 1990s, this gap grew even further and became a structural feature of the market economy. The north-eastern part of Romania – especially the county of Suceava – was particularly hit by the series of closing downs of industrial plants and consequent dismissal of personnel. However, the capital city, Bucharest, and the Western part of Romania headed in the different direction. Western counties, due to their proximity to the European Union borders and to the presence of major foreign investments, became the most developed areas of Romania, having development and employment indicators superior to those of other Romanian counties. The north-eastern part of Romania – namely, those counties situated in the Moldova region – maintained high levels of participation in the agricultural and farming
sectors. Moreover, employment in these sectors was merely done for subsistence purposes, not allowing the population to obtain any profits. [Cingolani 2009]

The internal scenery and prospects of personal economic growth did not look very bright in the 1990s. The uncertainties related to employment, wage, housing and daily life expenses, coupled with the opening of the frontiers and the easier procedures for travelling abroad, provided new impetus for Romanians to migrate, in search for employment and better living standards.

5.2.2.1 The early 1990s and the internal “reverse” migration

The economic transformations which occurred at the beginning of the 1990s determined a change in the way internal migration took place. The phenomenon of commuting dropped dramatically once the major industries of the countries closed down. An opposite phenomenon took place, a sort of reversal of the rural exodus of the communist period: workers who had previously moved from the countryside to the cities started returning to their places of origin, causing the primary sector to increase at about 36 per cent [Horea-Şerban 2007]. Beside the loss of employment, further factors contributed to the return of this segment of the population: the urban housing system, which previously lessened the purchase of a house for young couples, disappeared; housing expenses increased considerably; daily transport connections between urban and rural areas were reduced [Rotariu and Mezei 1999].

Another factor which determined urban population’s transfers towards the countryside was the process of de-collectivisation – i.e., the opposite of the collectivisation process which took place in the period 1949-1962\textsuperscript{102}. Land was given back to their previous owners who were thus able to return to the villages from which they came and use the land in order to satisfy their basic needs. However, as I already mentioned, this process did not allow

\textsuperscript{102} The programme was launched at the plenary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party of 3–5 March 1949. Until April 1962 – when the end of the collectivization programme was announced – 96 per cent of the country's arable surface and 93.4 per cent of its agricultural land had been included in collective structures. [Gheorghiu-Dej in Tismăneanu 2006: 431]
peasants to obtain more than the satisfaction of their families’ subsistence needs. Profits were obtained only by a very small percentage of them, whereas the type of agriculture practised by most of the peasants was very little productive on medium and long terms [Horea-Şerban 2007. Moreover, those families who re-acquired their lands were not the only ones who decided to return home, but some urban families also chose to buy houses in the countryside and sell their urban apartments in which they could no longer afford to live.

In the meantime, internal migration in urban areas continued to be directed towards the three most important cities in terms of population and employment opportunities: Bucharest, Timişoara and Constanţa [Rotariu and Mezei 1999:101-103]. In the figure bellow, Rotariu and Mezei [1999] traced as accurately as possible – given the data available and the lack of data concerning some periods – the evolution of migration from 1955 until 1998.

![Figure 4. The evolution of the internal migration rate from 1955 until 1998](image)


We can observe that the year 1990 represents an exceptional moment, when the internal migration rate reached its highest levels, of nearly 34 per mille. However, the raise was determined mainly by the chaotic situation registered immediately after the fall of Communism which transposed into urban-to-rural migration. Afterwards, migration flows
dropped and tended to stabilise at an average of 13 per mille throughout much of the 1990s.

5.2.2.2 The evolution of international migration

In the post-war period, the socialist political system considerably restricted the number of departures abroad. As Horea-Șerban (2007) points out, during the period 1975-1989, only 362,463 persons left the country for good. The most preferred destinations were the Federal Republic of Germany, USA, Israel, Austria, Canada, Hungary, France, Greece, Sweden, Italy and even Australia. However, the fall of Communism permitted the development of the international migration phenomenon which had previously took place in very small proportions. More and more people in the Central and Eastern European countries started to realize that spatial mobility was the quickest, most accessible way of achieving better standards of living. In this context, a specific phenomenon of East-to-West labour migration developed at the beginning of the 1990s. The process involved many people crossing the borders either legally or illegally in order to escape economic problems and to search for a better standard of living. Consequently, the real image and proportions of this phenomenon are highly distorted by the illegal character of migration.

Horea-Șerban (2007), while taking into consideration the international context and the countries that have undertaken the Romanian emigrants after the fall of Communism, differentiates certain stages in the evolution of Romanian international migration after the 1990s, each of them having distinct characteristics.

The first period, comprised between 1990 and 1995, is characterized by migration towards Israel and Turkey, while Italy, Hungary and Germany are also well represented. Migrants’ destination countries change during the period 1996-2001, when Italy becomes the first preferred destination, while Israel is still attracting many migrants but not as much as Italy does. The third period, beginning with 2002, Romania’s easier access to the Schengen space – achieved through to the policies aimed at Romania’s joining the European Union – has determined a mass migration of Romanians – particularly from the poorer parts of the
country. The two most attractive destination countries became Italy (absorbing almost half of the emigrants’ flow) and Spain, with nearly 25 percent of the number of departures [Horea-Şerban 2007]. This migration mainly involves adult people, who go abroad either alone or accompanied by their partners, trying to escape poverty and unemployment, and achieve a better life for themselves and their families. The main fields they work in are civil engineering sector, agriculture, domestic housework and nursing.

As far as the first period of migration is concerned, i.e. the years between 1990 and 1995, Constantin [2008] argues that a very interesting development occurred in the phenomenon of the East-to-West labour migration. This was represented by the rise of commuters, especially along the East-West borders. The author further states that “people who lived in border realized that they can commute daily or weekly to their neighbouring Western country and that, by doing so, they coulds substantially increase their income. Just as in the case of internal rural-to-urban migration, East-to-West migration was seen as a chance to benefit from better redistribution of wealth. Furthermore, for many Romanians, the beginning of the 1990s meant the development of the “trade by suitcase” phenomenon, which was to remain very popular until 1994 [Dimitrescu 2003]. Main destination countries in these five years were Romania’s neighbouring countries and, in addition, Turkey and Poland [Dimitrescu 2003:3]. Moreover, Constantin [2008] draws a comparison between the current phenomenon of commuting and that experienced during Communism, especially in the 1960s and 1970s when the rapid industrialization forced many Romanians who lived in the rural areas into daily or weekly movement to the city where they had factory jobs. In those times, “due to the fixity of jobs in Communist systems, for 20-30 years, people have travelled every day or week by train or bus to their work place.” [Constantin 2008:4]

Seventeen per cent of all Romanian households reported at least one member working abroad between 1990 and 2001, representing about 1.2 million households [Lăzăroiu and Alexandru 2005]. As the figure on the next page shows, labour migration gradually increased during this period. At the beginning of 2002, EU lifted visa restrictions for Romanian tourists, which had an impact on the number of people travelling abroad after that date.
As for the third stage of migration, corresponding to the 2002-2007 period, Constantin [2008] acknowledges that, during these five years, the trip abroad was supposedly done for tourism purposes and lasted no more than three months for most Romanians. The reason underpinning this behaviour is related to the fact that after 2002 the visa requirement for Romanians travelling to the EU was waived and Romanians were consequently able to legally “migrate” as tourists for a period of no more than three months\textsuperscript{103}. Consequently, compared to the 17 per cent of all Romanian households who reported sending at least one

\textsuperscript{103} In order to obtain the waiver the visa restrictions, the Romanian government set up a series of conditions which regulated a traveller’s stay abroad. Travellers had to show a ticket for a round trip within 3 months of leaving the country as well as a valid health insurance and an amount of 100 Euro/ per day for each day they wanted to spend abroad. However, these rules allowed in fact for the dissimulation of labour force migration under a tourist visa [Constantin 2008].
member to work abroad between 1990 and 2001, after 2002, the percentage increased to 23 per cent of all households. As represented in the next figure, 33 percent of these migrants were directed towards Italy.

**Figure 6 Main destination countries for Romanian labour migration from 2002 until 2005**

![Bar chart showing main destination countries for Romanian labour migration from 2002 until 2005. Italy has the highest percentage at 33%, followed by Spain at 26%, USA at 13%, Germany and Hungary both at 4%, and Other at 18%.]

Source: IOM 2005 in Lăzăroiu and Alexandru [2005]

### 5.2.2.3 Causes and impact of international migration

As for the factors that triggered migration, the most important ones, and in close relation one to the other, are poverty and unemployment. Since 1990 Romania has been facing unprecedented unemployment rates, triggered by the transition to a market economy. As represented in the Figure 7, unemployment rose considerably at the beginning of the 1990s, reaching 11 per cent in 1994. The Romanian authorities had to face an issue which was completely unknown for a former communist country, with a planned, super-centralized economy. Therefore, the Romanian labour force had to find various openings to earn its own living.
Unemployment affected entire areas which before 1990 were prosperous and privileged from an economic point of view and which afterwards became “dead areas”. As migration from urban to rural areas and to subsistence agriculture increased, the share of labour force working in agriculture sector grew to 35% out of the total active population. This translated into very low productivity and very low income coming from this source. Therefore, in the rural area there was an extra labour force (hidden unemployment), estimated to about 2 million people [Bîrsan et al. 2008]. Consequently, this underemployed population living in the rural areas of Romania became one of the main sources of emigration. There are villages where every family “sent” at least one person to work outside the country and where only the elder population remained together with children and adolescents who have not yet reached the working age. Cingolani [2009] describes a similar situation in the village of Marginea, situated in the county of Suceava, in the Romanian region of Moldova, where the majority of the population migrated in Torino, Italy, after the fall of Communism and after the closedown of the industries which

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104 For a more precise picture of the unemployment rate evolution between 2002 and 2007 and definitions, see Appendix 2, Graph 1 “Total and female number of registred unemployed and unemployment rate 2002-2007” (Source: INS 2008)
guaranteed the employment of the population living in the village. In addition to these “push” factors, the slow job creation and the difficulties faced by many young graduates or medium skilled persons in finding income sources also explain the mass migration taking place in some areas of Romania.

International migration was thus a solution to fighting unemployment, especially in the poorest areas of Romania. Moreover, the “pull” factors also contributed to the act of migration, as several EU countries had to deal with problems such as: mismatches between labour force demand and supply on the labour market; shortages of low skilled labour in the agriculture and building sectors, and of seasonal work in tourism; shortage of highly skilled labour like IT, doctors, nurses, engineers etc. [Bîrsan et al. 2008]. In addition, demographic changes such as the ageing population requiring specific care, coupled with the insufficient assistance offered by the welfare systems of these countries, further increased the request for foreign labour force to which many Romanians responded positively.

However, in spite of the beneficial influence migration had on the economy and society of both Romania and the receiving countries, over the recent years, population migration abroad proved to have positive, as well as negative, consequences for the Romanian society. Among the positive aspects brought by Romanians’ migration I would mention:

- the remittances or financial inputs emigrants send to the members of their families. In 2007, the stock of legal emigrants reached 1.2 million and 5.7 per cent of population [Ratha and Xu, 2008]. World Bank data positions Romania in the Top 10 of recipients of migrant remittances among developing countries in 2008, receiving U.S.$ 9 billion105. The money is usually invested in the estate field, or in smaller acquisitions connected to the household, contributing to an overall increase of the living standard of those members of he household who remained at home [Horea-Şerban 2007]. Although Romania joined the European Union on January 1, 2007, it is still considered a middle-income country, in which poverty persists, acting as a push factor of migration.

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105 Romania was the 7th remittances receiver country in 2008, preceded by India, China, Mexico, the Philippines, Poland and Nigeria, and followed by Bangladesh, Egypt, and Vietnam [Ratha et al. 2009].
- the *mentality change for the better* registered by emigrants in the host countries. Romanians who work abroad usually acquire new professional abilities and skills; concentrate more on working and on taking “constructive” risks. At the same time, they come back with superior aspirations and seem to be more optimistic about the future of Romania [Horea-Şerban 2007].

Nevertheless, as previously indicated, after 2002, about 23 per cent of all Romanian households had at least one family member working abroad. Consequently, this situation triggered significant family and community dysfunctions, having a negative impact:

- many *children are left alone* or in the care of their grandparents, relatives or simple acquaintances, who seem to be surpassed by the new cultural, social and economic problems. In more fortunate cases, children are left in the care of one parent, while the other is migrating with the promise of either coming back or achieving family reunification abroad as soon as possible. These children assume all the risks associated to loneliness and often develop emotional disorders. They become abnormally shy and frightened. Children aged more than 10 can have behavioural disorders – aggressive verbal and physical behaviour, lies, addiction to alcohol and smoking, weak results at school. The number of the children affected by this situation is evaluated at 39, 896 at national level.

- *family or couple stability* also suffers negative transformation. At the beginning of the 1990s it was the man who usually migrated in search of work, while the woman remained in the home country. As a result, women “gained” new responsibilities, they had to take up the fathers’ duties and, in many cases, they also had to keep working, while also caring for their children, just as single mothers would do. Nowadays there are more and more women who tend to migrate as the request for typically female occupations increases. This brings new challenges to the husbands and fathers left at home and especially for the young children.
- the aging of the population is also a natural consequence of the migration of the adult population. This process is particularly evident in the rural areas where many villages have almost been deserted, leaving behind only the elderly and the very young – normally grandparents and grandchildren. This fact will have serious consequences upon the future potential of labour force. The percentage of the aged people is already larger than that of the young population (19.3 compared to 16.1%), while birth-rate and fertility rates also suffer the consequences of migration, since the categories that largely participate to this mobility are the young and adult persons [Horea-Şerban 2007].

5.2.3 Romanian international female migration

It is useful, for the purpose of this research, to recall that, unlike more traditional societies, the Romanian political system before the 1990s, did not prohibit or try to hinder in any way female employment. During the communist era, Romanian women used to be employed in almost all sectors of the economy, sometimes even in poor and dangerous working conditions, in order to demonstrate their “equality” to men. However, as previously stressed, women were often “more equal” than men, as they were both working and taking care of children and family. Bîrsan et al. [2008:100] argue that “the [political] system placed Romanian women in the professional schemes, and the tradition placed them as provider of extra-work at home”.

As for the internal migration process, during the Communist era, women tended to be less involved than men. While men migrated from the countryside towards the cities where they worked and sent money home to their families, women remained in the villages maintaining the social continuity and preserving the local memory. However, accounts of Romanian female migrants who engaged in international migration before the 1990s do exist. Yet, these stories are limited to a small number of female migrants and are often full of almost incredible facts and adventures, while the female protagonists of these adventures were always taking huge risks by engaging in the illegal crossing of Romanian borders. Only a few privileged persons were able to receive visas and legally cross the border. This was usually achieved through acquaintances’ help and bribing. Such is the
account of Artemisia, a woman from the village of Marginea, Suceava, interviewed by Cingolani [2009], who succeeded in receiving the much-longed-for visas and was able to travel to Israel, the United States, Mexico and Canada:

“These, my dear, are worth much more than the visas you see on the passports of those poor creatures that go to Italy now. Back then their fathers were coming to me to buy napkins! I arrived in Israel because I knew a Jew in Bucharest who invited me. I used to buy 100 embroidered shirts from the bazaar – they were light and didn’t take up too much space, plus other 300 boxes of Chinese balsam. Back then I was one of the few females: I would arrive in Jerusalem and there, close to a church, I would sell everything to the Arabs in a few hours. From Israel I was buying icons and, when I returned here, my yard was full of merchandise, just like for a wedding. In the village they used to ask: who is getting married today? Then I went to America, thanks to a connection to a priest living in Bucharest. As always, I was on my own, doing business”. [Cingolani 2009:77]

In times when mobility was considered to be an activity which could be performed by men only and commerce was regarded with a lot of suspicion, a female trader represented a deviation from what was considered to be normal and appropriate for a woman. Still, throughout their activities, Artemisa, along with other enterprising, courageous women, managed to spread the Western goods and to tell the story of the world outside Romania’s borders, in a time when images and contacts with this world were thoroughly restricted.

After the fall of Communism, international migration was taken to a new level and this time women were also a part of the outflows. The collapse of many industries and the closedown of giant enterprises which ensured employment for thousands of Romanians, forced the former employees, including women, to look for jobs elsewhere. Similar to male migration, Romanian women migration was triggered by push factors such as loss of jobs and low income. Yet, unlike in the case of men, women often found jobs more easily than their men, especially in certain sectors (e.g., tourism, domestic work).
5.2.3.1 Migration towards Italy and migrants’ profiles

Constantin [2008] argues that, in the 1990s, Romanian flows of population directed towards Italy were not made up of migrants. Rather, she believed people were travelling back and forth between Romania and Italy, keeping strong ties with the relatives and family both in Romania and Italy, as well as maintaining business and work interests in both countries. Therefore, a more accurate categorization of these people is that of “commuters”. This circulatory phenomenon occurred between Romania and Italy on a mass scale starting with 1997 and seriously amplified after the visa requirement was abolished in 2002. She further argued that the process of commuting requires a new approach of studying and of managing the mobility process, other than those used for the study of short-term migration.

A typical behaviour of “commuter” migrants is that of directing the outcome of work – namely, the financial resources obtained – almost exclusively towards their household. This is done by minimising individual living costs and investments around the place of work. Another dimension connected with the workplace in Italy is the degree of interest in the functional elements of the new place of work. As Constantin [2008:6] observed, many workers “limit their involvement with the work place strictly to work, eliminating all ‘intruding’ elements from the general work environment: social contacts with natives, enhancing-social rights opportunities etc”. In fact, Romanian migrants in Italy who do not intend to return home are better integrated in the Italian society, have more Italian friends, show more interest in the reality surrounding them and tend to replace more easily some Romanian customs with Italian ones. Moreover, a third feature of commuter workers is their intention to return home, thus the envisaged duration of their work abroad. Constantin [2008] points out a further dimension accounting for commuting, namely, the formation of replacement chains for job preservation by family members and friends. This means that while a commuting worker returns in Romania, another Romanian – usually, a friend, acquaintance or relative – leaves and takes up the vacant job. Due to the nature of the jobs they usually perform, this type of replacement chain is very common among Romanian women workers.
Some insightful information regarding the perceptions of Romanians living in Italy was revealed by the sociological study undertaken by The Agency for Governmental Strategies in 2007. According to its findings, the following profile of Romanian immigrants in Italy could be drawn:

- Romanians living in Italy are more satisfied with their daily lives than most of the adult population living in Romania;
- Romanian immigrants are dissatisfied mostly by their poor interrelations and less by aspects related to health and money, that is, the main preoccupations of the population living in Romania. Overall, although the labour migration experience is a beneficial one, Romanian migrants lament the poor relationships with their families and a feeling of alienation and estrangement;
- most Romanian immigrants are professionally skilled people, having obtained their qualifications in Romania;
- before migrating towards Italy, most of Romanians had a job which was often insecure and poorly paid (the average declared income was about 140/euros/month). In Italy, nine out of ten Romanians had a job and earned approximately 1030 euros/month. Almost two thirds of the Romanian migrants worked in constructions, cleaning services, social care, trade and industry;
- in spite of more than 30 per cent of Romanian immigrants mentioning workplace discriminations, they still thought highly of their employers and Italian counterparts;
- Romanian immigrants in Italy took pride of being Romanian and generally felt prouder of being EU citizens than their peers living in Romania;
- Romanians living in Italy admit that their most common way of entertainment remains that of watching TV and that, compared to when they lived in Romania, they have a less active social and cultural life: they go less often to church and music concerts, read more rarely, listen less to the radio and seldom meet their friends. On the contrary, they make more use of the Internet;

106 The study entitled “Comunitatea românească: condiții sociale, valori, așteptări” (The Romanian Community in Italy: social conditions, values, expectations) is available at: http://www.publicinfo.ro/library/sc/cri.pdf (accessed in November 2009). Further data interpretation can be found in Popescu [2008:32-33]
- regarding the plans for the future, most Romanians want to return to their place of origin, earn more money, and build or buy a house. Real estate investments are all usually aimed towards Romania, as only one in five immigrants would like to settle in Italy for the rest of their lives;

- with relation to their perception of Italians, Romanian migrants generally have a positive perception although they tend to consider Italians lazier compared to the Romanian immigrants. Their migration experience makes them more tolerant towards religious or sexual minorities, but places them at increasing distance from the Roma citizens;

- another interesting aspect concerned the image of Romanians in Italy. Romanian immigrants were aware of the “Mailat case” \(^{107}\) and agreed that the Italian media had presented the case in a tendentious manner and that Romanian politicians had been more objective in this respect.

### 5.2.3.2 Romanian female migration towards Italy: features and profiles

The creation of stable migration chains composed of migrant women, coupled with the heavy reliance on foreign labour in the care sector by Southern European countries – Italy included – fuelled a growing process of feminization of migration in Romania. Piperno [2007] argues that in Romania this process started with the abolition in 2002 of the requirement for a visa for short. From this moment on, as bureaucratic procedures simplified and departure costs reduced, women were able to engage in their own migration path. Hence, for the first time, a significant increase was registered with regard to the number of women who migrated independently, not with the purpose of reuniting their husbands, but rather in order to find employment, often leaving behind their families. According to the estimates of CURS (Centre for Urban and Rural Sociology) the percentage of Romanian female migrants appears to have doubled in the period 2001-2004, growing from 16.7% to 31% of total migration [Piperno 2007]. Female migration in Italy is even more numerous. At the end of 2006, according to ISTAT data, Romania was

\(^{107}\) See the reference to this case in paragraph 4.1.3 “Legislative framework: from the 1948 Constitutional provisions to the present national legislation”, page 90
the third source of migration for Italy, after Albania and Morocco. Romanian migrants however were equally divided between women and men, with a slightly bigger female presence (180,000 women against 162,000 men) [ISTAT 2008:27]. This confirms the fact that the number and percentage female migrants have been growing steadily since 2002\textsuperscript{108}. By the end of 2008, Romania was the first country sending migrants in Italy and female presence had increased even further (there were 423,222 females against only 373,255 male residents in Italy)\textsuperscript{109}. Statistics reveal that, at the beginning of 2004, there was a low number of family reunification requests coming from Romanian male migrants, in spite of the high number of Romanian women present in Italy. The fact that the percentage of male and female migrants is well-balanced and that permits of stay are often asked for with the purpose of work may lead us to believe that many of these men and women migrate in Italy as couples and that both members of these couples are working [ISTAT 2007:48].

As for the features of Romanian migrant women, the empirical research conducted by Bîrsan et al. [2008] revealed similarities between Romanian female migrants in Northern and Southern Europe, showing that some features where common to all Romanian migrant women, irrespective of the country of destination. For example, a common feature regarded the age of female migrants who are often young and very young women. Moreover, a high percentage of them perform activities under their qualifications, or in another qualification. Still, they usually intend to stay longer and are generally, satisfied with habitat, professional and personal life. However, they regret the loss of friends and family. Women migrating in Northern countries usually had a higher level of education, whereas those migrating in Southern countries maintained closer ties with family members in Romania and tended to bring their children with them in country of immigration\textsuperscript{110}.

\textsuperscript{108} On January 1\textsuperscript{st} 2004 the number of Romanian female migrants in Italy was slightly inferior to that of male migrants (123,548 permits of stay were released to men against 120,829 permits of stay released for females) [ISTAT 2007:48]

\textsuperscript{109} For more details on other migrant sending countries, see Appendix 1, Table 5 “Foreign citizens in Italy. Resident population by sex and citizenship on 31 December 2008” (source: ISTAT 2009)

\textsuperscript{110} The research was conducted by Bîrsan et al. [2008] refers to immigrant women in the Northern countries of Denmark and the Netherlands and in the Southern countries of Greece and Spain.
Balcanu [2008] makes an attempt to draw up the image of Romanian female migrants in Italy, by analysing the articles published in two Italian newspapers, *La Repubblica* and *Corriere della Sera*. As a general rule, most articles spoke about negative aspects of Romanian female migration in Italy such as: crimes committed by Romanian women, violence against Romanian women, irregular immigration, and inhuman living conditions. About 26 per cent of articles presented also neutral or positives aspects such as: the importance of the help offered by Romanian women to the Italian families, the artists and sportswomen of Romanian origin, the successful businesswomen of Romanian origins, or the Romanian women involved in politics in Italy [Balcanu 2008:12]. Furthermore, Balcanu points out that between 2007 and 2008 a growing number of articles were written on Romanian women, mainly due to the attention given to two criminal cases in which Romanian migrant women were involved, either as authors or victims. In reference to the first case, Balcanu states that:

“On 27th of April 2007, a Romanian women, immigrated several years before in Italy and prostituting herself, killed with an umbrella a young Italian woman in the metro. A news item that shocked the public and echoed a long discourse upon the “barbaric invasion” of Italy by Romanians. All of the sudden the Romanian women [were] all only criminals, demonic hookers that came in Italy only for killing or stealing Italian men from their wives and mothers.” [Balcanu 2008:11]

However, Italians are not the only ones to attribute stereotypes to Romanian migrants. The negative aspects presented by the Italian media are echoed by the Romanian press thus provoking a feeling of discomfort towards Italy among those Romanians who did not migrate. The feeling of not being comprehended, as a sort of eternal victims, has attributed to Romanian by Durandin [2000:139]:

“One aspect of the Romanian collective existential drama dwells in that insurance of being a victim.”

Positive features of Romanian female migration are also spread through other means. For example a growing number of Romanian and Italian film directors make use of migration

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111 “Un des aspects du drame existentiel collectif roumain reside dans cette assurance du statut de victime.” (translation by Balcanu [2008:15]).
experience of Romanian women in Italy, bringing to light the extreme conditions endured by migrants, the prejudices, as well as the positive features of this phenomenon. The 2008 movie *Mar nero* (Black Sea) directed by Federico Bondi told the story of the relationship between two women: an Italian elder women who had recently been widowed and needed assistance and her Romanian young domestic worker. The situations presented by this film are very often encountered in reality: at the beginning, the relationship between the two women is very difficult due to the Italian woman’s mistrust; after a while though and after getting to know better her caregiver, this relationship evolves into a beautiful friendship and determines the Italian lady to take a trip to Romania in order to get to know her new friend’s country and culture. Stories like this one are frequently told in newspaper articles, television shows, and books written by Italian or immigrant women. Other cinematographic productions chose to present the negative aspects and the stereotypes either Italians or Romanians resent towards the “others”. Such an example is the 2009 movie “Francesca” in which the usual stereotypes Italians apply in relation to Romanians are replaced by the less common clichés some Romanians perpetuate when it comes to Italy. In this movie, we can hear Romanian actors pronounce the following phrases, in order to describe Italy:

“It doesn’t make any difference for them: we are all gypsies, criminals, thieves”. [Per loro siamo tutti zingari, criminali, ladri - non fa differenza.]

“Romanians are beat up on the streets by organized groups (…) it only takes one insane Italian to kill you, there’s no need for all of them to be insane.” [I rumeni vengono pestati per strada da gruppi organizzati (…) basta solo un italiano matto per ammazzarti, non serve che lo siano tutti.]

“I heard that they kidnap Romanians from the streets and they operate on them in order to collect their organs”. [Ho sentito che rapiscono i rumeni per strada e li operano per prelevare gli organi.]

“We are a nation made up of women, whereas they – the Italians – are a nation of men”. [Noi siamo una nazione di donne e loro, gli italiani, sono una nazione di maschi.]

The quotations are taken from the Italian trailer of the movie Francesca (2009) directed by Bobby Păunescu.
Chapter 5: An overview of Italian-Romanian migration paths in recent history

Of course these are all prejudices which derive from the lack of knowledge and fear of the ones who are different and thus source of potential danger. Similar negative stereotypes are perpetuated in Italy with regard to Romanians and this is also the fault of insufficient knowledge of those who are different from the majority.

Special attention has to be given also to the fact that Romanian women, along with other migrant women in Italy, undergo a double discrimination: first as women, and second as immigrants, that is, different from Italian citizens. However, these migrating women, who have “historically been associated with immobility and passivity”, are now changing well established gender patterns [Morokvasic 2008:17]. The traditional role of the man, as the major contributor to the welfare of the family is now challenged by the ever-increasing importance of the woman’s role. Yet, these changes take place in the country of immigration, i.e. Italy, in the detriment of the emigration country, i.e. Romania. Men and women profit by equal opportunities in the labour market, but this happens at the cost of transferring the domestic roles that were traditionally given to Italian women to immigrated women:

“Most Eastern live-out cleaners and baby-sitters to whom middle class career-oriented women transfer part of their reproductive work are declassed and de-skilled. They are often themselves middle-class, academics or professionals in their own countries and are trying to maintain their social status at home by working abroad. Their status preservation at home is thus contingent on their de-classing in their country of work.” [Morokvasic 2008:17-18]

In comparison with Italian women, migrant women are represented as being at an inferior level, on a step where Italian women once were, but from where they evolved.
5.2.3.3 Romanian female domestic workers: from care gain to care drain

The impact female migration had in Romania was not always positive. Not only did it create a “skill drain” problem, but it added the less known problem of “care drain”. Bîrsan et al. [2008:2] point out that “women are generally the principal caregivers within the family and their departure necessarily deprives the neediest of care: in particular, children and aged parents. It is not surprising that, precisely with reference to minors with parents abroad, Romanian media and NGOs have begun to talk of *de facto abandonment*”. This phenomenon has received a lot of media attention following several suicides of children, aged 10-14 years old, who were left in the care of their grandparents and strongly felt the absence of their mothers’ care. Moreover, it looks like Romanins are among the female migrants in Italy most likely to leave their children in the country of origin. Halcu [2009] draws the attention on the results of an empirical research which has shown that 60 per cent of Romanian women working in Torino left their children at home, whereas only 30 per cent of Moroccan women did the same thing. Obviously, one has to be very careful when dealing with these data because it may be true that Romanian women tend to leave their children more easily, but, at the same time, they also have less trouble finding regular employment and travelling home to see their children – at least ever since Romania has joined the European Union.

Moreover, the research conducted by Bîrsan et al. [2008] shows that care drain seldom translates into the absence of care and thus abandonment, thanks to the fact that the members of transnational families usually employ a series of compensatory strategies which reduce the negative influence of care drain and ensure the continuity of relationships. For example, mothers provide guidance and support to their children even from a distance, continuing to perform their caring role. Given the relative closeness of Romania and Italy and the recent infrastructure developments, travelling from one country to the other has also become easier and cheaper. Consequently, frequent trips back home or even family coming to visit are easier to achieve. In addition, mothers report making almost daily telephone calls and sending money and gifts home. Also, remittance flows are directed towards meeting care needs (that is, part of the money sent home is to be used for education and tutoring for children, health expenses and savings for a pension).
Nevertheless, the solutions put in place by migrant parents prove insufficient and the care shortage does not seize to exist. Despite receiving remittances and phone calls from parents abroad, children often report feeling alone (that is, without any family support) in the country of origin. The family members or relatives in which care these children are being places are not always capable of offering the most adequate support. The generation gap between grandparents and grandchildren may prove to be too great, thus both groups find themselves in difficulty. Bîrsan et al. [2008:2] even report cases when, “in order to be looked after by grandparents, minors have to move from the city to the country, where the difference in mentality can prove to be insurmountable”. Furthermore, when asked who supported and guided them in times of difficulty, they children were not able to identify any adult that they could turn to apart from their mothers who were abroad.

The lack of care is also felt by the elderly who remain in Romania, often having to take up the parents’ responsibilities. Care-giving for these persons is even harder to find than it is for the minors who are left at home by migrating parents. Few women in Romania are willing to offer care-giving services given the possibility of performing the same job abroad, for a higher wage. Consequently, if we consider that Romania is undergoing more or less the same demographic trends as Italy, that is, an ageing population in need of care and low birth-rates, combined with a welfare system which is not prepared to offer adequate assistance.
Chapter 6
Old and new migratory paths in the Province of Trieste

“Trieste ha fatto proprie le contraddizioni della frontiera, che è ponte ma anche barriera, luogo in cui è più facile incontrare l'altro ma pure rifiutarlo e ignorarlo, vivace apertura e gretta chiusura.” ¹¹³
(Claudio Magris in Corriere della Sera, 5 July 2005)

6.1 Historic background of the migratory phenomenon in the Province of Trieste

This chapter aims at presenting a brief history of the evolution of the migratory flows and distinctive features of the province of Trieste. As Trieste the case study of the present research is located in the town of Trieste, a few aspects and characteristics of this territory should be considered when analysing the findings and interpreting the data gathered.

Firstly, it is important to mention that, due to its location – at the crossroads of the Germanic, Latin and Slav cultures, Trieste’s population is made up of an ethnic mix from the neighbouring regions. Aside from the close-by neighbours (i.e., Slovenians, Austrians and Croatians), Trieste is marked by the historic presence of other ethnic minorities which

¹¹³ Trieste has made its own the contradictions of the frontier, which works both as a bridge and as a barrier, a place where it is easier to encounter the “other” as well as to reject or ignore him, a lively opening and a narrow minded closing. (my translation)
have been present for decades and have even managed to leave their mark on the city’s architecture, and on its cultural and social life. Such examples are the Serb, Greek, Jew and Armenian communities which have all found in Trieste a both a refuge and a commercial partner.

In order to understand the specificity of this borderland city, I will give a brief account of the most important events of contemporary history which have shaped the identity of its inhabitants. In 1861, at the time when Italy became a unitary state, parts of the territories of north-eastern Italy and the whole Slovenia belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. However, only five years later, Italians extended their eastern territories by taking hold of the western Friuli (today the Province of Pordenone) and the central Friuli (today the Province of Udine) along the border between Italy and Slovenia. At that time, the territory of Trieste and Istria, together with that of Gorizia and Gradisca, were still under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and benefited of great autonomy. Actually, under the Habsburg, this territory was known as the Austrian Littoral and it included both the Italian and Slovenian (or Primorska) border areas [Pantaleo 2008].

It was only in 1920, after the end of WWI and the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo\textsuperscript{114} that Trieste, along with the now Slovenian side (Primorska) became integral part of the Kingdom of Italy. The result was that a large number of Slovenes and Croats became part of Italy. According to Hehn (2002:45), “the treaty left half a million Slavs inside Italy while only a few hundred Italians in the fledgling Yugoslav state”. Furthermore, according to the Austrian census, there were around 25,000 ethnic Germans and 3,000 Hungarians living in the regions annexed to Italy.

In the period running from the First World War to the Second World War most of the current Slovenian territory was included into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, while the western part of Slovenia was kept under the Italian Kingdom. After Second World War, the Italo-Yugoslavian border was pushed towards the current Italian territory incorporating Slovenia into the Yugoslav state. As a part of Yugoslavia, Slovenia pushed the border

\textsuperscript{114} The Treaty of Rapallo was a treaty signed by the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in order to solve the dispute over the territories in the upper Adriatic, in Dalmatia and in the Julian March region (i.e., Venezia Giulia).
back, and by doing so gave rise to the famous “Trieste question” that puzzled the world for almost ten years and was one of the first signs of the Cold War [Pantaleo 2008]. However, after the Paris Peace Conference held in 1946 and the Treaty of Osimo signed in 1975, the two countries settled the question definitely: the so-called “A zone” (i.e., the current Province of Trieste) became Italian, while the “B zone” (now divided between the Slovenian Littoral (or Primorska) and Croatian Istria) became part of the ex-Yugoslavia.

Moreover, after the London memorandum agreement signed in 1954, the Slovenes allowed the Yugoslav citizens with Italian ethnic background to migrate to Italy. Subsequently, a relatively high number of these moved. The exodus resulted in a drastic decrease in the number of Italian community members and an increase of Slovene population and immigrants (e.g., Croats, Serbs and Bosnians) from other Yugoslav republics.

Aside from the disputes with its close neighbours which resulted in a mix of population, Trieste nowadays host also a significant number of Serbs, Greeks, Jews and other migrating minorities of more recent date. Furthermore, the city is also home to several minorities’ religious communities such as the Jewish, Greek Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox, Swiss Waldensian, Augustan Evangelical, Methodist and Adventist. According to ISTAT estimates, at the end of 2009, there were 15,795 foreign born residents in Trieste, representing 7.7% of the total city population. The Slovenes were the largest autochthonous minority, but there were also large immigrant groups from other Balkan nations (particularly nearby Croatia, Albania and Romania) -0.95%, Asia - 0.52%, and sub-saharan Africa - 0.2%. Serbian community consists of both autochthonous and immigrant groups.

Trieste’s multicultural population and its location at the border of Italy and at the crossroad of different empires, kingdoms and states had led to the creation of a distinct identity, to which Magris and Angelo [1982] referred to as the “border identity”. The city seems to have the ability to bring together minorities which in their home countries would be in conflict with one another and, at the same time, it can act as a meeting place for long time conflicting neighbours:

Chapter 6: Old and new migratory paths in the Province of Trieste

“The number of foreign residents in the Province of Trieste registered a constant growth in the 2000s. At the end of 2009, according to ISTAT data and data gathered by the Registry Offices (Uffici Anagrafe) of the Province of Trieste, there were 17,965 foreign residents living in this Province, almost 40 per cent more than the numbers registered at the beginning of 2003 and almost 140 per cent more than the figures registered at the end of 1998. However, the significant increase in the numbers of foreign citizens is coupled by a drop of the total number of residents living in the Province of Trieste. In the period 1998-2009 the total number of residents decreases by about 3 per cent, reaching a total of only 239,861 residents at the end of 2009.

Furthermore, the abovementioned study revealed that a significant increase was registered with regard to the share of foreign residents in the total population of the Province: 6.2 per cent of the population was represented by foreign citizens at the beginning of 2008 as compared to only 4.3 per cent registered at the beginning of 2003. Moreover, this figure is slightly higher than the national average of 5.8 per cent.

As for the distribution by age of foreign residents compared to autochthonous residents, data come to confirm the fact that it is mostly the young and adult population to undergo a

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116 Trieste, where Greeks and Turks spoke to each other in Italian (my translation)
117 Trieste has made its own the contradictions of the frontier, which works both as a bridge and as a barrier, a place where it is easier to encounter the “other” as well as to reject or ignore him, a lively opening and a narrow minded closing. (my translation)
118 See Appendix2, Graph 3 “Foreign National residents in the Province of Trieste on 31st December”
119 See Appendix2, Graph 4 “Total number of residents in the Province of Trieste on 31st December”
migratory experience. As a matter of fact, the foreign population of the Province of Trieste had a median age of only 34 years old, whereas the Italian population reaches a median age of almost 49 years old. Moreover, the share of foreign population in the total number of resident is higher precisely in those age strips which characterize the working population: 45 per cent of the foreigners have ages comprised between 18 and 39 years old [Candian and Zucchi 2009:8]. Therefore, the foreign population gives an important contribution to the rise of employment rates in the province of Trieste.

Moreover, the foreigners seem to contribute also to the increase of birth-rates registered in the Province of Trieste. But, most importantly, in the period 2003-2008 birth-rates increase considerably among the foreign residents: 84 per cent more foreign residents with ages comprised between 0 and 4 years old are registered in 2008 as compared to 2003. This evolution might be attributed to the fact that many of the foreign residents, who came in the Province of Trieste in the previous periods, settled down, probably found employment, got reunited with their families or build their families in the Province of Trieste in a manner similar to that of the Italian residents.

As for the citizenship of the foreign residents in the province of Trieste, at the end of 2008 there were 16,528 foreign citizens living in the Province of Trieste. Serbians were the most represented migrants with 5,755 residents, followed by Croatians with 1,526 residents and Romanians with 1,511 residents [Candian and Zucchi 2009]. As for the municipality of Trieste, figures looked slightly different: Serbians were still the first migrant community reaching 5741 residents, while Romanians came second with 1457 residents. In spite of being the most numerous foreign residents on a national level, Romanians were placed only third in the Province of Trieste and second in the Municipality of Trieste. This was mainly due to the old-date migration of ex-Yugoslav citizens and thus to the fact that communities of Serbians existed in Trieste long before the first Romanians arrived there.

Furthermore, in the period 2003-2008, the Romanian foreign residents in the Province of Trieste have registered a drastic increase, passing from 250 to 1124 residents. It was

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120 See Appendix 1, Table 8 “Foreign citizens in Trieste. The first 30 foreign resident populations by citizenship and sex on December 31st, 2008”
particularly in the year 2007 – that is, the year marking Romania’s joining the European Union – that the number of Romanian foreign residents grew by 127 per cent as compared to the previous year [Candian and Zucchi 2009:10].

Another interesting aspect of the foreign residents in the Province of Trieste concerns the family structure of this population. According to the data gathered by the Registry Offices of the Province of Trieste, 58 per cent of the families that had a foreign member were made up of one-member families. The explanation beneath the high presence of single foreign citizens is to be found in one of the features of labour migration: since many of the foreign residents have migrated for labour purposes, they most probably came to Italy individually and family reunification took place only once they managed to obtain a certain standard of living. However, it is important to consider the problems which may arise in the process of integration of these single migrants. The lack of references to the place of origin may sometimes be successfully replaced by the networks of relationships developed in the new environment. When these networks do not exist or are not sufficiently strong, solitude may transpose in a temporary difficult situation which, in turn, is influenced both by the integration paths followed by each individual and by the behaviour of the receiving society.

6.3 The domestic work sector in the Province of Trieste

A demographic analysis of the Province of Trieste and, more specifically, of the municipality of Trieste, reveals the fact that the elder residents make up for a consistent share of the total population. In 2007, according to ISTAT demographic data, Trieste was the Italian municipality with the highest share of elder population, followed closely by the municipality of Genoa. 27.8 per cent of the total population was over 65 years old, while 4.2 per cent accounted for the over 85 years old population.

On the contrary, the municipality of Napoli was among those that had the lower share of elder population with only 14.4 percent of residents aged over 65 years old and 1.4 per cent of residents aged over 85 years old. (Source: http://www.filleacgil.it/Filleacasa/DisagioAbitativo/Liv%204/Liv4_anziani.pdf, ISTAT demographic statistics)
Given the age distribution of the residents of Trieste and the high share of elder population, it became clear that forms of social assistance and care were needed for this category of population in particular. Since a great deal of the assistance suppliers were believed to be immigrant workers, most of whom were undocumented migrants and thus performed their work illegally, a set of projects meant to bring to light the informal component of the domestic work sector were put into place starting with 2005. Furthermore, the projects aimed at bringing together domestic work suppliers and families or individuals in search of caregivers.

Therefore, in April 2007, the Family Assistants Office (Sportello Assistenti Familiari) was opened within the Employment Office of the Province of Trieste. Its primary objective is to foster the legal employment of caregivers and, at the same time, analyse the specific needs of families and recommend the most suited employees from their database. The services of this Office are addressed not only to those families in need of a person to assist an elder relative, but also to those in need of assistance due to a disability or illness, to those who need domestic help or someone to attend to their children. Furthermore, the Office offers help with regard to the administrative procedures that have to be fulfilled for the employment of domestic workers and gives assistance on legislation governing the domestic work sector\(^\text{122}\).

The Family Assistants Office is not the only centre to offer support to the domestic work sector in the Province of Trieste. Already in 2006, an ACLI COLF office was set up in Trieste, with the aim of “defending, protecting, and fostering the cultural, social and working inclusion of Italian and migrant domestic workers”\(^\text{123}\). Aside from the usual support and advice to job finding offered to persons in search of work or families in search of a domestic help, the ACLI COLF takes charge also of the domestic workers’ professional training and even of their social inclusion. This is done by encouraging the participation of domestic workers in cultural and recreational activities. Furthermore, it offers psychological support and periodic encounters meant to foster the social inclusion of domestic workers in the Province of Trieste\(^\text{124}\).

\(^{122}\) Source: http://www.provincia.trieste.it/  
\(^{123}\) Source: http://www.immigratitrieste.org/associazioni/formazione/79  
\(^{124}\) Ibidem
Both the Family Assistants and the ACLI COLF Offices aim at bettering the quality of the services provided by domestic workers and, in order to do this, they encourage the participation of domestic workers in training and qualification courses. Moreover, in order to be employed, a good knowledge of the Italian language is requested and prior experience or qualification courses in this field increase the chances of job finding. As a matter of fact, the ACLI COLF Office only inserts in its database of potential employees, those workers who had already had a prior working experience in this sector and are able to present a recommendation letter attesting this fact.

As for the features of domestic work suppliers in the Province of Trieste, the data gathered by the Family Assistants Offices throughout the Friuli Venezia Giulia region reveal that domestic work is performed mainly by female workers: in 2009 almost 2,000 female workers found employment with the support of the Family Assistant Office, compared to only about 120 male workers [Cragnolini 2009:12]. As for the age of the domestic workers, 51 per cent were over 51.1 years old, while 36.1 per cent were aged between 31 and 45 years old in 2009.

With regard to the citizenship of domestic workers, only 12.5 per cent were Italian in 2009, whereas the remaining workers were mainly coming from Eastern Europe (76.5 per cent) [Cragnolini 2009:13]. However, the breakdown of domestic workers by citizenship does not offer a precise indication of the country of origin of migrant domestic workers. Still, a previous monitoring document of the Regional Agency for Employment of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region shows that during the 3rd trimester of 2008, 27 per cent of the domestic workers employed were Romania. The same share of Ukrainian workers was employed, while the Italian workers represented only 10 per cent of the total domestic workers employed in this trimester [Venerus 2008]. Previous monitoring reports reveal similar shares of the Romanian and Ukrainian domestic workers during the first due trimesters of 2008.

All things considered, it becomes clear that the demographic features of the province of Trieste trigger a distinctive evolution of the domestic work sector which is primarily made up of elderly assistance. Moreover, the statistical data previous mentioned clearly indicates
the fact that the elderly are highly dependent on the assistance offered by foreign domestic workers and that these workers are mainly made up of female migrants. As for the citizenship of domestic workers, Romanian female migrants are among the first to respond to the requests of domestic work services in the Province of Trieste. Therefore, a research on the aspects related to the employment, social and cultural inclusion of these migrants could be particularly relevant and it could offer first hand data on which one might draw on in order to improve the living and working conditions of foreign domestic workers.
PART III:
METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK
Chapter 7
Methodology

7.1 Choosing the research theme

The subject of the current research is the result of some years of reflexion over three general concepts and over the interactions between them: labour migration, female migration and integration/assimilation strategies. The study was triggered, firstly, by the growing interest in the field of female migration – an area of migration research which was completely ignored until very recently – and, secondly, by my growing personal interest in the way Romanian female migrants in Italy experienced the act of migration.

After completing my university studies in International Economics in Romania, I enrolled in the PhD programme for which I am undertaking the current research. Ever since the beginning of the classes, I was very interested in the phenomenon of migration and done a lot of reading on this topic. As a Romanian female migrant in Italy, I also tried to learn more about my female compatriots and the way they experienced migration and everything this act implied, starting from the moment of departure, the first impact with the new country, the feeling of homesickness and the relationship they developed with Italian citizens. From statistics, newspaper articles and migration stories narrated by Romanian female migrants, I understood that each woman experienced migration differently and that this variance was due to several factors such as: the reasons underpinning the decision to migrate; the age, family status, educational and economic background and, more generally, the particular moment in each woman’s life when migration occurred.

However, I soon realised that aside from listening to and spreading the stories told by these women, very little interest was shown in literature in the way these women managed to integrate in the Italian society. Actually, Romanian women are supposed to integrate very
rapidly into the new environment. They are believed to be very fast learners and to adapt very easily – or at least have less difficulties than other migrant women – to the new surrounding reality. This is partly due to the cultural resemblances between Romania and Italy and to the so highly-praised “Latinity” of Romania. Yet, little is known about the way in which this adaptation occurs and about the fact that the behavioural flexibility of these women is not always accompanied by a process of integration or assimilation. Instead, adaptation often occurs too abruptly, triggering a whole set of emotional and personal transformations which affect irrevocably one’s identity. Furthermore, the feeling of belonging to one particular culture, rather than another, and the identity changes suffered by these migrant women seemed equally interesting and worth exploring.

7.2 Choosing the sample and the investigation technique

As a consequence, I decided to focus my research on the situation of Romanian female migrants in Italy. Furthermore, I chose to restrict the field of my analysis to the labour migrants, because they are the most representative Romanians in Italy. In order to narrow down this field even more, I concentrated on the domestic workers, as most of the Romanian female labour migrants in Italy are employed in this sector. The location, that is, the province of Trieste, was chosen because of my vicinity to this area (this is the place were I lived during the past 4 years) and thus better understanding of the features of this province and of its historic multiculturalism, given by it being a “border land” and thus home to many migrants.

One of the most striking features of migrant domestic workers in Italy is the fact they usually find employment throughout unconventional job searching methods such as the suggestions and vacancy ads they receive from their networks of friends, relatives and acquaintances. Given the proportions of this phenomenon, it came natural to make use of this distinctive feature in order to find the sample for the interviews. Therefore what I did was interview four Romanian female domestic workers with whom I came in contact through various methods: two of them I met throughout my own network of friends, the third was recommended to me by the ACLI-COLF in Trieste and with the forth person I came in contact thanks to the Family Assistants Office of the Province of Trieste. I
subsequently applied the snowball technique in order to find the other respondents. This sampling technique allowed me to meet other subjects who were basically recruited by the first persons with whom I came in contact and who, in turn, recommended other potential subjects from among their acquaintances.

The investigation technique I chose to use in order to verify my hypotheses was the in-depth semi-structured interview. I found this instrument to be the most appropriate, as my intention was to investigate the individual inner conceptions, behaviour and perceptions, as well as their interpersonal relationships. All this would not have come to light if I used a more rigid instrument such as the questionnaire.

The in-depth interviews were individual, in order to provide a more involving atmosphere and make the interviewees feel as comfortable and relaxed as possible. The interview had a semi-structured format, meaning that I drafted some pre-planned questions but that I did not insist on asking specific questions in a specific order and I often adjusted my questions according to the respondents’ answers and to the frequently unexpected information which they provided. I found this method to be particularly useful because it allowed me to interpret what I was hearing, even the language and wording respondents used when answering my questions. I was also able to seek clarity and a deeper understanding from the respondent throughout the interview.

I chose not to audiotape the interviews as I noticed that some of the respondents were not feeling completely comfortable at the thought that our conversation will be recorded. Therefore, I took written notes during the interviews and usually completed everything once the interview was over, by adding information and remarks on the non-verbal behaviour or the non-explicit information transmitted by the respondents.

7.3 The interview and data analysis

The total number of interviewed persons was 15 and the meetings took place between the months of July 2009 and February 2010. They usually lasted for a minimum of thirty minutes up to a maximum of one hour.
As previously mentioned, I opted for semi-structured interviews, meaning that the framework of themes to be explored was quite flexible, allowing for new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of the interviewee’s answers. However, I prepared an interview guide which outlined and grouped the main questions and topics that were to be addressed during the interviews. Therefore, the interviews aimed at investigating the following general issues: personal background, personal migration history, aspects related to employment, degree of integration and identity transformations, rights’ awareness, and gender-related aspects.\(^{126}\)

Consequently, the interview was structured into five sections, all aimed at achieving an in-depth knowledge of the personal background and of the migration experience and stories told by the interviewees. Nonetheless, I tried to grasp from the answers received to what extent they managed to integrate in the Italian society and the identity transformations which took place as a consequence of migration.

The first section of the interview aimed at inquiring the personal background of the Romanian migrant women. The information gathered referred to where the interviewee came from, what her family situation was and for how long she had been staying in Italy. The data was helpful as it allowed a first framing of the individual story and it offered the possibility of comparing the migration experience of a certain subject against experiences of other interviewees who belonged to the same age category or shared the same level of education or place of provenience in Romania. Also, based on the place of provenience in Romania and on the economic and social evolution of that particular area, further conclusions could be drawn as to the propensity to migrate of the people inhabiting those regions.

The second section tackled the migration experience, trying to figure out which were the push and pull factors triggering migration. Furthermore, the interviewees were asked to describe their first impact with the receiving country and to assess as best as they could their level of knowledge of the Italian language and customs at the time of their arrival in Italy. This part of the interview was particularly useful as it helped kick off the

\(^{126}\) For the complete interview structure, see Appendix 3.
conversation and subjects usually gave detailed answers regarding their arrival in Italy and the emotions they experienced at that time.

In the third section, employment-related aspects were dealt with. Women were asked to give a full account of their previous employment situation and of their employment experiences in Italy. This part of the interview normally triggered accounts of the difficulties the interviewees encountered when searching for a job and the discriminations some of them endured while working for the Italian families. The stories told by migrant women allowed a further interpreting of facts as they were often accompanied by positive or negative remarks with regard to how they perceived certain events/behaviours/treatment they received at the workplace. Further conclusions could be drawn as to the level of knowledge of migrants’ and workers’ rights. In addition, the answers revealed information regarding the legality of the work performed and thus of the stay in Italy, as well as information regarding the level of protection these migrant women benefited from in Italy. Both of these factors are of paramount importance when it comes to the strategies female migrants can use in order to better integrate and feel comfortable in the receiving country.

As far as this research is concerned, the forth section is probably the most important, as it tackles the issue of integration and identity transformations. Female migrants were asked to speak about their personal growth and about the behavioural transformations which took place as a result of migration. Furthermore, the relationship with the Romanian and Italian communities was investigated, in order to determine to what degree the interviewees were maintaining their original identity and how much of this identity was replaced or enriched by new elements belonging to the Italian culture. Female migrants were also asked to speak about their future plans such as returning home, settling in Italy, accomplishing family reunification or any other piece of information which could offer clues as to how satisfied they are with their current condition and how they plan to change it in the future.

The fifth and final part of the interview addressed the migrants’ rights awareness. As it is often the case, migrants are in a disadvantaged condition, either because they are not legally staying in Italy or because they do not possess the necessary knowledge that can help them claim their rights when needed. It occurred to me that very often, while the
media and politicians are concerned with the potential danger represented by illegal migration, migrants are busy working and earning a decent living for them and their families. Therefore in extreme situations these migrants – regardless of their legal status – may find themselves in danger because they are not aware of their rights or of how they can claim them. In addition, the interviewees were requested to offer information regarding their level of interest in the political, social, cultural and economic developments taking place in Italy. The responses were considered indicative of their willingness to be a part of the country in which they currently lived.

The research aims to demonstrate that, in spite of the similarities between the Romanian and Italian cultures and thus the high potential for integration of Romanian migrant women working in the domestic sector, integration is hard to achieve. This is often due to the nature of their work and type of work contract under which they are employed, as well as to other elements pertaining to the social, cultural and educational background, the age and personal history of each woman. Consequently, women working on an hourly basis, as well as younger women and those who have less ties with Romania are expected to achieve higher levels of social integration and generally feel more satisfied with their life in Italy. In comparison, women who work as live-in domestic workers, and those who already have strong ties with Romania – namely family, properties or relatives from which they do not wish to separate on a long term – are expected have more difficulties integrating and feel less content with their life in Italy. Also, both groups are supposed to keep strong ties with the Romanian community living in Italy and to maintain a high interest in the events taking place in Romania. Therefore a great deal of the original identity is expected to be preserved, while elements belonging to the Italian culture are supposed to be also assimilated, either by replacing or simply adding up to the pre-existing Romanian ones.

7.4 The methodology: advantages and limitations

Regarding the investigation instruments used for researching the hypotheses of this thesis, I first considered using a questionnaire in order to gather the needed data. However, while building the questionnaire I had difficulties structuring the information I wanted to receive.
from the respondents, mainly because there were too many questions for which I did not know what answers to expect. I soon realized that a questionnaire would be too rigid and it would not allow me to receive any information other than what I requested. Adding many open questions also came to my mind, but this would also mean that I will probably only receive written answers and it would be difficult to interpret them unless I spoke directly to the subjects of my research. Also, running a serious quantitative survey proved to be a hard task as I did not have the possibility of gathering a sufficient number of respondents which could guarantee the representativeness of the sample. All this considered, the use of the in-depth semi-structured interview seemed to be more appropriate as I needed to investigate the individual inner conceptions of interpersonal relationships. Therefore, starting from the previous questionnaire draft, I was able to outline the questions I wanted to ask, while also leaving open space for any questions that might arise during the interviews.

This investigation instrument has allowed a great deal of flexibility. During the interviews I was able to orientate the discussion in the direction which I felt would permit for more interesting data to be gathered. While conducting the interviews I also realized that some of the interviewees’ answers were completely unexpected, meaning that it would have been almost impossible for me to foresee the importance of these data in a questionnaire. However, while it left a great deal of the space for unplanned questions, the interview was semi-structured, meaning that it was based on a pre-defined questionnaire. This fact helped produce comparable answers thus facilitating the emergence of tendencies.

Moreover, the fact that I interacted directly with the female migrants, permitted me to analyze non-explicit data they transmitted, such as the verbal language and the transformations it had suffered, the frame of mind and even the body language and facial expressions which changed according to the questions that were being asked.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned advantages offered by the use of the interview, a couple of limitations are of equal importance and have to be considered when analysing the gathered information and drawing the conclusions. The first flaw refers not to the methodology used, i.e. the interview, but rather to the sample, which was not very numerous hence the impossibility of generalizing the results. The second limitation regards
the sampling method, i.e. the snowball technique, consisting in interviewing a small number of female migrants who then suggested other potential interviewees from their circle of friends, relatives or acquaintances. By using this technique, I noticed that the networks proved to be quite homogeneous and female migrants belonging to the same network had similar characteristic: they either came from the same region in Romania or had more or less the same age and sometimes even shared a similar professional background. Therefore, the sample cannot be considered to be representative for all Romanian female domestic workers in Trieste. Still, similarities aside, all migrant women had different life stories and a different professional and personal evolution from the moment of their arrival in Italy.
Chapter 8

A portrait of Romanian female domestic workers in Trieste

8.1 Personal background

Based on the interviews conducted with the 15 Romanian migrant women living and working in the province of Trieste, I was able to draw some conclusions regarding their level of integration and identity changes which had occurred since their arrival in Italy.

Before exposing and interpreting the information gathered during these interviews, there are a few general impressions that have to be mentioned and taken into account when drawing the conclusions.

Firstly, I decided not to audio tape the interviews as I sensed that some of the interviewees felt uneasy about our conversations being recorded and I feared that they would not be completely open in their statements if I recorded our interviews. Furthermore, some of the stories and experiences unveiled by the female migrants were very personal and some interviewees were worried about the consequences of this information being made public. Therefore, in order to protect their identity, the names which appear in this Chapter are not the interviewees’ real names, but other Romanian common names which were used in order to make the text more readable.

Secondly, with regard to the methodology used, as already suggested in Chapter 7, the snowball technique was used for selecting the sample of interviewees. This resulted in the creation of some distinct clusters among the interviewed female migrants. More specifically, five of the women with whom I got in contact shared the same network of friends. Therefore they all had some common characteristics: they came from the same
region in Romania – namely Botoșani, a county in north-eastern Romania, close to the borders with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova\textsuperscript{127}, three of them used to share the same workplace in Romania and four of them were aged from 48 to 56 years old. A second group of female migrants having similar characteristics were also part of the same network. Two of them came from the same county in Romania, i.e. Botoșani, in spite of having no relation to the former group of migrant women. They were younger than the previous group, being aged from 27 to 35 years old.

With no relation to the first two groups, other three female migrants I interviewed came from the eastern part of Romania: one from the county of Brăila, one from the county of Neamț and a third from the county of Suceava. The remaining female migrants came from other areas in Romania: two from the capital-city, Bucharest, one from the county of Buzau, and two from the county of Olt. Unfortunately no representatives of the counties situated in the historic region of Transylvania were interviewed.

As far as the age of the interviewees is concerned, nine of them where aged 45 – 56 years old, while only six were younger with ages comprised between 27 and 40 years old.

Most of the female migrants first arrived in Italy about five to seven years ago (i.e., in 2003 – 2005), while only one of them arrived very recently (the most recent arrival was in the summer of 2009). It is interesting to notice that all of them decided to migrate after 2002 which is the year when the visa was no longer requested for those Romanians willing to migrate for tourism for a period of up to three months. However, from their declaration, I could understand that none of these women came to Italy for this purpose, but with the aim of finding employment and that all of them remained for longer periods, living and working in Italy as undocumented migrants.

Not all of the female migrants I interviewed had always been working and living in the province of Trieste. Actually, most of them changed more than four or five employers and worked in different regions during their stay in Italy. A few examples of the towns, provinces and regions in which the interviewees previously worked are: Province of

\textsuperscript{127} For a more clear understanding of the various counties location and the administrative units division, as well as the historic regions of Romania, see the maps in Appendix 4.
Caltanissetta (Sicily), Cava de’ Tirreni (Province of Salerno, Campania), Ancona (Province of Ancona, Marche), Rome (Province of Rome, Lazio), Province of Vercelli (Piemonte), Mantova (Province of Mantova, Lombardia), Verona (Province of Verona, Veneto) and Udine (Province of Udine, Friuli Venezia Giulia). Only four of the interviewees worked and lived exclusively in the Province of Trieste.

When asked about the differences between their previous workplaces and those in the province of Trieste, most of the women migrants who previously worked in the southern regions of Italy declared that they earned less money compared to their current jobs, but that they felt more accepted by the families they worked for:

*I felt a lot of human warmth while working for this elder family in Salerno. The pay was lousy but I was treated as if I were a part of that family.* [Daniela, 50 years old, in Italy since 2003]

*When my husband died they helped me with money although I had been working for them for only one month. I don’t think any of the families I worked for in Trieste would have done something like that for me.* [Maria, 40 years old, while talking about the family she worked for in Sicily]

The women who worked both in southern and northern Italy reported being poorly paid in the southern regions of Italy (they received a monthly stipend of no more than 600 Euro), whereas in the province of Trieste or other northern provinces they were paid from 800 to 1000 Euro monthly stipend. However, some of them declared that this was compensated by the fact that in southern Italy they felt more welcomed by their employers.

As for the marital status of the migrant women, I was able to outline two tendencies. The elder women, aged about 50 years old, usually came to Italy alone while their husbands remained in Romania attending to the house. They normally had children who were already teenagers and who were no longer living with them in Romania as they were either

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128 Since the interviews were not audio taped, the quotations inserted in this chapter are the result of notes I took during the interviews or immediately after they were over. However, even in those cases when the quotations are not entirely reproducing the exact words of the interviewees, the text remains faithful to the ideas expressed by the interviewees.
studying in other cities or having families of their own. On the other hand, the younger women, aged not more than 33 years old, were either married or single. In addition, most of the ones who were married lived in Italy together with their husbands and children. One example is Alexandra (33 years old) who was single when she came to Trieste in search of work.

_I was working as a live-in domestic worker when I met my husband-to-be. After a while I quit my job and moved in with him. Now I work on an hourly basis and this is much easier. I am able to have a social life and most of all I am able to have a family. My husband and I are planning to have a child soon._

Diana summed up very well the extent to which a live-in employment changes one’s life. Actually, Elena (56 years old) experienced the opposite situation:

_My husband and I were both unemployed in Romania. My pension in Romania is about 50 lei [more or less EUR 12]. We don’t have any children that can help us either, so I came to work here in order to gain some money for my husband and relatives in Romania._

Elena also explained that she usually comes to work in Trieste for about six months a year and then returns to her family in Romania. She has been doing this for the past five years. Obviously she had very deep roots in Romania, as during the time she was in Italy she perceived the whole experience as not very pleasant given that she was only supposed to work and endure the hardships of being away from her family. Moreover, other elder female domestic workers I interviewed suggested they all wanted to go back to Romania after a few years, once they had saved enough money that would allow them to have a decent life there.

Even Dorina, a 51 years old woman who has been living in Italy since 2003 and also had an Italian partner in Trieste and two daughters living in Italy, was saving up money for her retirement in Romania. Actually most of the money she earned by working as a domestic worker in Trieste was invested into a private pension fund in Romania. She said that she felt more “secure” knowing that in case something went wrong in Italy, she always had a

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129 On November 11th, 2009 (the day of the interview) one Euro was equal to 4,3 Romanian lei.
place to turn to in Romania. In spite of meeting new Italians and even having an Italian partner she confessed that it was sometimes hard for her to communicate:

“I have learned their language but still it’s like we don’t speak the same language.”

As to the education of the Romanian migrant women, the interviews suggested that almost all of the women were overqualified for the jobs they were performing. Three of the women I interviewed had a university diploma, while the others had graduated from high-school. Moreover, only one of the interviewees had a previous employment in Romania which qualified her for offering assistance to elder or disabled people. Therefore, in spite of their sometimes high qualifications, when they first came to Italy the others were not at all prepared for the jobs they had to perform. One example is Daniela who had a Bachelors’ degree and used to work as an engineer in Romania until the factory where she was employed closed down. She recalls working in an office and managing the sub-engineers in her department:

*I used to be a sort of boss at the factory where I worked and people would look up to me with respect.*

Daniela’s previous employment is in clear antithesis with her current job as a domestic worker. Still she feels very grateful to her employers and is satisfied with her experience in Italy.

Valentina (51 years old) had previously worked as a sub-engineer in Romania, together with Daniela. In spite of only graduating from high-school, I could sense from our interview that she was a very cultured and educated person and that she always sought to learn more and improve her skills and knowledge. Even if she was employed as a live-in domestic worker and usually had a lot of work, in her spare time, she always tried to read a lot, as she said she wanted to “keep learning new things”.

Silvia (27 years old) had been in Italy for only five months when I interviewed her. She worked on an hourly basis but she still had a lot of spare time so she was searching for other jobs also. In Romania she got a Bachelor’s degree and in Italy she also planned to pursue her university studies, as soon as she got a better job in Trieste. However, she
pointed out that her high-school and university diploma were not automatically recognized in Italy meaning that she had to do a lot of paper work before she could enrol in an Italian university. Still she was optimistic about the future and, in spite of being overqualified for her job, she did not feel frustrated. As a matter of fact, most of the women I interviewed told me they felt more frustration while they were working in Romanian and receiving small wages which did not allow them to offer a better life to their children.

Just as Silvia, Alexandra (33 years old) had a high-school diploma but was also attending some nursing classes at the time when I interviewed her because she wanted to improve her skills in this particular field. Afterwards, she was also planning to take an one-thousand-hours nursing course which, if she managed to finish successfully, would allow her to work as a nurse in a hospital. While in Romania, Alexandra told me she attended university classes for a few years but that she had to give up eventually:

In Romania I had to work in order to pay for my university courses. But this left me no time for studying and I had to give up university after a while because it didn’t work. When I came to Italy I was also enrolled in a Romanian university and I was taking online classes. This time I also had to give up because in Italy life was really tough at the beginning and I had to concentrate on finding a good employment.

However, after almost four years of staying in Italy, Alexandra had managed to find a balance between work, study and family. At the moment of the interview she was taking nursing classes and had even bigger plans for the future.

All things considered, one tendency which emerged from the interviews was that younger Romanian domestic workers usually had higher career aspirations and planed to improve their skills or pursue their studies in a different field as soon as their financial situation allowed them to. With regard to the elder women, even in those cases where they were highly educated, they also seemed quite content with the fact that they managed to earn more money by working in Italy. Still, their condition and social status were more affected, as many of them confessed that, at a younger age, they never would have imagined that they will be working as domestic helps.
8.2 The migration experience

In this part of the interview, I tried to investigate Romanian migrant women’s motivation to migrate and the first moments of their staying in Italy. In all cases, moving to Italy was the first international migration experience for the interviewees. However, some female migrants reported having migrated internally within Romania. This happened usually in those cases where husbands came from other areas of Romania and the female migrants I interviewed moved to their husbands’ respective areas of origin once they got married. Moreover, two of the interviewees reported frequent trips to the bordering country of Moldova and to Turkey from where they usually bought products which they then sold in Romania at a higher price. As described in the Chapter 5 of this research, this phenomenon of commuting or so-called “trade by suitcase” was very popular at the beginning of the 1990s, especially among those Romanians who lived in border areas.

From female migrants’ accounts of how migration towards Italy occurred and the reasons which underpinned their decision, I was able to identify the main push and pull factors of migration. Since this research concerns female domestic workers, it is quite natural for the main migration motive to be labour-related. Actually all of the women I interviewed first came to Italy in order to find employment. Of course this data cannot be generalized as there are also Romanian women who migrate to Italy in order to reunite with their families and, only after doing that, they start searching for employment. However, the female migrants who answered to my interview did not have their husbands or children already working or living in Italy at the moment of their first migration. Some of them had some friends or relatives already living in Italy, but most of them came alone without having much clue about what to expect once they arrived in Italy.

One remark concerning this part of the interview is that many migrant women stated that, before coming to Italy, their expectations were much higher with regard to the employment opportunities, employment conditions and life in general. They also explained that this was mainly due to the fact that no matter how harsh living abroad might have been for a migrant woman, at her return in Romania she would always depict her migration experience in milder terms. Some of the women I interviewed told me they used

130 See paragraph 5.2.2.2 on “The evolution of international migration”
to do the same thing when talking to their relatives or friends in Romania. They would purposely exaggerate the positive aspects of their experience and minimize or even hide the negative parts. The reasons for which they did this were related both to the fact that they did not want their relatives to worry for them and also to a kind of shame they felt with regard to the activities they performed and to the fact that earning money in Italy was not as easy as everyone back home imagined. I noticed this behaviour mostly in elder female migrants and migrants who came from smaller towns in Romania. This might be because in smaller communities – governed by more conservative attitudes and where members know each other more easily – the collective perception with regard to each member’s accomplishments is more important than in larger communities where the individual does not have to account for his or her facts to the entire community.

Female migrants explained that there was not much for them to do in Romania. The elder ones usually came from small cities in Romania where employment was almost impossible to achieve for women their age. Some of the elder women I interviewed were either unable to find employment in Romania or the wage they earned was not sufficient for a decent living. Consequently they migrated in order to offer a better future to their children.

My daughter was 19 years old when I first came to Italy. She enrolled at university in Brasov and we did not have the money to support her throughout university. My younger son was only 17 but he also went to university a couple of years later. One of us [either her or her husband] had to make this sacrifice. [Nicoleta, 48 years old, in Italy since 2003]

Nicoleta managed to find employment and offer a better future to her children. Now that they are doing fine and are able to provide for themselves she is planning to go back to Romania. On the contrary, Dorina (51 years old), who has managed to financially assist her children, decided to remain a little bit more in Italy and invest the money she gained in a private pension fund in Romania. She stated that:

I still feel young and capable of work but for a woman my age it is practically impossible to find employment in the small town from which I come from in Romania.

Beside their children’s future, other women stated that the money they gained in Italy was destined to finance small household investments such as restructuring the house they lived
in back in Romania, buying a car or electrical appliances and even covering daily financial expenses or paying debts. Children always came first but many were also sent to parents or relatives in need.

The motivation was slightly different for younger women who usually came to Italy because they wanted to work and be able to offer themselves a better future. They sent less money to their relatives in Romania and spent most of their wage in Italy where they had their families or simply invested more money in their personal growth.

As for the pull factors, that is, the reasons for which the female migrants I interviewed chose Italy as a destination country, the motives are quite homogeneous. Most of the interviewees stated that they had some friends, relatives or mere acquaintances who were working in Italy and who encouraged them to migrate. However, as they explained, their expectations before coming to Italy were in all cases higher than what they actually faced once arriving to their destination. The first impact with Italy and the first migration experience were – in almost all cases – unsettling and triggered very difficult situations for the female migrants.

Most of the problems Romanian female migrants encountered once in Italy were related either to their legal status or to the lack of knowledge of the Italian language and customs. The very trip to Italy was a difficult task for those women who migrated before 2007, i.e., before Romania joined the European Union. They usually came as tourists meaning that they could stay for a maximum of three months in Italy and that no visa was required for this. However, when crossing the border, tourists had to present an invitation letter from an Italian citizen and the insurance and financial means needed for their staying in Italy. For the migrant women I interviewed this meant that they either had to borrow or save up money prior to their departure. The money was often used to bride their way through Italy. Mariana (45 years old, in Italy since 2004) recalls the following:

_The first time I came to Italy it was by bus. I did not have an invitation and the money they were asking me to show for my staying in Italy. The bus driver told us each person should give 20 euros for the Romanian frontier guards. This way we won’t have any trouble crossing the border. I did that together with all the other people on the bus and everything_
was fine. Other times things were more difficult though. I once had to give away everything I gained in one month of work in Italy. Those were very hard times.

Other female migrants had similar stories. Daniela remembers that in order to have a job once she arrived in Italy, she paid 300 euros to a Romanian woman who was already working in Italy and had learned about a vacancy for a domestic worker with an Italian family of elder people. This first employment in the Sicily region was particularly difficult for Daniela: the pay was very poor and she only had one day off every week; the rest of the time she was not even allowed to go outside her employers’ house; she also remembers her employers locking her inside the house each time they went out. However, given these inhuman conditions, Daniela decided to react:

After a couple of months I tried to ask for a salary raise. They were only paying me 400 euros a month. Do you know what they told me? That I was an illegal immigrant and that they could denounce me to the police who would surely be glad to deport me to Romania.

After this bad experience Daniela decided to return to Romania where she waited another year, until 2004, when she managed to find a better job with the help of a friend who was working in Italy.

Nicoleta had a similar story with the only difference that, in her case, the situation took a different turn. Just as Daniela, she had to pay 300 euros to a doctor in Rome who she heard was recommending domestic workers to his Italian elder patients. As soon as she got to Rome she was given hospitality in a very small house where she stayed together with other 15 women of different nationalities. They were all waiting for a job vacancy to come up. Paradoxically, Niculana considers herself to be lucky because after a couple of days the police came and she was taken to the Questura of Rome together with the other women. As a result, she was given a permit of stay in Italy and was able to move to Bologna and then to Verona where – with the help of a relative – she managed to find her first job as a domestic worker.

An element which was recurrent in the interviewees’ accounts of their first moments in Italy was related to communication and to the level of knowledge of the Italian language and customs. This was actually one of the factors to hamper Romanian women’s
integration at the beginning of their migration experience. Due to the poor knowledge of the Italian language and to the fact that they knew very little about Italian traditions and customs, most female migrants felt very vulnerable during the first months from their arrival in Italy. Many of them recall learning the basics of Italian in a very short time both because they were pressured to learn the language in order to perform their job correctly and because of the linguistic resemblance with the Romanian language. However, at the very beginning most women remember being difficult for them to understand the very tasks their employers were giving them.

All but three of the interviewees had no knowledge of the Italian language prior to their arrival in Italy. However, Alexandra (33 years old), Andreea (29 years old), Diana (29 years old) and Silvia (27 years old) explained that they had some basic knowledge and were able to understand a lot of what they heard at the beginning, albeit not being able to speak and formulate phrases correctly. They all told me they had learned a bit of Italian in Romania while they were younger and used to watch cartoons on the Italian TV channels. Actually many other Romanian migrants I met in Italy, either male or female, confessed to learning Italian by watching the Italian TV channels, especially cartoons. Of course this feature applies to those migrants who were very young during the 1990s, as this is the moment when Romanians finally started having access to information coming from abroad.

8.3 Employment aspects

In this section of the interview I tried to investigate the aspects pertaining to employment, as this was the main factor triggering migration and it also had repercussions on migrant women’s social life and personal wellbeing.

On the basis of the interviews I conducted some possible trends took shape, albeit these emerging trends could not be generalized due to the limitations of this research. However, I noticed that two employment “arrangements” were more common among Romanian female domestic workers: live-in employment – meaning that domestic workers had to literally live in with their employers, offering assistance on a 24 hour basis – and hourly
employment – meaning that domestic workers offered assistance on an hourly basis while residing outside their employers’ home.

I used the term “arrangement” to define the working agreement between employers and domestic workers because – in almost all cases – the employer-employee relationship was not documented by a working contract. At the time of the interview only three out of the fifteen interviewees were legally employed, whereas the others were part of the informal economy. However, other female migrants stated that, at some point, while working for other employers, they were legally employed. Yet, in spite of the fact that some of the interviewees were working in Italy as early as 2003 or 2004, none of them was ever legally employed before 2007, that is before Romania joined the European Union and the access to the Italian domestic work market became free for Romanian immigrants. Female migrants declared that before 2007 employment procedures were quite complicated, one had to cut through a lot of red tape and employers did not want to bother helping them gain a legal status in Italy. Due to this situation, domestic workers were very vulnerable, especially before this date. They had to be very careful in order not to be discovered by authorities and, at the same time, lacked many rights such as medical assistance and the possibility of family reunification. All female migrants recalled that the most difficult moments were those when they wanted to travel back to Romania in order to join their families:

> Before 2007 passing the border was always a drama. I used to go back to Romania about once or twice a year to see my husband and the only way was by bribing the frontier guards. I once had to give away everything I gained in a month of work. It was all the money I had and I was planning to give it to my family once I arrived home. But eventually I was so happy to be with my family for Christmas and have a “clean” passport that the money did not matter anymore. [Daniela, in Italy since 2003]

As to the type of employment, as a general rule, female migrants who intended to settle in Italy preferred hourly employment which allowed them to dedicate more time to their families and social life. On the contrary, live-in employment was preferred by those Romanian female migrants who were only interested in gaining some money while residing in Italy only on a short term. As I previously mentioned, some of the female migrants I interviewed had strong ties with Romania where their families resided. Another
type of employment performed by a couple of the interviewees was also on an hourly basis, only that this time they were substituting other caregivers who were not available to work at that particular moment. This kind of employment offered more flexibility to female migrants allowing them to take classes or dedicate more time to children and family.

Other female migrants performed their work on a temporary basis meaning that they would work in Italy for a fixed-term, say six months, and afterwards they would go back to Romania where they had their roots and where their household and family centres were located. They would normally stay for a short period in Romania – normally from two to six months – and afterwards they would return to Italy. At their return they would sometimes work for the same employers who, in the meantime, found a temporary substitute. A similar employment agreement was on-going between two of the Romanian female migrants I interviewed, Daniela and Angelica. Angelica was the first to be employed by the family of an elder woman whom she had to assist. After a few months she had to return to Romania where her husband lived, but she planned to come back to Trieste and did not want to lose her current job. At that moment, Daniela was searching for employment and was glad to take Angelica’s place. When I interviewed her, Daniela had a couple more months to work until Angelica returned to Trieste. She confessed:

*I am very happy with this agreement. I also have my husband and house in Romania. I only come here because I need to earn some extra money in a short time and in Romania this would be impossible for me to achieve. When Angelica comes back I’ll go home and see for my house and husband and then during autumn I’ll hopefully be back to work in Trieste for a few more months.*

This type of temporary migration allows female migrants to reconcile family life and labour activities. However it also creates disruptions in the family life and it requires a high level of adaptability. Female migrants would normally maintain the centre of their social life in Romania, while in Italy they would only dedicated their time to labour activities and gaining the financial resource which would mostly be spent afterwards in Romania. Given the high frequency of their travelling back and forth between Romanian and Italy, these women have to be able to cope with different circumstances and, at the same time, they have to be capable of adapting in a very short time to the changing
environment. It is true that they often experience very strong emotions, but this also makes them stronger and able to undertake new challenges.

*I feel I can face any hardships at the moment. I am not afraid of anything anymore. I know it might seem strange but I never felt so strong before in my life. Not even when I was younger.* [Valentina, 51 years old]

As I will explain in the next chapters, these women have more difficulties in achieving integration, but this does not necessarily mean that temporary female migrants are not interested in the process of integration, nor that they want to belong exclusively to the Romanian migrant community in Italy.

Concerning the previous employment experiences, all female workers declared that, before moving to Italy, they worked in Romania and – with one exception – were employed in sectors which were not related to the field of domestic work. Some of the previous job positions these women held were: engineer, technician, postwoman, waitress, confectioner, shop clerk, manager assistant. In Italy, before working as family assistants, some of the female migrants I interviewed had also worked as waitresses, baby-sitters, dishwashers, and cleaning ladies. As family assistants they normally offered care to elders, disabled persons, or ill persons in need of temporary care.

Concerning the ways of searching employment in Italy, the first jobs were found, in all cases, throughout the network of friends and acquaintances whose help seemed to be essential with regard to both job finding and any other problems which arose during their stay in Italy. Three of the female migrants I interviewed already had a close relative working in Trieste, before their arrival in Italy. It was either a sister, a mother or a daughter. The first impact with the new country was easier for these women because they benefited from the help of their close relatives who offered hospitality, accommodation and advice on job searching.

In order to find employment in Trieste, Romanian female migrants usually made use both of informal and formal methods. Some of the formal methods to which Romanian the interviewees stated they turned to were: the Family Assistants Office of the Province of Trieste, the ACLI-COLF and Caritas Trieste. A couple of the female migrants I
interviewed managed to find employment with the help of the Family Assistants Office and ACLI-COLF respectively. Some of the others explained that the ACLI-COLF asked for a recommendation letter from a previous employer in Italy and that this was rather hard to obtain in some cases. However, some female migrants did manage to obtain a recommendation letter from their previous employers and were consequently hired with the help of ACLI-COLF. Alexandra was one of them and she was very satisfied with all the work experiences she had through this association as the employers she had were always professional and everything was legal. In addition, the association received constant feedback from the employer and the employee and made sure that both parts were satisfied and that domestic workers’ rights were respected. Moreover, Alexandra was happy with the fact that the personnel was always available and helpful.

Many female migrants also made use of the weekly ads they found in the weekly magazine *Il Mercatino* or the daily *Il Piccolo*. However, informal methods such as recommendations and suggestions of friends, relatives and acquaintances seemed to work better, as many of the female migrants I interviewed managed to find a job with the help of these networks.

A couple of the interviewees confessed that job searching in Trieste was not as easy as they expected it to be at first:

*I knew from my daughter who was studying in Trieste that the town’s population was rather old-aged. When I arrived here I could see for myself that there were a lot of elder persons and figured that finding a job would be a piece of cake. After a while I was disappointed to see that it was not at all as easy as I thought. The ACLI-COLF wanted a recommendation letter and the Office in Scala Cappuccini [the Employment Office of the Province of Trieste] would only find very small jobs, working for a few hours every once in a while. It was only after two months of searching that I managed to find a job thanks to a friend of my daughter’s.* [Daniela, 50 years old]

*I came from Salerno where I always found employment with the help of friends and where employers were more easygoing. In Trieste it was very hard at the beginning. Employers are more serious and professional here but they do not trust somebody they know nothing about. So they ask for recommendations and are more afraid to hire you if they know you are a clandestine.* [Elena, 56 years old]
In spite of having difficulties at finding a job, female migrants were generally satisfied with the fact that their pay was higher compared to other cities in Italy.

One aspect I tried to grasp from the interviews concerned any forms of ethnic discriminations which the female migrants experienced during the process of job searching or while they were performing their job. Many of them told me that, on the one hand, employers sometimes mistrusted them possible due to the fact that they were Romanian and because Italian media and politicians wrongly associated a bad reputation to this nationality. On the other hand, other employers were even searching for Romanian domestic workers because they had learned about the fact that they were “hard-working”, “honest” and “serious”. Still some of the female migrants I interviewed suggested one should not generalize and apply neither negative, nor positive, stereotypes to a people based solely on its nationality:

_Some of them [the Italian employers] are afraid because they don’t know us and the only information that gets to them is the news on TV or in the paper, about Romanians rubbing or killing. Others are more open-minded; they know that we are hard-working people and respect us for that._ [Andreea, 29 years old]

_All the Romanian women I met here in Italy were honest, hard-working persons, but I also heard many stories about Romanian women that escaped with the money and jewellery of their employers or about those who wanted to marry their employers just so that they could inherit all their money. So I kind of understand that they might be mistrustful at the beginning._ [Daniela, 50 years old]

An interesting aspect which came to light during the interviews concerned the relation between the female domestic workers and their employers. The female migrants who offered assistance to elder women usually explained that the relationship was quite tense at the beginning. According to the interviewees’ declarations, elder women were in many cases reluctant to accepting them in their homes. They were mistrustful and sometimes even suspected their employees of having bad intentions. Due to this particular situation, female migrants usually did the best they could in order to be liked and accepted by their employers. This meant that sometimes they worked longer hours, performed extra-
activities which were not agreed to at the beginning, and even ate less food and tolerated humiliating remarks:

\[\text{During the first months she did not like me at all. She had grown very affectionate to her previous badante so nothing I did ever pleased her. She told me I didn’t know how to cook and that I ate too much and was too fat, so I started eating a bit less and cooking whatever she liked. I tried not to care and did my best to keep my self control and remain sane.} \]

(...) \[\text{Now we have become very good friends. She trusts me with everything and even likes many of the Romanian dishes I prepare, although she still doesn’t want to admit I’m a good cook.} \text{[Mariana, 45 years old, in Italy since 2004]} \]

Other female migrants experienced situations similar to that of Mariana. While talking about their employment experiences in Trieste or other towns in Italy, many of them confirmed that elder people were usually very mistrustful at the beginning while later they became friends and migrant workers could finally relax and stop perceiving work as a burden. Elder women in particular seemed to be more reluctant to accepting the new help within their household probably because they had trouble coping with the fact that they could no longer perform certain activities and that a younger woman took their place.

Valentina (51 years old) also had a good example of a “happy-ending” relation with the elder lady she assisted. Valentina confessed that after taking care of her for almost one year, she realised that the woman she assisted was a very intelligent and well-educated person and that there were many things that she could learn from this lady. The life experience and wisdom her employer had somehow managed to open up Valentina’s eyes and helped her achieve a certain level of emancipation in her day-to-day life and even in her relation with her husband and family:

\[\text{When I first arrived in Italy I used to me more submissive and obedient, but this job and the conversations I had with the old lady have opened up my eyes. I am more independent now and I understand that I am very valuable for my family in Romania. Now I demand more respect from my husband and relatives because, after all, I’m the one who brings in the money and my husband is not the only one to contribute to the family wellbeing.} \]
Beside elder persons, the domestic workers I interviewed had to assist disabled people or persons with very bad health conditions. Due to the fact that they did not have the professional training needed for offering assistance to these persons, they often had to face very difficult situations and were unprepared to certain reactions of the persons they offered their care to. For example Alexandra told me about one work experience where she had to assist an elder woman suffering from Alzheimer’s disease:

> After a couple of months I could no longer take it. It was very stressing; I could never rest, not even during the night. I really felt unprepared for dealing with this illness and decided to give up this job.

Female domestic workers recalled often having difficulties dealing with the illnesses from which the persons they assisted suffered. At the same time, they felt unprepared and considered they were given too much responsibilities while being paid vary poorly with respect to the complexity of the activities they performed.

### 8.4 Migrants’ rights awareness

With just a few exceptions, many of the intervieweees reported very difficult working conditions and their rights not being respected especially at the beginning, soon after their arrival in Italy. This was even more traumatic for the female migrants as they still needed time to get accustomed to the new country and were very vulnerable due to the recent separation from their home country.

Two of the women I interviewed had actually paid an important amount of money before coming to Italy in order to have non documented jobs as caregivers once they arrived in Italy. However, both of them were deceived because it all proved to be a trap: the first did not receive the position and found herself unemployed and with very few financial resources, while the second was employed illegally and thus unable to denounce the fact that their employers were exploiting her and paying her less than what was foreseen by law as a minimum wage.
As I previously stressed, before 2007 none of the Romanian women I interviewed were legally employed in Italy. Therefore it was almost impossible for them to denounce any form of exploitation from their employers, as this would have meant turning themselves in as clandestine immigrants. However, this does not mean that in all cases female migrants were exploited and did not have their rights respected. Sometimes having a legal employment was simply too hard to achieve because of the stiff bureaucratic procedures that employers had to put up with. The Italian quota system foresaw only a limited number of jobs for non-European citizens. Furthermore, employers had to identify their employees and be willing to hire them before they came to Italy. In practice this was almost impossible to achieve. Potential employers searching for a family assistant or a caregiver frequently had urgent needs and were unable to wait for the long procedures foreseen by the Italian quota system to come to an end. Consequently, they were almost “forced” to illegally hire non-European citizens.

This was also Irina’s case. From 2004 until 2008 she worked as a family assistant for an elder couple who only managed to subscribe a working contract for her in 2007, once Romania joined the European Union and bureaucratic procedures were made easier. Irina was perfectly aware of the fact that not having an employment contract had caused her a lot of problems and that she was unable to benefit from many rights foreseen for legal migrants. However, she did not blame her employers for acting this way:

*I am very grateful for the opportunity they gave to earn some money and thus help my daughter with her studies. They treated me with respect and this helped me get through the sadness caused by the fact that I was away from my family.*

Irina, as well as other migrants, felt very grateful to their employers although in many cases nothing was done in order to document their status in Italy. Even in those cases where female migrants reported being treated respectfully, in spite of the lack of a legal form of employment, respect was given only to a certain extent. From the interviewees’ accounts, I was able to understand that they never benefited from those rights to which every legal employee is entitled, such as paid leave and sickness, holidays, a minimum number of hours of rest during the day or bonuses and additional monthly payments (e.g., the thirteenth month payment and other bonus payments).
Moreover, some employers took advantage of the vulnerable situation female migrants were in and not only did they make no attempts to regularise the status of their employees but they further forced them to live and work and conditions which were barely human. One female migrant reported being locked inside the house while her employers were away; another remembered being literally thrown out in the cold because her employers no longer needed her services; others talked about situations which were clear examples of harassment and some even received sexual advances from their employers. Some of the situations female migrants had to put up with were quite traumatic and disturbing. I choose not to reproduce these stories as I consider them to be too intimate to expose and because the aim of this research is not to unveil sensational experiences. Still, from what I could gather, the unfortunate episodes in their professional careers have somehow served as a lesson for the interviewees. Female women who had been working in Italy for several years stated that they were more cautious while choosing their workplace and asked more questions to their future employers before accepting a job position. Some of them also reported having turned down certain job offers which did not seem to be secure enough.

During the interviews I also tried to learn more about the level of knowledge Romanian migrant women had with regard to the rights they gained once Romania became a member of the European Union. For this purpose I asked them whether they had participated at the last European elections held in June 2009. Since Romanians were at that time able to elect for the first time their favourite party for the European Parliament and considering that Romanians residing in Italy were able to choose between participating at the Romanian or the Italian elections, I was curious to see what the migrant women I interviewed opted for. Their answers showed that none of them participated at the elections – neither the Romanian ones organized by the Romanian Consulate of Trieste, nor the Italians ones – but about half of them told me they went to the Romanian

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131 Article 22 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides the following rights to EU citizens: “Every citizen of the Union residing in a Member State of which he is not a national shall have the right to vote and to stand as a candidate at municipal elections in the Member State in which he resides, under the same conditions as nationals of that State (…)”. Furthermore, article 22 reads: “(…) every citizen of the Union residing in a Member State of which he is not a national shall have the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament in the Member State in which he resides, under the same conditions as nationals of that State. (…)”
Chapter 8: A portrait of Romanian female domestic workers in Trieste

Consulate in order to express their right to vote for the presidential elections in November 2009 and previously they had voted for the referendum held in November 2007 with regard to the uninominal voting system to be introduced in Romania. Obviously the Romanian female migrants I interviewed were not aware of the voting rights which Romanian citizens had acquired when joining the European Union. This fact was partly due to the lacking or misleading information\textsuperscript{132} and also to the fact that female migrants had maintained a high interest in whatever happened in Romania, while they were less interested by the events taking place in Italy.

8.5 Level of acculturation and identity transformations

As discussed in Chapter 2\textsuperscript{133}, four possible strategies of acculturation can take place once migrants settle in the new country. The same goes for the Romanian female migrants I interviewed. They can either integrate in Italy – meaning that they maintain their cultural background and, at the same time, develop relations with the larger society – or they can be assimilated into the Italian culture – meaning that they gradually give up those elements belonging to the Romanian cultural heritage and adopt elements belonging to the Italian culture. The other two possible strategies of acculturation are: marginalization, where the Romanian cultural heritage is gradually lost, but new cultural values are not being acquired from the Italian society; and separation, where Romanian immigrants would stick to their cultural background and refuse to acquire any element belonging to the Italian society.

The latter two strategies of acculturation were obviously not the cases of the Romanian female migrants who answered the interview. All of them showed great interest in the Italian customs and values while, at the same time, declaring that, no matter how much they changed, they still perceived themselves as being Romanian. This led me to think that

\textsuperscript{132} An example of misleading information was the video presented by the Italian television which was meant to guide the citizens through the voting procedure for the European elections (the video was still available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ce8v99zPA on January 2010). The advice on how to vote was addressing exclusively Italian citizens, while completely ignoring to mention that any European citizen residing in Italy could participate at the elections and choose the Italian representative party within the European Parliament.

\textsuperscript{133} See paragraph 2.3 “Moving identities: reconciling personal and National identities when migrating”
assimilation was also out of the question, as even those women who had been in Italy for more time still demonstrated a lot of interest in the events taking place in Romania and maintained much of the Romanian traditions and elements belonging to the Romanian identity.

However, the strategy of integration, rather than assimilation, is quite predictable as none of the women I interviewed migrated at a very early age (the youngest was already 27 years old). This meant that much of their personal identity was already shaped. Therefore, the new elements belonging to the Italian culture would most naturally be added up to the Romanian elements.

For the purpose of this research, I tried to question the interviewees about the identity changes that occurred since their arrival in Italy and indirectly asked questions that would help me understand to what level they managed to integrate in the Italian society and, more specifically, in the smaller reality of the town of Trieste. When asking the interviewees whether or not they felt less Romanian after their staying in Italy they all responded negatively. Still, they added that some changes had occurred in their habits and even daily activities, but that essentially they had maintained their initial identity and enriched it with new elements. Most women stated that they were still very attached to Romanian traditions and customs. Even the Romanian traditional cuisine was carried on in Italy, while new recipes were added:

*I learned to cook the pasta and now I eat it every once in a while, although I prefer our Romanian dishes much more. I miss our traditional dishes the most at Christmas and Easter time.* [Dorina, 51 years old]

*I’ll never get used to their espresso coffee even if they tell me it’s the best in the world. It’s too strong, gives me heart palpitations.* [Corina, 49 years old]

*I like their pasta so much. My relatives in Romania always ask me to prepare it when I go back home. I even brought a moka for making coffee in Romania, but my relatives don’t appreciate it that much. I tried explaining that the Italian coffee is better but they still prefer the Romanian way of making it.* [Diana, 29 years old]
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It was interesting to talk with the interviewees about cooking and about Italian and Romanian dishes. Since for most of them preparing the meals is one of their duties at work, they were very prepared on this particular topic. Some of them told me they could not give up the Romanian eating habits, while others admitted to having adjusted to the Italian ones.

It was very hard at the beginning to get used to their small breakfasts. In Romania my breakfast used to be a very consistent meal. It’s also true that I did not have a lunch break back in Romania, while here I’ve grown accustomed to eating more for lunch and relaxing for a couple of hours, just like Italians do. [Nicoleta 48 years old]

What I could grasp from the interviews was that younger female migrants normally got used to the Italian habits more easily and even enjoyed and adopted the various customs and behaviours. Elder women were more conservative and tended to select only those aspects which they considered could improve their lives.

Another interesting aspect was related to the language the women used when communicating in Romanian. Since the interviews were conducted in Romanian, I was able to notice all the changes that the female migrant’s language suffered due to their staying in Italy. Generally, at the beginning of the interviews, after exchanging a few works, female migrants would excuse themselves for the fact that they had some trouble speaking Romanian. Given that they had to speak Italian most of the time, they grew more accustomed to this language. Even if they were not perfectly fluent in Italian, the fact that they had to speak this language daily created some problems and misuse of words in Romanian.

Since most of the times when Romanian female migrants had to speak Italian were at the workplace, the words which they had more troubles remembering in Romanian were those related to housework activities such as cooking or cleaning. However, in spite of the normal difficulties one has when having to change language several times during the day, some of the interviewees stressed that they tried to do their best in order not to forget their mother tongue and speak it correctly. They mostly disapproved of the Romanians living in Italy who, after a very short time, forgot their native language and were no longer interested in preserving it.
During my staying in Italy, I have met Romanian migrants who after a very short period of time in Italy started speaking a language which could be defined as a mix between Romanian and Italian, confusing some Romanian words with Italian ones and adapting Italian expressions into Romanian. Of course, the language that resulted was hard to understand for a Romanian who did not speak Italian, but it was completely comprehensible to other Romanian migrants. This is mostly due to the fact that Italian and Romanian are both Latin languages and to the fact that the two languages also share a great deal of “false friends”\(^\text{134}\).

However, the fact that most of the female migrants I interviewed did their best to minimize the effects that the newly learned language had on their mother tongue proves that they have a high respect for their culture and want to preserve it, while also learning the new language as best as they could.

When asking whether they felt integrated into the Italian society, all women answered positively. However, when investigating the level of integration a bit further, I realized that female migrants were still very much connected with the Romanian community. Actually their circles of friends were mostly made up of Romanian colleagues or relatives living in Italy. The Italian friends were mostly represented by their Romanian friends’ partners or former employers. Even Dorina, a 51 year old, who at the time of the interview had an Italian partner and planned to settle down in Italy, had some troubles integrating and communicating with the Italian people she knew.

> Most of my friends are Romanian because we understand each other better. I never managed to establish close friendship with the Italian persons I know. We just don’t have common interests.

I could sense from Dorina’s statements that she was quite mistrustful of Italians in general and that this was mainly due to the fact that communication failed. In Dorina’s, as well as other migrant women’s case, communication and understanding between the two groups is often hard to achieve, especially because it is had to find common interests as the Italian

\(^{134}\) False friends are pairs of words in two languages or dialects that look or sound similar, but differ in meaning.
people they knew had a different age or different life experiences. However, communication was easier for those women who decide to settle down in Italy and possibly form a family after their arrival in the new country. In this sense, Alexandra was a positive example. She was only 29 when she first migrated towards Italy. Contrary to Dorina’s attitude, Alexandra was very open towards Italians and from what I could gather she felt more secure when dealing with Italians than she felt in her relations with Romanians:

*People in Trieste are much more civilized. I was appalled at the beginning whenever I saw a civil servant smiling at me and answering my questions in an educated manner. In Romania you simply don’t receive this kind of treatment, although it should be normal. In Bucharest especially I’ve met the rudest people.*

For Alexandra and for other young female migrants there is no turning back. They feel as a part of the Italian society, although they stress the fact that they will always remain Romanian.

Andreea’s identity was also a nice nix between the Romanian and the Italian ones. She was still very interest in the events taking place in Romania. On TV, she preferred watching the Romanian television channel instead of the Italian channels. She also read about the events taking place in Romania on the internet and stayed in touch with her relatives in Romania via the internet. In addition, she had Italian friends and also friends of other nationalities and stressed that nationality and citizenship did not make any difference for her:

*I have friends of many different nationalities here in Trieste. So it really does not matter anymore if one is Italian, Serbian, Albanian or Romanian, as long as we get along and respect each other.*

Andreea’s path towards integration seemed certain. This might be also due to the fact that her husband and 3 year-old daughter were also in Italy and they planned to stay. The fact that Andreea’s daughter was very small at her arrival in Italy triggered a lot of positive effects with regard to the integration process of her mother. Andreea got to know other Italian mothers whose children had become her daughter’s friends. Furthermore, her daughter’s progress was very fast and she seemed to get along perfectly with other
children her age. Andreea and her husband decided to continue teaching Romanian to her small daughter who will most probably grow to become a so-called “second generation immigrant”.

One conclusion that can be drawn from these experiences is that the younger women I interviewed were more inclined to settling in Italy. They managed to reunite with their families, as their husbands were also young and managed to find employment more easily. Throughout their children they managed to get in contact more frequently with other Italians and conduct a life very similar to that of their Italians friends. On the other hand, elder female migrants were usually working in Italy on a temporary basis and had as a main goal earning money for their families back in Romania. They were less incline to settling in Italy for good. However, this does not mean that they were less interested in developing strong ties with Italians or that they were not willing to integrate. The truth is that integration was more difficult to achieve in their case, because they lacked common interests with Italians and they had reached an age when one is less incline to change and adopt new habits and new ways of living. For these reasons, the migration experience was more traumatic for the latter group of women. They were “forced” to change their way of living and often perceived the whole experience as an alienation from their roots.

Still, given the similarities between the two cultures, i.e. Romanian and Italian, – they are both European countries, Roman descendants and share Christianity as a dominant religion – integration can be achieved more easily. In the chapter 2 of this research, I was giving the example of antagonistic cultures where migrants often “represent a minority which is partially assimilated and psychologically identified with the dominant group without being fully accepted”. In antagonistic cultures there is the risk of migrants becoming alienated from their original cultures and, at the same time, they are not accepted as full citizens by the host societies. However, this danger was not present among the Romanian female migrants. They were all quite attached to the Romanian identity and most of them – especially the older ones – lamented the fact that they were pushed to migrate by the lack of employment in their country of origin.

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135 See paragraph 2.3 “Moving identities: reconciling personal and National identities when migrating”
Elder female migrants confessed that back in Romania they still felt capable of working, but that nobody wanted to hire them or that the jobs they had were very poorly paid. So they perceived migration as a *sacrifice* they had to do in order to offer a better life to their families. On the contrary, younger female migrants, in spite of being pushed by the same factors, perceived migration more like an *opportunity* they had to better their lives. This triggered different integration paths resulting in a more difficult adaptation for elder Romanian female migrants.

Furthermore, as discussed in the theoretical chapter of this research, the domestic work sector has some distinctive features which further influence the extent to which female migrants manage to integrate. Firstly, the sector is representative for the emancipation of Italian women who no longer fulfil the role of housewives, taking care of family and parents. The process of emancipation seems to have been done at the cost of female caregivers and maids who had to take care of the families of the newly-emancipated Italian women. For this reason, I tried to understand whether or not the interviewees felt frustrated or unable to emancipate due to the nature of the work they performed in Italy. Surprisingly, the female migrants I interviewed argued for the opposite. They explained that, indeed, the work they performed did not match their professional and educational qualifications, but that the money they gained and the fact that they manage to put up with all the difficulties brought by the process of migration allowed them to feel and be more independent:

> One has to have the capacity to start from scratch when migrating. I am a positive, optimistic person and these features have helped me a lot. Otherwise I would have suffered terribly. Now I feel that this experience has made me stronger and wiser. [Valentina, 51 years old]

Some migrant women even reported that they had been able do more things for themselves since they arrived in Italy. Valentina told me that, even if she works a lot, in her spare time she enjoys reading and learning new things. She considers education to be of great importance, especially for the young. It was for this reason that she first came to Italy, as she wanted her daughter to be able to study and go to university. Once her daughter will finish her studies, she plans to return to Romania because “that is where she belongs”.

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Some female migrants already had plans of returning to Romania and, at the same time, bring with them some aspects of the life in Italy that they found useful. Daniela, for example, was talking about wanting to refurbish her house and buy some of the domestic devices she enjoyed using in Italy, such as a dishwasher, a dish drainer and installing a bidet in the bathroom. Female migrants basically wanted to bring to Romania anything that would make their lives easier and allow them to have more time for themselves. Elena also talked about the Italian recipes that she will continue cooking once she returns in Romania and about teaching Italian to her grand-children in Romania.

### 8.6 Further interpretation of the data gathered

After completing these fifteen interviews what I realised was that, the Romanian female domestic workers might represents a loss as well as a gain for the Romanian society. Of course they send their money back home, help their families lead better lives and thus allow for economic growth to take place. Some of them even return to Romania, bringing their skills and useful aspects they acquired from the Italian society. The Romanian female migrants I interviewed also did their best not to create the so called “care drain” effect, by migrating away from their families and thus depriving small children and elder parents from their affection and care. Consequently, they either waited for their children to reach adolescence and thus be less affected by their mothers’ leave or – in those cases where children were very small – they did everything in order to reunite with their families in Italy.

Yet, as these few interviews showed, the migrant women who were keener towards returning to Romania were the elder ladies, whose close relatives were also living in Romania. Unfortunately, the youngest and more enterprising often decided to settle in Italy and thus reunite with their families and – on a long term – stop contributing to Romania’s economic and even cultural growth.

With regard to the Romanian female migrants who were more inclined towards settling in Italy, the interviews suggested that younger women had less difficulties adapting to the Italian society. However, the female migrants who participated at the interviews were all
“new-date” migrants – none of them had arrived in Italy prior to 2003. Consequently it is hard to tell whether, on a longer term, they will maintain parts of their Romanian identity or be assimilated to Italian culture. The interviews have also showed that, aside from the poverty and lack of employment, migrant women associated Romania to positive aspects and were not denying or being ashamed of their Romanian identity. This might lead one to think that they will not be completely assimilated, but rather integrate harmoniously into the Italian society and transmit elements of their mother culture to their children.

The negative aspects revealed by the interviews concern the integration process of elder Romanian female migrants. They are the ones to face the most difficulties due to their minor propensity to change and to the fact that it is often difficult for them to reunite with their families. Even when they declare that they are integrated into the Italian society, in-depth discussions show that they still have very strong ties with the Romanian community mainly because it is hard for them to find common grounds with the Italian people they meet and also because they have less opportunities of encountering Italian persons which share their interests.
Conclusions

As stated in the introduction, the aim of this research was to analyse the integration patterns followed by Romanian female domestic workers who migrated to the Province of Trieste, in Italy. A special attention was paid to the integration strategies used by these female migrants, as well as to aspects of their daily lives, family status, satisfactions and dissatisfactions with their life in Italy. In-depth insights were taken into any other elements that would lead to a better understanding of whether Romanian migrants managed to integrate and, if so, to what extent integration took place and what were the aspects that lacked for the integration to be complete.

Furthermore, the intention of this research was to reveal the motives which triggered migration, the social and economic background, the daily life and difficulties Romanian female domestic workers encountered in Italy and how all this had repercussions on the way in which Romanian female migrants managed to integrate in the Italian society. The hypothesis of the research was that, in spite of the much- praised power of adaptability and fast-learing abilities of Romanian female domestic workers, this group did not always manage to integrate perfectly into the hosting environment and that this was also due to the atypical nature of domestic work. Previous sociological studied had already revealed that dissatisfaction motives among Romanian immigrants in Italy were mostly related to their poor interrelations with family and friends and that many experienced a feeling of alienation and estrangement. Therefore, my hypothesis was that this feeling was even stronger in the case of female domestic workers, due to the atypical nature of their work. With this I refer to the fact that domestic work often implies cohabitation with elderly, ill or disabled persons. Migrant women find themselves working, often illegally, within these families and having very few contacts with the outside world. They are isolated and sometimes develop a dependence relationship with their employers who may take advantage of their undocumented status and thus make them put in longer hours, give them no spare time or holidays.
Moreover, another hypothesis was that isolation and a slower integration were more frequent in the case of elder Romanian female domestic workers. This happened because they usually had their families and relatives in Romania, while in Italy their only goal was to work and earn money for their families back home. Therefore, they were more inclined to accepting live-in working arrangements which were indeed more convenient in terms of wage and comfort. However, the working conditions implied by this kind of employment would also limit their contacts with the Italian society and create fewer chances of encountering and developing relations with other persons. On the contrary, younger Romanian female migrants were expected to demonstrate more adaptability and willing to adopt new customs, values, traditions, and even make new friends and move away from their family centre in Romania.

As far as the findings of the research are concerned, the hypotheses were confirmed. Moreover, other interesting aspects related to identity transformations and to migratory experiences undergone by Romanian female migrants added up to the initial suppositions. The interviews revealed that indeed older women preferred live-in domestic work and had more ties with their families and friends back in Romania. However, this did not mean that they were unwilling to integrate or get in contact with the Italian persons. They just had more difficulties at doing so, as they had less opportunities of encountering other persons. Even when they managed to do this, relationships were hard to develop and maintain due to the nature of their work and to the fact that they had very few time for themselves. Furthermore, they very rarely visited their families in Romania and this fact intensified even more the feeling of alienation.

However, the findings of this research have also revealed that elder female migrants often managed to find solutions to their communication problems and feelings of loneliness and homesickness. They either commuted back and forth between Italy and Romania in order to spend some time with their families and also earn some money or they made friends among other Romanian fellows with whom they shared common interests and sometimes even a common migratory experience in Italy.

Younger domestic workers demonstrated indeed a better integration in the Italian environment and were generally more satisfied with their life in Italy. Most of them
managed to reunite with their families or even start a new family while in Italy. They preferred working on an hourly basis and this allowed them to have more time for themselves and their families.

Interesting aspects were revealed with regard to the emancipation of Romanian migrant women. Many of the female migrants I interviewed lived under the Romanian Communist regime for several years. They were thus already used to the kind of “equality” promoted by this regime, meaning that, while they were in Romania, it was normal for them to have a job and financial responsibilities together with their husbands. Still, they had to be housewives at the same time, and attend to their children’s education, tasks less common among Romanian fathers and husbands. Once in Italy, in spite of the job they performed, many women managed to acquire a certain level of independence. Strangely enough, with the money they gained in Italy, Romanian female migrants managed to be more independent and acquire a new social status once they were back in Romania. However, this “double identity” left its marks, as the gap between the different statuses female migrants had in the country of origin and that of migration influenced their morale and increased the feeling of not belonging to the society they lived in. As for the ones who decided to stay, emancipation took place in a more natural manner, as female migrants often strove to achieve more professionally as well as on an individual level. They also managed to integrate more rapidly and were generally more flexible with regard to the elements belonging to the new culture.

One final remark concerns the immigration policies promoted in Italy. These polices mostly make use of an image of female migrants which corresponds to that of unskilled and submissive migrant women who migrate mainly due to poverty reasons or who are, at worst, victims of exploitation or refugees. Moreover, they reflect the image of an aging society, in need of foreign care-takers, a need for which immediate measures have to be taken. These policies usually offer short term solutions for the migrant women’s problems: they regularize their status when necessary and promote migrants’ employment in those sectors where the Italian workforce is lacking. But little is done with regard to the domestic, as well as other workers’ social inclusion. Acquiring a legal status is of paramount importance and for Romanian migrants this has become easier to achieve after their country joined the European Union in 2007. Still, this is not enough when it comes to
the migrants’ full integration and acceptance into the society they live in and enrich with their skills and hard-work. The unskilled, submissive female migrants often have high qualifications and aspirations on a personal and professional level. They are rarely satisfied with their status of domestic workers. Implementing new policies that would allow female, as well as male, migrants to make the most of their skills and feel welcome in the new society would certainly benefit both migrants and the receiving community.
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APPENDIX 1
Table 1
Foreign residents in Italy on 31 December 2007 by citizenship and gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITTADINANZA</th>
<th>v.a.</th>
<th>% vert.</th>
<th>% donne</th>
<th>CITTADINANZA</th>
<th>v.a.</th>
<th>% vert.</th>
<th>% donne</th>
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* According to the Dossier Caritas/Migrantes estimates, the legal migrants' presence in Italy is equal to 3,987,000 persons, about 16% more compared to the 3,432,651 residents registered by ISTAT.

Source: Immigrazione. Dossier statistico 2008. XVIII rapporto, Caritas/Migrantes and ISTAT data
Table 2. Percentage of female migrants among the total number of international migrants, by major area, 1960-2000

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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<td>49.4</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>50.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>45.5</td>
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<td>45.7</td>
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Table 3. Foreigners in Italian censuses 1871-2001

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<th>Non-resident foreigners</th>
<th>Total foreigners</th>
<th>Resident Italian population</th>
<th>Foreign residents per 1000 residents</th>
<th>Total foreigners per 1000 residents</th>
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Source: ISTAT
Table 4. Classification of the first ten migrant-sending countries in Italy, for numbers of permits of stay, 1970–1999

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<th>Total permits of stay on 31/12</th>
<th>Percentage of the total permits of stay</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total permits of stay on 31/12</th>
<th>Percentage of the total permits of stay</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total permits of stay on 31/12</th>
<th>Percentage of the total permits of stay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>6,460</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>8,399</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>63,809</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>2,068</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>6,472</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>31,881</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1,752</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>The Philippines</td>
<td>4,107</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>The Philippines</td>
<td>26,166</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1,504</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>4,048</td>
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<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>22,335</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>1,477</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>3,139</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>21,073</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>1,406</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>2,535</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>14,183</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
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<td>Jordan</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>12,998</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>10,933</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>2,080</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>9,364</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>2,018</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>8,747</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total       | 143,838                        | 12.9                                   | Total       | 198,483                        | 18.8                                   | Total       | 548,193                        | 40.4                                   |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total permits of stay on 31/12</th>
<th>Percentage of the total permits of stay</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total permits of stay on 31/12</th>
<th>Percentage of the total permits of stay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>155,864</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>133,018</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philippines</td>
<td>67,386</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>61,212</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
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<td>Egypt</td>
<td>46,773</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>41,234</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>41,234</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>40,890</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>34,042</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>31,991</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>31,991</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Elaboration of data from the Interior Ministry. Permits at 31 December of each year; 1970–1979: permits valid for more than three months, including expired permits; 1980–1990: permits valid for more than one month, excluding permit expired more than two months earlier; 1999: permits valid for more than one month, excluding those expired.
Table 5. Foreign citizens in Italy. Resident population by sex and citizenship on 31 December 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>373.255</td>
<td>423.222</td>
<td>796.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>241.829</td>
<td>199.567</td>
<td>441.396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>233.708</td>
<td>169.884</td>
<td>403.592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>88.853</td>
<td>81.412</td>
<td>170.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>30.992</td>
<td>123.006</td>
<td>153.998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philippines</td>
<td>47.606</td>
<td>66.080</td>
<td>113.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisi</td>
<td>64.181</td>
<td>35.931</td>
<td>100.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>29.796</td>
<td>69.593</td>
<td>99.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>54.314</td>
<td>37.541</td>
<td>91.855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>30.019</td>
<td>594.058</td>
<td>9.424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYROM</td>
<td>50.799</td>
<td>38.267</td>
<td>89.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>32.546</td>
<td>47.524</td>
<td>80.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>30.883</td>
<td>46.746</td>
<td>77.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>51.993</td>
<td>22.606</td>
<td>74.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Laka</td>
<td>38.142</td>
<td>30.596</td>
<td>68.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>53.125</td>
<td>14.385</td>
<td>67.510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>43.684</td>
<td>21.845</td>
<td>65.529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>31.714</td>
<td>26.112</td>
<td>57.826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>38.206</td>
<td>17.165</td>
<td>55.371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>19.639</td>
<td>24.905</td>
<td>44.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>23.937</td>
<td>18.390</td>
<td>42.327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>15.982</td>
<td>25.494</td>
<td>41.476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.913.602</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.977.693</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.891.295</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6. Romanian exports. The first 10 buyer countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The World</td>
<td>33,627,9</td>
<td>29,401,8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Germany</td>
<td>5,553,9</td>
<td>4,980,5</td>
<td>16,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Italy</td>
<td>5,182,6</td>
<td>5,013,1</td>
<td>15,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 France</td>
<td>2,478,1</td>
<td>2,269,5</td>
<td>7,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Turkey</td>
<td>2,204,5</td>
<td>2,071,4</td>
<td>6,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Hungary</td>
<td>1,708,0</td>
<td>1,636,9</td>
<td>5,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Bulgaria</td>
<td>1,390,0</td>
<td>941,1</td>
<td>4,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 United Kingdom</td>
<td>1,103,3</td>
<td>1,214,1</td>
<td>3,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 The Netherlands</td>
<td>974,1</td>
<td>606,1</td>
<td>2,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Ukraine</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>540,3</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Spain</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>678,3</td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 7. Romanian exports. The first 10 supplier countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The World</td>
<td>56,336,8</td>
<td>50,992,6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Germany</td>
<td>9,189,1</td>
<td>8,755,3</td>
<td>16,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Italy</td>
<td>6,384,0</td>
<td>6,485,4</td>
<td>11,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Hungary</td>
<td>4,177,0</td>
<td>3,533,9</td>
<td>7,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Russia</td>
<td>3,335,5</td>
<td>3,235,3</td>
<td>5,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 France</td>
<td>3,204,8</td>
<td>3,185,0</td>
<td>5,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Turkey</td>
<td>2,775,7</td>
<td>2,763,6</td>
<td>4,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Austria</td>
<td>2,742,1</td>
<td>2,467,2</td>
<td>4,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Kazakhstan</td>
<td>2,566,7</td>
<td>987,3</td>
<td>4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 China</td>
<td>2,413,5</td>
<td>1,669,6</td>
<td>4,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 The Netherlands</td>
<td>2,103,6</td>
<td>1,843,2</td>
<td>3,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Foreign citizens in Trieste. The first 30 foreign resident populations by citizenship and sex on December 31st, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizenship</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Serbia</td>
<td>3058</td>
<td>2683</td>
<td>5741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Romania</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>1457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Croazia</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>1368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Albania</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Cina Rep. Popolare</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Bosnia-Erzegovina</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Ucrainina</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Slovenia</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Macedonia</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Moldova</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Senegal</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Polonia</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Colombia</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Turchia</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Germania</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Marocco</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Regno Unito</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Russia Federazione</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Libano</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Camerun</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Grecia</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Bulgaria</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Francia</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Austria</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Bangladesh</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>23</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Tunisia</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Stati Uniti</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
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<td>28 Filippine</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Spagna</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Algeria</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total foreign residents | 8089  | 7706  | 15795 |

Source: elaboration of ISTAT data (available at: http://demo.istat.it/str2008/index03.html)
Graph 1. Total and female number of registered unemployed and unemployment rate 2002-2007*

* In Romania registered unemployed refers to persons able to work, who cannot be employed because of lack of available jobs (Law no. 1/1991 republished in 1994 and completed by Government Ordinance no. 47/1997) and who are registered at the territorial agencies for employment. According to the stipulations of Law no.76/2002, unemployed persons are those who simultaneously fulfil the following conditions:
   a) they are looking for a job and have an age of at least 16 years old and no more than the pension age;
   b) their health, physical and psychical capacities make them able to work;
   c) they have no job, receive no income or they gain an income which is lower than the national gross minimum salary;
   d) they are available to start work in the next period if a job fitting their skills comes up;
   e) they are registered at the National Agency for Employment or at another supplier of employment services.

Assimilated unemployed are:
   – graduates of educational institutions and graduates of special schools for disabled persons aged 16 years at least, who, during a 60 days period since graduation, did not succeed in being employed according to their vocational training;
   – persons who, before carrying out their military service, were not employed and who, during a 30 days period since the end of military service, could not be employed;

Registered unemployment rate represents the ratio between the number of unemployed (registered at the agencies for employment) and civil economically active population. [INS Statistical Yearbook 2008]
Graph 2. Foreign nationals residing in the Province of Trieste on 31/12/2009, by citizenship

Source: data presented at the meeting of the Territorial Council for Immigration of the Province of Trieste („Consiglio territoriale per l’immigrazione della Provincia di Trieste”), held on 18 February 2010. The data was made available by the Trieste ACLI COLF.
Graph 3. Foreign nationals residing in the Province of Trieste on 31st December

Source: data presented at the meeting of the Territorial Council for Immigration of the Province of Trieste („Consiglio territoriale per l’immigrazione della Provincia di Trieste”), held on 18 February 2010. The data was made available by the Trieste ACLI COLF.
Graph 4. Total number of residents in the Province of Trieste on 31st December

Source: data presented at the meeting of the Territorial Council for Immigration of the Province of Trieste („Consiglio territoriale per l’immigrazione della Provincia di Trieste”), held on 18 February 2010. The data was made available by the Trieste ACLI COLF.
APPENDIX 3
The interview structure

1. Personal data
   - Age
   - Marital status and children
   - Level of education
   - Place of residence in Romania and any other migration experiences inside or outside Romania
   - Period of stay in Italy and places in Italy where she lived/worked

2. The migration experience
   - Push factors (Reasons for moving away from Romania)
   - Pull factors (Reasons for which she chose Italy)
   - Accounts of the first impact with the receiving country

3. Employment aspects
   - Previous employment in Romania
   - Ways of finding a job in Italy
   - Possible discriminations intervened in the process of job finding
   - Type/Sector of employment
   - Type of working contract, if any
   - Working conditions
   - Respect of workers’ rights by employers and any positive or negative experiences involving the employers or the activities that had to be performed
4. Level of integration

- Satisfaction with habitat, professional and personal relations in Italy
- Reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life in Italy
- Importance of the Romanian community in the daily life
- Relation with Italians (how she perceives them and how she feels Italians perceive her)
- Changes and transformations registered with regard to traditions, customs and daily life activities
- Reunification with members of the family
- Nature of settlement (temporary or permanent migration)
- Identity transformations

5. Migrants’ rights awareness

- Level of knowledge of laws protecting workers and migrants against discrimination
- Level of knowledge of the rights acquired once Romania joined the EU
- Interest shown the latest political, economic, social and cultural events taking place either in Italy or Romania
The administrative map of Romania

Source: wikipeda.org
The four historic regions of Romania

Source: wikipedia.org