INTRODUCTION

“Gulag” versus “Promised Land”: Metaphors of Destination and Transnational Social Fields

A Sunday in Rome’s Garbatella

On a Sunday morning in November 2004, I took Rome’s metro from St. Peter’s Square and rode 40 minutes outside the city center to the Garbatella metro stop. Among post-1991 Ukrainian migrants in Rome (those who migrated after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the declaration of Ukrainian independence), “the Garbatella” also referred to a large parking lot behind the station where every Sunday, 50 Soviet-era courier vans arrived from all over Ukraine filled with photographs, letters, and Ukrainian products sent from family members in Ukraine to those working as caregivers to the elderly in Italy. Over 5,000 Ukrainians, most undocumented, visited the Garbatella every Sunday.

This morning I am with Tanya, an energetic woman in her 50s. As Tanya and I exited the metro, we paused on a platform that overlooked the Garbatella. Looking out over the crowd, it was immediately obvious that those below were almost all women. Even more interesting, whereas most migrant populations around the world tend to be in their 20s or 30s, these women were in their 40s, 50s, and 60s, many of them babushki (the plural of babushka meaning grandmother). Tanya sighed and said in Russian, “Do you see all those women down there? They carry Ukraine on their shoulders and don’t think they don’t know it … and don’t think they are happy about it either.” Although I certainly witnessed and participated in moments of happiness with Ukrainian domestic workers in Rome, overwhelmingly the women and men I encountered used phrases that suggested “forced” exile such as “forced out of Ukraine,” “stuck in prison,” and “gulag” to speak about their migration to Italy. Many I spoke with had personal or familial experiences with relocation to Soviet-era gulags. “Gulag” expansively refers to a system of forced labor camps that peaked in the 1930s–1950s
under Stalin and continued to exist in limited form into the 1980s. Perceived
offenses against the Soviet state were punished with exile to labor camps, often in
remote, underpopulated regions with brutal living conditions. Ukrainians con-
stituted the second most numerous ethnic group among the gulag population. Therefore, the “gulag” was a ready-made metaphor for migrants in Italy who
described working abroad as a forced, post-Soviet exile to the labor camps.

Entering the Garbatella, I walked among the throngs of people. Most Sundays,
women shared with me photographs from home. These included pictures of cars,
computers, kitchen remodels, or fashionable clothes bought with the monetary
remittances they sent back to their families. Migrants often told me that these
photographs were “proof” that Ukraine is “Europe.” As they pointed to objects
bought with their remittances, women often said things like, “We may be in
Italy, but we are still working for the new Ukraine!” It was not only consumer
products that participants on the Garbatella pointed to as symbols of Ukraine’s
European standing, but also the behaviors of children who were studying
“international business” or joined protests for a European Ukraine. Ethnographic
experiences such as these highlighted a gendered migrant subjectivity forged by a
particular intersection between gender, migration, and post-Soviet economic
transformation. A deep, and even tortured, relationship to Ukraine emerged from
my interviews with Ukrainian migrant domestic workers. The angst-filled dis-
cussions migrants had with me and each other about the life choices their
migration made possible for their children and grandchildren back in Ukraine and
the kind of nation the new Ukraine would become dominated Ukrainian spaces
in Rome.

A Domestic Worker’s Meeting in San Francisco

In San Francisco, the migration narratives Ukrainians told me were strikingly
different. Here post-1991 migrants from Ukraine spoke about how “lucky” they
were to come to the United States and presented their migration as a “voluntary”
exodus. Most were sponsored legally through family reunification visas and later
became naturalized U.S. citizens. Migrants spoke, at times sarcastically but mostly
emphatically, about coming to “the Promised Land,” “the land of opportunity,”
or simply “America” with all the potential for self-realization and economic
betterment the phrases imply.

Like in Italy, migrants I spoke with were domestic workers. One of the reg-
ularly organized gatherings for post-1991 migrants in San Francisco were home-
care worker union meetings run by Svitlana, herself a Ukrainian migrant.
Homecare workers are paid through a California state agency to provide in-home
care to low-income elderly and disabled persons. Migrants reported feeling a
connection to the U.S. state as “government workers” and described domestic
work as a site of integration. I observed this framing during a homecare workers
union meeting I attended.
Viktoria gave a presentation in Russian to about 20 people sitting around the table at the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) office on how to vote in the upcoming election for city supervisor. Formerly a literature teacher in Ukraine, Viktoria, 58, blended into this crowd of middle-aged careworkers from the former Soviet Union. In addition to homecare work, Viktoria also worked for the voter registration office during election cycles. As she walked her coworkers through a sample ballot, they lost interest and began chatting in Russian. Yuliana, a large, animated woman with a blond beehive hairdo said with a sparkle in her eye, “Ladies, ladies – oh, excuse me, and gentlemen,” winking and smiling at the two men in attendance. “Quiet! This is important. We are government workers for the United States of America. We must learn how to vote!” Viktoria continued, “Yes, Yuliana is right. We are American citizens now, and it is our duty to vote.” Galina, a woman in her early 60s, piped up in an exaggeratedly whiny voice, “But Vika, how do we know who to vote for? They all seem the same.” Heads nodded and people laughed. “I cannot tell you who to vote for, this is America. Right, Cinzia? Don’t say I am not doing my job properly!” Viktoria exclaimed, turning to me. I feigned shock and replied, “Who me? Never!” Viktoria smiled and said, as if relaying a secret, “But I can tell you who our union is supporting.” Galina clasped her hands over her chest and looked at the people seated around the large meeting table. She said with a smile, “We must come here [to the union office] to learn how to be Americans! It’s not so different [from the Soviet Union]. They still tell us how to vote!” The group erupted into laughter.

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*On the Shoulders of Grandmothers* draws on 160 interviews and two years of ethnographic research I conducted with migrant Ukrainian domestic workers in Italy, California, and their children in Ukraine as well as community leaders. It seeks to answer three questions raised by the contrasting ethnographic experiences illustrated in the above vignettes. First, grandmother-led migrations are both striking and unusual. Why are specifically middle-aged women leaving Ukraine to perform domestic labor abroad? Second, these migrants all have high levels of education, similar economic hardships, and experienced the same “push factors.” Why then did migrants in Italy feel they had been “forced” into exile to the Italian “gulag,” while migrants in California felt they had left for “voluntary” exodus to the “Promised Land” and how did this impact the behaviors of migrants? Finally, how do migrants in exile to Italy and exodus to California have different effects on Ukrainian nation-state building?

In order to understand why the behavior of migrants at the California union meeting concerned with the rights and obligations of U.S. citizenship differed so drastically from the migrants, whom Tanya called the “babushki brigade,” that gathered weekly at Italy’s Garbatella to discuss their new obligations of Ukrainian
instead of Italian citizenship, we must include where migrants came from in our analysis. Therefore, to answer the questions posed above, we must first learn something about Ukraine, specifically its gendered transformation from a socialist economy under the Soviet Union to something resembling a capitalist economy. The next section provides a brief overview of the Ukrainian context in order to situate the contributions of On the Shoulders of Grandmothers. Chapter 1 provides a fuller account of how Ukraine became one of the world’s top five emigration countries and the genesis of the divergent migrations to Italy and California.

From Soviet to Post-Soviet Ukraine

The Soviet Union or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), established in 1922, was a federal union that grew to encompass 15 republics, including Ukraine, with Moscow as its capital. The Soviet state was the apparatus that governed this federation which spanned West and North Asia, as well as Eastern Europe before it was dissolved in 1991. The Soviet Union had a socialist economy that depended on manufacturing. As a result, the Soviet State needed both men and women in the factories to keep production output high. There was virtually no unemployment in the Soviet Union. In order to achieve near full participation rates for women, the Soviet state provided social benefits including paid maternity leave, free or low-cost childcare, free healthcare, and free higher education. Women had a direct relationship to the Soviet state through subsidies, while men’s relationship to the state was vis-à-vis their work category where they were expected to contribute to and lead state enterprises. Men were expected to provide a paycheck to their family, but were otherwise peripheral to family life, because men were not encouraged to participate in childrearing or other domestic tasks.

The Soviet state advocated for gender egalitarianism, although this was never realized. The Soviet state did, however, undermine patriarchal authority in the home to some extent, and installed the state, not individual men, as the head of the Soviet family.7 The state also made mothering a public service and exalted women as “mother-workers” building socialism alongside men. However, the state did not take on all of women’s reproductive labor, leaving women ultimately responsible for childrearing, housework, and wage labor.8 Thus the socialist economy depended on an extended family household in which young grandmothers, who retired at age 55, were the primary caregivers to children and took care of the home so that young women could participate in the formal labor market.9 Grandmothers were indeed young because in the Soviet period (as well as in present-day Ukraine) most women expected to have a child between 18–22 years old. This means women in their early 40s are likely already babushki. In many cultural contexts, women in their 40s and 50s are not considered “older women,” which in Western culture can be perceived as a derogatory term because age, gender, and power intersect to bestow status on older men and
disparagement or invisibility on older women. Ukrainian participants, however, embraced both their 40s and grandmotherhood as a life transition in which they thought of themselves as “older women” and their adult children referred to them as the “older generation.” Given early retirement ages and relatively low life expectancy (see Conclusion), participants felt they were approaching the end of their professional careers and nearly the end of their lives. The Soviet bodies of my participants often looked older to my and other Westerners’ eyes compared to Italian or U.S. bodies of the same age. This is likely the result of the hardships and deprivation many participants reported experiencing under socialism and later the institutional collapse of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, I will follow the convention of demographers and refer to women in this age group as “middle-aged.”

When the Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991, the socialist economy was dismantled, and a newly independent Ukraine opened itself to global capitalism. Three processes occurred simultaneously and intersected to reify young women as mothers and expel many middle-aged women from Ukraine: (1) the reorganization of the economy and labor market according to the adoption of neoliberal capitalist principles; (2) the construction of a new gender order in which women went from “mother-workers” to “housewives” and Soviet extended families moved toward “capitalist” nuclear families; and (3) the rise of ethnonationalism, whereby the nation was increasingly defined by a common ethnic heritage, language, and faith, among Ukrainian policymakers and elite.

The previous stability of guaranteed Soviet employment evaporated when Ukraine joined global capitalist markets. Inside Ukraine, unemployment, economic inequality, and poverty rapidly increased in the 1990s during the first decade of independence. Ukrainian women of all ages experienced a loss in livelihood but middle-aged, professional women were particularly affected, because they were concentrated in state-run services and enterprises such as education, healthcare, and scientific research institutes that were shut down or greatly diminished by state collapse.10 Additionally, post-Soviet discourse constructed market capitalism as “masculine” and fostered an understanding that the limited available jobs were reserved for men who needed to be breadwinners for their families, whereas women should return to the home as wives and mothers.11

Just as the socialist economy relied on an extended family unit comprised of “mother-workers,” peripheral men, and strong babushki, the post-Soviet economy aspired to capitalism and therefore based itself on a new ideal family structure with mother-housewives, father-breadwinners, and absent babushki. The American sociologist Talcott Parsons influenced Ukrainian policymakers’ conclusion that Ukraine had to transform its family structure and gender relations.12 Parsons believed that a nuclear family with men and women performing “instrumental” and “affective” roles, respectively, was necessary for the creation of a capitalist economy.13 Parsons further argued that capitalism required nuclear families with a single breadwinner, because nuclear families were more geographically mobile.
Other family formations with two wage-earners or extended families in which grandparents or other relatives provided childcare were less easy to uproot. Instead, according to Parsons, a nuclear family with one male wage-earner allowed families to move where the best jobs were and provided the flexibility private industry required for economic growth. Therefore, according to Ukrainian nationalism discourse, the Ukrainian state “liberated” women from their Soviet obligation to work and exalted young women for their “biologically determined” role as mothers. As we will see, there was significant variation among respondents who, although forced to engage with this dominant discourse, contested, resisted, accepted, and struggled with this vision of the post-Soviet, ethnic Ukrainian family in their own lives.

Structural changes in the labor market made the discourse of “women returning to the home” appear desirable. Women experienced increased gender discrimination in the labor market, because “business” was constructed as a difficult and even dangerous endeavor unsuited to women in these early days of “Wild West” capitalism plagued by corruption. Additionally, the adoption by the state and elites of neoliberal ideology dramatically reduced state services, such as childcare, that facilitated women’s employment in the Soviet era. Anthropologist Nina Glick Schiller defines neoliberalism as:

> a series of projects of capital accumulation that have reconstituted social relations of production in ways that dramatically curtail state investment in public activities, resulting in the reduction of state services and benefits, and the diversion of public monies and resources to develop private service-orientated industries from healthcare to housing.

In Ukraine and the former Soviet Union more broadly, the neoliberal project of divesting in state services and benefits has resulted in the privatization of motherhood and the transfer of responsibility for reproductive labor, once shared with the state, onto the shoulders of individual women.

These changes in the labor market, economy, and family were also supported by Ukraine’s urgent process of nation-state building which sought to establish its separation from Russia and the former Soviet Union and legitimate its claims to an independent and ethnically Ukrainian nation and state. In post-Soviet Ukraine, ethnonationalism was articulated in gendered terms. Because of the great diversity within the category “Ukrainian” (see Chapter 1), not all Ukrainians saw Russia as radically different from them. Given Ukraine’s long colonial relationship with Russia, still a powerful regional neighbor, this was problematic for establishing an independent Ukrainian state. However, the Soviet Union was so fully discredited as a system after its collapse, that all Ukrainians do agree that they are not Soviet.

Perhaps the most condemned aspect of the Soviet Union was its gender order. In post-Soviet discourse, the Soviet Union “distorted” the true biological nature
of women and men through policies of gender egalitarianism. The Soviet gender order produced what is now considered an illegitimate family structure of “strong,” “masculine” women who neglected familial responsibilities in favor of paid work; “weak,” “effeminate” men given to alcoholism and emasculated by controlling wives; and “matriarchal” babushki running the extended household. Post-Soviet Ukraine, in its aspirations to be “European” and “capitalist,” has instead reified women as housewives and men as breadwinners. Many young women, finding structural obstacles to entering the paid labor market, aspire to fulfill the status ideals of new Ukrainian womanhood by staying home and caring for children or, even if they continue to work, now feel conflicted as they learn from new nationalist discourses that primary childcare is their responsibility and not babushka’s.\textsuperscript{17}

Therefore, in this new, European, capitalist Ukraine, middle-aged women’s jobs have been eliminated or greatly reduced by the collapse of the Soviet state, and young women are now expected to stay home and raise children, previously the anticipated role of babushki. As a result, middle-aged women have been \textit{doubly marginalized} from both the labor market and their familial role. However, men’s wages remained low and prevented them from supporting their families as breadwinners.\textsuperscript{18} Babushki realized that their children did not need them to care for grandchildren; they needed money. With their work and family positions eliminated or reduced inside Ukraine, many middle-aged women felt the only way for them to acquire money was to go to work abroad. The lives and experiences of middle-aged women in Western societies inhabit a marginalized position in public imaginaries, and this is compounded in the New Ukraine where the gap between generations is also one between Soviet people (understood as the past) and a younger generation more profoundly shaped by neoliberal capitalism and new Ukrainian nationalisms (understood as the future). Although young sex workers are a small percentage of labor migrants from Ukraine, they receive substantial scholarly and public attention; yet this significantly larger migration of grandmothers by comparison is invisible.\textsuperscript{19} Even middle-aged women who remained in Ukraine must nevertheless negotiate this double marginalization and be able to justify to themselves and others why they too were not abroad.\textsuperscript{20} For those who emigrated, whether they made their way to Rome or San Francisco was a matter of chance. However, the middle-aged women who led these migrations became part of contrasting \textit{transnational social fields}: exile to Italy and exodus to California.

Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller define transnational social fields as “a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed” and which connects actors across borders.\textsuperscript{21} Therefore, transnational social fields include social remittances, which are ideas, behaviors, identities, and knowledge that flow between receiving sending sites; family members who do not migrate but whose lives are deeply transformed by migration; and economic processes that
shape the terrain of possibilities for individual actors. However, even scholars who adopt a transnational lens have struggled to delineate the contours of a transnational social field in relation to ethnographic data. Some continue to focus on the structural aspects of the transnational social field, for example focusing on the circulation of bodies between sending and receiving sites. Others, particularly anthropologists, focus on the subjective dimension, arguing that migrants have “transnational imaginaries” that connect them to their homelands even if they never physically return. The first approach risks conceptualizing transnationalism too narrowly and the second too broadly. I propose exile and exodus, as contrasting transnational social fields, to allow us to see the specificity of both the structural dimension as well as the divergent gendered migrant subjects that are building the new Ukraine from the outside in.

Building Post-Soviet Ukraine Transnationally

In 2010, Ukraine had 14.4 percent of its population abroad exceeding both the Philippines and Mexico which had 4.6 percent and 10.7 percent of the total population abroad respectively. Ukraine ranks fifth among top emigration countries. Therefore, migration flows out of Ukraine have material consequences for the trajectory of post-Soviet transformation in Ukraine and the region. In Ukraine, like in many other national contexts, how women behave has both symbolic and structural significance for the nation, and this is heightened in moments of mass emigration.

On the Shoulders of Grandmothers shows how nation-state building and large-scale economic transformation in Ukraine are produced by the collective actions of individuals acting transnationally. In this context, gendered migrant subjectivities are a key site for understanding the production of transnational social fields, nation-state building, neoliberalism, and the workings of global capitalism. For this reason, I present much of the rich ethnographic and interview data through ten narratives that share the experiences of migrants and connects them to the aspirations and trajectories of their family members both in the receiving countries and in Ukraine. Taken together, these narratives illustrate how globalization is produced both from the bottom up inside Ukraine and transnationally from the outside in through migration.

Contexts of Reception in Transnational Social Fields

Migration scholars often study either the sending or the receiving country. A small but growing literature on sending countries investigates why people migrate and how states manage their population abroad. U.S.-based migration scholars often study receiving countries, particularly the United States, to understand migrant economic, occupational, and political integration. Even those who discuss both “contexts of exit” and “receiving contexts” tend not to analyze them in relation to each other. Rather, once the “push factors” of migration such as
poverty or war are mentioned, migration scholars often explain variation in
migrant outcomes and experiences by looking at the contexts of reception, which
includes the institutional landscape, immigration laws, labor market conditions,
and local gender and racial hierarchies of the receiving site.

The contexts of reception are undoubtedly important. They help explain many
of the differences between exile to Italy and exodus to California (see Chapters 2
and 4) – but not all of them. Contexts of reception do not explain why middle-
aged women are driving the migrations. In fact, scholars use the contexts of
reception to explain why most migrants are young women. They note that rising
demands for domestic work in wealthy countries is driving the increase in
women migrants worldwide and that domestic work is physically grueling, and
therefore excludes middle-aged women.30 Teresa, a Filipina woman in her mid-
30s and my contact in one of Rome’s domestic workers’ unions, found the
masses of Ukrainian grandmothers baffling. With a moralizing tone she told me:

I just don’t understand. Lots of the Ukrainian women who come here to
care for the elderly look like they could use a caregiver! What is wrong with
their daughters that they send their elderly mothers abroad to work instead
of going themselves? … Filipinas or South American women would never
send their mothers.

Teresa and others providing social services to migrants in Italy suggested the rea-
sons must be cultural. However, I uncovered that Ukraine was inserted into
structural processes of late neoliberal capitalism that constructed this particular
generation of women as potential migrants despite conditions in the receiving
context that may create preferences for younger women. I also found that in
order to explain the unevenness of the process of stage migration to California,
the sending country matters, not only for understanding the sending side of
migration, but also the receiving side. In approaching my data through a global
and transnational lens, I found that the relevant comparison was not between
receiving sites.31 Instead, the transnational social fields of “forced” exile to Italy
and “voluntary” exodus to the United States are the central comparison of this
book.

**Methodological Nationalism and Nation-state building**

Migration is often ignored in studies of nation-state building, because we fre-
quently assume that nation-state building is a process internal to a country. This
perspective is influenced by what Glick Schiller calls “methodological national-
ism” or “an ideological orientation that approaches the study of social and historical
processes as if they were contained within the borders of individual nation-
states.”32 This narrow frame has erased the role that migration and transnational
processes played in the nation-state building processes of Western Europe and the
United States, making it seem they developed modern states and national identities that defined “the people” of the nation within their own territories rather than in relationship to global flows of people and ideas. In fact, many European countries and the United States built industrialized economies with the help of billions of migrants, part of the Great European Migrations of the late nineteenth century, who worked in factories, fields, and mines unimpeded by passport or visa regimes that were largely abolished to facilitate this movement of labor. Migrants also helped shape modern nation-states in these countries.

Today, however, Ukrainian migrants face a world order in which nation-states are understood as “pre-existing” and “natural.” For individual migrants and non-migrants, the stakes for nation-state membership have steadily increased at the same time that the barriers to citizenship have also increased. Democratic rights and social benefits are currently tied to individual membership to a nation-state. As a result, the respect and privileges warranted an individual are conflated with membership to a nation-state and its status in the global hierarchy of nations. This often gives migrants, especially those excluded from the political and welfare system of the receiving country, such as Ukrainian migrants in exile to Italy, an urgent personal stake in the nation-state building processes of their sending state and can encourage transnational practices. Poor migrant-sending states frequently also have an increasing stake in fostering ties based on nationalist sentiment among their population abroad. This is because both the sheer percentage of the population of poor migrant-sending states abroad has increased and sending states are increasingly dependent on migrants’ monetary remittances as an economic development strategy. These forces intensify the connection between migrants and sending states making a global and transnational analysis that denaturalizes nation-states all the more important.

On the Shoulders of Grandmothers looks at sending and receiving countries as dynamic sites that are interacting with and shaping each other. Gender is a useful idiom for this global and transnational approach precisely because gender is central to articulating and maintaining global economic and cultural systems. Ukraine, the United States, and Italy are connected by large-scale processes of migration and global economic transformations that are fundamentally gendered processes with significant consequence for politics “internal” to Ukraine as well as migrant practices in the receiving countries. I excavate these macro-level processes on the ground through the experiences and subjectivities of migrant domestic workers and their families.

Making Capitalist Subjects through Gendered Migration

The post-Soviet world is a unique site of globalization. With the collapse of the Iron Curtain, global capital, market relations, capitalist moralities, and “Western” ideals flooded into Ukraine and heightened the visibility of global processes on the ground. Scholars studying the region often focus on top-down economic
transformations. They study the “transition to capitalism” by looking at elite players such as the “Oligarchs” who are wealthy businessmen with extraordinary political influence. Instead, On the Shoulders of Grandmothers studies globalization from the bottom up starting with gendered migrant subjectivities. Yet, how is it possible to extrapolate from subject formation to macro-level processes? And what is a “migrant subject”?

According to Michel Foucault, we are each individuated subjects produced through the specific constellations of power that act upon us. Yet individuals often create identities and engage in behaviors in groups when they are subjected to similar constellations of power that Foucault calls “discourse.” For Foucault, discourse is a structured set of statements, rooted in a system of social networks that keep the statements bundled together through repetition so that discourses become truth-making mechanisms. Discourse is power because it creates its own actors or subjects. Following Foucault, Rhacel Parreñas argues that migration is a process of subject formation and that an analysis of subjectivities “moves beneath the structural and institutional bases of social processes to deconstruct their minute effects on the subject.” However, through the study of gendered migrant subjectivities, we can also scale up our analysis and follow discourses and relationships of power from the micro-level of individual subjects to the meso-level of social and cultural relations, such as transnational nation-state building, and the macro-level of larger structures, such as the production of neoliberal capitalism.

Neoliberalism is an example of a global discourse that keeps bundled together a set of ideas about the relationship between the state, the economy, the population, and the underlying gender order. Therefore, neoliberalism can similarly shape the beliefs and behaviors of individuals despite varied local histories across world regions. In Ukraine, this shift from socialist to neoliberal economics has also ushered in a new set of moralities. During my fieldwork, many participants explained this idea of subject formation to me in colloquial language by noting that “Soviet” and “capitalist” people had different “mentalities.” Ukrainian migrants and their children struggled with these questions about “Soviet” versus “capitalist” subjectivities and their negotiations show how economic structures are tied to family structures and gendered discourses. What an individual must do to be considered a successful and honorable person varies dramatically under socialism and capitalism which have different systems of rewards and punishments and therefore produce contrasting subjects. These new capitalist moralities created painful contradictions for migrants in this study who came of age under the Soviet Union and identified themselves as Soviet people. They worried, therefore, that they lacked the knowledge necessary to teach their children how to be “capitalist” subjects and live economically stable and emotionally fulfilling lives in this new, post-Soviet world.

Young adults I interviewed in Ukraine were also concerned about the production of capitalist subjects. They worried that economic reforms enacted by elites from above, without changing the “Soviet mentality” of the people on the
ground, would not be enough to produce a capitalist Ukraine. They wondered how Ukraine could become a capitalist country if its citizens were still Soviet. Twenty-two-year-old Bohdan asserted this view in stark terms over tea in L’viv’s city center. He said, “The older generation, they have a Soviet mentality. In order for Ukraine to become a capitalist country, we are waiting for this generation to die.” Despite the devaluation of Ukraine’s Soviet generation, and middle-aged men are not excluded from this devaluation (see Conclusion), sending some of this generation abroad is accomplishing Bohdan’s goal of producing capitalist citizens in an increasingly European Ukraine even though this work and the middle-aged women who perform it are invisible to Bohdan.

Migrants in this study contributed to fundamental structural changes in Ukraine. Simply their physical absence from households, whether it was to go to Italy or the United States, altered the labor market and family structure in Ukraine. It also contributed to the creation of the post-Soviet gender order, which is the basis of Ukraine’s ongoing economic transformation. The monetary remittances migrants sent from their labor abroad made it possible for their daughters and daughters-in-law to be or aspire to be stay-at-home mothers to fulfill the new ideals of authentic, ethnic Ukrainian womanhood, even if migrants were often conflicted about the younger generation’s rejection of the Soviet fight for gender egalitarianism they held so dear. Migrants often harbored hopes that the younger generation of women would have families with involved husbands and fulfilling work lives (see Chapter 1). Simultaneously, remittances allowed their sons to navigate masculinized capitalist markets, which was also fraught with tension (see Chapter 5, Zhanna and Conclusion).

Migrants sent monetary remittances but also social remittances back to Ukraine. Migrants were consciously engaged in processes of subject formation spurred by their migration experiences. Living abroad heightened their awareness of their own “Soviet mentality,” and they sought to cultivate a “capitalist self” and “reinvent” themselves in order to help teach their children how to succeed in this new social landscape. Migrants in Italy and the United States with children in Ukraine sent back knowledge about capitalist understandings, practices, and institutions. An examination of gendered migrant subjectivities shows that fundamental institutional change, key to the nation-state building process, was produced through these grandmother-led migrations.

**Exile and Exodus: Conceptual Tools**

Exile and exodus, as conceptual tools, can be applied to the transnational social fields created by migrations from any country in order to highlight global and transnational processes. They are particularly useful concepts in comparing migrations from a single sending country to multiple destination countries. Exile and exodus are synthesizing concepts that make evident: (1) the link between the structural and experiential dimensions of migration, and (2) the social and...
institutional infrastructure between sending and receiving countries. These distinct transnational social fields contain both a structural and discursive dimension and span sending and receiving sites. The structural and discursive content of exile and exodus is outlined in Table 0.1.

The structural dimension is descriptive and includes the demographic characteristics of the migrants, citizenship status, the reception migrants experience by the receiving state, and temporal aspects of the transnational social field. The structural dimension is implicated in Ukrainian nation-state building. As we have seen, both exile and exodus helped to transform Ukraine’s work and family structures by the physical removal of middle-aged women through migration as well as the social and monetary remittances they send back from labor and learning abroad. Although exodus to the United States produced transnational families living across borders, the ultimate goal of migrants in exodus was to reunite their family in the United States permanently, even if it took years or decades. In contrast, transnational families were built into the structure of exile to Italy. Therefore, exile is constitutive of the transformation from “Soviet,” extended family households to “capitalist,” nuclear family units. This transnational social field continues to produce, both structurally and discursively, features of a “European” Ukraine.

The concepts of exile and exodus also reveal the subjective dimension of the transnational social field. The intersections of sending and receiving contexts

| TABLE 0.1 Comparison of key structural and subjective dimensions of exile versus exodus |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Exile (Italy) | Exodus (California) |
| 1. Middle-aged women (Soviet generation) | 1. Women and men of all ages (led by middle-aged women of Soviet generation) |
| 2. Individual migration | 2. Family migration |
| 3. Temporary migrants | 3. Permanent migration |
| 4. Exclusion by Italian state | 4. Inclusion by U.S. state (exclusion by previous waves of Ukrainian migrants) |
| 1. Forced connection to sending country | 1. Connection to sending country was individualized choice |
| 2. Domestic work tied to sending country (Europeanization project) | 2. Domestic work tied to receiving country (vehicle for integration) |
| 3. Motherhood discourses: “Prostitutes” and “bad mothers” | 3. Motherhood discourses: “Good mothers” and “Soviet” versus “American” parenting norms |
shape which discourses are available and resonate with migrants in transnational social fields. Whether migrants experience their migration as “forced” exile to the post-Soviet “gulag” or a “lucky opportunity” for exodus to the “Promised Land” are discourses specific to each transnational social field and affects the form and intensity of the transnational connections migrants cultivate with the sending country. Although migrants in both transnational social fields were performing cleaning and caring labor to the elderly, the meanings attached to this work were strikingly different. In Italy, migrants saw the knowledge that they learned from living in Italy about being “capitalist” and “European” as a gift they were able to transmit to family members in Ukraine to further Ukraine’s Europeanization project. Domestic work was a vehicle for transnational nation-state building. Respondents in the United States, often hired to provide care to the elderly, instead saw domestic work as a vehicle for integration not into American culture, but the U.S. state. Nevertheless, those with transnational families also communicated cultural knowledge about capitalism and aspirations to being “Western.” Finally, the intersection between sending and receiving sites made different sets of discourses around motherhood available to migrants. Surprisingly, middle-aged women migrants to Italy, rather than celebrated as agents of nation-building, were constructed by the Ukrainian state as “prostitutes” and “bad mothers,” whereas those who migrated to the United States were constructed as “good mothers” sacrificing to give their children a better life (see Chapter 1). Migrants both resisted and subjected themselves to these discourses. Comparing these two transnational social fields makes visible the structural and discursive constraints that produce gendered migrant subjects whose collective practices build nations from the outside in and also shape discourses of nationalism in receiving countries.

**Metaphors of Destination**

“Gulag” and “Promised Land” are metaphors of destination (see Conclusion). My Italian colleagues and the many dedicated Italians I met working to improve the lives of migrant careworkers may take offense at the term “gulag” to describe Italy as a receiving country. Others may feel the metaphor belittles the horrors and loss of life experienced in Soviet-era gulags. Much of the time, the daily challenges for migrants in Italy was not like being in a Soviet gulag. Similarly, given the struggles migrants to the United States described, nor was the United States much like the “Promised Land.” Nevertheless, “gulag” and “Promised Land” are the destinations attached to exile and exodus. These are culturally and historically specific metaphors that were both available and deployed by the migrants in this study. As we will see, these metaphors are powerful not because they are true, but because they shaped how migrants framed their relationship to Ukraine as the sending country as well as how they constructed meaning and engaged with institutions in the receiving countries.
Exile to Italy: The “Gulag”

The experiences of Soviet exile were vivid for many of my participants in Rome. Alla, 54, was not unusual in answering my first interview question, “Where are you from?” with her own family’s experiences in the Soviet Gulag system. As we sipped tea at a quiet bar in Rome, Alla explained that both her parents were Ukrainian and lived outside L’viv, but her family was exiled to a labor camp in Kazakhstan in 1947. Three years into their exile, Alla was born. Alla recounted:

One day Ukrainian partisans [freedom fighters seeking independence from the Soviet Union] held a gun to my young brother’s head. They told my father either you join us or we kill him. So this was the excuse. We were sent to the gulags [by the Soviet state] because my father was supposedly helping the partisans who wanted a free Ukraine.

When Alla was a young adult, she and her family were able to come out of exile and returned to Ukraine. Alla graduated from L’viv University in chemistry. I was struck by the pain and emotion in her stories about her time in exile. She recounted her family’s experiences in the harsh labor camps as if they had occurred yesterday.

In The Gulag Archipelago, Alexander Solzhenitsyn argued that the Soviet government could not govern without the threat of exile and that the Soviet economy depended on millions of exiled laborers, like Alla’s family, to push policies of rapid industrialization. The Soviet Union was, according to Solzhenitsyn, built on forced exiled labor. Solzhenitsyn further explained that, in an attempt to make sense of exile, these laborers had to come to terms with the moral implications of the gulags for the entire Soviet system and for themselves as Soviet citizens. There are striking similarities between Soviet exile and today’s post-Soviet exile to Italy. The new Ukraine is being built, in part, on the labor of exiled migrants and this has similarly produced a moral crisis between Soviet and capitalist systems of honor, rewards, and punishments with which all Ukrainian citizens, and exiled migrants in particular, must come to terms.

Unlike Soviet exile, the current Ukrainian state is not using violence to deport women to Italy. Nevertheless, gendered state-driven processes are pushing middle-aged women out of Ukraine. Alla noted that her daughter finished university when higher education was still free and subsidized by the state. Alla’s youngest son was not so fortunate. After his first year, L’viv University instituted tuition, and Alla could not afford to pay. With deep sadness Alla said, “I got down on my knees in front of the director and begged him to keep my son, but in the end he had to drop out.” Eventually Alla’s husband turned to her and said, “Everyone else is in Italy, why not you?” Alla continued, “Cinzia, I was thinking the same thing. Why them and not me? But I hadn’t yet dared to say it out loud.” Alla loved her small village outside L’viv, and exclaimed, “I am a Capricorn. I need
green! I suffer living in the city.” Moreover, like many respondents, she simply never imagined that she would leave her home, children, and grandchildren. Alla said, “I have only left our Ukraine twice: once when my family was sent to Kazakhstan and once when I was sent here [to Rome]. Cinzia, which was worse? I don’t know …” One reason why Alla compared Italy with her family’s experience of Soviet exile was that, without documents, Alla felt “stuck” in Italy. She was caught between a desire to return home and the knowledge that she would not be able to re-enter Italy where she felt she had no choice but to labor to support her family.

Participants like Alla experienced their migration to Italy as a painful expulsion. Precisely because exile to Italy is constitutive of Ukrainian nation-state building, migrant women in Rome are pulled into a constant and intimate engagement with the gendered meanings and moralities of the “new” Ukraine. Ukrainian migrants in exile to Italy, even those who deviate from the dominant structural position of exile such as men or those who manage to bring their families to Italy, are nonetheless constrained by the structural and discursive realities of this transnational social field.

Exodus to the United States: The “Promised Land”

The narratives of migrants in California suggested experiences of “voluntary” exodus reminiscent of the biblical story of exodus in which Moses led the Israelites, entire families with their livestock, out of bondage in Egypt to the Promised Land. However, in order to settle the Promised Land, the Israelites had to enter into a covenant with God and pledge their faithfulness. This biblical story of exodus resonated with the Ukrainian migrants I spoke with, in part because exodus was the dominant migration narrative of the previous waves of Ukrainian migrants to the United States, making California a significantly different receiving site from Italy.

Two waves of Ukrainians, “Diaspora Ukrainians,” who came to the United States in 1940–1956 fleeing the Soviet Union before it solidified during and after WWII, and Soviet Jews, who arrived after 1975, pushed for the liberation of Ukraine and other republics from the Soviet Union. Both groups were important in shaping California’s context of reception. WWII Diaspora Ukrainians and their descendants founded organizations whose primary goal was an independent Ukraine and they actively compared the organized Ukrainian Diaspora to the Jewish Diaspora arguing that Ukrainians are an ethnic group that experienced its own Holocaust, a famine-genocide known as the Holodomor, under Stalin.46 Both Diaspora Ukrainians and their descendants, as well as Soviet Jews understood the situation of their compatriots toiling behind the Soviet Union’s Iron Curtain as bondage similar to the captivity experienced by the Israelites. Although only two respondents from the San Francisco site identified as Jews (see Chapter 4), this context nevertheless made exodus a framing that resonated with participants in California.
Many countries, including the United States, put up walls to keep people out, but the Soviet Union put up walls to keep people in. By the time the Soviet Union collapsed, the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 had already created a preference system for family members of U.S. citizens. As a result, the visa requests from family members in California to sponsor relatives in Ukraine soared. Post-1991 migrants reported that they were “lucky” to find a relative among the Diaspora Ukrainians and their descendants to sponsor their migration. Often migrants were unable to communicate with these relatives during 40–50 years of Soviet rule. Or they felt “lucky” to have Jewish family members who arrived as refugees but were now able to sponsor non-Jewish family members.

This was how Elena came to San Francisco. Drawing on Soviet-era nationality politics where “Jew” was considered a nationality, Elena explained that she was Ukrainian, but her husband, Dmitri, was a Jew. Dmitri’s parents were already in California and able to sponsor him and his family. Elena, a 55-year-old woman with broad shoulders and bright make-up, scowled as she explained how disastrous those years after Soviet collapse were for young children who did not have access to milk or medicine. Elena felt helpless and useless as a medical doctor. “I didn’t have enough clothes and food for myself and my children. How could I help my patients?” Buying goods and then selling them at a higher price for profit was a rare and morally reprehensible practice in the Soviet Union. After its collapse, many people in dire economic straits bought items in nearby Turkey or Poland and then sold them for profit in Ukraine in what was called the “shuttle trade.” Elena shook her head in disgust as she explained these practices she considered beneath her as a member of the intelligentsia (intellectual class) and which were “immoral” under socialism. Elena said:

Shuttle traders voyaged between countries to buy chewing gum, clothes, or something. And they even earned more money than me, a doctor! … I am not a salesperson. I cannot change my profession and buy something in Turkey and then come back to sell it in Ukraine or Russia. It is too difficult for educated people to make such a moral compromise. And then, as they say, we had a “ticket,” a “Jewish ticket” to the land of milk and honey! And we left, all of us who could left.

The very process of exodus, collecting family members in California through the family reunification allotment of U.S. immigration law, requires U.S. citizenship and therefore some identification with the U.S. state. For this cohort of Ukrainian migrants, I discovered that their integration strategy involved creating connections with the U.S. state. This inclusion by the U.S. state through naturalization and homecare work was in direct contrast with the exclusion of Ukrainian migrants by the Italian state. However migrants in California were excluded from the organizations, many with transnational ties to Ukraine, founded by Diaspora Ukrainians who ultimately felt they had little in common with
“Soviet,” post-1991 migrants (see Chapter 4). This made it rare for post-1991 migrants to foster transnational connections beyond those with immediate family still in Ukraine. Whereas the transnational social field of exile to Italy was constitutive of Ukrainian nation-state building, the exodus to California had important but less salient effects.

**Gendered Global Ethnography**

In his call for a “global ethnography,” Michael Burawoy argues global processes are necessarily produced in local contexts by specific agencies, institutions, and individuals and therefore, ethnographers can and must study “globalization from below.”49 Global capitalism creates macro-level links between systems of gender inequality that span from receiving to sending countries. Therefore, a global and transnational approach, grounded in feminist ethnography, reveals that people in their everyday negotiations with nationalisms, markets, and moralities are driving Ukrainian nation-state building, economic transformation, and the spread of neoliberalism. *On the Shoulders of Grandmothers* illustrates that global processes are produced in specific locales by the collective practices of individuals who act, think, and construct meaning locally.

**Studying Ukrainian Migrants and Their Families**

*On the Shoulders of Grandmothers* is based on extensive ethnographic work and 160 in-depth interviews conducted over two years, 2004–2006, in Rome, Italy; L’viv, Ukraine; and San Francisco, California. I spent six months in Italy and conducted 61 in-depth interviews (51 women and 10 men) with Ukrainian migrants who provided care to the elderly as well as 16 other formal interviews with community leaders including religious leaders and labor organizers. Domestic work was almost exclusively the only work available to middle-aged Ukrainian migrants in Italy. I also spent seven months intensively immersed in the San Francisco field sites. I conducted 41 interviews (34 women and 7 men) with domestic workers from Ukraine providing in-home cleaning and caring services to the elderly as well as two more interviews with local religious leaders. I attended Russian-language union meetings for homecare workers, participated in the parishes of two Ukrainian churches, and attended countless community cultural events.

I kept certain characteristics of my sample of migrant workers in Rome and San Francisco constant. They all left Ukraine after 1991 and, with the exception of a handful of interviews, were between 40–65 years old. This is in line with the overall population of Ukrainian migrants to Italy. Although not every Ukrainian migrant domestic worker in Italy was a grandmother, most were. Ukrainian women migrants in Italy were “predominantly over 50 years of age” and the largest age bracket of Ukrainian migrants to Italy is 50–54 while those over 65 represent 20 percent of the total.50 There was more age variation in the migration
to California because entire families migrated. However, migrant-receiving institutions in San Francisco channeled middle-aged migrants into jobs caring for the elderly, making the San Francisco sample comparable in age and occupation to those interviewed in Rome. Therefore, all interviewees had some higher education and nearly all had technical or advanced degrees as well as professional work histories. The most common pre-migration professions reported by participants were high school teacher, accountant, and engineer.

Interviews with migrants in Rome and San Francisco were snowball samples and referrals by key informants I gathered following a reflexive model of sociology and with attention to feminist methodologies. Therefore, my samples are not representative of all Ukrainian migrants in these locations, rather they are representative of the two transnational social fields of exile to Italy and exodus to California. I conducted and recorded the interviews, and then had the interviews transcribed in the language of the interview, most often Russian but occasionally Italian. I then translated the interview texts into English myself. The primary language of communication was my American-accented Russian. As a result of Soviet-era Russianization policies that forced non-Russian communities to give up their language in favor of Russian, a considerable proportion of ethnic Ukrainians speak Russian as their main language. I was most concerned that language might be an issue during fieldwork in L’viv, the only region in Ukraine that is predominantly Ukrainian-speaking and in interviews with young people who grew up with Ukrainian as the official language. Yet young people were also fluent in Russian, noting that Russian was the language of television and social media. Several young men noted that Russian and English were the languages of business and of capitalism.

As the U.S.-born daughter of Italian migrant parents, my fluency in Italian also proved vital to the project. My own family’s migration story helped me gain access and establish rapport with participants. My mother’s jobs included seamstress in Boston’s sweatshops, homecare worker, childcare worker, and hairdresser in nursing homes. My father, an agricultural worker and manual laborer in Italy, worked as a landscaper after arriving in the United States. Sharing my parents’ labor history reassured participants that I would not disparage their current work, which most experienced as downward social mobility. Fluency in both Russian and Italian allowed me to conduct participant observation in the Italian organizations that represented and provided social services to domestic workers as well as the Ukrainian workers union and the offices of Rome’s Russian and Ukrainian language newspaper. I conducted ethnographic work in several Ukrainian Greek Catholic parishes and Rome’s Russian Orthodox Church where I attended weekly services, meals, and activities. Three months into my fieldwork, a contested presidential election in Ukraine sparked the Orange Revolution (see Chapter 1). I spent countless hours observing Ukrainians demonstrating in solidarity with the mass protests in Ukraine in addition to attending cultural events and informal gatherings.
Italy and Ukraine were physically connected by a fleet of Soviet-era courier vans and buses that carried goods and workers back and forth. I rode the “migration bus,” a three-day ride from Rome to L'viv in Western Ukraine, the region the majority of my respondents were from. I stayed in L’viv for three months and conducted 39 interviews with teenagers and young adults who had one or both parents working abroad as well as with other family members left behind. While in Ukraine, I followed political and media representations of emigration. I completed the migration circuit by taking the three-day bus ride back from L’viv to Rome with Ukrainians heading to Italy to work.

Why Italy and California?

It might seem like a strange choice to compare Italy and California. After all, following Soviet collapse, Ukrainians migrated not only to Italy and the United States, but also to many other countries including Greece, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Russia, and Israel. Excluding Israel which received Ukrainian Jews who are beyond the scope of this project, Italy and the United States were the two top receiving countries of Ukrainian migrants.\(^5\) If Italy is the immigration country in the European Union, then California is the immigration state in the United States. California experienced a large increase in immigration in the decades following Ukrainian independence because larger economic trends such as the privatization of public goods, explosive growth in service-sector jobs, increased workforce casualization, and declines in unionization are changes that came sooner and were more extreme in California than elsewhere in the United States and created a greater demand for cheap, migrant labor.\(^6\) This means that if you are interested in post-1991 Ukrainian migrants, Italy and California are the places to be. The Appendix provides more details regarding the site-selection and the demographics of the two migrations as well as the Ukrainian communities in both receiving sites. As in Italy, Ukrainians and other migrants from the former Soviet Union are filling domestic work positions in numbers disproportionate to their population in California.\(^5\)

Perhaps even more importantly, however, the migrations to Italy and California are the most qualitatively significant inside Ukraine. The migrations to Italy and California are critical to our understanding of Ukrainian emigration because they occupy two different structural positions both historically and vis-à-vis Ukrainian nation-state building.\(^5\) Discussions and debates about these two migrations were central to political discussions inside Ukraine. How the Ukrainian state differently addressed these two migrations (see Chapter 1), highlights the role of migration in the Ukrainian state’s attempt to break with its Soviet past and constitute the New Ukraine.
Reframing Migration in a Globalized World

On the Shoulders of Grandmothers makes three key contributions to how we understand the nexus of gender, migration, nation-state building, and globalization. First, although it seems logical to study migration from the vantage point of the places where migrants arrive, this book illustrates that dynamics within the sending country stratify migrants in surprising ways, because not all migrations are treated equally by the sending state. Ignoring the important role that sending countries play, obscures the cultural practices, values, and convictions that animate migrant lives.

Second, this book shines a light on the analytical terrain of transnationalism to show how migrants build nation-states from the outside in. Looking for nation-building processes solely inside the country at the national level, or how nation-states might be constructed between countries at the international level—especially tempting in the Ukrainian case with Russia as such a close and foreboding neighbor—ignores where I suggest most of the action is. The fundamental restructuring of Ukraine’s institutions of family, labor market, economy, and even political structures are largely produced at the transnational level. Furthermore, the insight from feminist literatures about intersectionality infuses this discussion of transnational nation-state building. Intersectional approaches to social research suggest that systems of oppression such as race/ethnicity, class, gender, age, and sexuality interlock to shape the experiences of individuals. In this book, I take this intersectional approach to gendered migrant subjectivities and apply it not only to individuals, but to relations between national institutions inside Ukraine, transnationally between nations, and in relation to global processes.

Finally, by applying the methods of gendered global ethnography, which takes for granted the centrality of historically marginalized groups in the making of global processes, On the Shoulders of Grandmothers allows us to see how globalization is produced from the bottom up. Globalization can seem like a disembodied force in which we as individuals have no part. The social inequality produced by these processes is indeed complex. Yet the approach of gendered global ethnography helps us see that the inequities created by globalization are made by individuals and therefore, through the collective actions of individuals, can be undone or redone to decrease social inequality.

Overview of Book

Part 1 of the book, Genesis, includes Chapter 1 with a close look at post-Soviet Ukraine and its new nationalisms. I show that Ukraine’s opening up to neoliberal market reforms is a gendered process that has implications for how the institutions of work and family are organized and for a “capitalist” (as opposed to “Soviet”) moral order. These large-scale national, transnational, and global processes become understandable to individuals through a gendered language of motherhood and
result in the marginalization of middle-aged women, most babushki, who lead the migrations to both Italy and the United States.

Part II of the book focuses on “forced” exile to Italy. In Chapter 2, I describe Italy’s context of reception with a focus on immigration laws, the position of domestic work in the Italian labor market given the “care crisis” for the elderly, and the local organizational landscape that shaped migrants’ experiences in Rome. The Italian state’s policies of exclusion contributed to making transnationalism a salient characteristic of exile. In order to uncover the gendered migrant subjectivities produced in exile and how these migrants were building the new Ukraine transnationally, I provide five ethnographic narratives in Chapter 3. Each narrates the experiences of a migrant in exile to Italy and that of their family. Together these narratives highlight three key themes. First, migrants actively attempted to learn to be “capitalist” and “European” subjects and transmitted this knowledge to their children in Ukraine. Second, both migrants and the Ukrainian state articulated the struggle around migration and nation-state building on the gendered discursive terrain of reified motherhood and failed masculinities with consequences for both migrants and their children in Ukraine. Finally, exile contributes to the ongoing production of a “traditional” nuclear family in Ukraine – a stark contrast to the extended Soviet family. Gendered discourses about appropriate behaviors for women and men in nuclear families become the “building block” of ethnicity and nation and the basis for a reorganization of the labor market. As a result of these shifts in work and family structures, many middle-aged women were painfully pushed out of their families as well as their country to labor abroad.

Part III, Exodus, begins with Chapter 4 on the context of reception in California. I present U.S. federal immigration laws, the role of the state of California in organizing carework, and the community organizations that affected the experiences of Ukrainian migrants in California. I show that U.S. policies of inclusion encouraged a discourse of “luck.” Migrants attempted to collect family members in California in a context where anyone could “win” the Green Card Lottery or be next in line for family reunification. For middle-aged women migrants, this produced a state-based integration strategy. To explain both the gendered migrant subjectivities and practices produced in exodus and their relationship to transnational nation-state building, I provide five narratives of migrants and their families that highlight three dimensions of exodus to California in Chapter 5. First, middle-aged women migrants rejected the Ukrainian state as a “bad provider” and cultivated a personal connection to the U.S. state as their new “husband-provider.” Those who had children in Ukraine sent back both monetary and social remittances about capitalist subjectivities and aspirations. Next, the adult children of these migrants in the United States learned to be “capitalists” through market-based integration into American life. This, coupled with a politics of exclusion practiced by the previous wave of Ukrainian migrants and their descendants, led the adult children of migrants to disassociate from other migrants
from the region. Third, even the few undocumented individual migrants in exodus whose families are in Ukraine were shaped by the dominant discourse of “luck” and family reunification in exodus.

In the Conclusion I highlight women’s contributions to Ukrainian nation-state building, both during the Euromaidan protests of 2013–2014 inside Ukraine and as migrants building Ukraine from the outside in. Women’s contributions to nation-state building are made visible though the “bottom up” approach of gendered global ethnography, which takes gendered migrant subjectivities as its starting point. I also describe the painful implications of the intersection of gendered neoliberalism and nationalism for men across generations both inside Ukraine and as migrants. The stakes for accurately understanding Ukrainian emigration, nation-state building, and post-Soviet economic transformation are higher than ever. In the current context of a Ukrainian–Russian war, these stakes include the redrawing of the map of Europe.