Daughters of migration:

An autoethnographic journey through a matrilineal history of migration between Brazil and Italy

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Abstract

This project starts out as an inquiry of my experience as a migrant in Italy, where I partially grew up. But this only occurred because the women in my family decided to move away from Brazil. Thus, I needed to include their voices and travel through the history of my matrilineage from Brazil to Italy to understand the complexities of gender and migration and give an account on the experience of being a female in the migratory process. The women in my family are part of a migratory flux of women who migrate from peripheral countries in Latin America to work in the domestic and care work sectors in Europe. In this sense, I investigate how the globalization of labour affected us and contributed to shaping the migratory process. Moving to Italy is also related to a previous colonial bond of past Italian mass emigration to Brazil at the end of 19th century, which granted us the access to the Italian citizenship. This is a further theme that I discuss so as to understand how issues of citizenship shape people's movement. In this way, I first discuss what I consider three broader aspects of international migration: class mobility, family separation and citizenship. Subsequently I move towards a more subjective dimension to present what are the peculiarities of changing one's country of origin according to our generations and the subjective elements embedded in each experience. I am interested in understanding and giving an impression of how we perceived the migratory process similarly and differently, and how our identities were affected by it. Finally, this thesis contributes to enhancing the understanding of female migration while giving a nuanced account of the embodied experience. Likewise I converse with postcolonial and decolonial theories in order to articulate an analysis of migration that is deeply concerned with the discourses on migrant subjectivities.

A border, like race, is a cruel fiction
Maintained by constant policing, violence
Always threatening a new map. It takes
Time, lots of people's time, to organize
The world this way. & violence. It takes more
Violence. Violence no one can confuse for
Anything but violence. So much violence
Changes relationships, births a people
They can reason with. These people are not
Us. They underestimate the violence.
It's been awhile. We are who we are
To them, even when we don't know who we
Are to each other & culture is a
Record of us figuring that out.

Brazilian is not a race, Wendy Trevino, 2016

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In her autobiography, Audre Lorde asks, “to whom do I owe the woman I have become?” The realization of this project would not have been possible if it were not for the support and encouragement of those who helped me and inspired me to become the feminist researcher I now am. It is thus with immeasurable gratitude that I thank you all.

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Come dice la poesia, Tieni un capo del filo, / con l'altro capo in mano/ io correrò nel mondo./ E se dovessi perdermi/ tu, mammina mia, tira.

Table of Contents

Page

Introduction

> I began to think, "Yes, I'm a chicana but that's not all I am. Yes, I'm a woman but that's not all I am. Yes, I'm a dyke but that doesn't define all of me. Yes, I come from working class origins, but I'm no longer working class. Yes, I come from a mestizaje, but which parts of that mestizaje get privileged? Only the Spanish, not the Indian or black." I started to think in terms of mestiza consciousness. What happens to people like me who are in between all of these different categories? What does that do to one's concept of nationalism, of race, ethnicity, and even gender? I was trying to articulate and create a theory of a Borderlands existence. ... I had to, for myself, figure out some other term that would describe a more porous nationalism, opened up to other categories of identity.
>
> Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Interviews*

Nonna Luiza, as I call her, was cutting onions and I was laying the table when I asked her, "*nonna,* do you know everything about the family's history of migration?" She had recently come back from Brazil where she had been for the first time to the annual family reunion of those who descend from Giovanni Casagrande and Maria Destafani, my grandmother grandparents. I was enchanted that my grandmother had much willingness to travel so far – to the lands of her place of birth – to meet up with people she had never met but with whom she shares the same family name. It was asking about the reunion that I started learning more about the family ties.

I have always known that we had Italian descendants and that this affiliation was what granted us the Italian citizenship, but I was not aware of the celebration of this Italianness across time. Pouring me some wine, she said, "Giovanni and Maria were my father's parents and they both came from Italy but they didn't go together. Giovanni was only a child when he went to Brazil. He went with his siblings and his mother, who was a widow. Her name was Chiara, we have the whole family tree, I'll show you." Then she opened on her phone a jpeg file with a gigantic family tree, making the way from Chiara until us.

In that moment something clicked and I realised the story of migration of my family is a story of female border transgressors. Then I started thinking why is it they are all women? It started when Chiara Stival, widow, 50 years old, mother of four children, hopped on a ship from Genoa, Italy to Vitória, Espírito Santo, Brazil. The travel of this woman in search of a better life in the 'New World' is the landmark of the story I want to tell here and our blood ties are what drove my maternal family to

go ‘back’ to Italy in the early 2000s. Starting with my grandmother, *nonna* Luiza, in her 50s at the time, then my aunt Andreia and my mother Simone on their 30s, and my 6-year-old cousin Natalia and my 9-year-old self. This is what I call here my matrilineage and of whom the stories of migration I’m going to tell.

In a course I took on English Literature with a focus on women’s travel writing of the Early Modern Age, it popped up – not surprisingly – that the first female writers of travel literature were mostly aristocratic women. I then started reflecting on the history of my family, how much we have travelled and how, in my own experience, I have perceived myself as this female adventurer around the world. Yet the stories of the women in my family are not like the ones considered legitimate of travel writing, because migration is a form of travelling detached from the canonical literature on the genre. Thus, I started wondering about how the story of these female adventurers would look like if they had the opportunity to tell it. One thing we learn with the history of feminist movements is that *the personal is political*, that what is private is no less political than what is traditionally constituted as public. Hence, I start with my personal story so as to investigate and explore the political features embedded in the paths of my family’s life and mine as well as I claim the telling of marginal stories because they do matter.

The difference between the women in my family and English women writers is mostly an issue of class. The reason why the widowed woman left Italy and my grandmother left Brazil was poverty, although to different extents. Another difference is the respective times in history in which they lived and they decided to move, to migrate, to cross borders. These differences are what are at stake in this thesis. I argue that borders play a central role in defining or creating categories of identity and as anticipated in the epigraph to this introduction, Gloria E. Anzaldúa (2000) rightly asks, “What happens to people like me who are in between all of these different categories?” In my own (hi)story I experienced different modes of being in relation to class, gender, sexuality and nationality when I decided or it was decided for me to transgress borders. Thus, these themes are central to this thesis.

Almost ironically, my experience of border crossing started on 11 September 2001. My adventure with borders coincidentally matched the day that dramatically influenced international policies on border crossing. My experience with borders started with the very proliferation of border enforcement and the rise of securitization (Mezzadra and Nielson, 2013). I specifically refer to the measures that hampered the

access or the simple movement of non-Western (and white) subjects, particularly those of Muslim descent, resulting in the politics of control of who is entitled to and who should be banished from crossing international borders. As that was a day of deep transformations for international migration, what did it have to do with me? How did it affect (or not) the making of my transnational life? The answer to these questions is what I attempt to reach in this thesis so as to investigate and articulate how my story is entangled in this context. In this sense, I attempt in this thesis to be giving an expression of my and the women of my family experience of being migrants in times in which migrancy is extremely policed not only by means of migrations policies, but also through discourses that deem migrant subjects from the periphery of the Western world to subjugated positions. However, such discourses are multi-layered and need to be understood from the awareness of the asymmetries of power and how such asymmetries unfold into issues of oppression or privilege.

Furthermore, this thesis is part of my feminist theoretical commitment to conferring value to women's voices within academic standards and to claim knowledge production from the bodies and lives of women, as to push the boundaries of academic writing. As such, I aim to add to the current debates on migration studies in Italy by adding an account that is somewhat still underdeveloped, that is, the stories of those of an *incerta generazione* [uncertain generation], as Italian-somali writer Igiaba Sciego calls it and refers to generations that do not fit in identitarian categories like 'second generation' or the label of 'migrant.' Although the field of migration studies, particularly its intersection with postcolonial studies, in Italy is still emerging, there is a significant body of literature dealing with questions of migration, gender, and race in Italy's postcolonial condition (Lombardi-Diop, 2012; Giuliani, 2016). However, an autoethnographic standpoint is a novelty to the field as postcolonial texts addressing the experience of dual belonging and the cartographies of a migratory life are mostly represented by literary writers and usually concern past relations with Italian colonies in the northeast Africa (Scego, 2015, Ali Farah, 2014, Wu Ming and Mohamed, 2012). I understand this thesis to contribute and be inserted in the field of postcolonial studies in Italy as scholar Sandra Ponzanesi (2012) sees it, which is "not so much the technical and chronological relationship with the former colonies (Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Libya)," she writes, "but the awareness, and with that the consciousness, of forms of domination and resistance within Italian culture as related to power structures that are connected to both colonial policies and new global

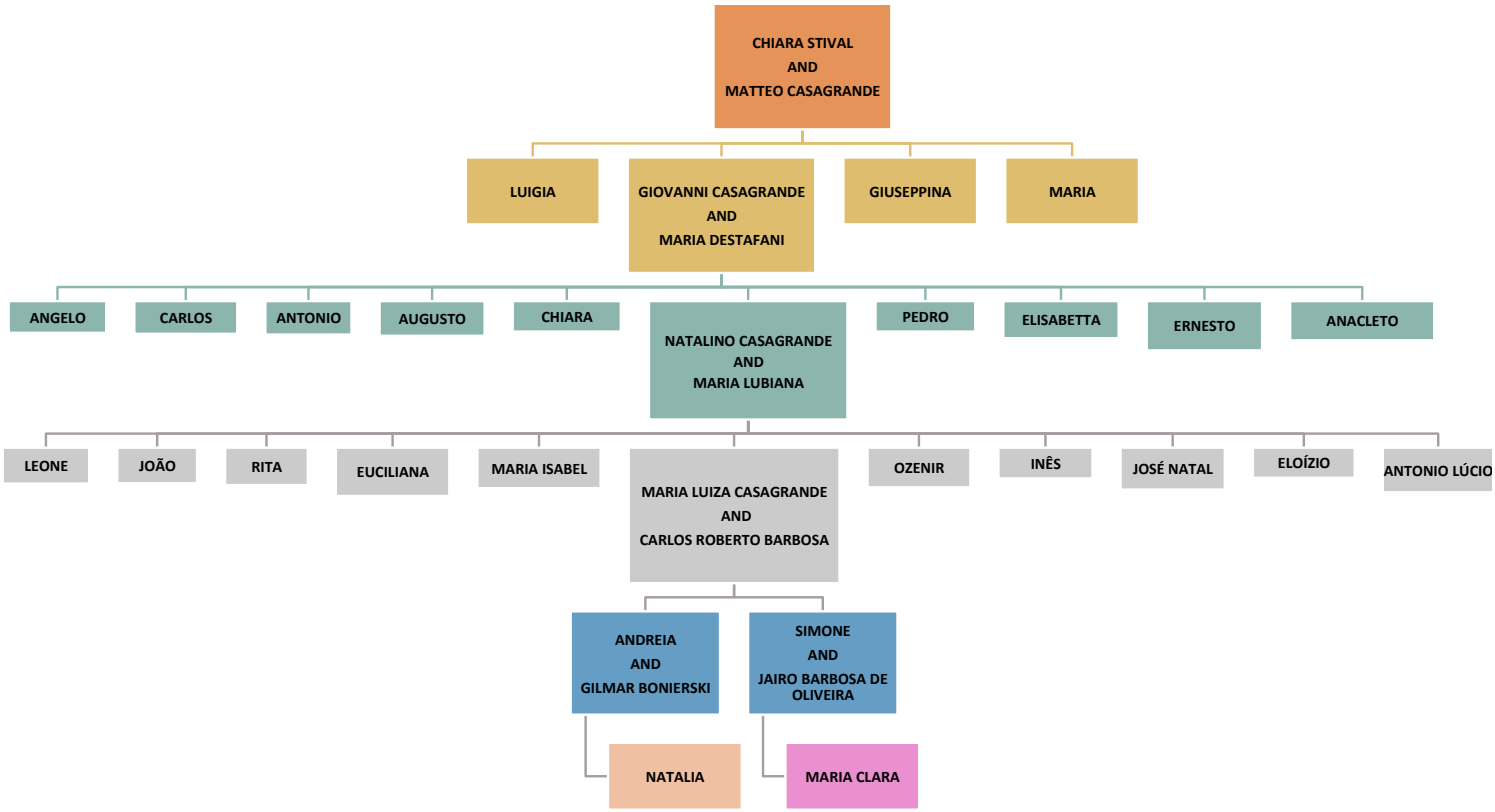
dynamics" (p. 61). It is, thus, by bringing further realities and the very materiality of current Italian culture that I aim to enrich and expand the existing debates.

To accomplish my aims, I start this project by laying the theoretical basis that informs my comprehension of borders. In Chapter One, I present the frames of analysis from which I depart in order to comprehend the historical processes that constitute the asymmetries of power, drawing on the field of postcolonial studies. I explain the theories and concepts that I consider indispensable when talking of international migration and engage with the notions of 'border as method' (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013), 'decolonial feminism' (Lugones, 2010), and 'borderland feminism' (Anzaldúa, 1987). Likewise I present a brief genealogy of experience and my own use of the concept in this thesis and how it bridges to the theories I ground my perspective. I then elaborate on the methodological choice of autoethnography, stressing the potentialities and the methods I applied to enact it. I describe the techniques I used to design this project to show how they are enriching and auxiliary to the process of telling the nuances of national in betweenness.

In Chapter Two, I start weaving our narratives with those stances that I consider to be structural and broader/general aspects of migration and that are particularly evident when crossing borders from developing to developed countries. I thus discuss the nuances of my and my family's story regarding the question of how class shapes migration, that is how one's class condition before departure is decisive for the act of migrating itself, and how migration shapes class, or the mobility(ies) in class membership after migrating. I then move toward the question of family separation and what moving away from family members meant and entailed to each of us. Lastly in this chapter I address the issue of citizenship, our right to acquire it and troubles and contradictions in possessing an European citizenship.

Chapter Three examines the unexpected details that emerged during the interviews and that in a way pertain to metaphorical spaces where our migratory identities were able to develop a sense of belonging. Through the subjective, embodied experience of migrating it emerged that freedom gave my mother a solid foundation into which she was able to built her life autonomously. To my grandmother the role of religion played a crucial role in facilitating her adaptation when she arrived in Italy. As for me, my comings and goings contributed to give me a different sense on the idea of homelessness.

Chapter Four explores the contradictions and prejudices that prevail even after years stably living in the receiving country. I thus explicit address events of xenophobia my family faced and situations where we perceived that stereotypes around Brazilian femininity surfaced. Finally, I conclude with a reflection on self-identification in regard to national affiliation, specifically in the case of my cousin who has spent most of her life in Italy.



Chapter 1

1. Theoretical interventions, methodologies and methods

1.1 Thinking decolonially: a frame of analysis

The idea of writing a project on my family's experience of migration arises from understanding that contemporary migration is severely controlled through the world system of nation-states. This system governs the control of movement of people in the world through processes of segregation and hierarchization embedded in migration policies. I understand this system to be a consequence of the European colonization of other lands, as it developed the universalization of one mode of organizing the planet in relation to the political economy and its consequent social structure. I acknowledge this connection of contemporary migration and colonialism from a) a material perspective, e.g. the geographical movement of migratory fluxes from former colonies to the respective colonizer in Europe; and from b) a discursive perspective, that is the codification based on "a relation of structural domination and suppression […] of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 18).

The field of postcolonial studies provides a historical understanding of the ideas and substance of colonization. In other words, engaging with the postcolonial debate means that I understand that the ideologies of power that arose in European Modernity were made possible through the colonial endeavour by creating the colonizer as the subject (man, white, Christian), and the colonized as the subjected (other). The subject, though, brought with him a capitalist system of power that developed itself through an intimate relation between racialization and exploitation (Quijano, 1991). I start here to centre my understanding of how systems of domination come to classify people and I add to it my awareness of the role of gender in this subjectification and the necessity to resist it. This awareness is what María Lugones (2010) calls "decolonial feminism" and what I intend to use as theoretical guide through my writing as form of resisting stratifying discourses on subjects within migration, as well as a form of shading light on these very oppressive discourses. Accordingly, Lugones argues that "the decolonial feminist's task begins by her seeing the colonial difference, emphatically resisting her epistemological habit of erasing it. Seeing it, she sees the world anew, and then she requires herself to drop her enchantment with ''woman,'' the universal, and begins to learn about other resisters

at the colonial difference" (p. 753). Under this light, I aim at being accountable for the ways in which differences are articulated within narratives about migration.

A decolonial standpoint is conscious of that the "coloniality of power and gender" still permeates social structures, ideologies and mould the organization of the world and the disposition of citizens in the nation-state. As Lugones (2010) writes, "Unlike the colonization, the coloniality of gender is still with us; it is what lies at the intersection of gender/class/race as central constructs of the capitalist world system of power" (p. 746). Drawing on Walter Mignolo's work, Lugones situates her understanding of the coloniality of power and gender in the "fractured locus", as both the space where the coloniality is enacted upon and from where it can be undone. It is, thus, with this understanding of the historical complexity of the coloniality of power and gender and standing on the fracture, thinking from the feminist border, that I am to talk about migration with a specific focus on women.

Feminist theorist Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) argues in her critique on Western feminist scholarship that feminist scholars in the West codified Third World women under a "monolithic subject" (p. 17), neglecting substantial differences among the group and discursively reproducing this coloniality of power and gender. Thus, I depart from a decolonial perspective precisely because I want to refuse discourses on universal and homogenous groups. I invoke Mohanty's critique specifically because with my singular and particular story I want to account for the variety of experiences, and the material and historical heterogeneities of migrants in contemporary Italy. In fact, writing decolonially denies any "homogenization and systematization of the oppression" (p. 20) of migrants, particularly migrant women, but enables me to touch categories of gender, class an race from a more accountable perspective that is aware of the historicity of each concept.

In addition, it is significant to note the specific position of Italy in the postcolonial horizon. Postcolonial theorist Miguel Mellino (2012) writing on Italy and postcolonialism observes that in the body of current postcolonial writings about Italy it is noticeable that the country joins the postcolonial condition according to specific enunciations. Of particular relevance to this thesis is a) the fact that Italy had colonies, and its discourses, representations and stereotypes (on differences) still reflect the colonial period; b) the flows of immigration of the last decades have had a major role in changing Italy's social space, as it complexified Italy's racial composition it sparkled an increasing "material and symbolic racist violence against the postcolonial

migrant" (Mellino, 2016, p. 84); c) lastly, Italy's participation in the contemporary global neoliberal economy, for this system of capitalist accumulation is still driven by colonial and imperial logics. "A system," writes Mellino (2016), that "is still based […] in the continuing proliferation of juridically and hierarchically differentiated zones, territories, populations, and subjects" (p. 85). Hence, Italy's postcolonial condition urges me to engage with postcolonial theories if speaking of migration. I now turn to the explanation of the border as conceptual method from which to take a decolonial approach.

1.2 Border as method and framework

I argue that decolonial thinking in this project becomes the feminist border that enables me to break with the assumption of "the West" […] as the primary referent in theory and praxis" (p. 18), and claim the historical and political agency of the plurality of migrant experiences. The conceptualization of border Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013) offer considers the border as a "complex institution" (p.3), with multiple components (legal, cultural, social and economic) that transcends the mere "image of the border as a wall, or as a device that serves first and foremost to *exclude"* (p. 7), and enables us to comprehend the dynamics of "inclusion existing in a continuum with exclusion" (p. 7). This notion opens up to the challenge of taking the border as a method from which to think decolonially.

The idea of envisioning the border as a locus of possibilities for action from the subjects embraced by it, and not a solely device of control and oppression, was already present in *borderland-mestizaje feminism* (BMF) (Saavedra and Nymark, 2008). Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) in her pathbreaking Borderlands/*La Frontera* births a new methodology of *la conciencia mestiza* invested in the hybridity of her life in between the US and Mexico that hits exactly on the coloniality of dualistic thinking as it tries to disrupt it from a consciously embodied perspective. Chicana/Latina studies scholars Cinthya Saavedra and Ellen Nymark (2008) assert, "the borderlands conceptualization comes from the experiences and lives of Chicanas/os or those living in the interstices of the geographical and metaphorical spaces of *la frontera/*borderlands (but not limited to the us/mexico)" (p. 256). Thus, borderland-mestizaje feminism accurately matches my will to theoretically undo or at least account for the discourses on the coloniality of gender and power speaking from "the

spaces between the different worlds she inhabits" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 20), not so to be self-indulgent but to fragment dichotomies.

Taking the border as method is a way of theorizing from "spaces not deemed theoretical" (Saavedra and Nymark, 2008, p. 258) and, thus, also intervene about the pedagogies applied in Western academic discourses and bring questions of differences that have been marginalized in White academia (Saavedra and Nymark, 2008). "*Nuestros cuerpos* and experiences," the authors write, "can be powerful sources and sites of knowledge and identity negotiation and production" (2008, p. 257). Reappropriating the sites of knowledge production means combining languages as I write. As such, BMF writers merge Spanish words and sentences in their writing to resist symbolic barriers of the coloniality of power and for its proximity to my Portuguese and Italian languages, I feel involved in this rearticulation of forms of knowledge and inspired to engage with it. In this sense, border functions as a tool to undo coercive power enforced by the very presence of the border by inhabiting and reappropriating it instead of refuting it. It is a matter of asking and seeking to understand "What's up with that?", as the British artist of Sri Lankan descent M.I.A puts in her song 'Borders'. The verse goes:

Borders (What's up with that?)
Politics (What's up with that?)
Police shots (What's up with that?)
Identities (What's up with that?)
Your privilege (What's up with that?)
Broke people (What's up with that?)
Boat people (What's up with that?)
The realness (What's up with that?)
The new world (What's up with that?)
Am gonna keep up on all that

The rapper not only politicizes pop culture, as she contends a critique to national borders and the borders that are generated between individuals as a consequence of border enforcement, and the resulting 'crisis' that surfaces from the incapacity of tackling migration from a more human perspective. But what do we do with all these categories enacted by the border? M.I.A is not *a priori* condemning such categories, rather she is asking. Thus, I stand on the border, the fracture, *la frontera*, engaging with it in an attempt to deterritorialize it, to denationalize it. I do so, invested in the idea, as Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) write, that "the figures who

inhabit the world's borderscapes are not marginal subjects that subsist on the edges of society but central protagonists in the drama of composing the space, time, and materiality of the social itself" (p. 159). As I try to indicate how the "features of this landscape (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 19) work in shaping, dividing, restricting, controlling, and enabling people's lives.

1.3 Experience

For experience has been a highly debated and sometimes contested concept within feminist scholarship a note is worth being given. The poststructuralist critique on experience is well examined by Silvia Stoller (2009) in her article "Phenomenology and the Poststructural Critique of Experience." As she explains, one of the inconsistencies of the use of experience is that it takes experience as the source of knowledge and by assuming it as the origin does not give space for questioning whether or not there are other causes of a particular experience. A further point of the poststructuralist critique is the presumed ahistoricity of experience, as if experience was presented to be independent of time and space. On this regard, poststructuralist scholar Joan Scott (1991) argues for the redefinition of the concept rather then its expulsion. Thus, she considers historicization a way of rejecting experience as the foundation of knowledge, as it interrogates the process of creation of such experience. In her words, "Experience is, in this approach, not the origin of our explanation, but that which we want to explain" (1991, p. 797). As such, for Scott, historicity allows explaining how the experience is produced. Therefore, the potential of historicity is that it problematizes the foundations of the experience, going beyond the experience itself.

These ideas and critiques about experience within feminist scholarship have their origin in the uncritical use of the category 'women's experience', which mplies an authentic feminine experience that "universalize[s] the identity of women," (1991, p. 787) as Scott puts it. Such notion emphasizes the exclusive dimension of homogenizing all women in one group, overlooking the complexities and differences of women's individual identities. Stoller (2009) has called for a situated account of experience as a way to demystify women's experience. Situatedness permits "to describe not only the experiences of subjects of different genders, but also the collective experiences of women in comparison to men, as well as the extraordinarily

different gender experiences that vary from woman to woman on the basis of unique gender identities" (p. 720). In this debate, intersectionality as a theoretical perspective, method, and concept has challenged this monolithic assumption of women's experience. Without entering into a more in depth consideration of intersectionality within feminist theory, it is important to underline that non-Western feminist scholars like the ones mentioned above (Mohanty, 1988, 2003; Anzaldúa, 1987, Lugones, 2010) have offered compelling arguments to highlight that "women are not only women, but also black, white, rich, poor, heterosexual, homosexual, etc." (Gunnarsson, 2011, p. 25).

In considering my family and my experience as females and migrants for this project, I am aware of the risks it could entail. However, I am also committed in using our experience to precisely address how differences articulate experiences, rejecting any allegation of an authentic third world female migrant. My use of experience is situated and historical, and I attempt to tackle with substance the socio-historical context I am embedded in. I now turn to the examination of autoethnography as the form that best suits the fulfillment of this project.

1.4 Autoethnography and the 'I' in research

The emergence of autoethnographic research coincides with two important moments in social research. On one hand, the 1970s and 1980s had a significant revaluation of positivistic assumptions on human disciplines. A "crisis of representation" and "confidence" pushed scholars to reform social inquiry from within (Ellis et al, 2011), questioning ideas of objectivity, neutrality, and universal truths that Western science had claimed thus far. A central argument was the recognition of the impossibility of separating – as if they were completely detached – the researcher and the researched. Donna Haraway (1988) accounts for the affirmation of partial perspective as embedded in knowledge production. To acknowledge that all knowledge is situated implies "[unmasking] the doctrines of objectivity because they threatened our budding sense of collective historical subjectivity and agency and our "embodied" accounts of the truth" (p. 578). Thus, situated knowledge resists impossible truths and accounts for the complexity of thinking social phenomena. This awareness contributed to fostering the critique of the presumptuous objectivity of research of social and human sciences. Tony Adams et al

(2015) note that scholars started resisting practices of mainstream research as (a) the prohibition of storytelling as a way of knowing, (b) "the bias against affect and emotion," (p.10) (c) the refusal to recognize how social identities influence research, and (d) "colonialist and invasive ethnographic practices" (p.10) that often disregarded ethical concerns about cultural members, among others standards of research practices.

On the other hand, an increased importance of social identities and identity politics helped questioning forms of doing and writing research. Particularly in the United States, the 1960s and 1970s saw nonmainstream identities coming together to organize "counter-culture activities—the era of Black Power, disability rights, second-wave feminism, […] the Stonewall Riots, and Vietnam" (Adams et al, 2015, p. 14) that focused in showing how identities influenced and "governed whom you could love and marry; where and whether you could work, eat, or go to school; as well as what you could study" (ibidem). Such turmoil also called into question mainstream research practices and assumptions. The canon of research was built on, as Carolyn Ellis (2011) points, a "White, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper-classed, Christian, able-bodied perspective" (p. 275). Therefore, assuming this perspective did not do justice to the wide range of differences in the social stratum, fminist scholars were among the first to stress that differences in race, class, gender, and sexuality and their intersection shape lived experiences differently, generating diverse processes of inclusion and exclusion (see, for example, Crenshaw, 1989; Davis 1981; Lorde 1984; hooks, 1990; Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981; Mohanty, 2003). Nancy Naples (2007) affirms that during the 1980s feminist sociologists like Dorothy Smith and Sandra Harding wrote extensively on how "traditional approaches to science [failed] to acknowledge how the social context and perspectives of those who generate the questions, conduct the research, and interpret the findings shape what counts as knowledge and how data is interpreted" (p. 1701). Henceforth, there has been consistent development in social feminist methodologies that merges the awareness of differences with multiple research methods, approaches and strategies. Autoethnography, thus, emerges from these contexts.

These "new ideas about and ideals for research", together with "emerging appreciation for personal narrative, story, the literary and the aesthetic, emotions, and the body" (Adams et al, 2015, p. 8) opened up the path to autoethnography. Scholars started to ground their knowledge production in personal experience so as to radically

rethink the "ethics and politics of research practices and representations" (Adams et al, 2015, p. 8) and embraced responsibly the study of the self in cultural research. As follows, I explore the peculiarities of doing autoethnography that I attempt to incorporate along this project.

1.5 The potential of autoethnography

Writing from and about the self is not a prerogative of autoethnography only. Most literature on autoethnographic research methods (Ellis et al., 2011; Adams et al., 2015) highlights the common threads of autobiography and autoethnography. In both autobiographies and autoethnographies, writers "retroactively and selectively write about past experiences" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 275); they choose epiphanies, that is, crucial incidents that may have been transformative in their lives. However, when researchers depart from personal experience in order to analyse cultural experience in a broader sense, they put their experience in conversation with "theoretical and methodological tools and research literature" (Allen, 2006, in Ellis et al., 2011, p. 276). This approach allows autoethnographers not only to analyse experience, but to also "consider ways others may experience similar epiphanies, they must use personal experience to illustrate facets of cultural experience" (Ellis et al, 2011, p. 276). Furthermore, since "ethnography and autobiography are symbiotic" (Atkinson et al, 2003, in Adams et al, 2015, p. 10), autoethnography adds some elements of the literary genre so as to create aesthetic and evocative texts by using, for instance, poetry or other literary forms to endorse its distinction (Ellis et al, 2011). In what follows, I elucidate on the potential aims that this approach enables and that are of relevance for the purposes of this thesis; namely, (a) to spark critical self-reflection (Spry, 2001); (b) to put forward insider knowledge of a cultural phenomenon/experience (Adams et al, 2015); (c) to describe and critique cultural norms, experiences, and practices (Adams et al, 2015); (d) to allow oneself to be vulnerable (Spry, 2001); and (e) to embrace writing as therapeutic (Ellis et al, 2011).

1.5.1 Reflexivity

Bernadette Marie Calafell (2013) writes, "In my mind reflexivity refer[s] to an intersectional critique, an illumination of power, and acknowledging one's

relationality to all of this" (p. 7). I start with reflexivity because I make of it my guiding principle in the writing trajectory throughout this work. Writing reflexively needs to account for my positionality in relation to the story I am telling. I want to write about my maternal family's experience of being migrants, foreigner and local, working class vs. middle-class citizens, being aware that these categories do not apply equally to the different generations in my family and to Latin-American women in Italy, and that part of our identities gets more or less privileged or oppressed depending on our locations. Simply put, as white women we are more likely to pass unnoticed and bypass racism, however, as 'foreigners', or at least not-Italy-born Italians, we cannot avoid facing xenophobia. Therefore, I must acknowledge how and why differences are operating in self/culture to understand how my intersecting identities are both marginalized and privileged. As communication studies scholar Richard G. Jones (2010) affirms, "Part of telling my story means first being reflexive in regards to my intersecting identities, and to acknowledge the disadvantages and privileges that come with them" (p. 124).

In this perspective, reflexivity "asks us to explicitly acknowledge our research in relation to power" (Adams et al, 2015, p. 23). As a reflexive writer I need also to account for my identity's limitations and its implications when I consider, for instance, as Tony Adams (2015) puts it, "Not having to think about race is a privilege that my Whiteness grants me" (p. 30). When I first arrived in elementary school in Italy, many of the children in my classroom were also from non-Italian origins but matters of race, religion, and language shaped our integration differently. Since my native language is Portuguese, it was faster and easier for me to learn Italian than an Arabic-speaking child, and therefore to socialize with other children. My upbringing in a family with Christian values also minimized cultural differences and eased integration with local children – this might not have been the same for children of different religions. My grandmother's skin colour certainly facilitated passing unnoticed when she feared deportation for being "illegal" in the country; contrarily, many people of colour are always in risk of having their citizenship questioned simply on the basis of their "non-Italian" look. This notion resonates in the argument of critical race theory scholar Fatima El-Tayeb (2011) that many ethnic others "despite often having acquired citizenship […] continu[e] to be perceived as migrant, as "alien[s] from elsewhere" (Adelson, 2005, cited in El-Tayeb, 2011, p. xiv). This is due to the fact that "all parts of Europe are arguably invested in "whiteness" as the

norm against which ethnicization is read as a tool of differentiation between insiders and outsiders" (Ibidem). In other words, race becomes a primarily mark of differentiation and exclusion.

Reflexivity becomes critical accountability if the acknowledgement of privileges and disadvantages is made known. Jones (2010) writes, "self-reflexivity cuts to the bone. It implicates you. Reflexivity is uncomfortable because it forces you to acknowledge that you are complicit in the perpetuation of oppression. […] Reflexivity has got to hurt. Reflexivity is laborious (p. 124). Such implicatedness in reflexivity is beautifully illustrated in Trinh Minh-ha's words, in which my own perspective of in-betwenness is mirrored:

> Not quite the same, not quite the other, she stands in that undetermined threshold place where she constantly drifts in and out. Undercutting the inside/outside opposition, her intervention is necessarily that of both not quite an insider and not quite an outsider. She is, in other words, this inappropriate "other" or "same" who moves about with always at least two features: that of affirming "I am like you while persisting in her difference and that of reminding "I am different" while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at. (1997, p. 418)

1.5.2 Insider Perspective

Feminist thoughts and theories are already examples of "*insider's* perspective on the practices, meanings, and interpretations of cultural phenomenon/experiences" (Adams et al, 2015, p. 31). Driven by the need to change how sexist tyranny limited their lives, women progressively organized their struggle starting by naming their oppression while fighting for political recognition. Appropriately, in *Feminist Theory* bell hooks states:

> My awareness of feminist struggle was stimulated by social circumstance. Growing up in a Southern, black, father-dominated, working class household, I experienced (as did my mother, my sisters, and my brother) varying degrees of patriarchal tyranny and it made me angry – it made us all angry. Anger led me to question the politics of male dominance and enabled me to resist sexist socialization. (1984, p.10)

Numerous feminist writers have brought their insider and often marginalized experiences and perspectives into the body of academia and theory (Davis 1981;

Lorde 1984; Walker 1984; hooks, 1990; Collins 1991; Spivak, 1988; Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981; Mohanty, 2003). Their work spotlights the complexities of different axes of oppression by bringing nuanced, emotional, and meaningful insights of lived experiences. Hence, choosing autoethnography, writes Spry (2011), "offers a critical methodology that emphasizes knowledge in the body, offering the researcher an enfleshed epistemology and ontology" (p. 716).

Although I do aim at "being able to describe an experience in a way that "outside" researchers never could" (Adams et al, 2015, p. 31), I hope to – with my insider knowledge – move away from the confined dichotomies of self/other, West/rest, and even insider/outsider that perversely perpetuate segregation and discrimination. Indeed, it is exactly by recounting the story of my family that I aspire to show that categories get blurred and are often mobile when we cross borders, or borders cross us.

1.5.3 Cultural Critique

When feminist women of colour write about their peculiar position in terms of their gender and race, they produce knowledge about different injustices and exclusions they have faced in relation to White women, for example. Thus, writing reflexively from an "enfleshed" (Spry, 2001) perspective opens the path to the critique of oppressive, constructed cultural norms. However, to present such critique there is the necessity for a detailed description of experience, or as Clifford Geertz defines it, a "thick description" of a culture (Ellis et al, 2011, p. 277) that proposes understanding and the possibility to transgress imposed norms.

Anthropologist Shahram Khosravi in *'Illegal Traveller'* (2010) writes a fascinating autoethnography on his history of border crossing. In describing his trajectory from Iran in an attempt to reach the West in the late 1980s, Khosravi moves a critique towards (the lack of) humanitarian assistance on the part of the United Nations (UN), showcasing that the international discourse on human rights protection is limited and often unreachable by those in real need of protection. He recounts an event during his permanence in Pakistan:

> While Saddam Hussein's agents persecuted and murdered Iraqi refugees, Shiite groups supported by the Iranian state attacked Iranian expatriates, ironically, often right in front of the UNHCR building. The moment the buses stopped and

> screaming young men attacked refugees with chains and sticks, the UNHCR guards closed the gates in panic. The officers watched the scene from the second floor. In front of the closed doors of the UNHCR building and its guards, staff arrived and left in cars with tinted windows, which were swiftly gone from our sight. (2010, p.35)

The description of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) paralysis encourages readers to think about taken-for-granted norms. The very idea of the UN as the bearer of human rights principles is questioned, as he indicates the failure to fulfill the undertaken duties in relation to the protection of human lives that the UN represents. Autoethnographies intentionally use personal experience to challenge dominant discourses, often breaking silences, "as well as address[ing] instances of unfairness or injustice" (Adams et al, 2015, p. 89).

1.5.4 A Note on Vulnerability

To make oneself vulnerable is a requirement of autoethnographic enquiry if the researcher wants her and her readers to "understand these experiences and the emotions they generate" (Adams et al, 2015, p. 39). I explicitly chose to include a note on vulnerability for its potential for constructive knowledge making, on one hand, and its relation to my own self-exposure, on the other. Regarding the first one, in her book *The Vulnerable Observer,* Ruth Behar (1997) observes

> The charge that all the variants of vulnerable writing that have blossomed in the last two decades are self-serving and superficial, full of unnecessary guilt or excessive bravado, stems from an unwillingness to even consider the possibility that a personal voice, if creatively used, can lead the reader, not into miniature bubbles of navel-gazing, but into the enormous sea of serious social issues. (1997, p. 24)

Writing vulnerably is to make myself susceptible to the (dis)approving gaze of potential readers and it is a risk I choose to take, for vulnerability is, as Athena Athanhasiou, in conversation with Judith Butler, states "the abiding and vital potentiality of being affected by others and of owing ourselves to others (2013, p. 158). "Giving up the power that comes from being disembodied and disinterested observers", Katherine Allen and Fred Piercy (2005) write, "we can claim a new sense of empowerment and add another dimension to our understanding of the human

condition. Vulnerability is returned for strength" (p. 156). Tamy Spry (2001) associates embracing vulnerability with the possibility of being in charge of your work, as she puts it, "to step out from behind the curtain and reveal the individual at the controls of academic-Oz" (p. 714).

1.5.5 Writing as therapeutic

Writing reflexively, from my own position, and embracing vulnerability along with humility allows me to better "identify and address inequities in human relationships and the systems of domination that maintain them" (Allen & Piercy, 2005, p. 155). It is, in fact, *writing* as a practice that will enable me to access this hidden knowledge, for writing is a method of inquiry, a way of knowing (Richardson, 2000). Writing vulnerably entails breaking silences, dealing with (un)comfortable emotions being opened to (re)discover how/why experience shaped/affected who I am. Hence, the possibility to achieve greater consciousness on the roots of dominance and the pain it can cause has a healing potential.

Producing testimony of our own lived experience helps making sense of ourselves, questioning canonical stories that debunks "hegemonizing dominant cultural myths" (Spry, 2001, p 711) that are usually the origin of constraint and pain. Spry (2001) affirms it was only when she started writing on being sexually assaulted that "profound healing began", when she embraced writing that experience "as a woman with strength and agency rather than accepting the victimage discourse of sexual assault embedded in our phallocentric language" (p.712). Carolyn Ellis et al. (2011) stress that writing personal stories can be therapeutic not only for authors but also for participants and readers. Along these lines, Tony Adams (2015) argues that writing about his troubled relationship with his father not only enabled him to work through his own emotions and responsibilities, but also allowed others to identify with it and take it "as stories to "live with" during times of relational distress" (p. 39). He finally states: "I reveal my experiences—as unflattering as they may be—so that others might learn from my mistakes and avoid such behaviors" (p. 40). Nevertheless, therapeutic does not relate only to painful events in experience. Through my autoethnographic journey I have also benefitted in better understanding my familial relationships in productive ways. Especially when I was younger, I would blame my family for my misfortunes, but writing and trying to reason from everyone's

perspective allowed me understand that "*all* people involved in a relationship perpetually and mutually influence each other in innumerable and uncertain ways" Adams et al, 2015, p. 39). Thus, it did not only serve to heal or mend gaps but also to attribute new meanings to my ways of perceiving my matrilineage.

I highlighted above some of the specificities of autoethnographic writing. For its potentialities and distinction, I find autoethnography to best fit my research purposes, so that I can bring in new analytical strategies by blending my embodied experience so as to explain and critique existing systems and discourses of power. As follows, I describe the methods and techniques applied to accomplish the project and to give new inputs to the textuality of academic writing.

1.6 Research Design

In this research I departure from my own personal, located, embodied experience to cast light on social patterns of migration, in particular female migration in from Brazil to Italy. Thus, my aim is to connect story with theory and personal experience with culture. To do so, I will juxtapose these elements, and articulate my story – that is based on my personal narrative, informal conversations, and interviews with my family – with current theories on migration and postcoloniality in regard to class, gender and transnational belonging. In this way, I aim at putting story and theory in conversation, by "using the vocabulary of theory and the mode of story to create nuanced and compelling accounts of personal/cultural experience" (Adams et al, 2015, p. 90). This approach, as Adams et al. explain, uses citationality so as "to *enact* the intervention of theory *in the writing* itself" (2015, p. 91). As follows, I will elucidate on methodological practices and techniques that will help me accomplish the desired result.

1.6.1 About interviewing

I could have chosen to do an autobiographical account on my experience of living and growing up in between two countries, different cultures and indefinite social classes, but all this would not have been possible if my grandmother had not chosen to migrate, if my mother had not chosen to follow her and bring me along. To tell this

story, then, I need to include their voices and I choose to make them, the women from whom I learned the meaning of affect and love, my co-storytellers. I do so by using semi-structured interviews as a strategy to reach out and include their own embodied knowledge and engage with their own spaces of in betweenness.

My fieldwork is primarily constituted through accessing my own memory and personal narrative, bringing back informal and casual family encounters, including Sunday special lunches and Wednesday dinners, along with my mental notes on gossiping and other informal conversations before I decided to write a project about us. Nonetheless, some participant observation took place in these same informal contexts also once I sketched the project. But mostly, I interviewed my family members, my grandmother (Luiza), my mother (Simone), my aunt (Andreia), and my cousin (Natalia), individually altering and adapting interview methods to each family member when necessary. Marjorie DeVault and Glenda Gross (2006) notes some specificities of the human talk that renders interviewing a rich source for storytelling experience, as "the flexibility and productive powers of language; the subtle shades of meaning conveyed through the nuances of speech, gesture, and expression; issues of translation; the ineluctable locatedness of any moment or stretch of talk" (p. 173), to name a few. As H. L. Goodall (2000) points, "the goal of fieldwork is to recognize patterns" (p. 8). In this way, my interviews are aimed to reflect an impression of the differences and proximities of our experiences.

However, I need to acknowledge my bias as a member of the family and researcher and how it can affect the research. During the interviews, my greatest challenge was to address the topic of family separation with my cousin Natalia. For we have very similar histories of detachment and interaction with our fathers – first leaving them in Brazil when we first went to Italy, then having them joining us in Italy for some years, and lastly having them going back to Brazil as we stayed in Italy – I understand these events as extremely important in shaping our paths and personalities. The moments of absence as well as presence of our fathers in regard to affection and financial support were decisive in making the persons we became and the life opportunities we had. I knew though it was a sensitive topic to address, since unlike myself she cut off her relations with her father since he went back to Brazil. Thus, during the interviews, I really wanted to address the topic with her, in an attempt to know more, to understand, to get a sense of what family separation meant for her. As we moved forward, I felt excited and hesitant at the same time to talk to

her about it and I ended up disappointed for feeling unable to appropriately approach the theme. I felt she was stiff and didn't leave too much room for it. So I was unable to insist on the topic because I felt like I was going to cry, as I perceived she was not too much willing to talk. Although I imagine her hesitation may suggest that family separation has a tone of tragedy for her, I recognise that my own positionality and the emotions that are at play by empathising with my cousin's pain affect the ways I approached the interview.

Furthermore, closely related to the process of interviewing are the processes of transcribing and translating. Here language comes in as another challenge I faced. Not only I struggled in finding the accurate words for capturing their narratives, but also had to pay careful attention to the use of Portuguese and Italian in their testimonies. I agree with translation theorist Lawrence Venuti's (1996) notion that there is an inherent violence in the act of translation. This resonates in Louse Von Flotow's (1997) idea of the "translator-effect" (p. 35); that is, the mark a translator leaves on the work. Thus, to minimize such violence I opted for "strategic choices of translation" (Mehrez, 2007, p. 108) that I better consider to do justice to my interviewees' voices and the nuances within the languages. Thus, given that Portuguese is my family's first language, I translated most of it. I maintained in the text some words or expressions that I believe to be untranslatable, or that have particular sentimental meanings to me. For instance, I address my mother as *mãe* and my aunt as *tia.* I also kept ordinary words that are used in the diminutive form, since it denotes a particular mode of referring to things that is a little over used in the Brazilian Portuguese language, and particularly over used within my family, for example I kept *casinha,* when my grandmother referred to her 'little' house. Equally important and untranslatable is the use of Italian words they unconsciously express, particularly pet phrases or meaningless words they insert in the middle of their sentences. *Cioè, capito,* are usually words deprived of meaning if used repetitively and, for as I see it, it is very telling of not only their immersion within Italian culture but also their own subjective expression of a transnational life.

1.6.2 Writing as method

I embrace in this project the idea of writing as inquiry as Laurel Richardson (2000) proposes, that is, a way to "word the world" (p. 923). Writing taken as a

method of inquiry means that the investigation of how we construct the world happens through the writing process. As she puts it,

> I write because I want to find something out. I write in order to learn something out. I write in order to learn something that I did not know before I wrote it. I was taught, however, as perhaps you were, too, not to write until I knew what I wanted to say, until my points organised and outlined. (p. 924)

I as well write because I want to find out what it means to have grown up and be still living in between spaces of classes and nations. Adopting writing as method means for me that I will not depart from pre-established conclusions, neither writing forms or representation (prose, poetic, etc.), but that I let them come forward – in a metamorphic fashion – as I write. Richardson labels this approach as "creative analytic practice ethnography" and affirms that this type of work is genre and conventions breaking, which challenges claims of scientific truth as they evocatively and creatively present "valid representations of the social" (p 930). I chose to explicitly acknowledge writing as a method for the importance of crafting this research on paper as it allows me to work through material and symbolic power in academic, social and life conventions.

I make use of some techniques that can be auxiliary in my mode of writing. Firstly, I create themes. I do so as strategy to organised the research as whole so as I did with my interviews. I identified themes in order to construct a logical narrative, letting my pre-conceived themes guide the research and including, subsequently, new themes that appeared through my interviews and writing. Themes come in helpful for pinpointing and analysing similarities and distinctions in relation to my co-storytellers and current research. Secondly, I employ a particular take on the politics of citation. Adams et al. (2015) argue that many autoethnographers use the poetics of citation so as to combine "their voices and the language of theory, poetically merging story and theory so that story becomes theory in action" (p. 92). I make constant use of citations intertwined with my own writing to support and develop my arguments as a stylistic and aesthetic choice to converse with theory and blend my experience with theory. However, renowned feminist scholar Sarah Ahmed, writes in a post on her blog *feministkilljoys* that citational practices in the academy can function as a "reproductive technology" (2013) that privileges the work of male writers. In other words, the use of citationality can be crucial for resisting or reproducing dominant

ideologies. Accordingly, my decolonial approach to the writing of this thesis assist me in the choices I make regarding whom to cite.

The third point, in fact, consists of bringing in 'Found Poetry and Stories' that I found in words of authors whose work isn't necessarily inherently academic. In describing techniques of writing useful to autoethnography, Stacy Holman Jones (2005) highlights the utility of using poetry and stories found in the source texts to rethink or transform the text form or structure, paying attention to language, rhythm, etc. Gloria Anzaldúa explicitly combines different forms of writing as a political and aesthetic statement (Pérez, 2013) that breaks the presumptuous rigidity of academic writing. In a similar move, I make use of found poetry and stories focusing on drawing on and/or quoting compelling poetry and prose that directly touches the subjects I address. This strategy also allows me to work with Italian postcolonial literature that approaches issues of being a migrant in contemporary Italy.

This choice is a strategy I found so I could include a literary dimension into this thesis, and present literature as a source of knowledge as I incorporate voices whose languages reflect my own, or voices whose experiences mirror my own. bell hooks (2000), in the last chapter of *All about Love,* writes on the transformative power of books in her life and how they "enabled [her] to understand life with greater complexity" (p. 235). In a similar manner, I include those poetic texts that are in some way transformative to me for they meet Audre Lorde's (1984) understanding that poetry "forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into an idea, then into more tangible action" (p. 37). For this reason, I bring in the stories of Somali-Italian writer Ubah Cristina Ali Farah, for instance, because her novel *Il Comandante del Fiume* hints on the Italian fascist colonial past in particular in relation to Somalia through the story of a families who came to have their lives shaped by this history, which in a similar way, I perceive to be the case of my family to the extent that histories of colonial power, migration, and national formation, impact the everyday lives of those involved in it. Also, Cristina's accounts on migrant youth in Rome, through the perspective of the young Yabar, takes me back to my teen years in Italy with a pinch of nostalgia as I read and remember the dynamics of socialization of those who arrived in Italy at a young age. The poetry of Cecília Meireles comes in for its remarkable quality, and for she is my favourite Brazilian poetess.

1.7 Ethical considerations

The use of invasive colonialist research methods and methodologies opened the debate on the ethical aspects on conducting social research (Alcoff, 1991; Spivak, 1988). Tony Adams (2015) reiterates that for doing autoethnography ethically, autoethnographers must be responsible for the way they represent others in their research, seek consent from participants, account for possible consequences for others, and protect their identities when necessary. With this in mind, I decided to write a message on our family Whatsapp group to explain what they were going to be part of and under what terms. I also restated these aspects before interviewing each of them. It goes as follows:

Good morning family,

The multiple ties that bond us – as granddaughters, daughters, cousins and friends – and the life history we share made me want to investigate deeper what are the similarities and differences we lived particularly in relation to our experience of migrating from Brazil to Italy. As far as I am concerned, all these comings and goings, all the schools I studied, all the houses I lived in, our reunions and separations shaped who I am today. & All of you are directly and indirectly part of this history. But although we all share the experience of having left Brazil, this affected each us in a different way. This is why I am interested in discovering your experience in these 15 years of Italy.

When I come visit next week, I would like to ask each of you some questions that will be recorded and used in my research. I will tell episodes of our lives that will be mediated by my own interpretation of the facts but your own words will also be directly cited. This means that there will be a number of people that will know about our lives. & if this is a problem, if necessary, I will adopt measures to maintain the confidentiality of whatever if do not feel like sharing or omit details.

Ethical considerations, however, do not concern only practices that deal with respecting participants and research conduct. The ethics of research concerns a set of entanglements of ideas and practices that are informed by particular standpoints the researcher decides to position herself. As elucidated above, my theoretical approach is

part of my commitment with decolonizing discourses in research theories and practices, as well as it is informs my ethical attitudes in the writing process. As such, these explanations were made to prepare the ground on which I am now going to let my story flourish. The next chapter elaborates on systemic issues inherent to international migration, like class mobility, family separation, and citizenship, woven with my family's experience.

Chapter 2

2. Transgressing borders, traversing boundaries

2.1 Arriving in Italy

Nine eleven two thousand and one. Jairo, Simone and I departed from Afonso Pena International airport in Curitiba, Brazil, stopping over Frankfurt and landing in Malpensa airport in Milan, Italy as our final destination. *Nonna Luiza* had been in Mantova already for nine months when we arrived. She and her sister, my great-aunt – *tia* Ni – were working and living in a restaurant in a quite wealthy suburban area. They still didn't have papers. They were working illegally while they waited the citizenship recognition process to progress. *80 Voglia* was a family's restaurant; almost everyone that worked in the restaurant also lived there. There were plenty of bedrooms on the second-floor and the restaurant was in the ground floor. It was a very good deal for my grandmother and my great-aunt to go working there while they waited the regularisation of their citizenship status. They did not have to worry with renting a house, which is difficult when you are an illegal migrant, and they were working and earning money.

When they first arrived in Italy, a niece of theirs had already been living there with her husband and daughter for a few more months and she received them in her house, but that was only temporary, until they could be autonomous enough to settle.[1] Thus, the restaurant was very convenient for them, and it was certainly very convenient for the owners not having to pay taxes for some of theirs employees. In fact, *nonna* Luiza told them she had a daughter and a son-in-law willing to come and work with them, and they said 'yes'. My father and mother then moved to Italy to live and work illegally in a restaurant with a 9-year-old child in between that. If it weren't my story, this would sound to me like my family was involved in forced labour and I was there only watching. Despite not having being the case of forced labour, the situation was very stressful and the work was hard, particularly because my mom and

[1] This is in line with sociologist Mirjana Morokvasic's (1984) notion that informal networks are essential in shaping migration processes. Also Brazilian Gender studies scholar Teresa Kebla Lisboa (2007) notes migration processes are dependant on "a complex network related to the social, economical, and cultural contexts in both sending and receiving countries" (p. 806). The presence of a niece was determining in relation to the destination, for instance. If it wasn't for her, they might have gone somewhere than Mantova.

dad had never done it before. While my grandmother and great-aunt were working in the kitchen, my parents were the waitresses.

As soon as we arrived, I was enrolled in an elementary school in the neighbourhood, quickly started learning Italian and making friends. Soon I was going to my friend's places to play with Barbie dolls. I was such an addict of Barbie. My friends had so many Barbies. I was fascinated that in Italy there were Barbie dolls even in the supermarkets, in Brazil we had to go to toys stores and I could only get one for my birthday, children's day or Christmas. And my friends had so many dolls, accessories, the Barbie kitchen, the Barbie trailer, the Barbie new Beatle. My Italian friends in the neighbourhood also had a room of their own and I was ashamed of living in the restaurant, sharing the room with my mom and dad. That year in May I turned 9 and I had my head shaved. Quite queer for a 9 year old girl. I used to love my hairstyle but because it was a new school and people didn't know me from the previous years often they would think I was a boy at a first sight. I think I didn't care that much, but sometimes I would feel ashamed about that too.

As time was passing, working and living in the same place was becoming every time more unbearable. After a couple of months my parents had saved some money and decided to rent a flat. They thought the situation would improve if we could have a place of our own, and we could separate work and home. Even though I could perceive the material differences with my wealthy Italian friends, I couldn't tell the difference of having or not having documents. Thus, I asked my mother what it meant for her to leave under those conditions and how she felt being undocumented.

Mãe: I was so afraid. I couldn't see the police officers that would come for eating at the restaurant that I would think they were there for us. It was so difficult to organise things, to get an apartment. We were not able to get an apartment, we had to live at the job and we felt subordinated to that situation which was not nice, understand? But at the same time, we would see many other Brazilians that had a nice life, a normal life. They had a job, a house, everything. But how can I say? It was a time with a lot prejudice. So for me it was horrible, I had a constant fear for being undocumented. We managed to find a place to rent. We had the money to pay a security deposit and the rent but when the landlord found out we were foreigners they gave up and didn't rent it to us. So we went through some difficulties and your father, you and I ended up going back to Brazil. *La nonna* and a *tia* had a different situation, they were more resistant, they stayed because they were waiting for the documents, but we weren't. This was one of the things that made us go back. If we had settle immediately perhaps we wouldn't have gone back. Because we already had a job and we were getting used to the job.

My mother's words reflect the idea that "the condition of 'illegality' results in such docility" (Khosravi, 2010, p. 91) for the consequent impotence of not being able to object to anything they are told, which sometimes can be very perverse like low wages or being refused a house. This embodied fear my mom reports is embedded in the constant risk of apprehension undocumented immigrants have and often determines their immobility. My conversation with my grandmother about her experience as an undocumented migrant adds interesting insights on the issue.

Clara: Were you ever afraid of being deported?

Nonna: Ni and I weren't that much afraid. But people would try to frighten us. But for us was like: either we stay, or we go back. We came to do the citizenship but people would get mad with us because we would go out on the streets, we would talk and other people would live more hidden. […] People of colour suffer more. There are stories, many stories, poor them. My friend Rosa suffers a lot. She doesn't go anywhere; she limits herself at home when she's not working.

Interestingly, *nonna'*s opposite evaluation of not fearing deportation in comparison to my mother, might suggest that the age difference between them at the time they were undocumented also played a role. Besides, my grand mother's perspective introduces the important aspect of the visibility of the undocumented migrant when she is or could perceived as such by her skin colour, which results in the "constant feeling of being under surveillance, which functions as a disciplining mechanism" (Khosravi, 2010, p. 91) as she feels pushed to opt to stay indoor. Such submission was something my parents were not able to stand, thus our first experience in Italy ended here.

2.2 Class echoes

I discovered what class means when I was about 8 years old. At that time my family had recently moved from North Brazil in the Amazon region where I was born to the South, where both my paternal and maternal family used to live before moving north. It was the second time since I was born that we moved south to start things anew. This time, we moved to *nonna* Luiza's house. As I have always been used to, my parents enrolled me in a private elementary school, because as we knew it, if you want to grant your children better education, public education was not the way to go.

It was never something I questioned; it was just how things were. I also knew that public schools were for children whose parents were poor. And my school was paid for, so it meant my parents were not poor. Another indicator of class was the house one lived in. A beautiful and rich house was a big house and one made of bricks like all the ones we have lived in so far. While settling in, we temporarily moved to my grandmother's house while she was in Italy. She had a wooden house in a working class neighbourhood. I remember how I felt ashamed in living there because the school bus was going to pick me up every morning and my schoolmates were going to see I lived in wooden house. My 8-year-old self was so concerned about people thinking I was poor, which was unfair because I thought I was not. I think that was when my in-betweenness started and it have accompanied me ever since. A sense of not belonging to either category, because I was not embedded enough to none of them and never antagonistic enough to be cast out.

I had similar feelings again in Italy, when people would think we were very poor in Brazil and this was the reason for moving to Italy. A classmate of mine in elementary school once asked me: "did you live in the *favelas*?" I could not understand why people thought so since I used to go to a private school and now in Italy was going to a public one. How did people assume I was doing better in life if I was going to a public school now and I had been taught that public schools are for people who cannot afford a private one? What did a child in Italy know about favelas? It might also suggest a degree of cultural imperialism through prejudices and assumptions instilled at an early age. To a certain extent, this speaks to the works of renowned postcolonial scholars like Edward Said (1993) and Gayatri Spivak (1988) and their emphasis on the mode of Western societies of representing the other through a hierarchy that inherently disqualifies those low in such scale.

With time, my transatlantic movements contributed to further my understanding of class. Until this day, I feel uncomfortable in positioning myself in regard to class because class is not only something you choose to be part of. In my case it isn't also always related to my family class affiliation. Being educated, white, speaking three languages, having travelled the world, all this put me inevitably in a position of class privilege in Brazil. Being from Brazil, living with my partially solo mother, who works as a cleaning lady and speaks Italian with a strong Brazilian accent also inevitably puts me in a migrant box in Italy. In this border-crossing life, class is one of the things that is more present, it is always there and it gives me a

sense of estrangement when I change geographic location. It is about how you are treated, the spaces to which you can belong, or even the people you can talk to and get involved with. In this sense, class is a marked category and often goes hand in hand with the racialization of some minorities. This is particularly evident in the 'global cities', as Saskia Sassen (1991) describes these European metropolises in which multinational cultures coexist, but are organized hierarchically through an ethno-social divide where ethnicity is often equated to class. As Fatima El-Tayeb (2011) puts it, "at the same time, not coincidently but necessarily, they [global cities] are also increasingly fortified border zones, divided into sections, housing populations with radically different positions and prospects in the national hierarchies, whose paths are rarely crossing" (p. 20). This is well represented is films such *La Haine* (1995) by Mathieu Kassovitz, or *Caché* (2005) by Micheal Haneke where immigrants and second-generation migrants are residents of the French *banlieues,* working-class suburbs.

Nonetheless, it is not even necessary to turn to global cities to find such situations. Even in such a small town like Mantova, there are ethnicized working-class neighborhoods; the biggest and most notorious is *Lunetta*. We never lived there, but I attended my last three years of middle school[2] in a school where a great number of students were residents of this neighborhood (also known as *Lunetta Bronx* as my schoolmates would write on their Eastpak backpacks). According to my cousin who attended another school, my school had a bad reputation because of its 'migrants' students, it is known as "*una scuola casinista"* [a messy school].

I feel a tension in this class positioning because in terms of class-consciousness I feel uncomfortable in sharing the same status of a small elite that is often responsible for maintaining the status quo. It is as if the interests of this middle-class I automatically pertain to are antagonistic to my anti-capitalist values. More simply, I feel uncomfortable to recognize that certain elements of my class privilege, partake in the oppression of others, particularly in Brazil, where the social divide is much more visible and opportunities unequally shared. In a way it is if my notion of class as an individual and as collectivity does not match. But Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) note, in fact, that the subjective dimension of class can complicate the concept

[2] In Italy the school system is divided into five years of elementary school (*scuola elementare)*, three years of middle school (scuola media), and five years of high school (scuola superiore) and usually one.

of class itself. They argue, that even Karl Marx struggled in defining it. Quoting Marx, they write: "'at first sight,' he observes, 'classes seem to correspond with objective sources of income: profit, rent and wages.' Nevertheless, he experiences a kind of dizziness in front of 'the infinite fragmentation of interests and positions' that social classes entail" (cited in Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013, p. 98). It was revealing talking to *nonna* Luiza on how she feels about her social status and her class membership to understand this subjective dimension of class.

Clara: Do you think you changed your social class coming to Italy?

Nonna: Not really. It's the same thing I think. I mean, here we have a higher purchasing power. We travel more, this kind of things. We can give our granddaughters a gift once in a while. (Smile) In Brazil it was more difficult. Now I was able to save and buy that apartment in Brazil. It's a good property, in a good location. The first house I bought when I lived in Ouro Preto (North Brazil) was a *casinha de madeira* [little wooden house], then I sold it, moved to the south again and bought a houseless property and your parents gave me the money to build a wooden house.

Nonna's understanding of her class mobility does not equate the material improvement she acquired with an improvement of her social status. She buys more, but is not related to her sense of herself. She clearly mentions class markers such as the "good property" as a symbol of objective affluence, but she does not perceive the "conflicting class mobility" (Parreñas, 2000) in it. Such notion is presented by Gender studies scholar Rhacel Parreñas as a feature of many migrant domestic workers in Europe and the United States whose experience as domestic workers "simultaneously involves an increase and decrease in class status" (p. 574). They earn more for doing less skilled work than their previous occupation in their country of origin, in which they would earn much less. Contrarily, my grandmother has been part of the working class in Brazil and Italy, namely doing the same type of domestic work in both countries. But objectively and structurally she transition from working-class to middle-class standards of affluence even though she does not perceives it as a change in her social status Thus, her social status is not only a matter of economic affluence but something that is imprinted in her subjectivity. A. Khun's notion of class speaks to this same logic of class with which *nonna* Luiza identifies:

> Class is not just about the way you talk, or dress, or furnish your home; it is not just about the job you do or how much money you make doing it; nor is it

> merely about whether or not you went to university, nor which university you went to. Class is something beneath your clothes, under your skin, in your psyche, at the very core of your being. (1995, p. 98)

This understanding fits into the cultural and symbolic configurations of class of which feminist sociologist Steph Lawler (1999), drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, argues that "become incorporated into the self" (p. 4). *Nonna* Luiza's testimony matches Lawler's argument that "class is embedded in people's history and cannot be easily escaped" (p.3). On the other hand, I wonder what happens to those who are in a way traversed by different categories of class. On a Sunday lunch, Natalia, my cousin, told me how she used to feel ashamed when she had to say what her mother's job was. I could entirely relate, it was as if we had the perception of "stepping down" to a lower class and it was shameful. I then confronted my cousin again about it during the interview:

> Naty: Well, it was different from my friends. None of my Italian friends had mothers who did a humble job. *C'è*, it is normal that when you're a teenager you want to hide certain things.

In fact Lawler affirms, "One way in which class inequality works is through making working-class subjectivities pathological, so that class relations are not just economic relations but also relations of superiority/inferiority, normality/abnormality, judgement/shame" (p. 5). We were white, we spoke Italian, but still we were not born there, we were *le brasiliane*. It was already a marked difference that made us displaced if not ashamed. There was already an element of otherness, being perceived as poor was a further cause of "anxiety of being associated with working class existence" (p.6). And it was like this because class, race and nationality are organized hierarchically. I talk about this because I feel these movements across the geography of my life and class categories have had – particularly in the past – profound implications in making sense of myself and that my self-actualization was often displaced.

Class determines migration more than it is actually acknowledged. Migration studies scholar Nicholas Van Hear (2014) stresses the need to reconsider class in the study of migration for it is precisely class what determines "*who* is able to move and to where" (p.101, emphasis added). "Class shapes the migration process itself" (ibidem, p. 101) and defines mobility or immobility. I started with class precisely

because the accounts on class I present from my and my family's perspectives also casts lights on the different dimensions of class, particularly when intersecting with this transatlantic border crossing. It seems to me this issue of class across transatlantic borders cannot be viewed separated from the division of international labour that cannot be separated from gender and race.

2.2.1 Female neoliberal migration

The women in my family participated in a flux of female migration that takes shape within neoliberal globalization, in which categories of gender, class and ethnicity are re-signified in accordance to the sexual division of labour. Feminist sociologist Jules Falquet (2008) argues that the neoliberal State plays a role in reorganizing the work relations when it stops guaranteeing social services that are automatically relegated to the private sector and the family. Within this context, traditionally considered feminine work is first transferred to women and in turn, retransferred to migrant women (documented or not) by women in central countries or privileged women in Southern/peripheral countries. In a similar way, Teresa Kleba Lisboa (2007) emphasizes the relationship of migration and the unequal development intrinsic to neoliberal capitalism that was promoted among Third World countries in the 1990s. This trend of making "the state minimum to the social and maximum to the capital" (p. 808) had a direct influence in the process of "feminization of migration" in the "globalization of assistance". Parreñas (2000) frames this sector as 'reproductive labour' that encompasses "household chores; the care of elderly, adults and youth; the socialization of children; and the maintenance of social ties in the family" (p. 561). In her study on Filipina domestic workers, she argues that globalization of care increases the unequal gendered division of reproductive labour. This significant movement of women from peripheral countries towards central countries occurs so as that Third World women and women of colour can occupy the spaces of class-privileged women in post-industrial societies, since reproductive labour has historically been relegated to women. Thus, the women in my family entered the labour market in Italy by taking the workplace of women who are now working outside the household and have delegated their societal duty as caretakers of the home to other women.

In this context, the significance of class is restated. As Lisboa (2008) notes many domestic workers in Europe who come from countries considered the Third World have higher level of formal education and worked as teachers, lawyers, nurses, etc., in their country of origin. And this is how class shapes migration. The women who enter the globalization of reproductive labour are the ones who can afford it, while those too poor to migrate remain immobile or in turn work for the women who left and are working for the wealthier women in the rich countries (Perreñas, 2000). Such labour chain of women who work for other women often results in what Parreñas names *international transfer of caretaking* in which women in receiving countries relegate their gender roles to the work of migrant workers and migrant workers do it in turn to poorer women in their country of origin. In this global chain, all women enter the labour force but gender constrains are not abandoned or renegotiated with the male counterparts. This pattern reinforces a division of labour that "is a structural relationship based on the class, race, gender, and (nation-based) citizenship of women" (p. 570). In the case of my family such chain never completed itself since my cousin and I weren't separated from our mothers and left in Brazil to the care of other women when our mothers went to Italy.

Unlike *nonna* Luiza, *tia* Andreia and Simone, my mother, walked the road to a middle-class status before migrating and did experience contradictory class mobility by entering the domestic labour market in Italy. For many decades of the 20th century and perhaps until now in many places, but specifically in Brazil, there were two main trajectories to leave working-class status for women: education and heterosexual marriage, the only form recognized by patriarchal law. My grandmother lacked both since she stopped going to school at grade four of elementary school and got divorced in an early stage of her marriage; my aunt and mother instead were able to finish their high school degree and get married at a young age with men who were educated and were relatively financially stable, which makes a difference when we talk about putting up a family and specifically growing children. In fact, when I asked *tia* Andreia about how she perceives the differences in her social conditions before and after Italy she did not mention many differences, "we used to live *mais ou meninhos né* [quite well] there, right? The only different thing we did not do was travelling. We used to travel once a year to visit relatives. So I think we did not have a lot of money to travel but the rest was quite the same, we used to do the same," she said. On the

other hand, she also recognizes the differences of moving from having a more mental occupation to a more physical demanding job.

*Tia: "*I'm talking about the experience *I* had here, 'cause the way I'm talking it sounds like paradise and it isn't. Of course doing domestic work is heavy, it's extremely tiring. […] After three months I was here, it occurred to me to leave, to go back so as to change job. In the beginning I used to sweep the street like this [she mimics holding a broom while turning her face], because I had to sweep a sidewalk in front of a bank and my first time with a broom in there I was ashamed, now I don't care, but in the beginning I was ashamed."

This perspective speaks of relations of superiority/inferiority I mentioned above and shame results from the conflict of having stepped down in terms of quality job but maintaining a more or less similar life quality. Although she points that those features of her relatively good life quality in Brazil are part of her working class life in Italy. Precisely, this contradiction is present in her idea that the cultural capital of a middle-class life in Brazil is the same cultural capital of a working-class life in Italy. It hits precisely on the core of my anxiety in how one moves across categories and boundaries just by traversing national borders, as if class is in a way changes meanings as it changes locations. Her further statement supports this very idea:

*Tia: "*Going back to how I feel as working class, I don't live this difference because my daughter goes to the same school my boss' son goes. If something happens to me, I go to the hospital and my boss, a lawyer, is there next to me waiting in line to use the same services. I go to a restaurant – of course there are posh restaurants in Mantova that if I really want I could even go – but in Brazil there are posh restaurants you just can't go. I go to the bar and I meet my bosses there, and they are rich, *capito?* Here in Mantova particularly we don't see that much of a difference."

Hence, what she is affirming is that the material disparity between people from different classes is smaller in Italy from what she perceived in Brazil, for the wage gap between the poorer and the richer is smaller. Precisely this is what convinced her in doing this job. "I had an Italian friend – the one you met when I came pick you and your mother at the airport in Verona, remember? – He had a construction company and he told me at the time to learn Italian properly, to go study and then he would give me a job in an office, something administrative, but I would have earned 800€ per month to work 8 hours a day and that wasn't interesting for me. Doing *questo lavoro* we do is better paid," she said. Thus, her perception of doing

something that is more physically demanding and seen as humble compensates for the higher income. It does compensate because unlike in Brazil she does not have to worry about additional life costs such as healthcare or her daughter's education. Simone was emphatic in stating that these differences between Italy and Brazil motivate her to stay.

Mãe; I don't have this agony of not having a healthcare insurance because I know if something happens I can go to the hospital and they will figure something out, *capito?* In Brazil, let's talk more about this because I know it is something that really matters, because I worked with it and I saw people selling their houses, selling their lives to pay the hospital's bill. I was the one charging it. I worked in a hospital's administration and I was the one charging people and that used to devastate me, but it was my job, what else could I do? And I know in Brazil it is like that, but here we don't have that. Of course things cost, it is not for free, it costs, but it is easier.

2.3 Family separation

A further important consequence inherent to the experience of migration Perreñas points is *family separation.* In our case, family separation happened multiple times and in different ways and it is very significant especially because children were involved. Furthermore, one thing became very clear: they would have never stayed in Italy if it were not for each other's presence and support. The first time it happaned was in 2001, when *nonna* Luiza together with one of her sister left Brazil to meet a niece of them who was already in Italy working on the papers for citizenship recognition. The rest of us remained. "I had another life, I was married and had no intentions to come here. I didn't even think about it", *tia* Andreia said. Two years passed before the citizenship was released and *nonna* Luiza went back to Brazil. "That time I went back because I thought 'am I going to stay here alone? No, I'm going to stay with my family, right?' I wouldn't have stayed here alone. If Andreia and Simone wouldn't have come, I wouldn't have come either," said *nonna* Luiza. My conversation with *tia* Andreia on this gives more nuances on what happened when they first experienced family separation.

Tia: *Vó* Luiza came here and when my father died we suffered a bit for being there alone, and grandma felt it. And she said 'there is no reason,'– I don't know why I am crying (laughs) – she said 'there is no reason for being far from you' which was us four [aunt, mom, Natalia and I].

Clara: So he died while she [*nonna*] was here, hum...

Tia: Yes, she was here and she felt it. 'Cause we never lived near him and she had a bit of a regret of us not having lived more with him, and having left him a bit out, of not having made him be part of our lives a bit more. So when he died she felt 'there was no need for me to be far from my two daughters and my two granddaughters. There is no reason. Then she went back to Brazil, she went back intending to stay there, she didn't mean to come back here. Then she commented 'if one of you are willing to go back to Italy with me, I go, otherwise I don't go back there anymore.' I was bit messy with my marriage and a bit willing to change life and I said 'I'll go.'

When it comes to Natalia and I, we had very similar and oppositional experiences at the same time in our life stories. Both our moms got pregnant in their twenties, got married and then also got divorced (later). Anyway, both our fathers also came – at a certain point – to Italy and both returned to Brazil. Nonetheless, the moment her father left Italy was also a moment of rupture in their father/daughter relationship. They have never met again and no longer speak. My father also left when I was 13 but we reconstructed our relationship when I moved back to Brazil when I was 16. My dad's re-entrance in my life made all the difference in healing the wounds and mending the gaps that years of his absence had created. He supported me in a thousand ways, especially emotionally and financially. I know my whole life, access to studying, travelling, growing and having so much to choose from was made possible because he was there for me, always. This is also a way in which family composition influences class and social mobility. In fact, the absence of my grandfather and the consequent lack of financial aid to help my grandmother raise my mother and aunt made it harder for her to cope with life. Our conversation illustrates this point:

Nonna: I worked six years cleaning a Federal institute, so I was even a federal worker. But we would earn so little there. We earned so little, *Deus me livre!* [God forbid!] I didn't even earn the minimum wage; I earned half of a minimum wage. Then I got desperate, I couldn't sustain myself, I couldn't live. Your mother used to work at the hospital and earned a minimum salary and Andreia worked in a fruit shop.

Clara: This in Rôndonia [northern Brazil]?

Nonna: In Rôndonia. and Andreia also earned half of a minimum salary. I mean, we didn't have the conditions… Then I left and went to Curitiba [southern Brazil] and I started working for Mrs Elza, in a family house. Then I could make it because I would share with Inês [her sister], we would share the expenses.

Clara: Then you bought that property [the one I moved in while she was in Italy] there?

Nonna: After a while we bought that property.

Clara: With which money did you buy it?

Nonna: With the money from my house in Rondônia.

Clara: And how did you buy that house?

Nonna: I bought that property by instalments, but I finished paying it before going back [to Curitiba]. Always like this, always tight.

Clara: And when you divorced from my grandfather, did he give you an allowance or something?

Nonna: No, he didn't give me anything. He never gave me anything, *nadinha*.

It would have probably been different if she had had some financial support after divorcing. But paternal support after divorcing need not be only material to ensure the well being of a child. For instance, when my father left Italy, I started losing interest in school and I almost failed a year in 2nd grade high school. At that time though I had no idea his absence was what could have caused such distress. Once I started high school I entered the loop of the immigrant *self-fulfilling prophecy*[3] (Merton, 1948), as if I – like many others immigrants or second generation students – was to be predestined to be the ones to skip school, to do drugs, to have no future as the popular belief wanted, and as my cousin said about the bad reputation of my majority migrant middle school, "this was people say." Indeed, in a way, my life at the time was following that prophecy. Until not long ago, I had never realised that such situation concerned also my mother and it was so difficult for her to the point

[3] Sociologist Robert Merton coined the term *self-fulfilling prophecy* to indicate that behaviour can strongly be influenced by expectations or predictions even when they are false. He wrote: "The self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a *false* definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the original false conception come *true*. This specious validity of the self-fulfilling prophecy perpetuates a reign of error. For the prophet will cite the actual course of events as proof that he was right from the very beginning" (Merton, 1948, p. 195).

that it became so unbearable that the best choice was for me to go back to Brazil and live with my father, which meant separating from my mother.

Mãe: In 2008 when you were older, we [my parents] saw that it was interesting for us [me and her], it was important for you to leave [go back to Brazil], that it was a phase that you needed so. I preferred seeing you there, than here doing nothing. You were so unmotivated. Because when your father was here you were such a good student, and after he left, you declined so much, your output at school declined. They called me two or three times to talk to me at school because you were going badly; you had no stimulus or motivation. Going back to Brazil was great in this sense, because you recovered everything. You restarted in a good school and your dad was in a very good financial situation at that moment. Thus, of course I preferred you here with me but only if you were doing well, not as you were, unmotivated, smoking week, etc. I couldn't deal with it. It was a bad period, a difficult age and with your dad you were doing very well and I felt safe.

Likewise, Natalia ended up failing a year in 2nd grade high school after her dad left. Such distresses indicate their absence played a role in what we are doing in life at the moment, which in our case was going to school. But unlike me, Natalia did not go back to Brazil and for reasons I ignore she cut relations with him. However, each of us found alternatives to cope with the situation and go on, going to Brazil was definitely a good change for me. As for Natalia, she changed school, started over and also like me went on with studying; she is currently finishing her Bachelor's degree in Economics at University of Parma. Regarding her father, the farthest our conversion went was this:

Clara: When was the last time you spoke with your dad?

Naty: Hum, since he left.

Clara: Since 2010?

Naty: Yes.

Clara: Oh, come on. You spoke with him after that!

Naty: To scold him, yes, many times in the first year. After that I got tired, then I don't speak with him anymore.

Familial distress is certainly not a prerogative of families who migrate. In our case despite the affective pain of familial disruption, I am interested in the

consequences it has had. For Natalia, cutting her bonds with her father besides posing some material setbacks also meant that she cut her bonds with Brazil, affecting how her identity, her sense of herself, and her ideas on attachment were moulded. Unlike the rest of us, she went back to Brazil on a Christmas holiday once around ten years ago. I advance the discussion on identity and belonging in chapter 3. I will now move to the relations of class and migration with other elements that shape people's movements. For international migration cannot exist outside the nation-state system, the legal conditions are critical for crossing borders. In my case, the consanguine bonds with Italy were a game changer in the process.

2.4 Consanguine bonds and the subject of citizenship

As stated above, class defines mobility and immobility. Resources need to be mobilized in order to move. However, other attributes contribute to create "fast or slow lanes" (Sheller and Urry, 2006) of migration. In our case, the right to acquire Italian citizenship was a key factor to becoming a migrant. This mode of citizenship based on the principle of *ius sanguinis* is what enabled my grandmother to reclaim the Italian citizenship, given her blood ties with the Italian nation. *Nonna* Luiza's travel "back" is part of a "collateral effect" (Pastore, 2002) of the Italian citizenship assignment and is situated in a specific global historical context of neoliberal globalization. The interest in acquiring Italian citizenship by descendants coincided with the deterioration of the socio-economical conditions of countries like Brazil and Argentina, the rise of the Welfare state in the European Union (EU) and the possibilities of freedom of movement in the EU to holders of the red passport. These circumstances encouraged a significant amount of Italian descendants to request Italian citizenship as it could position one in a fast lane of mobility. Migration studies scholar Ferruccio Pastore (2002) notes that in 2011, at the Italian Embassy in Argentina, requests for recognition of the Italian citizenship totalled 33.143 (resulting in years of wait before the release of the documents. The situation was similar in Italian embassy and consulates in Brazil, thus travelling to Italy and requesting it there was an alternative to accelerate the access to the *passaporto*, just as my grandmother did.

However, the pursuit of the red passport is a laborious and expensive enterprise. As most of Italians descendants do not speak Italian, many face difficulties

when they arrive alone in Italy and need to start the bureaucratic endeavour of applying for the citizenship recognition process. After the great amount of money people need to spend on gathering birth and marriage certificates, translations, etc., in Brazil, once they arrive in Italy more expenses are added to the bill. There are, thus, consulting companies (formal and informal) that assist in the process by charging a lot of money. Part of the money paid to consultants usually serves to pay for the residence certificate, which you pay for faking that you live in a certain house, and then only after such certificate is released, you are able to star applying for the process at the municipality you are registered in. *Nonna* Luiza, ignorant of how things worked at the time, was conned by a Brazilian woman, to whom she had paid to arrange a residency in Milan (which also entailed more costs since she would have to travel every time from Mantova to Milan) and who just disappeared with her money. She managed to find another person to whom she paid 900.000,00 ITL (450,00 EUR) for pretending she lived at that address in Milan and then started her process. Nowadays, a consulting company charges around 3.500,00 EUR to help with residency (and accommodation) and assisting in the process at the municipality. This indicates that the access to the advantages of possessing an European citizenship, is already shaped by the privilege of having sufficient resources to finance it.

Moreover, the jurisprudence on citizenship assignment is particularly significant to understanding how in contemporary Italy the legal system contributes to form the processes of hierarchization and stratification of subjects connected to the coloniality of gender/class/race. Such legal system functions as a device that determines who is apt for inclusion. In this case, legal inclusion refers to the nature of rights people can have access to along with the formation of a national identity. On this account, Fatima El-Tayeb (2011) rightly writes that

> The unified Europe manifests itself increasingly through ethnicized economic bonds, belonging to the EU primarily means having access to economic privileges not available to non-Europeans. In order to prevent or control the access of those non- (or in the case of the East not quite yet) Europeans, the continent's external borders are increasingly fortified. (2011, p. 23)

For instance, I am currently enrolled at Utrecht University as an Italian citizen, and my annual tuition fee is equal to 2.000, 00 EUR. However, if I did not have an Italian passport, the tuition fee would increase to 10.000, 00 EUR. This is the case of any student from outside the European Union or second-generation students in Italy

who do not have Italian citizenship, which makes it a matter of class, hence a matter of inequality and inaccessibility. This then goes on to create a vicious circle of who can enter into social structures, thereby illustrating how certain subjects are doomed to a condition of constant exclusion. My conversation with Natalia reflects this question of inclusion/exclusion in contemporary Italy:

Clara: Have you ever been discriminated for being Brazilian?

Naty: No, never.

Clara: Why do you think so?

Naty: *Bo*h, because I don't look Brazilian, I think. I mean visually.

Clara: What is *visually?*

Naty: Because I'm white, light-coloured eyes, light-coloured hair, this kind of things. I think it counts today. I mean, many people – if you're dark – they don't talk to you. It's normal.

Clara: Is it normal?

Naty: It isn't normal, it isn't fair, but it happens. I think they never saw me as a foreigner because I speak Italian well, I don't look like I'm from another country, I've always had Italian friends, this kind of things.

In regard to citizenship, thus, this points to the racialized pattern of citizenship rights (El-Tayeb, 2011). Even in the case of citizens of colour in the possession of an Italian/EU citizenship they continued to be perceived as migrants, which masks their exclusion from full participation behind the seemingly access to rights, as if "their racialized difference permanently bars them from full membership" (El-Tayeb, 2011, p. 23). Somali-Italian writer Ubah Cristina Ali Farah with her compelling stories brings to the fore the hassle of black Italians in coping with deep-rooted structural racism. *Il Comandante del Fiume* [The Commander of the River] (2014) tells a story about Somali diaspora in Rome narrated by Yabar, an 18-year-old boy who lives with his solo mother, eagers to know about his father who abandoned them in Rome and went back to Somalia during the civil war, and struggles to keep on to complete high school. Through Yabar's shreds of stories it is possible to glance at a different Rome from the perspective of those who elected it as home, as well as to read the features of an unresolved colonial past between the lines. These excerpts about Sissi, Yabar's best friend, born of a Somali-Italian mother and an Italian father depict the issue of racialization in Italy:

> Sissi and I cannot be equals for many reasons, but there is one more important than others and this reason is that I am black, born of black parents, while Sissi is white, golden curls in her hair and green-gray eyes. I am black, aunt Rosa is apparently black, but she didn't transmit anything of her to her daughter, nothing of her colours I mean. (2014, loc 390)[4] […] Sissi didn't understand, or didn't want to understand, that fraternal love isn't enough to make a colour, because a colour is what other people see, it isn't what you see, that you feel, and nothing, neither a fable, nor a song, neither friendship can change the colour that others see. (loc 401)[5]

This takes me to a conversation I had with Charles, on a train last year. It was late spring I was in Mantova visiting my mom for a week or two and decided to spend the weekend in Bologna and stay at a friend's place. I came back on a Sunday afternoon by train. So I took the train at *stazione centrale* and changed the train to Mantova in Modena. I got off the train and made the way to another platform, I stopped in front of the monitor to check the information for a second and confirm I was heading to the right platform. Once I saw the sign *Mantova 16:09,* I turned and started taking the stairs up to the platform. As I started my way up, a young boy who arrived in front of the monitor a second after me, pretending he did not understand the sign, asked me with a very strong accent *"questo treno per Mantova?"* I felt he scanned me with his eyes and wanted an excuse to talk to me, anyway I answered that it was the right train and kept on my way to platform. A few minutes later, the guy sat next to me and started talking to me. I didn't feel unsafe because it was daylight and there were other people in the cabin train. He, in reality, tried to start a conversation but his Italian was not good enough. Then I asked him if he spoke English, though I was undecided if I wanted him to leave me alone or I wanted to take that as a chance for sociological inquiry. I was curious. Since he was black and didn't speak Italian, I assumed he was from African descent, which also reflects a degree of internalized racism. From his body language I assumed many other things, as I assumed he was

[4] Io e Sissi non possiamo essere uguali per tutta una serie di ragioni, ma ce n'è una più importante delle alter e questa ragione è che io sono nero, nato da due genitori neri, mentre Sissi è Bianca, ha i ricci dorati e gli occhi grigioverdi. Io sono nero, zia Rosa è apparentemente nera ma non ha trasmesso proprio un bel niente a sua figlia, niente dei suoi colori intendo. (loc 390)

[5] Sissi non capiva, o non voleva capire, che non basta l'amore fraterno per fare un colore, perché il colore è quello che vedono gli altri, non è quello che vedi tu, che senti tu, e nessuna favola, nessuna canzone, nessuna amicizia può cambiare il colore che vedono gli altri. (loc 401)

probably a newcomer in Italy, and that his life was tough. I found in the inconstant diary I keep, a note on that day:

> *Going back to Holland.*
> *I spent a week in Mantova and did many things and didn't do many others. I visited Claudia and Vick in Bologna and talked to a black guy from Ghana on the train. He was my age and it was so sad when he told me "Italians don't like blacks. I came here but no one likes me because of my skin." The guy was clearly hitting on me and it annoyed me, but what I saw in him was pure loneliness, pure longing. He was going back from Church from Modena to Suzzara. Italy is so racist. Mantova sometimes make me sick, even though I love it.*

I outlined structural and broader concerns entrenched in the migratory processes, as I tried to account for the specificities of my family in contrast with other migrant subjects. The next chapter deal more in depth with the affectivity sparked in the embodied and subjective process of negotiating and finding new forms of belonging.

(from left to right, Andreia, Natalia, Luiza, Clara and Simone – December 2015)

Chapter 3

3. Affective spaces of belonging

3.1 Freedom

Liberdade, essa palavra
que o sonho humano alimenta
que não há ninguém que explique
e ninguém que não entenda
Cecília Meireles

It took me a while to understand feminism as something that regarded myself in first place. It took me some time to be able to situate myself as being part of a world and being an agent and being acted upon in this world, which means that I am part of a context in which systems of domination are at work and that I can be harmed by it as I can replicate it myself. I can't recall when I first heard the word feminist, but I remember my first yeas of graduate school, thinking of being critical towards sexism in society as if it was something detached, far away from my own experience. It had not occurred to me that patriarchy played a major role in shaping my own life, starting from how my grandmother had to raise her kids alone, to me being judged by my middle school teacher in Italy for choosing to go to a high school "for boys." I had to do as bell hooks (2000) invites us, and come closer to feminism to be able to see how my life is entrenched in these systems of domination. And I do come closer to it as I inquire through my writing and enhance my comprehension of the "whys" and the consequences of my personal trajectory.

In effect, it was by becoming every time more conscious of the "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (hooks, 2000, p. 4) that I started situating my family's story in it and understanding how these females manage to cope with it. It was when I connected the dots and realised this feminized pattern in my family's history of migration that I came to think that in the current mode of the world, there are significant differences in being a man or woman and migrating as I tried to outline in the previous chapter. As a matter of fact, one consequence of migration that emerged in my interviews, in particular with my mother, is the sentiment of liberty that came with financial independency and autonomy that being in Italy brought her.

Not long after I was born my mother stopped working, got married and became a housewife for most of the time before we migrated to Italy. As Frederick Engels (1973) suggests in the *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State,* the historical emergence of male supremacy and the inequality between the sexes is an outcome of private property and its concretization through the institution of marriage. He states, "Monogamous marriage comes on the scene as the subjugation of the one sex by the other; it announces a struggle between the sexes unknown throughout the whole previous prehistoric period," and continues, "The first class opposition that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male" (p. tal). The inequality was automatically established when my mother, in reality, continued working inside the home for no recompense. Thus, by stopping working outside the home, even though by choice, my mother's life became dependant on my father for everything that concerned the pursuit of her well being.

Angela Davis (1981) in *Women, Race, and Class* argues that the sexual division of labour was restructured within capitalist societies that doomed women to the role of housewives. As a result, she affirms "In advance capitalist societies… when all is said and done, the housewife, according to bourgeois ideology, is, quite simply, her husband's lifelong servant" (loc 3622). In other words, the authors highlight the hierarchical aspect that heterosexual marriage entails and how such hierarchy keep women in a position of dependency. It was interesting to see in my mother's testimony that migration brought her the power to bargain these patriarchal ties. It is noticeable that not only divorce – or in her case, separation, because my parents are still legally married – which could mean the primarily rupture apart from the marital dependency, but specifically migrating to Italy was key in bringing her an autonomy and financial independency. Since she tried to go back to Brazil once, also when I returned at the age of 16, we talked about the differences of living on your own in Brazil and in Italy. It went as follows:

Clara: Now you only go to Brazil on holidays, but you tried to go back...

Mãe: I tried to but it didn't work. It didn't work because I didn't want to. I went but I didn't want to in reality. Well, I wanted to try but I arrived there and I didn't want, not only for my situation with your father. For example, he even told me

> if I wanted to live there, I could. But I really didn't want, it wasn't my space anymore, I didn't want that for my life in that moment. Because your dad even told me if I wanted to stay there we could be friends and we could live together until I arranged me life, without being husband and wife. Because I went back for us to try to be together, but a part from that, he was serious, he said 'if you want to stay, I'll help you.' But I really didn't feel like, I didn't want to, I wanted to come back.

Clara: You didn't feel it was home there anymore.

Mãe: It wasn't my home.

Clara: Why?

Mãe: Maybe because I knew here I could do it by myself, *capito?* That's it. I arrived here again, looked for a job and soon things started going again. Because I need to have the certainty I can look after myself. When I was there I thought that soon I was going to be dependent on Jairo [my father]. For a while it would be ok, but I couldn't see how, I didn't want to. He even tried to find me a job, but then I would start calculating how much I was going to earn, and it was not going to be enough, and I didn't want it. In that moment I wanted to come back, my home was here. Then I came back, went through a complicated moment until I reorganised everything with the work but soon I had that feeling of freedom, that I could do it, that I did it. Here I can support myself and there [in Brazil] I have the feeling I cannot do it.

Hence, it is clear for her that even a certain autonomy in Brazil would not have been sufficient. In addition, her situation is particularly significant to understand the "gendered spheres" (George, 2005, p. 24) in a given society. On one hand, she escaped the role and dependency of the housewife; on the other, she did so through entering the gendered division of labour, or the gendered sphere of the globalization of care. Furthermore, it also emerges that she clearly associates the feeling of freedom to the specific geographic locality of Italy, and her feeling home, her belonging to that space constitutes itself through her freedom, transforming into the locus itself for it is where she finds money to support herself and "a room of her own" (Wolf, 1989 [1929], p. 7). Interestingly, the autonomy acquired through migration also enabled her to reconnect with the country of origin, for instance, by visiting places that she'd never been before. "I could only get to know Rio de Janeiro," my mother told me, "which was the dream of my life, after I was here! To Bahia I haven't been yet, and Bahia is my plans." Being in Italy enables her to negotiate her multiple belonging as she puts an effort to stay in touch with Brazil.

This adds a layer to my argument of trying to portray the many different facets involved in the migratory endeavour. It also enables me to point to the relationality and highlight the subjectivity behind experience. Bell hooks explains (2000) that when Betty Friedan (1963) published *The Feminine Mystique* maintaining that women in the United States in the 1950s were unhappily confined to the home and their role as housewives, but as hooks specifies, the dissatisfaction was limited to small group of white and middle-class women: "While they were complaining about the dangers of confinement in the home a huge majority of working women, who put in long hours for low wages while still doing all the work in the domestic household would have seen the right to stay home as 'freedom'" (p. 38). This understanding helps envisioning how experiences of oppression and liberation are a not a strict dichotomy but get troubled by the politics of location and situatedness of the subjectivity in question.

3.2 Religion

My most remote memories of my grandmother in my childhood are of her giving me sweets, sewing jumpers and sweatpants for Naty and me, and going to church, sometimes I would accompany her on Sunday's mass and tell her I wanted to eat that potato chip the priest would give her. But religion was more or less a taboo in my family for a while. My paternal and maternal families were very catholic and my father was a convinced atheist. When I was born, contrary to costume, I was not baptised and it was an issue of argument between my father and the two matriarchs, my two grandmothers. Thus, I grew up mostly distant from any religious practice, although I acknowledge being brought up with Christian values for they have been present in my other spheres of socialization (school, etc) in both Italy and Brazil. Anyway, *nonna* Luiza is very devoted to Catholicism and very active in her catholic community, but it was not until I talked to her about her experience of migrating to Italy that I realised that for her religion had a special role in the process.

As Nancy Foner (2008) acknowledges most literature on migration and religion in Europe stresses the conflicting aspect of Islam and immigrant integration in Western Europe and frame religion mostly as an obstacle rather than a bridge to inclusion. Indeed, more often the popular belief is that religion is more a barrier than a point of connection and perhaps this is why I had not considered it as a topic to be

investigated further before my interviews. For my surprise, however, as Peggy Levitt (2003) puts it, "migrants also use religion to create alternative allegiances and places of belonging" (p. 851) and indeed this appeared in *nonna* Luiza's narrative.

Her relationship with religion has double valence, as it created a space of belonging in Italy, as she can live her life, find purpose in it and practice her religious activities, as she gets to interact with the people of the local community. Furthermore, she also organises a monthly mass in Portuguese for the Brazilian catholic community in Mantova, which enables her to cultivate and renew her links to Brazilian culture. In fact, "religion is a global societal system as transnational in its operation as the economy or the nation-state," affirms Levitt (2008), "it is no surprise that migrants use religious institutions to live their transnational lives" (p. 848). During the interviews, the role of religion subtly came to the fore before I actively addressed it.

Clara: Have you felt in any moment discriminated for being Brazilian?

Nonna: No, it never happened to me. I don't know, but I arrived here and immediately started working at Caritas, and I don't know, everyone likes me [laughs].

Caritas Internationalis is a catholic humanitarian and social service organization that *nonna* Luiza volunteers for, usually helping preparing meals for homeless people. I asked her how she got to be involved in the organization and her statement is striking for it demonstrates that she associates being accepted with being part of this Catholic community, as though in the geography of Catholicism borders get blurred through the language of Christianity.

Nonna: I used to help Caritas in Brazil already, we helped Don Alex and when I arrived here, we arrived in Castel Goffredo [a small locality in the province of Mantova] and I started going to church there. We were there for two months only but I met a young man called Davide and he had already been to Brazil and had helped a mission in a parish in Brazil. I started speaking to him, I mean, we tried with the little bit I knew of Italian and him with the little bit he knew of Portuguese. Then I started, he gave me the address and I went there and started helping with cleaning, ironing, washing because at that time they had guests [the homeless], you know? They would serve only lunch, not dinner, but there were guests and I started with cleaning. Anna, Santa, Andrea and I, and these three gave me that golden crucifix I have in my necklace when I left as a gift. This is how I started with Caritas here, like I used to do in Brazil, I almost didn't speak Italian and everyone liked me because I only

> worked and didn't chat. This is how I got involved with them, because if we do it in Brazil, we arrive here and don't need to know how to speak, we go out of curiosity, and we go there and start doing it, the work is the same, right? *As mãos não precisam da boca pra trabalhar* [The hands don't need the mouth in order to work].

Despite *nonna* Luiza redefining her transnational belonging through religion, the issue of religion in Europe remains "the marker of a fundamental social divide" (Foner, 2008, p. 361). Fatima El-Tayeb (2011) in *European Others* argues that the very idea of a tolerant secular Europe is paradoxically constructed against the Muslim presence and the accusation of Islam's oppressive structures, and is rooted in Christian principles. In other words, the image of Islam in the "dominant European imaginary is one of fanaticism, fundamentalism, female suppression, subjugation, and repression" (Goldberg, 2006, p. 345). El-Tayeb accurately addresses the features that center the conflict of religious minorities in Europe:

> Contemporary tropes around the Muslim presence in Europe are framed not in the language of race, religion, or nation, but in that of culture and gender. The *hijab* in particular serves as the key symbol of Muslim difference, representing silenced, oppressed women living in parallel societies that are shaped by ancient and primitive rather than modern Western structures. Its presence underlines the perception that Muslims and Europeans are like oil and water, unable to mix and merge; instead archaic Muslim enclaves, separate *qua* space as well as time, are supposedly surviving unchanged within the larger European societies. (2011, p. 83)

In this sense, the religion difference is only marked when it's not about Christian religions. Italy is officially a laic state and public spaces should not profess any religious affinity or adherence, however, in public schools, like the ones I attended, every classroom has a cross on the wall and catholic religion class (usually given by a sister). It suggests how the secular discourses are biased. In sum, the question of religion is highly intricate and it interacts with gender and racial dimensions. As Muslims identities are stigmatized and inferiorized, they are every time more pushed to the margins of society automatically creating disadvantages of class, educational attainment, particularly for second-generations. This is particularly related to the raise of Islamophobia after the events of 9/11 fostered by the negative and sensationalistic representations in the mass media after the attacks (Allen & Nielsen 2002). In fact, in survey with 222 British Muslims, psychologist Lorraine Sheridan (2006) showed that experiences of religious discrimination increased by

80% after 9/11, suggesting that the discourses around Muslims identities influence the proliferation of prejudice towards religious minorities.

3.3 World Wide Web

My trajectories of movement are multidirectional. Only in the last two years I've passed through, visited, or lived in almost every continent of this planet. But it was not until I embraced telling my matrilineage's story of migration that I came to fully understand the role of our virtual realities in the Internet in our everyday lives, there is, how the online life and the offline life are connected. Indeed, part of the fieldwork and other sorts of communication related to this project were made possible through the *What's App* group *Famiglia* I maintain with my mother, grandmother, aunt and cousin. Thus, these "mediated spaces" are responsible for creating "a kind of virtual togetherness" (Leeuw; Rydin, 2007, p. 188). Such closeness I realised has many facets and is not solely related to keeping in touch with family and friends, but plays a role in how I maintain Brazil and Italy present in my life as it is if I could continue living these spaces through the Internet. Koen Leurs (2014) correctly points the aspects and spheres that social media and the Internet influence in keeping connected with different homes. In his words:

> Social media and digital technologies such as the mobile phone have thus altered processes of migration and diaspora formation, as migrants in the diaspora may experience living in a third space – a space not here and there, beyond their homeland and country of arrival. The third space sustained through social media might be of assistance in coping with feelings of dislocation and homesickness. Furthermore it may provide an outlet for the circulation of news, identity and belonging, arranging for remittances, mobilization, protest and activism. (2014, para 3)

Overall I have lived longer in Brazil than Italy in my life, but Italy is where I lived the more without moving around from town to town. So when speaking of roots, it is where I feel I have some. Moreover, since I left Italy for the first time in 2008, I never felt I actually left it for it remained present in my everyday life especially in this third mediated space. Interestingly, the more I sought to make an international life, moving to Bosnia-Herzegovina for six months in 2015 and then the Netherlands by the end of the year, and the more I got closer to feminism, what was happening in the feminists scenes in Brazil and Italy was also becoming more of my interest.

Paradoxically, the farther I went geographically, the closer I came virtually to what is going on in both countries.

As a matter of fact, I am part of several *Facebook* groups like *Estudos de Gênero e Minorias em Relações Internacionais* [Gender and Minority studies in International Relations] where I keep an eye and exchange thoughts with my former academic community and am able to observe the trends of academic debates on gender studies; *Leia Mulheres Curitiba* [Read Women Curitiba] is a group of people who monthly get together to discuss a book written by a female author and exchange information on books and meeting points on *Facebook*; *Entre nós, só nós* [Among us, only us] is a secret *Facebook* group for women to exchange experiences on sexual health, and everything they feel like they to share and confront with another women, it works more like a virtual sisterhood. I like to follow it and sometimes respond to the issues raised as it inspires me to engage with a use of feminist politics of social media; in Italy I follow *Facebook* pages like *Abbatto i Muri* [I knock down the walls] that posts anonymously stories and experiences of patriarchal oppression from people around Italy, opening a space for debate and dismantling patriarchy; I also often follow *Soft Revolution,* an online feminist magazine that publishes a set of articles based on a monthly theme that is approached from different perspectives, from pop culture to the body or history. In this sense, I am often able to compare and situate myself in these geographies and learn the different politics of location that are at stake as I get to negotiate own.

3.4 Homelessness

Não tem mais lar o que mora em tudo.
Não há mais dádivas
Para o que não tem mãos.
Não há mundos nem caminhos
Para o que é maior que os caminhos
E os mundos.
Não há mais nada além de ti,
Porque te dispersaste...
Circulas em todas as coisas
E todos te sentem
Sentem-te como a si mesmos

E não sabem falar de ti.[6]

Não Tem Mais Lar, Cântico 19, Cecília Meireles, 1982

Perhaps I arrived at the stage of this project that I feared the most when I thought of writing about myself. One that I knew it was going to be troubling because in a way it entails answering or – at least addressing – the question "where are you from?" which I always think it's annoying to answer, because it's long and because often I don't know and because it involves describing *home*, besides often ending with a fascist edge, "I didn't understand in the end, are you Italian or Brazilian?" As Chandra Mohanty (2003) asserts, the question of the meaning of home for migrants "is a profoundly political one" (p. 126).

Once I started counting and I lived in more then twenty houses in my life, I might be closer to thirty nowadays. How can I put it into words that often home for me has no association with spatiality as I never really became so attached to one singular house? Indeed in all my cartographies sometimes I felt jealous of those who never left, who lived in the same house they were born until they came of age to go to University or start working. This sort of envy derives from the desire to belong to certain spaces that I always felt I failed to accomplish. Khorasvi (2010) in his autoethnography of borders explain that exile to him meant a "double absence," (qdt in Khorasvi, 2010, p. 88) not having a place in any space of your own cartographies. "I do not know a lot of things, trivial things, but things that still crucial to the feeling of belonging," (p. 88) he states. I remember once a friend in Italy made fun of me because I hadn't watched some cartoons that everyone in my generation had grown up watching in their childhood. The exactly same thing happened in my school in Brazil when I moved once again at the age of 16; I wasn't a kid like the others. Even

[6] There is no more home for those who live in everything.
There are no more gifts
For she who has no hands.
There are neither worlds, nor paths
For whom who is greater than the paths
And the worlds.
There is nothing beyond you
Because you dispersed yourself
You circulate in all things
And everybody feels you
They feel you like they feel themselves
And they don't know how to talk about you.

linguistically, in both Portuguese and Italian I don't have a specific and recognizable accent that would make one immediately detect where it comes from and I lack vocabularies and grammar knowledge of some sort in both since my schooling was present and absent in both.

Nonetheless, as scholar Shelley Mallet (2004) contends in a critical review on the literature on the meaning of home, "home is a multidimensional concept" (p. 68). One that is often used to describe, "where one usually lives, or […] where one's family lives, or it can mean one's native country" (Ahmed, 1999, p. 338). Yet Mallet (2004) emphasises the meaning of home is often used in relation to positive connotations, where one feels confortable, secure, with a sense of stability. However, she also stresses that critiques of home have characterised such approach "an expression of an idealized, romanticized even nostalgic notion of home at odds with the reality of people's lived experience of home" (Mallet, 2004, p. 72). For me, in fact, for a long time, home was everywhere and nowhere at the same time, since many times I had a feeling of estrangement in places where everything was familiar. I spoke the language; I knew how to move though the city streets, yet I would feel lost, misplaced, alienated. Contrarily, a real sense of intimacy appeared in places I was a complete outsider, in terms of culture, language, and citizenship. I will never forget how I felt in Sarajevo in those months I lived there. Perhaps, this sense of intimacy and wellness is precisely what I had been longing my entire life. I never felt so free, and in charge of my life, in control of everything, I also never expected anything from Sarajevo and never felt Sarajevo expected something from me. I believe because of this – not surprisingly – in Sarajevo I started to acknowledge my sexuality differed from what my previous worlds had taught me about it. I had no duties of explanations or I never feared cultural surveillance and only when I was there, I realised that these things were possibly implicit and unconscious in my other cartographies.

In these sense, home is constituted as a potential space of exclusion and rejection when the subjects who inhabit the home refuse to comply with conventions of gender roles, gender and sexuality inherent to their homes. Such notion resonates with some second-wave feminist critique of the home as a site of patriarchal oppression (Oakley, 1974), where women are confined and expected to adhere to the feminine domains of home and housework. If this idea of home is extend to the nation, we can clearly observe the connection between gender and sexuality, and border crossing as an alternative. On this account, Oliva Espín (1999) affirms

migration provides the possibility for people to reinvent their sexuality and sex roles identities. I acted as a non-professional actress in *3 Zene (or Waking up from my Bosnian dream)* (2016) directed by Sergio Flores, playing a Brazilian girl who moved to Bosnia to work in a strip club in Sarajevo, the idea was to indicate how crossing border confers the freedom to escape from limitations of the home gaze, and "transform [ones] sexuality and sex roles" (Espín, 1999, p. 5). In the particular case of prostitution, Kohrasvi (2010) notes, "Borderlands offer sites for work that may not be acceptable in the homeland" (p. 48).

Thus, only when I was detached from home – *homeless* – that the boundaries and fixities of home started to loose, and homelessness as I knew it stop hurting and being uncomfortable. I could be from anywhere. Sometimes I would say I came from Italy, because I don't like the way some people exoticize me when I say I come from Brazil, "Brazilll, uuuu, lalala, samba." Although sometimes I would have done it myself, "You know I was born in the Amazon?" Nothing was false, or I never feared being perceived as 'faking it.' It was then, that some sense of genuine belonging started to flourish, in particular when I met other "homeless" subjects whose lives were equally distributed along multiple cartographies and nomadic ventures through identity categories. Sara Ahmed (1999) argues that such cases provide the necessary bonding in with communities are formed, "a sense of inheriting collective past *by sharing the lack of home rather than sharing a home*" (p. 337, emphasis in original). *Homelessness* instead of home started to make sense to me as a possibility and an active way of being in the world. In a way, this idea resonates in the work of Rosi Braidotti (1994) in *Nomadic Subjects* envisions changes and displacements as a "kind of critical consciousness" that "resists settling into socially coded modes of thought and behaviour" (p. 5) through detachment and dispossession from social constrains and its boundaries. The nomad – intended by Braidotti also as a metaphor – as the subject that subverts "a set of conventions," (p.5) is the promise I envisioned and identified in homelessness. I am arguing for a semi-metaphorical articulation of home that finds homely comfort in a notion/space of homelessness. Perhaps the most subversive reading of homelessness, I find in Khorasvi when he says,

> Homelessness means not recognizing anywhere as home. Only in that condition is humanity not territorialized and can the plagues inherent in the nation-state system vanish and the 'botanical' way of thinking about human beings, in terms of roots, and the uncritical link between individuals and

> territory fade away. Exiled homelessness designates de-territoriality, discontinuity, inconsistency and interruption, all in contrast to the botanical image of national identity. Homelessness as a paradigm, as a way of being in the world, as a lifestyle, as ethical and aesthetic normativity opens the door to accepting the other as she *is*, not as how we want her to be. Only when *home* has vanished and humanity is no longer territorialized, only then, there will be a chance for humanity. (2010, p. 95-96)

In this tone, homelessness is a radical hope, and a possibility of breaking with instead of preserving "a clear demarcation between inside and outside" (Mallet, 2010, p. 73). As poetess Cecília Meireles wrote, *Não há mais nada além de ti,* [There is nothing beyond you,]/ *Porque te dispersaste...* [Because you dispersed yourself…]/ *Circulas em todas as coisas* [You circulate in all the things]. Dispersed and circulating things have no roots and are not fixed in space, or time, or ideas. But even though I identify with this rootless understanding, I acknowledge that the very possibility of me identifying with it is a matter of privilege. In her critique of Braidotti's nomadic theory, Sara Ahmed (1999) points to a contradiction in the questioning of a western subject, "the subject of and in theory" (p. 335), and the very positionality of the subject who questions that she acknowledges as one position of privilege. In her view, "What is at stake is a very liberal narrative of a subject who has autonomy and is free to choose, even if what is chosen is a refusal of the kind of subjectivity we might recognize as classically liberal" (p. 335). Ahmed (1999) highlights that the subject who *chooses* is the one to whom the possibility of embracing homelessness as a subversive act is already granted, she "is certainly a subject who is privileged, and someone for whom having or not having a home does not affect their ability to occupy a given space" (p. 335). She continues and rightly asks, "Is the subject who chooses homelessness and a nomadic life-style, or a nomadic way of thinking, one that can do so, *because the world is already constituted as their home*?" (p. 335, emphasis in original). She refers to the fact that subjects whose race, class, sexuality, gender, ability, religion, etc., escape the spectrum of western embodiment and subjectivity are constantly pushed to the margins. Accordingly, I agree with Ahmed as I do understand my approach to homelessness has an aspect of choice to the extent that my privileges in relation to class, race, and citizenship are part of what grants me the ability to choose. However, I also see it as the result of several years of displacement and the consequent awareness that home can also be an unembellished environment.

Chapter 4

4. Diasporic contradictions, or *Italia, uno stivale stretto?*

4.1 But don't forget to go back to your country

Se i piedi sono senza escarpe e i diti sono felici di pestare la terra, mi dici, signora, perché mia bambina deve usare scarpe? Lo so, tu parli di malattia, ma l'anima è più libera se piede sente libertà. Italia, grande estivale stretto.[7]

Ana de Jesus, Christiana De Caldas Brito, 2004

I invoke for the first time in this project the idea of diaspora in relation to my family and I. I do so because in a way the idea of 'being migrants' is to a certain extent insufficient to translate the experience of migration of my family. They have been living in Italy for more than 15 years, they have made it their home and don't manifest any intention of going somewhere else in the near future. But even if we "stopped" being migrants in Italy, the bonds with Brazil are still very much alive and cannot be dismissed. Thus, I make use of diaspora as El-Tayeb (2011) conceptualizes it, understanding "diaspora [to] transcend the binary of citizen and foreigner, the linear model of movements from origin to destination" (p. xxxiv). This notion of diaspora allows me to disidentify with the never-ending label of 'migrant', but also to reject ideas of assimilation, as politically it still enables me to engage with the consequences entailed by the migratory process, it is, as queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz (1999) affirms, a "third mode of dealing with dominant ideology, one that neither opts to assimilate within such a structure nor strictly opposes it […] a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology" (p. 11).

This being said, I want to return to my story. When I moved back to Brazil in 2008 to live with my father I went through a moment of 'reverse cultural shock.' It was the month of August, the middle of academic year in Brazil, thus I had to redo half a year in the same grade, and wait the next academic year to start my last year of high school. The town where we were living was new to me. I hated so much that we had to wear uniforms at school and that no one in my classroom smoked cigarettes. I

[7] If the feet are without shoes and the fingers are happy to step the earth, can you tell me, Miss, why my girl needs to use shoes? I know, you speak of disease, but the soul is freer if foot feels freedom. Italy, big tight boot.

was 16 and accustomed to smoke cigarettes with my teachers during the breaks in high school in Italy. With time though, I ended up benefitting from this cultural difference and stopped seeing teenagers smoking cigarettes as natural. However, even if high school in Brazil helped me to go back to track, it did not help me to feel really connected. Such disconnectedness let me susceptible to hold on to whatever would make me forget it, which this time – luckily – weren't drugs but a toxic relationship. Nonetheless, every chance I had – mostly during holidays – I went back to Italy. I went every year until when in 2012 there was the opportunity of going abroad during my BA in International Relations. I went then for a year to study Sociology at the University of Trento, which became a year and a half as I did an internship at the Brazilian Consulate in Milan after my studies in Trento.

During that year of studies in Trento, even though I was there as an international student, I never lived it that way, because it actually allowed me to reconnect and reinvent my bonds with Italy and Mantova, not as foreigner. I would go to my mom's home every weekend, and also spent the whole summer there. I would take the train at *stazione centrale di* Trento every Friday after class, change in Verona and take another train to Mantova and do the same thing back on Sunday evening. In between these comings and goings, one day I was at the platform waiting the connecting train to Trento in Verona, and an old lady approached me to beg some money, for what I remember she was a gypsy – I apologized and rejected her request, *scusi, non ne ho*. It was when she asked me in a rhetorical tone if I wasn't Italian, *lei non è italiana, vero?* I never understood that question. I don't know if *she* was Italian or not and if there was an intrinsic xenophobia in the question but what struck me most was what made her perceive me as non-Italian, as our encounter was too short to make any conclusion. Was it my body language? My accent? My appearance? My unkindness in not giving her money? I don't know but it disturbed me.

This foreignness was perceived and projected on me also in other circumstances. When I was in my first year in high school one classmate that I still more or less consider to be a friend and that we have been in touch also after I left, used to say to me as a 'joke' "*torna a cucire i palloni"* [go back to sew football balls]. Regardless the joke had been intended to be funny, it reflects those figures of representation embedded in ideas that disqualify the so-called "Third World" as if in Brazil all children were involved in child labor exploitation, it also reinforces the idea that

coming from such 'backwards world' I could not belong and should thus go back to do the things that children in Italy do not do.

While Natalia and *nonna* Luiza have explicitly said they haven't encountered situations of xenophobia and that they think xenophobia is mostly related to racism, as described in Chapter 2, Simone (yes, I often call my mother by her name) also reported experiencing xenophobic events.

Clara: So you felt at that time that there was prejudice against foreigners?

Mãe: At that time there was more. Well, there is also today, but now the people here in Mantova, which is such a small town and people are a bit narrow-minded, but people seem to be a bit more opened today.

Clara: But isn't it that you are more integrated and than you say so? Now that you already know how things are.

Mãe: Also the city has adapted, I think. For instance, at the beginning there were two stores that I went and then I said, I'm not going there anymore.

Clara: Like a shop?

Mãe: a clothing store and a *tabacchino* [convenience store].

Clara: Why?

Mãe: Because you could feel they didn't treat you well. I felt that. And it wasn't only me; my friends felt the same, too. There was this *lojinha* [little shop] in the centre we used to go, and the shop attendant as soon as she realised we were foreigners, you could see that she didn't care about selling to us. And in the *tabacchino,* too. I never went there again.

Recently, last Christmas, something similar happened to *tia* Andreia and Natalia. It was 24 December and they were buying the last Christmas gifts in cosmetic stores when *tia* paid and asked to have the nice paper bag, and the owner said that she couldn't give *that* paper bag because it was for clients who bought things of that specific brand, which my aunt had not. This was when *tia* Andreia started got a bit nervous and complained saying she had just spent a hundred euros and the least she could get was that bag, which the shop attendant insisted in not giving her. Then the situation got out of control and *tia* Andreia raised her voice and said she was not leaving with the paper bag. Meanwhile, Natalia was getting embarrassed with the confusion and tried to calm my aunt and convince her to leave. This was when my

aunt said to the woman, "if you come to work to treat your clients this way, you'd better stay home" and then, the shop assistant replied, "you should go back to your country instead of coming here to mess around." However rude my aunt might have been, it does not justify the xenophobic response she received. In this sense, this situation reflects how the construction of the public space is inherently one restricted to the subject of nation, in which perceptible differences [in gender, race, language, religion] are not welcomed, even if sometimes tolerated.

4.2 Perceptions of Brazilian femininity

I tried to argue in the previous chapters that my family and I escape and thus privilege from not facing racism. But issues of sexism remain very much present, particularly in regard to stereotypical ideas of Brazilian femininity. Gender studies scholar Adriana Piscitelli (2007) in a study on Brazilian women married to Italian men mostly through the practice of sexual tourism of men who visited Brazil and took the women (some explicitly involved in sex-work) back to Italy, reveals that Italian masculinity portrays a kind of fascination for a "Brazilian style" associated to "joyfulness, availability and sexual openness" (p. 735). My first Italian lover once told me that my Brazilianness was present in the fact that I always smile, *sei solare, sorridi sempre, secondo me è questa la cosa brasiliana di te* [this is what I think is the Brazilian thing in you]. The features of this Brazilianness are merely corporeal to the extent that the label 'Brazilian style' is often used to indicate aesthetic choices and procedures that are perceived to increase sensuality, like Brazilian underwear or Brazilian waxing. I wanted, then, to know what are the experiences my mother and my aunt have had as Brazilian women, since they are usually perceived to be 'more' Brazilian than my cousin and I mostly for a linguistic matter.

Clara: There is here in Italy this thing of stereotypes about foreigners, you know when they say, Moroccans are this, Brazilians are that […] Particularly in regard to Brazilian women, because as you also know, there are many Brazilian women involved in prostitution and there are these stereotypes that Brazilian women are hot and more sexually inclined. Have you ever experienced something in these terms, has someone ever addressed you in these terms?

Mãe: Nothing traumatic I'd say…

Clara: Not traumatic necessarily, but that you could notice…

Mãe: For instance, there was this time when *tia* Andreia met Gavino [current partner] at *Vinitaly*, I was with Ale [ex-boyfriend] and when *Vinitaly* ended, we all went to a *pizzeria* with this people from Sardinia we met there. There was this gentleman who was the owner of this winery from Sardinia and immediately *tia* Andreia and I didn't sympathise with him. We were all sitting at the table and he was referring to us, giving an idea ... as if we were *puttane*, *capito?* In fact, your aunt gave him an answer there at the table; you know she doesn't tolerate to be affronted. I don't remember now how it went but we both left with that sense that he was arrogant because we were foreigners.

Clara: There is this idea that foreign women with Italian men because they [women] are easy. When you go out at night, have you felt that men approached you in this sense?

Mãe: I never felt it but it exists. Many [men] do it. Even when I was in Puglia [South Italy] with Ale, his friend asked me, 'when I go to Mantova, will you introduce me your Brazilian [girl]friends?' With that idea, that they are easy. Even my friend [current crush] – well, I don't know if it is a matter of being Brazilian or not – but he met me at the bar and then he went around asking if I was a serious woman.

Our conversation illustrates those *clichés* of cultural representations that tend to exoticise the other. This sort of depiction is well examined in *Il Colore della Nazione* edited by Gaia Giuliani (2016) in which textual and visual representations of Italy's recent cultural production are still understood to be inserted in a colonial imaginary. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci, the authors use the term 'cultural hegemony' to underline the stratification of colonial alterity that is inherently gendered, racialized, and classist. My argument is, in some, that these representations are not only mere depictions but are signs of how subjects outside the hegemony of white, heterosexual, Christian, and Italian are in reality treated in Italy's social space.

4.3 National identity and self-perception

Little has yet been investigated and written on the negotiated identities of second generations, or uncertain generations in Italy. Perhaps, something on the question is best illustrated in the documentary *"18 Ius Soli: il diritto di essere italiani"* (18 Ius Soli: the right to be Italian) directed by Italian-Ghanaian Fred Kuwornu, where young second generation Italians are given a space to express how the multiple domains of their identity are compatible with an idea of Italianness. I wanted then to explore how it is for Natalia, since she is the one who has lived in Italy

for the biggest part of her life and we usually tell her that she is "too Italian," but how does *she* feel about it? I wondered.

Clara: Let's recapitulate: you were a child, you were growing and suddenly they interrupted you, coming to Italy was a sort of interruption in your life because it really affects your personality, your identity, etc. If you have never left Brazil you would be someone different […] and since you have lived here most of your life, your only influence of Brazil …

Naty: It's being born there.

Clara: No, it is also your family. Your mother, your grandmother, your aunt and me, and the contact with your paternal family there that is only virtual. But how does it affect who you are? If someone asks you where you are from, what do you answer?

Naty: That I am from Brazil, that I am from Curitiba, and then they say "where is Curitiba?" it is in the state of Paraná.

Clara: But do you consider yourself Brazilian?

Naty: No, just as I don't consider myself Italian.

Clara: Why?

Naty: I don't know. I don't know how to answer this question. I don't consider myself anything. I'm from the world and that's it.

Clara: You're from the world? (smile)

Naty: I'm a person, I was born in the world and that's it, I'm not from a State.

Clara: Why?

Naty: Because I'm not Brazilian, I don't have absolutely anything Brazilian. The only Brazilian things I have are my family and the fact that I speak Portuguese, and I'm not Italian because I don't consider myself as such.

Clara: Why don't you consider yourself Italian? Is it because of your affiliation with Brazil?

Naty: Exactly. I wasn't born in Italy thus I'm not Italian in any case.

Clara: But here in Italy, it doesn't work like that.

Naty: In my head it does.

Clara: Because here, if you are born here to non-Italian parents, you're not Italian. Let's say you were born here and your parents only had a *permesso di soggiorno*, you had never been to Brazil, and then you would be 20 years old, you would be Italian, but you wouldn't have an Italian passport.

Naty: A passport counts relatively. I'm not talking about this. *Cioè,* I'm saying inside me, I don't feel Italian even if I have the citizenship since I lived in Brazil.

Clara: What do you say when you go abroad? Aren't you going to say you're from Italy?

Naty: Yes, but that I am Brazilian. I mean, that I was born in Brazil, that I lived in Italy a number of years, etc. *C'è*, I'm not going to say I'm a certain thing. I briefly tell the story of my life but I don't say "I'm this." Because going abroad and saying I'm Italian means that I am ashamed of my origins and I'm absolutely not. What's the problem in saying I was born in Brazil?

Clara: There's no problem in being born anywhere, but the place we are born doesn't necessarily define our national identification.

Naty: Neither where you grow up.

I insisted so much on this topic because I couldn't understand why she couldn't say she identify as Italian, until she let it go about being an issue of not denying the origins, which is something I had not consider before. A very similar situation is presented in *Il comandate del fiume* when Yabar, the main character meets another black Italian, Ghiorghis, in Rome that tells him a story of an Italian-american teacher he had in school that once asked him where he was from and when he said, "Etiopia," the teacher asked where he is born, and when he said "Rome," the teacher started giving a speech on how "he was Italian, not Ethiopian, because Italy was the place he was born, had received the first caresses, had done the first friendships, and started school" (Ali Farah, 2015, loc 1299). Then Ghiorghis explained that years later he found a summer job at *Caritas* and once he arrived the priest asked him where he was from, and when he said "Rome," the priest insisted "Ethiopian, Eritrean?" he answered his parents were from both from Ethiopia and then, the priest said "I don't like this denial of yours" (loc 1307). Thus, it is interesting to note that subjects with mixed cultural backgrounds are simultaneously pushed to feel part of the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) where they grew up, as they are also required not to deny and refuse their origins, where they are "really from."

Conclusion

In this investigation, I travelled through the history of my maternal family migration to try to grasp what was it like for each of us to experience such a change in life. To sustain my response, I attempted to frame this story under a postcolonial perspective and weave my personal experience and the theoretical frameworks that deal with the examination of discourses around the classification of subjectivities, in which the categories of gender and race are central axes of differentiation and hierarchical organization. I thus analysed the ways in which our experiences are shaped by such discourses in contemporary Italy, addressing how asymmetries of power result in issues of privilege or oppression. I looked into how gender and class shaped this experience while conversing with a colonial history. Even if Brazil was never a colony of Italy, a massive emigration to Brazil played a role in colonizing the country. Bringing it to current times, the result is that now a big number of Brazilian citizens have the right to acquire an European citizenship, which makes migration processes to the global north easier. So, a central element I discussed is that of being privileged in terms of access to rights, freedom of movement, unlike many migrants in contemporary Italy who are instead undocumented, or children of migrants born in Italy who do not have the right to possess citizenship. I argued that these issues are part of the coloniality of gender/race that are at the foundation of the social structures in contemporary Europe and organize inequalities on hierarchies. Nonetheless, I also argued that the possession of a red passport does not equal acceptance and belonging for the same intricate relation between race, gender, and the righteous subject of the nation.

I was equally concerned with the influence of the border in modelling and creating these asymmetries. The question of class was my central element of examination in this regard. Furthermore, I concentrated the interviews around themes that are central to this thesis, there is, ideas on class mobility, family separation and belonging/citizenship. Although I started with this topics in mind, many other things came out, to mention one, the role of religion appeared - for my grandmother - as an element of bonding and it seemed to me something that eased integration. Furthermore, it made me also think of religion - Catholicism - and its relationship

with colonialism. These unexpected findings added much to my comprehension of the complexities of crossing borders and the fact that push-factors to migrate could be directly related to issues of gender, race, class, religion and colonial ties. However, with all these contributions in mind, perhaps the most compelling contribution of this investigation is not so much with the academic body of knowledge. I noted that many times the story I think I knew did not match the story I was told, which also made it a self-discovering adventure. During the interviews, rethinking events, re-accessing the past and talking through it with my family also gave me a new vision on my matri-ties. It was beautiful to see each other's importance in each other's lives, and the weight of family separation and family reunion for each of us, which I consider to be the most productive outcome of this exploration. Putting all these events into perspective enabled me to understand we are constantly affecting and being affected by others.

My biggest challenges were trying to dealing rationally about very emotional experiences. In fact, I recognize there were moments I failed go deeper like when during the interviews I did not succeed in asking my cousin more about her relationship with her father. Likewise, I rewrote many times some parts about my adolescence and my experiences with drugs, for I was struggling to understand my own limits with self-exposure and what I really wanted to remember and reconsider, since I still needed to process what is unresolved about those times. In this sense, the writing of this project also helped to take a step to come to terms with it. On the other hand, sometimes I felt limited by the language and I doubted if choosing to write this in English was a good idea. I wonder if one of my other languages would have helped me to formulate my arguments in more compelling and emotional way.

Theoretically, I wanted to add to the current debates on postcolonial and migration studies in Italy, by giving an embodied account from the perspective of those who have been experiencing migrancy for more than fifteen years. Thus, I started at the particular, embodied, subjective linking it to the broad context of migration in Italy and in a globalised world. I also hope this thesis has offered instruments to inspire future autoethnographic research. The diversification of Italy's social stratum is an on-going transformation and these growing multi-cultural encounters demand further examination. Despite the increasing development of various fields of in the humanities giving attention to Italy's postcolonial condition, little has been done in academia regard personal experience, let alone recounted in the first person.

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Film

3 Zene (or Waking Up from my Bosnian Dream) (2016) – Sergio Flores

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18 Ius Soli: il diritto di essere italiani (2012) – Fred Kuwornu