

**JUST WORK?
BULGARIAN FEMALE LABOUR MIGRATION
AND
THE MORAL ECONOMY OF CARE**

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JLEU



- Female Labour Migration in the Media
- Structural conditions: Bulgaria and Italy
- Ethnographic research
- Care, Moral economy of care, Lebensweg
- Conclusion

“The Town of Badante Women” (2009)
Dir. St. Komandarev, Scr. Diana Ivanova



Ethnographic data: Elderly women take care of other elderly women and men

Women care worker: betw. 55 und 71

Previous professions: teachers, a midwife, low or middle management positions in tourism services, an employee in a textile enterprise.

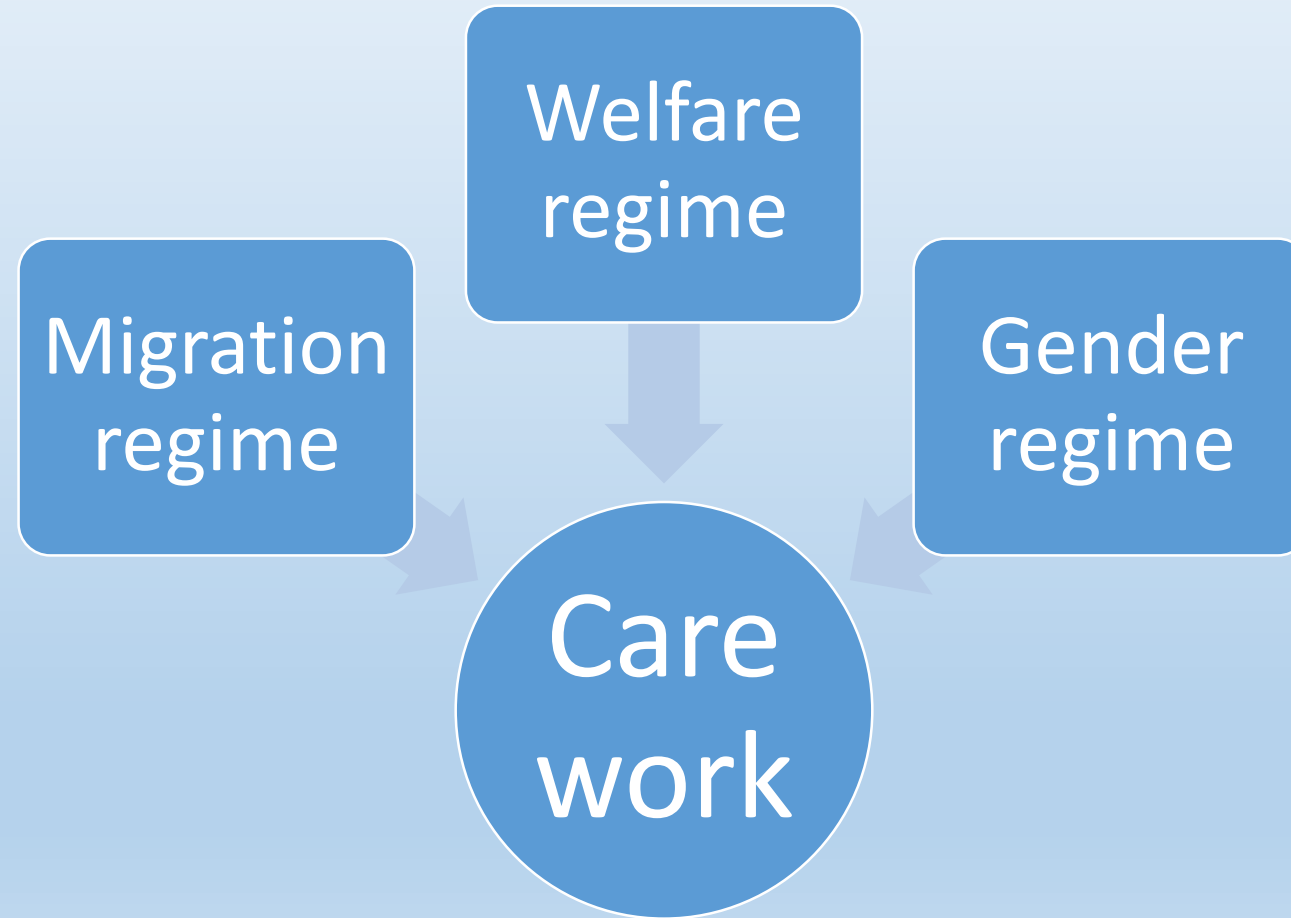
Everyone has secondary education - high school. Some of them have also completed a technical school, college or higher education - philology, history, mathematics, economics, tourism.

Family status during the migration period - married, divorced, widowed with grown-up children (students, or working).

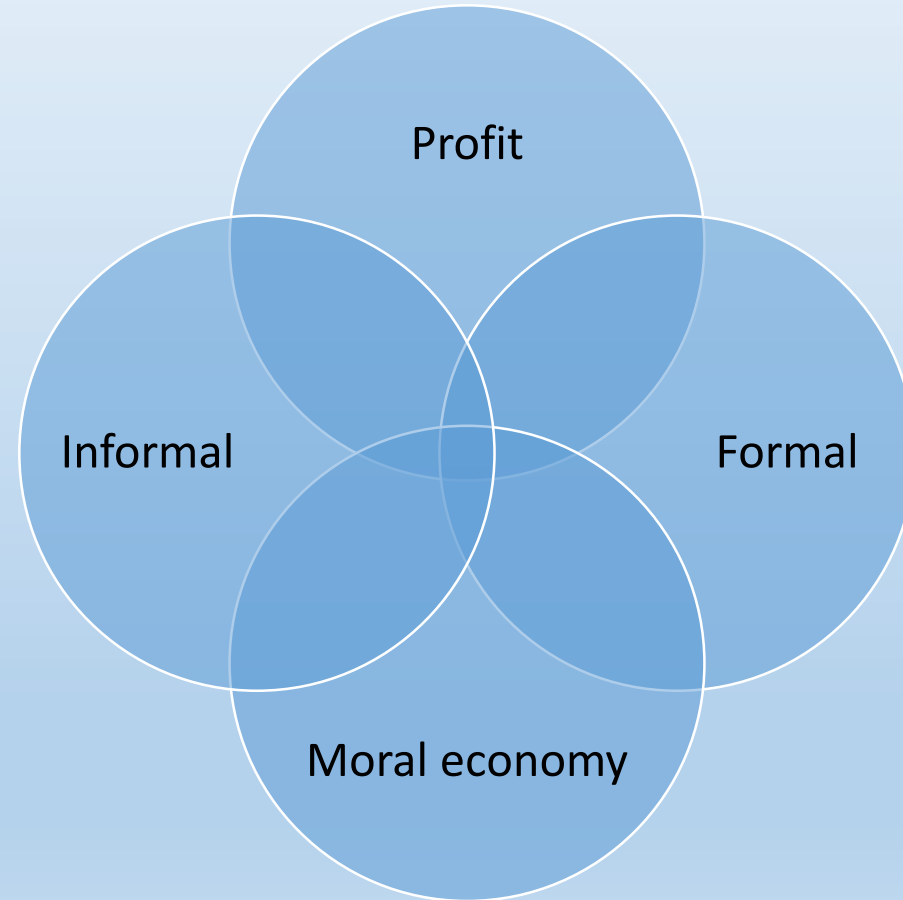
➤ Nina (migr. zw. 55-65.J.): „ I had a mission“

➤ Nadja (migr. zw. 65-72.J.): „They were very pleased with me“

Care work



Moral economy



moral economy of care encompasses the field of labour interaction, such as economic behaviour (carrying out a particular job in order to receive salary) and as moral behaviour (motivated by certain values, moral norms, ideas for right and wrong, good and evil; they have a connection with gender and life course).

"the goal was to raise money for housing"

"we went there for one thing: one to fix the house, another to furnish it, to fix a roof that runs, to send money to students children".

"I went to Italy at the age of 55, this is the perfect age. Neither you count as an old woman, nor you care about bringing up children, they've already grown up".

“A friend who knew I was looking for a job called me. I took sick leave. And I left. All I knew was that the bus driver would take me and leave me at the address. I went with another woman from S. Mine was an adventure! They drove us there. You have no claims. You know what you're looking for - grooming elderly people or someone younger ill person, dependents. You do not know a language; you can not make Italian cuisine. My first job was with a grandmother. I did not dare to think forwards. Day by day. You do not think it. You have arrived”.

"It is not the work itself that is humiliating, but the attitude of the employer".

"You clean, you wash, you find a way to dry it, not to hurt ... I kept it clean. It's a very hard job. The woman is easier to clean up than a man ... hard work....and you have to have the will to be strong to handle the situation"

„I had decided here, I would not be traumatized by not being able to go out. Because this is the condition - you're available 24-hour, and if you have 2 free hours per day – that's it, but otherwise – you stay put. But, no matter how hard it is, everyone accepts all the conditions. There is no room for disputes; there is no room for bargaining. Especially in Southern Italy ... I ended up in Potenza. With an elderly woman who had an initial Alzheimer. I learned the language with her. For six months I had not left the apartment. She did not let me go. There are no rules in Southern Italy. "My mother needs a woman 24-hour. You will do what my mother wants. No day off. At home there is everything". (Nina)

"So in Southern Italy, the badante starts with 500 Euros. If you do not go out on a Sunday - another 50 Euros; if you do not go out in the afternoon on Saturday - 25 Euros. This is the ceiling of 700 Euros per month. But the compensations are calculated by the "decent" employers, others pretend not to notice them".

"I take a job, then another job. Others sit in one place! One friend has worked 13,5 years for a sick woman! 13, 5 years! I can not understand it!"

"I was tired of nostalgia and that I could not come. For a year and a half I had not come. But I worked for my elderly man without coming, to get extra salary. Here the house was not finished. I have sent the money for this. To fix it ... I paid for it. I'm telling to myself, let's work a little longer. Then, the next year, when I had a contract, they paid for my leave". (Nadya)

"But under these conditions you make € 1000 - that's a big boost. This is a precondition to feel as a human being. This is a guarantee that you can send home. For the last four years, I also had the 13th salary and liquidation. That's 20,000 for the Italian women, but also for us - when it's on paper "(Nina)

"I worked for the mother of the head of their NRA (National Revenue Agency) in Potenza. And I asked him: will you legalize my papers?"

- I'll fix them, but why throw money in the wind, to the Italian state?"

And he did not fix me. He paid me under the table, and I remained in the shadow economy. We, the foreigners, fit very well into the Italian model". (Nina)

..."They saw that I was a good person..."

– Nadya, if you want, you can leave. You did a great job. I am very pleased. My door is always open for you”.

“Well, I made great efforts, I did many good things for her, and she was pleased and that’s why she told me so. But I left anyway” (Nina).