

**THE INFORMAL ECONOMIES OF THE UKRAINIAN-ROMANIAN
BORDERLANDS**

by

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore the informal economies of post socialism as they are practiced in two rural communities on either side of the Ukrainian-Romanian border, which are now dependent on migrant worker remittances, cross-border small trading and consumption and a wide range of non-market economic practices for not only daily but also long-term survival or social reproduction. As informal economic practices have been sustained and even proliferated in the region, the thesis responds to a need to understand how local communities produce, embed and give meaning to these everyday, routinised practices in the borderlands. The thesis therefore addresses two key questions: How are informal economies in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands practiced?; How do communities construct and embed meanings for these practices? The themes of language, citizenship, gender and marriage enable us to understand the processes through which the practices are discursively and performatively given meaning.

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Note on Transliteration and Translation

In transliterating Ukrainian names, words and conversations, I have used the Library of Congress system without diacritical marks. I have used official Ukrainian transliterations for geographical place names, such as Kyiv. I have removed all diacritical marks from Romanian words, as is standard in most texts. Where available, I have used English-language names for places, such as Bucharest. All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

Glossary of terms and places

Chernivtsi – City in western Ukraine that is the administrative centre for Ukraine's smallest region and former capital of the region of Bukovyna.

Cross-border small trading(CBST) – Shuttling of small amounts of goods across an international border for sale in another country without declaring the products or payment of the relevant taxes and duties in order to profit from higher prices for those goods on the other side of the border.

Diverse economies – a research agenda in economic geography based on the work of J.K. Gibson-Graham that seeks to highlight non-capitalist and alternative forms of economic practice to challenge capitalocentric views of the economy.

Diyalivtsi – False name given to the village in Chernivtsi region of Ukraine, where the greater part of Ukrainian fieldwork was carried out.

Gorbanita – False name given to the village in Suceava county, Romania where ethnographic fieldwork was carried out from 2008-2009.

Hryvnia – Ukrainian currency (code UAH), which for the period of fieldwork was valued at around 10 to 1GBP.

Informal economy – a term first employed by Keith Hart in the 1970s and used widely within the social sciences to refer to a myriad of economic practices that take place outside of formal, state-controlled employment and enterprise.

Leu – Romanian currency (plural lei, code RON) shortened to RON, which for the period of fieldwork was valued at around 5 to 1GBP.

Patriarchy – refers to a society in which men dominate positions of power and females are subordinated to men through sets of constructed norms.

Performance – ‘a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being’ (Butler, 1990: 33).

Practice – a stabilised, routinised activity.

Suceava – City in north-eastern Romania that is the regional administrative capital for Suceava county, where fieldwork for this thesis took place.

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1. Introduction

A. An Ethnography of Informal Economies

The aim of this thesis is to explore how the informal economies of post socialism are practiced primarily in two rural communities on either side of the Ukrainian-Romanian border and the way in which social actors shape, re-shape and negotiate meanings for these practices within their everyday lives. Since 1989/1991, these communities have experienced significant change in their everyday economic activities, due to rising unemployment and increasing job instability, which has become a major part of the much-critiqued ‘transition’ (cf. Pickles and Smith, 1998; Bradshaw and Stenning, 2004; Hann, 2002). Consequently, the rural communities of the Ukrainian-Romanian¹ borderlands are now dependent on migrant worker remittances, cross-border small trading and consumption and a wide range of non-market economic practices for not only daily but also long-term survival or social reproduction (Katz, 2001; Stenning et al., 2010). Academically the thesis is sited at the nexus of social anthropology and human geography and draws upon the literature of both disciplines to theorise the informal economic practices described.

Of course, this is not the first ethnography to explore informal economic practices, whose roots in academic thought lie in Keith Hart’s study of 1960s urban Accra. Hart (1973) explored the informal income streams of those statistically classed as ‘unemployed’ and suggested they are sites for potential economic growth. Migrant workers and their remittances and cross-border economies also remain hidden from official statistics and their activities remain primarily unregulated, as they often do not declare their work overseas and are frequently employed informally or illegally. Regional cross-border economies focus on

¹ My use of Ukrainian ahead of Romanian reflects the process of dual-sited fieldwork, during which I carried out participant observation in Ukraine initially. This means that Ukraine is central to the thesis, with Romania being used for comparative purposes. There is detailed discussion of this issue in chapter three.

trading and consumption and generally operate outside of the 'rules', due to their profitability being centred upon the avoidance of paying the relevant taxes and fees.

Smith and Stenning (2006) have argued that the economies of post-socialism should be seen as 'diverse'. The Community Economies Collective (2001) have organised a diverse economy into market, alternative market and non-market practices. In the context of post-socialism, these have been extracted by Smith and Stenning (2006) to refer to particular economic practices. Firstly, market practices include formal and informal work and remittances from migration. Non-market practices are envisaged as self-provisioning, reciprocity, redistribution (e.g. state pensions) and unpaid care work. Alternative market practices are centred on the informal economy or economies, which includes a vast array of activities ranging from the payment of individual bribes to organised crime. An ethnographic approach offers a real opportunity to understand not only the practices but the social context to them, as Lee explains:

[economies are] constituted geographically, socially and politically – and hence practised – as co-present and dynamic hybridizations of alternative, complementary or competing social relations which may vary over the shortest stretches of time and space.
(Lee, 2006: 421)

Within the context of the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands, the two key informal economic practices are migration and cross-border small trading and consumption. Using Smith and Stenning's categorisation, these can be viewed as market and alternative market practices. This gives a more focussed approach to the research suggesting a view of the impact of informal economies on economic diversity in the region, moving away from the formal/informal binary approach (Williams et al. 2007) to studying 'informalisation' (Sassen, 1998) in the context of the whole economy.

Anthropologists and ethnographers have considered many aspects of these economies from a grounded perspective, exploring their cultural significance (cf. Caldwell, 2004 on self-provisioning), gendered aspects (Pine, 2002) and the diversity and moralities of the black market (Humphrey, 2002). Whilst consideration is given to the interwoven nature of these practices within post-socialist societies, less time has been devoted to relationships between these practices in the context of particular communities. In economic geography, there have been a number of different studies focusing on the diverse and informal economies of post-socialism (Smith and Stenning, 2006; Stenning et al. 2010; Round et al. 2008), however with the exception of interests in household food production (Pallot and Nefedova, 2007; Wegren, 2005), this research has privileged urban sites, which are to some extent less dependent on diverse economies due to the spatial inequalities of the transition (Sokol, 2001). Geographical work has greatly expanded theoretical understanding of these economies, but has not drawn widely on the ethnographic approach to elucidate local interpretations of the diverse economic practices of post-socialism or interrogated more deeply their impact on the lived experience of post-socialism for particular communities. In this sense, they have been more concerned with what can be learned theoretically from this everyday experience than engaging with the socially transformative effects of diverse economies. This is linked to critiques of studying practices within the sub-discipline, particularly growing concerns about the fracturing of the discipline and its impact on 'economic geography's theoretical and methodological integrity, its social and political relevance, its collective spirit and purpose' (Peck, 2005: 130).

The potential for dialogue is clear; as economic geographers have entered the 'household' (Smith and Stenning, 2006), their objective has been to theorise and document diverse economic practices (ibid: 191) and in some cases (Gibson-Graham, 2006) to actively seek to perform discourses that offer alternatives to capitalism. These studies should be

supplemented by grounded, empirical research, which focuses on the communities in which informal economic practices have proliferated. That is the focus of this thesis, which centres on the premise that if economies are constructed and re-constructed in everyday life, then this process of construction and performance of economic practices is both produced by and remakes local culture. I draw on an understanding of ‘community’, which supposes that members of that community understand one another and operate through ‘culture’ - a set of shared meanings. Often these rules are implicit and regulated informally (Hart, 2010), highlighting the need for grounded ethnographic work in order to uncover this shared culture. The thesis offers a unique interdisciplinary perspective, bringing together geographical and anthropological approaches into a rigorous and sustained debate.

Within the context of the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands, informal economic practices have increasingly become associated with migration (remittance economies) and cross-border small trading and consumption. Both have attracted attention from scholars of the post-socialist states (cf. Williams and Balaz, 2002; Tolstokorova, 2010). The ‘economic’ impact of these informal income opportunities (Hart, 1973) is widely recognised and no longer viewed to be ‘residue’ or part of the transition that will diminish as these states ‘progress’ towards a market economy (cf. Stenning et al., 2010; Williams et al., 2007). However, as informalisation have been sustained and even proliferated in the region, we need to consider whether the shift from temporary to more permanent, resistant and enduring practices has greater potential to transform communities and culture. This thesis will, therefore, look to address two key questions:

- A. How are informal economies in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands practiced?
- B. How do communities construct and embed meanings for these practices?

In the following section, I give a detailed overview of the two fieldwork sites, located on either side of the Ukrainian-Romanian border. Whilst the empirical findings of my

research are very much blended and aim to explore key themes in both sites, it is important to recognise that there were differences between the two villages.

B. The Ukrainian-Romanian Borderlands

My fieldwork took place in the Chernivtsi region of Ukraine, situated in the south of western Ukraine and Suceava County, situated in the north-east of Romania. Both sites are located in an area, which from 1774 to 1941 formed the administrative region of Bukovyna;² initially from 1774 to 1918, as part of the Austro-Hungarian empire (Kristof, 2006: 1), and later from 1918 to 1941 as part of 'Greater Romania'. The northern part of the region was occupied by Soviet forces in 1941 and became part of the Ukrainian SSR, with the southern part of the region remaining in Romania.³ I have chosen to conceal the exact location of the sites in which I carried out my research. My concern in doing so has been to preserve the confidentiality of the people in the two key sites. Although this can be cumbersome at times in writing throughout the thesis, I feel that given the depth of the information provided on the sites and their location in relation to the border, confidentiality would be compromised by reference to nearby settlements. In this section, I therefore restrict discussion to a broad overview of the region, including its history, before turning my attention to a detailed account of the two fieldwork sites.

The fieldwork sites are located between the Dniester River and the main range of the Carpathian Mountains, surrounding the source of the Prut and the Upper Siret rivers. The majority of the western part of the region is located in the Carpathian Mountains and is

² Bukovyna can also be seen written as Bukovina (Russian), Bucovina (Romanian) and Bukowina (German/Polish). This reflects the history of the region, but for the purposes of this dissertation, I have chosen to use the Ukrainian transliteration. The reason for this is two-fold: firstly, the name comes from the Slavic word for a beech tree, 'бук', and means 'land of the beech trees'; secondly, as Ukrainians are the dominant Slavic-speaking group in the region today and the northern territory falls into the Ukrainian nation-state, I have chosen the transliteration from Ukrainian rather than Russian or the Polish spelling. It does not reflect a particular focus in terms of the dissertation, which primarily uses the more generic term 'Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands'.

³ The history of the region has been widely researched, for more details, refer to Kruglashov (2006), Kristof (2006), King (2000), Bilyk et al. (1994), Osachuk (2002), Strutynsky and Horuk (2002) and Popyk (1999).

sparsely populated. The eastern areas are lowlands and much of the territory is still forested, with most villages maintaining working areas of forest attached to them. These are used primarily for providing wood for fuel, as well as for other foraging activities and amongst young people for recreation.

Figure 1: A map of the region, showing the city of Chernivtsi, county town of Suceava and the location of the border.⁴



According to the 2001 Ukrainian census, the total population of the Chernivtsi administrative region was 922,817, which makes up just 0.02% of Ukraine's overall population. 40% of the population are classified as living in towns and cities or 'urban-type' settlements, compared to an average for Ukraine of 67%. The region has just one settlement over 20,000 people, the regional capital, with a population of 236,691. Of this population,

⁴ Map not to scale and taken from <http://www.care2.com/c2c/groups/disc.html?gpp=14758&pst=885565>, accessed on 12/07/2011.

75% identified themselves as ethnically Ukrainian, 12.5% as Romanian, 7.3% as Moldovan, 4.1% as Russian and 1.1% as other groups.⁵ Suceava County in Romania had a population of 688,435⁶ according to the 2002 Romanian census. The county town had a population of 105,865 and although it is the capital of the county, many administrative functions and services, such as postal services, are controlled from Iasi, a larger city located 145km from Suceava by road⁷. In the 2002 census, just 1.2% of the population of the county declared themselves to be Ukrainian/Ruthenian⁸. However, in particular settlements, this figure rose to 67%. 83.3% of Ukrainians living in Romania as a whole live in rural areas. The vast majority of Ukrainian-speaking settlements are clustered in the area to the north of the Suceava en route to the Ukrainian border. They are generally denoted by the signs giving their village name in Ukrainian and Romanian.

The two fieldwork sites I chose were located in the vicinity of a border town in Romania and near to, but not directly on, the main road route and border crossing connecting the county town of Suceava in Romania and the closest regional city of Chernivtsi in Ukraine. They were indirectly connected through kinship networks, in the sense that villagers from Diyalivtsi had relatives in the neighbouring village to Gorbanita⁹, as did the people of Gorbanita. The villages were approximately 12km apart (as the crow flies). In the following discussion, I summarise the general characteristics of each of the fieldworks sites, presenting details on the structure of the populations, the nature of the village economy and employment and services and businesses present in the village. The statistical information presented for Diyalivtsi is more detailed than that for Gorbanita, due to the different levels of data collected

⁵ http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/results/nationality_population/nationality_popul1/ accessed on 26/7/2009 at 13.28.

⁶ Romanian 2002 census data.

⁷ Iasi has a population of 315,214. As Chernivtsi had previously been the regional capital, these services would have been developed there prior to 1941.

⁸ The Romanian census data combines Ukrainian/Ruthenian ethnicity. Rusyn/Ruthenian originally refers to anyone coming from the Kyivan Rus, with Ruthenia being the Latin word for the Rus. Since the development of the Ukrainian nation-state, Ruthenian has become synonymous with Ukrainian in this region.

⁹ I have removed the diacritics from all Romanian words throughout the thesis. Written in Romanian, the pseudonym for the village would be Gorbănița.

for each village by the local councils. Where possible, I have attempted to use other sources of observable data to give a fuller picture of both sites.

i. The Ukrainian Fieldwork Site: Diyalivtsi

The fieldwork site in Ukraine was a village approximately 4km from the main road and the main road border crossing in the region and 35km from Chernivtsi. The village was located in the Ukrainian ‘pre-border zone’, which was subject to restricted access, foot and vehicle patrols by the local border police and movement to some parts of the land attached to the village was limited to residents, who had been issued with the necessary permits. Motorists passed through a checkpoint upon leaving the main road towards the village, however this was frequently unmanned. The Romanian border town and the border crossing were visible from certain vantage points in the village. There were only two road exits from the village and both went to a neighbouring village, before rejoining the main road to the city and the border. The village was just 500m from the border at its nearest point and it was referred to by one young woman as ‘the end of geography’ due to this location.

The official population was 929¹⁰ of whom 449 or 48.33% were men and 480 or 51.67% were women. Local people suggested that the number of people actually resident in the village during my fieldwork period was likely to be lower, around 600, due to the large numbers of overseas migrant workers. This was also confirmed by the number of dwellings, which appeared to be vacant within the village or by the number of people who stated that there was a member of their household overseas during the observation period in the village. Diyalivtsi formed part of a collective with a larger neighbouring village, whose population totalled 2888, giving a total for the commune of 3817. Diyalivtsi was a predominantly Ukrainian-speaking village, however the larger neighbouring village was inhabited by

¹⁰ Data taken from village council statistics dated 1/1/2005.

heritage Romanian-speakers and consequently, contact between the two villages was somewhat limited, with many in Diyalivtsi expressing suspicion of their neighbours. I was aware of just one man and one woman from the neighbouring village who had both married and moved to Diyalivtsi. In addition, the owners of the main village shop were from the neighbouring village, but resided there and not in Diyalivtsi.

The village experienced a drop in the number of dwellings between 2001 and 2005, from 314 to 289. However, the number of people possessing shares of commercial agricultural land increased from 23 to 58 and the total land belonging to villagers grew from 272ha to 389.39ha. In 2001, 2.52% of the land was in use for buildings and accommodation, 87.58% was used for subsistence farming and the remaining 9.86% was used for shared, commercial crop production. By 2005, 6.72% of the village's land was being used to provide accommodation, 76.99% was used for household agricultural production and 16.29% was being used for shared, commercial crop production. The reasons for this fall in household agricultural production are discussed in more detail in chapter six, but relate to the low status of agricultural work and an increase in the leasing of land to a commercial farmer from another Ternopil.

As no new public buildings were constructed in the period, the shift in land being used for private and commercial accommodation can be explained by the building of large, new houses and also some local businesses, included a shop, bar and sauna on the edge of the village and a new bar and restaurant in the centre of the village. Of the land available for household-level cultivation in 2001, 93.69% was actually being farmed. By 2005, although the amount of land available for household-level cultivation had increased, the amount of land being actively farmed had not, leading to a decrease in the percentage of available land being farmed to 74.44%. This was confirmed by a conversation I had with two men from Diyalivtsi on my way back to the village one day from Chernivtsi. Both men decried the

‘shame’ of the unused, fallow land along the road to Diyalivtsi. At the same time, land in the centre of the village that was suitable for commercial land being highly sought after but in short supply. In the time I was in Diyalivtsi, just once such plot came up for sale and was said to have sold for \$5000. The buildings on the plot were dilapidated and a home in better condition further away from the centre of the village had sold for \$1000 just a few months previously. The plot was set to be developed into a commercial site by a local man. In terms of livestock, the period from 2001 to 2005 saw a drop in the number of all types of livestock (except pigs), which was greater than the decrease in the number of households in the village. In 2005, there were only 79% of the livestock numbers that there had been in 2001. In addition, the number of tractors fell from 14 to 11, reflecting the drop in the number of households, but as the land under cultivation was the same, this suggests that more and more land was being cultivated primarily by hand or using horse-drawn ploughs.¹¹

Of the 295 buildings in the village, just two were for communal use, the school and the village hall/library. Of all the buildings in the village, 34.58% had a supply of water and 72.88% made use of liquefied gas. This meant that many homes in the village had to share their wells and water supply with neighbours and this was particularly true of people living in the centre of the village. There was no drainage system available, but most newer and recently-renovated homes had built their own cesspits and drains and had systems to pump water from their wells, giving them the opportunity to build indoor bathrooms and kitchens. However, these homes were still a minority in the village, although many had been rebuilt or modestly uplifted in the 1980s, meaning they were in good condition, if lacking in facilities. 53.22% of buildings were made from brick, 30.51% from wood and 16.27% from adobe. Most of the improvements and the installation of indoor bathrooms had taken place in the period since 1991 and only a very elite number of houses had such facilities dating from the

¹¹ For more clarification and discussion of this issue, see the comparison in chapter five, section B, relating to self-provisioning.

Soviet era, including that of the former head of the collective farm. During the Soviet era, the village was part of a collective with three neighbouring villages: one where the current village council was based and which still formed part of the official collective; another, more remote, Romanian-speaking village, which was accessible by foot across the fields; and a Ukrainian-speaking village, which was located on the main road to the border. The latter village had grown substantially in the period since 1991, due to its location. The village was easily accessible for work in Chernivtsi, as well as having a number of businesses catering to Romanians coming across the border to shop and Ukrainians crossing the border to trade in Romania.

Local people explained that during the Soviet era, as well as work on the collective farm, large numbers of people in the village were employed in factories in the city and nearby towns. Six or seven full buses would leave the village every day to transport people to these factories, which were predominantly engaged in the production of furniture and construction materials, for which wood was often sought from local forests. At the time of my fieldwork, just one bus a day left for a nearby furniture factory, which only two villagers appear to use. Official statistics suggested that the village had a working population of just 280, which is less than one person per household. Statistical data recorded sectoral employment for only 191 inhabitants; 6 were employed in manufacturing; 36 in the wholesale and retail trade; 5 in transport, post and communications; 8 in financial services; 39 in state administration, 54 in education; 37 in health and social security; and 6 in collective, social and private services. Given the lack of data relating to professions, it is difficult to draw conclusions, however the figures do suggest relatively low ‘official’ employment levels amongst the working-age population of around 47%.¹²

¹² Details of the age of the population can be found in figure 2, which shows that there were 601 inhabitants aged between 18 and 59. This is only a very simple indication of the levels of unemployment, as the actively employed population of the village was given as 280, just 46.59%. Whilst a number of these people will be

In addition to formal employment, income in the households of Diyalivtsi was generated from four main sources:

- 1) state benefits, including pensions, sickness & disability benefits and child allowances;
- 2) informal/undeclared work, primarily in agriculture locally, particularly during planting and harvesting seasons;
- 3) remittances from migrant workers, primarily working illegally in Italy;¹³
- 4) cross-border small trading (CBST) to Romania.

Furthermore, there were a number of non-market economic practices, which were common place in the village, including domestic food production (self-provisioning), barter and exchange (of labour, goods and services). The majority of households employed a range of practices, as has been noted by other scholars of the postsocialist space (cf. Pavlovskaya, 2004).

At the household level, agricultural production was primarily limited to vegetables and beans. Few households appeared to grow grain and no-one spoke of making use of a local flour mill.¹⁴ Most households farmed fairly small plots of land close to their own homes and on the main routes out of the village. Neighbours and family helped one another in planting and harvesting their crops and were repaid by reciprocal labour, as well as food and other payments in kind (sewing, chopping wood, etc.). Whilst some labour was repaid immediately, such as with food or reciprocal help in harvesting, at other times there were

excluded from official unemployment figures as being economically inactive, the figures suggest how many people of working age in the village could be involved in diverse economies.

¹³ Migration had long formed a part of village life. A visit to the village cemetery with a friend revealed a large number of families who had long since left the village for Canada (before, during and after the Second World War). However, since 1991 there have been a number of different phases of migration. Immediately after independence from the Soviet Union, many men sought work, primarily in construction, in Russia and Central Europe (e.g. the Czech Republic and Germany). At the beginning of the 2000s, the focus of migration had shifted towards Southern Europe, particularly Portugal, Spain and Italy. Although some of this work had initially been in construction, more recently there had been a feminisation of migration, as women moved to Italy to work as carers in Italian homes. For more on the feminisation of migration, see Tolstokorova, 2010 & 2009.

¹⁴ This is noteworthy in contrast with Gorbanita and further discussion can be found in chapter six.

delays in 'repayment' of this labour. Few people, other than local tractor drivers, were able to make a living wage from agriculture and sought other means to provide the needed cash income. The proximity of the border meant that cross-border small trading was central to not only households, but the village economy as a whole.¹⁵ Very few households in the village did not or had not at some point had a member of their family involved in this type of trading. The main product traded through the border was cigarettes, which cost from as little as 30 Euro cents per pack of 20 in Ukraine. In contrast, cigarettes in Romanian shops across the border would retail from around 1.5 Euros per pack of 20¹⁶. Use and intensity of involvement in CBST, with some households having this as their sole income, whilst others used it to supplement pensions, incomes from paid employment and remittances from overseas workers.

The village had four shops, a sauna, a bar and restaurant, in addition to the school, post office¹⁷ and village library/hall. Three shops sold groceries and some household cleaning items and the largest of these was the former co-operative shop in the centre of the village, which was owned by a family from the neighbouring Romanian-speaking village. The owner had purchased the shop with money he had earned working in construction in Germany in the 1990s. There was one further shop, which supplied household goods, small agricultural equipment and building materials. The bar and restaurant and sauna/bar/shop, had also been funded either partly or entirely from migrant work remittances.¹⁸ Whilst the bar and restaurant and three of the shops were run as family concerns and had no employees, the sauna/bar/shop employed a number of people from the village. In addition, permanent and

¹⁵ In chapter eight, I discuss further the impact of CBST on the regional economy.

¹⁶ Prices correct as of December 2008.

¹⁷ The post office was not classified as a 'government' building within the official statistics.

¹⁸ The sauna was owned by two local men, one of whom was dependent on income from his wife working in Italy to fund the project, which was ongoing. The shop attached to the sauna opened during the period I lived in Diyalivtsi. The bar and restaurant had been set up in 2006 by a couple, Alina and Roman, who are one of the central families to the ethnography in chapters four to seven. Their funds came from three years of working illegally in London.

seasonal work opportunities were available within the post office. The village hall/library had just one employee and all the school teachers were also drawn from the village population. There were many rumours of competition amongst the village businesses and the former co-operative shop was subject to regular inspections from the authorities as one local woman, who was interested in purchasing it from its current owners, allegedly tried to force them out of business.

Figure 2: Table of the Population by Age Group of Diyalivtsi, 2005.

Age groups	Total	% of total population
0-17	163	17.55
18-34	222	23.90
35-59	379	40.80
60+	165	17.76
Total	929	100

Women made up 61.82% of the population over 60, reflecting current trends for life expectancy in men to be lower than that of women in Ukraine¹⁹. Finally, in terms of religious faith, the village had an Orthodox church and a Baptist House of Prayer. However, the House of Prayer was no longer in use as I was told that the family that had built it had left and now lived overseas. The village shared their priest with a nearby, larger village, where he and his family also lived. The church building itself had been donated to the village in the 1930s, when the area was under Romanian control. The village from which it had come had built a new church and their old church was moved in its entirety to Diyalivtsi. This meant that any writing on the icons and other pictures on the walls was in Romanian. The church was not well-attended (even at Christmas), in spite of the fact that many villagers maintained the

¹⁹ Insert reference

traditions of religious feasts. The one exception to this was the annual blessing of the Easter baskets, which was attended by almost everyone in the village.

ii. *The Romanian Fieldwork Site: Gorbanita*

Gorbanita was located approximately 9km from the border town and 10km from the border crossing itself. The village formed part of a commune with a larger neighbouring village, which was 2km away. According to the 2002 Romanian census, in this Romanian county²⁰ 43.04% of the population live in urban settlements and the remaining 56.96% are rural-dwellers. The total population of Gorbanita and its neighbouring village is 2694, 51.60% of whom are women and 48.40% are men. The population of the commune saw a decrease of around 5% in the period between the censuses of 1992 and 2002, having shown a population increase in the period since 1977. This compares to a population decrease of 2% for the county as a whole and an increase of just over 1% in rural areas of the county. Gorbanita and its neighbouring village can therefore be seen to have experienced a greater decline in its population than other areas in the county since the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime. However, it should be noted that in the period since 2002, it is likely that the village has experienced a further decline in population, due to greater migration resulting from Romania's EU membership. Local people estimated the current village population at around 380.

The area in which the village was located was primarily seen to be an ethnic Ukrainian zone by people in the local area and large numbers of the older people spoke primarily in Ukrainian/Ruthenian²¹ amongst themselves. Many younger people were able to converse in the village dialect, but few spoke Ruthenian as their mother tongue unlike young

²⁰ Judet in Romanian.

²¹ Local people described themselves as speaking Rusyn/Ruthenian (po-rus'ki), although the language is close to standardised, modern Ukrainian, there are some dialectical differences. For the purposes of this dissertation, the language will be referred to as Ruthenian, due to self-identification. The issue of language is explored in depth in chapter four.

people in some of the neighbouring settlements.²² The larger neighbouring village, where the village council was based, was almost exclusively Romanian-speaking and when people from Gorbanita visited the neighbouring village for the local market or other festivities, people from the neighbouring settlement would often comment that, ‘the Russians are coming’. Census data for the village is available only combined with that of the larger neighbouring settlement. According to the 2002 Romanian census, just 0.78% or 21 people in the commune as a whole declared themselves to be of an ethnicity other than Romanian, all of these were Ukrainians/Ruthenians.²³ This is lower than the percentage for the county of 1.24% and the percentage for rural areas of 1.94%. Research in the local cemetery also confirmed the Ukrainian/Ruthenian ethnicity of many of the key village families.

Figure 3: Photograph of Grave Headstones in the Village of Gorbanita, 2008.



²² Many of the other local settlements had Ukrainian schools and identified as Ukrainian communities, displaying Ukrainian, Romanian and EU flags.

²³ The reasons for a lack of identification with a Ukrainian/Ruthenian identity are again explored further in chapter four.

Gorbanita was home primarily to an ageing population, whose children and grandchildren lived in urban areas, stretching from the local towns near the border, on to the nearest city and also further away in Bucharest. In addition, many inhabitants had younger relatives overseas engaged in migrant work in Western European countries, including Italy, France and the UK. The village had one school and one teacher (from outside the village) catering for classes I-IV and had approximately 20 pupils.²⁴ Older children primarily attended the school in the neighbouring settlement, which had facilities up to and including class X. Statistics from the census suggest that across the commune as a whole the population is more balanced.

Figure 4: Table of the Population by Age Group of the Gorbanita Commune, 2002.

Age groups	Total	% of total population
0-19	791	29.36
20-34	612	22.72
35-60	671	24.91
60+	620	23.01
Total	2694	100

The village had two churches, only one of which was currently in use, having been built just three years ago. The village had a permanent priest, who lived in a new home next to the church with his wife and three children. The priest originated from a Romanian-speaking village in Ukraine and had initially come to Romania on a student visa. According to the 2002 census, 73.27% of the commune as a whole declared themselves to be Romanian Orthodox (compared to 88.39% in the county), with 6.76% Baptist, 17.22% Pentecostal and

²⁴ Romania was one of the first countries in the region (after Latvia and Hungary) to secure a ‘bailout’ loan from the IMF in 2009 as a result of the global financial crisis. As a result, the government has been forced to cut spending in a number of areas, the most controversial of which were to public sector pay and pensions. The school in Gorbanita was scheduled to close as a result of the cuts, but as of the date of submission of this thesis, remains open.

2.71% Seventh Day Adventists. However, the vast majority of the non-Romanian Orthodox population resided in the neighbouring village and only two women in the village were said not to be of the Romanian Orthodox faith, both of whom were originally from neighbouring villages.

The village had a number of the new larger style of houses, which have become more common throughout the region in the last few years. However, the housing stock was still primarily traditional homes with two rooms, an outside kitchen and no running water or bathroom. The village was serviced by electricity and household waste collection, as well as having four buses a day to the border town and nearest city. The commune as a whole had 1077 dwellings according to the 2002 census data, of which 7.52% have running water, 6.03 have a drainage system and 5.29% have an indoor bathroom. This compares unfavourably with rural areas of the county as a whole, where 9.26% have running water, 9.10% have drainage and 7.35% have an indoor bathroom. This situation appears to have changed significantly in recent years, with many migrant workers using earnings to fund home improvements, such as installing bathrooms and even building new homes in some cases.

Residents of the village were primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture,²⁵ although a small number of inhabitants did work in the nearby border town and nearest city. The active working population of the commune was just 30.51% or 822 people in 2002, compared to 64.62% of the population of the county and 63.06% in rural areas. The majority of the economically active population are men, 73.36% and 90.02% are currently employed. Unemployment amongst women stands at 10.50% and amongst men at 9.78%. This compares to an average in rural areas of the county of 6.56% for men and 6.97% for women. Many pensioners had returned to the village on retirement from local towns, as they were unable to

²⁵ Some households distributed excesses from agricultural production on to family members in urban settlements in exchange for labour. Produce was also occasionally sold through family contacts in the nearest city. During the 1990s, younger people in the village talked of having often travelled to cities in other parts of the region to sell produce, particularly potatoes. However, almost all of these young people were now migrant workers and this practice appeared to have ceased.

maintain homes in urban settlements due to small pensions.²⁶ The majority of these people had been employed in the towns during the socialist era and their children and grandchildren remained in these urban settlements, coming to the village on a regular basis to assist their elderly relatives in maintaining their crops and homes.

In addition to formal employment, income in the households of Diyalivtsi was generated from three main sources:

- 1) state benefits, including pensions, sickness & disability benefits and child allowances;
- 2) informal/undeclared work, primarily in agriculture locally, particularly during planting and harvesting seasons;
- 3) remittances from migrant workers, primarily working in Italy, France and the UK.

Almost all households were engaged in small-scale subsistence farming. There was some level of mechanisation in agriculture and most people owned a tractor or hired local tractor proprietors to assist them in farming their small-holdings. Within the village there were four commercial enterprises, a shop and bar, a further bar, a blacksmith's forge and a commercial farm. Both bars were run by families in the village and employed no outside help. The blacksmith had a local man who assisted him on occasion, but the work was primarily seasonal. The commercial farm was owned by a man from the neighbouring settlement and operated by workers from outside of the village, as the farmer had earned a reputation for late payment and low salaries. The workers came predominantly from more remote, mountainous areas of the county and one local woman was employed to clean the worker accommodation and cook food for the employees. Other people in the village earned wages from assisting in various agricultural and household maintenance tasks. This work was

²⁶ The current pensionable age for women is 55 and for men 60.

normally paid in cash and was generally carried out by men of working age. A number of young men were also engaged by the brick factory on the outskirts of the neighbouring settlement. Due to increasing demand for building services, one man was self-employed as a builder and casually employed two or three men on different projects within the village.

Two households in the village operated as distributors of goods from across the border in Ukraine. The village blacksmith received goods via kinship networks²⁷ from Ukraine on a weekly basis, including cooking oil, rice, matches and washing powder and villagers would visit him to purchase these goods. In addition, villagers could place orders for larger items to be delivered the following week; these were generally building materials, such as metal gates and gate posts. The owner of the village shop also received deliveries of goods from Ukraine, which included cigarettes, alcohol and matches. The village had become increasingly dependent on the supply of goods from across the border, which could also be purchased through Ukrainian traders at the weekly markets in the neighbouring villages and towns or directly through cross-border consumption. However, cross-border consumption was limited by transport, with the majority of trips being made via relatives in nearby towns or by migrant workers during return visits to the village. In any form, this consumption practice was referred to as ‘going to the Russians’.

iii. Summary

The statistics suggest that Gorbanita had a higher number of pensioners and a smaller working-age population, however this supposition may be unreliable due to migration. Many of those officially resident in the village were in fact working overseas and this was particularly noticeable amongst females of working age in Diyalivtsi. Self-provisioning although important in Diyalivtsi was more prevalent in Gorbanita, where particularly the

²⁷ Detailed discussion of this practice can be found in chapter six.

pension-age population drew on kinship networks for labour to cultivate larger plots of land. This labour was then repaid through the distribution of the produce after harvesting. Although such networks of kin and neighbours also existed in Diyalivtsi, less land was farmed and investment in agricultural productivity was lower. Being a larger settlement, Diyalivtsi had considerably better services, such as more year groups catered for by the school and a post office. These services had to be accessed in Gorbanita's neighbouring village. The villages' locations in relation to Suceava and Chernivtsi were almost the same in terms of distance, however Gorbanita benefited from greater accessibility due to a paved road running directly to the village. The 4km journey from the main road to Diyalivtsi could take up to twenty minutes, depending on the weather conditions.

However, what united both villages was not only a shortage of employment opportunities but low wages made such work as was available unsustainable once costs had been deducted. These were key factors in determining involvement in informal economies. Both communities appeared to have large numbers of the population working overseas, particularly in Italy and both were heavily dependent on the arbitrage opportunities (Altwater, 1998) presented by the border. Villagers in Gorbanita acted as distributors and consumers of Ukrainian goods, traded by their counterparts in Ukraine. Consequently, fieldwork in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita provided the depth need for an ethnographic study of the informal economies of these post-socialist borderlands. Participant observation in these sites gave rise to four key themes, which are organised and presented to give a sense of scale in the empirical chapters. The first empirical chapter focuses on language and uses this as a site for discussing transnationality and relationships to and understanding of the rest of the world in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands. Through this chapter, I am able to explore how the practices of migration and cross-border small trading shape and define notions of Ukraine and Romania's place in the world. This chapter is then followed with a shift in scale to

national level by exploring citizenship through informal economic practices in chapter five. This includes extensive discussion of the role of informal economic practices in shaping state-citizen relations and highlights significant differences on either side of the border. The penultimate empirical chapter moves into the social life of the villages themselves, by exploring gender and the gendered nature of labour in the region. Gender is so central to shaping and understanding social relations and economic practices in the region that this chapter provides insight on a regional scale to the processes ‘practicing’ of informal economies. The final substantive chapter is based upon discussion of the household, primarily focussing on the issue of marriage, which is key to understanding household formation, sustainability and reproduction. Through this chapter I am able to return to the household as the central focus of the study and bring together key strands that highlight the value of an in-depth study of the ‘practice’ of informal economies in this region.

C. Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 – Thinking Practice-ly about Economies

The first chapter reviews the relevant literature by ‘thinking practice-ly about economies’ Its purpose is three-fold: firstly it highlights synergies between anthropological and geographical literature in challenging neo-classical economics and its approaches to theorising ‘the economy’ by foregrounding the role of economies in sustaining human life and the construction of economies through everyday life; secondly, it explores the need for approaches that focus on ‘practice’ as a means for embedding understanding economies in their broader social context; finally, it situates this research in post-socialism and borderlands.

Chapter 3 – Methodology and Ethics

This chapter presents the methodological rationale behind the research, reflecting on participant observation of informal economic practices. It provides an overview of the fieldwork and detailed analysis of the particularities of dual-sited ethnographic research. There is extensive discussion of the researcher’s positionality in the field and the chapter concludes with a section on ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 – Learning to Speak ‘Village’: Understanding the Cost of Language

This chapter commences with a detailed overview of language in the region, as a contentious and politically sensitive issue. It highlights the multi-lingual complexity of the region as a context to focussing on discussion of the impact of cross-border economic practices and migration on the use of and identification with language.

Chapter 5 – Practicing the Economies of Citizenship

Building on the previous chapter, here the thesis moves on to explore the impact of informal economies on the people of Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita's understandings of and relationships with their respective and each other's states. It first suggests an economic view of citizenship in the borderlands, before continuing with discussion of the ways in which citizenship is encountered through migration and cross-border economic practices.

Chapter 6 – Understanding Men's and Women's Work: Gender and Economic Practices

The third empirical chapter explores informal economic practices in the context of gender, examining the gendered impacts of migration and cross-border small trading. The chapter presents Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita as separate case studies of migration and the threat that it poses to social reproduction through its challenge to the traditionally gendered aspects of life in both villages. Gender is posited as a central means for organising economic practices and labour.

Chapter 7 – The Heart of the Household: Practicing Economies of Household Formation through Marriage

The final chapter brings the empirical section of the thesis to a close in the household. It introduces three different households in both fieldwork sites in detail, exploring income, expenditure and divisions of labour. This chapter centres very much on household formation and reproduction through marriage in the context of informal economic practices. It discusses the role these practices have in re-shaping the formation of marriage and how they impact on the way couples maintain their marriage in the light of strong moral disapproval of divorce. This chapter encompasses discussion of marriage as a framework for sexual relations and reproduction.

Chapter 8 – Conclusions

This chapter revisits the original theoretical and methodological rationale for the research, before summarising the main findings of the thesis and its key contributions to the field.

2. Thinking ‘Practice-ly’ about Economies

Introduction

In chapter one, I provided a brief overview of the thesis, including an introduction to the fieldwork sites and a preliminary framing of the research in current academic literature. In this chapter, I situate the thesis more broadly in existing academic debate on pluralist and ‘practiced’ perspectives on the ‘economy’, drawing principally on economic geography and anthropology. Central to both sub-disciplines has been challenging notions of *homo economicus* bound up in neo-classical economics, which may have been clearly critiqued from a number of disciplinary directions, but whose assumptions are still very much at the heart of theory in much of the discipline of economics (Hann and Hart, 2011). The body of literature in this field across a number of disciplines is clearly too extensive to cover here, so this review has the more modest objective of summarising relevant, key approaches in both sub-disciplines and highlighting areas in which this study can advance current debates. In particular, this thesis has been informed by recent work on the ‘human economy’ (Hart et al. 2010; Hann and Hart, 2011) and diverse economies (Gibson-Graham, 1996 & 2008). As the site for studying the practice of economies, the empirical focus of the thesis is on borders or borderlands but the intention is not to contribute to the extensive literature on borders, borderlands or as Sarah Green (2010) prefers ‘borderness’.

I begin the chapter with discussion of how geographers and anthropologists approach and conceive of economies, their practice and performance. This discussion commences with reflection on the purpose of economies in the light of recent work, which seeks to revive Karl Polanyi’s *Great Transformation* (cf. Dale, 2010). I follow this with consideration and critique of the informal economy, which leads to engagement with Gibson-Graham’s work and the diverse economies research programme in human geography. The review then moves to an overview of pertinent research on these topics in the context of post-socialism, initially

exploring how economic geographers have theorised the ‘multicoloured’ economies of post-socialism (Sik, 1994) and contrasting this with the approach taken by anthropologists. I conclude the chapter with a review of research specifically related to cross-border economies and economic practices of post-socialism.

A. A Human Economy?

‘The object of an economy was always the reproduction of human life and beyond that the preservation of everything that sustains life’ (Hart et al., 2010: 6). In their book on the ‘human economy’, Hart et al. bring together a collection of works with the central tenet that the ‘human economy’ exists but is merely obscured by the economic models and discourses dominant in the media and academia (ibid: 13). One of the aims of their edited work is therefore to rescue economics from economists (ibid: 5). Hart and Hann (2011) reiterate this in their volume on economic anthropology and this also reflects a critique central to economic geography, which has been emerging since the 1960s regarding place, context and spatiality in understanding economics (cf. Gould, 1963 and Wolpert, 1964). Hart et al.’s proposition does not represent a new endeavour, but restates some of the ideas presented by Polanyi (1944), which form the basis of many economic anthropological endeavours. Polanyi argued that the economy had historically always been founded on reciprocity, redistribution and householding and was consequently integrative, rather than individualistic. He saw the spread of the market as a threat to the very foundations of society. Like Hart, he emphasised the need to ‘reclaim’ the real meaning of the economy, the deeper meaning, which he saw as satisfying human need and not individual gain and wealth accumulation.

Economic anthropology has also drawn upon the work of Marcel Mauss, whose contribution, Hann and Hart (2011) argue, cuts to the heart of economic anthropology by

positing that there are universal principles of mutual obligation and social integration in distribution, which contrast with the idea of a 'pure' gift or the selfish contracts of personal interest made by *homo economicus*. In Mauss' understanding, society that forms the context to economic behaviour is, therefore, actively made and remade (Hann and Hart, 2011: 166). It is to these processes that this thesis speaks as it demonstrates the complexity of the social relations and interactions in which economic behaviour is determined and enacted. I draw upon the history of the region and show how influential this has been in shaping the current economic practices of the borderlands.

Hann (2010: 188) argues that Thompson's moral economy shares the holistic approach suggested by Polanyi. Thompson (1991) also challenged the notion of a *homo economicus*, which saw men as making economic decision based on rational choice, devoid of moral values or considerations. His historical research on English workers, demonstrated that their deeds were grounded in agrarian traditions, or a 'moral economy of provision'. However, rather than suggesting it is solely neoclassical economists who are responsible for this current separation of 'morality' and 'economy', he calls on other social scientists to re-engage in the language of 'morality' in discussion of economies. Ethnographers and anthropologists are well placed for the engagement Hart et al. (2010) and Hann (2010) are suggesting through their positioning in the everyday life of communities and their focus on the practices that produce and are produced by notions of humanity and morality. As Jones and Murphy have also reflected upon, the move of economic geographers into research in and of practice(s) has also signalled possibilities for the sub-discipline to move forward existing theory through what they view to be a new epistemological approach (2010: 378). Central to theory-making in economic anthropology and economic geography have been efforts to contextualise and 'rehumanize' approaches to understanding and theorising economic life. It is these approaches that shape, inform and present the context to the ideas presented in this

thesis. The empirical chapters of the thesis contribute in particular to how we theorise distribution and economic life across borders away from formal trade and global financial and economic centres.

B. The Informal Economy

The use of the term the ‘informal economy’ (or economies, sector) arose out of work carried out by Keith Hart in the 1960s amongst the urban poor in Ghana (Hart, 1973 & 1976). Whilst statistical analyses had revealed high levels of urban unemployment, Hart observed that the urban poor were not ‘unemployed’, but were in fact working ‘often for low and erratic returns’ (Hart, 2010: 145). He shifted the focus onto informal income opportunities as potential sites for economic growth, moving away from notions that ‘regulating’ economic activity and consequently ‘formalising’ all aspects of the economy and employment signified economic ‘progress’ (Lewis, 1955). From its beginnings within economic anthropology, Hart’s idea gained momentum with the field of development, but has been further employed in research on industrial nations (Williams and Windebank, 2002 & 2001; Kesteltoot and Meert, 1999; Leonard, 1994 & 1998), Latin America (Fernandez-Kelly and Shefner, 2006; Castells and Portes, 1989) and more recently to the post-socialist and post-Soviet states of Eurasia (Round et al, 2008; Williams et al. 2007). Whilst almost all authors on the informal economy problematise the ‘binary’ relationship, which it suggests (Hart, 2010; Williams et al., 2007), it has continued to be used widely in a myriad of contexts. In this section of the chapter, I explore the concept of the informal economy or sector, looking at its roots in Hart’s ‘Third World cities’ through to its application in post-socialist states.

Samers argues that the popularity of the informal economy within social and economic research is a result of its hidden or mysterious nature (2005: 875). However, I liken my own interest to that of Keith Hart, who notes that he only noticed how the ‘formal’ and

regulated approach had become natural to him through contact with the informality of income in an Accran slum (Hart 2005: 5). Informal suggested the anti-thesis of what he describes as 'state capitalism' that was dominant at the time (Hart, 2001). 'Forms' or rules were invariably created and sustained by the state's attempts to manage money and markets through the creation of a national-level bureaucracy. Prior to the neo-liberal policies that appeared towards the end of the 1970s and have been sustained until the most recent financial crisis, it was not the market, but the state that was seen to be the sole means of regenerating an economy (after Keynes, 1936). In this context, and on the basis of democratic principles, 'the people' expected their government to intercede in economic life for the benefit of all (Hart, 2005: 6).

Such a basis for economic organisation was enabled by the strength of the state its ability to lend protection to certain enterprises through the rule of law. The distinction between these two 'types' of economy was summarised by Geertz in his work in Indonesia, where he theorised two distinct forms of entrepreneurship as 'bazaar-type' and 'firm-type' (1963). Whilst the majority of people were involved in the bazaar-type of entrepreneurship, the state gave legal protection to large, usually Western, firm-type entrepreneurship. Geertz concluded that this protection enabled accumulation of capital, which was not evident in the individualistic and competitive world of the bazaar.

Indeed, outside of Hart's coining of the informal economy, academics have widely researched aspects of the hidden (cf. Henry, 1978), second (particularly in the context of command economies, cf. Sampson, 1987; Verdery, 1991), underground and black economies. What has emerged is a vast body of literature on an equally extensive array of different economic practices and forms of economic activity, which can only very loosely be connected through their 'invisibility' to the 'bureaucratic gaze' (Hart, 2005: 5). Evasion of state rules, it seems, is exceptionally varied. This proliferation of informal economies has

been linked to the neo-liberal, or as Hart (2004) prefers - 'neo-mercantilist', approach associated primarily with Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s. This period saw a move away from 'state capitalism', where the state was the generator of economic growth, to an 'unencumbered' market (Hart, 2010). This shift was accompanied by a decline in the power of nation-states, due in no small part to the rapid integration of people, places and markets in what is generally referred to as globalisation (Robertson, 1992).

Informal economies have been theorised to encompass activities as diverse as off-shore banking, drug-trafficking, undeclared work and self-provisioning. It is the universalisation of the term to everything outside of formal rules and regulations that has attracted much criticism and attempts to nuance and theorise this sphere differently. In addition, as Hart himself states (2005), these informal economies are not static but constantly shifting and changing, as they are made and remade. Williams and Windebank (1998) have suggested the inappropriate nature of a static noun, such as economy or sector, to describe such a diversity of economic practices. Sassen (1998) uses the term 'informalisation', suggesting process, change and plurality. Smith and Stenning (2006) argue that the economic practices encompassed within the 'informal sector' are relational and therefore, need to be understood in relation to one another and the 'formal economy'. This leads to the concept of a 'whole economy' approach (Williams and Windebank, 1998), which encompasses all aspects of a household's economic practices. Williams (2011) concludes on the basis of research in Moscow that highlights the scale of engagement in informal economic practices amongst households, that far from being marginal, research into informal economies and their practice must be brought into the foreground.

I suggest through my research that it is useful to draw on elements of the diverse economies approach to frame studies of informal economies, but also for us to think about the ways in which they are practiced and performed. Although there have been numerous

interesting studies of informal economies that ground them in the social, political and historical context in which they are being practiced, providing insight into the communities and the shaping of the economic practices themselves, what I propose here is the need for a fundamentally different approach, which centres discussion of these economic practices in their sites of performance, e.g. through language, representations of state-citizen relations, in gender relations and in the processes of household formation through marriage. Therefore, in titling this thesis ‘informal economies’, I demonstrate the empirical focus of the research, but the conceptualisation of economic life locates these economies within a much broader set of situated practices.

C. Diverse Economies

The tone of Hart et al.’s (2010) work is intentionally strident as they seek to create a new movement in action and participatory research grounded in an economic approach that reflects the needs of humanity. Their points echo those of emergent research into alterity and more recently the ‘diverse economies’ programme in economic geography. As Lee (2006: 414) claims, the economy is ‘an integral part of everyday life, full of the contradictions, ethical dilemmas and multiple values that inform the quotidian business of making a living. In short, it is ordinary.’ Gibson-Graham’s 1996²⁸ *The end of capitalism (as we knew it): a feminist critique of political economy* was pivotal to the emergent body of literature on diverse economies within the discipline. Gibson-Graham’s intention was to critique post-Fordist Marxism, which envisaged capitalism as all-encompassing, by suggesting that capitalism was better understood as a hegemonic discourse (2006: 148). She²⁹ argued that such a discourse rendered non-capitalist economic practices ‘invisible’, but they existed

²⁸ I reference the second edition from 2006 in this chapter.

²⁹ J.K. Gibson-Graham was the pen name used by two geographers, Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson. In their published works, they used a singular voice, i.e. the first person singular ‘I’, when writing together. Therefore, in responding to and engaging with their ideas, I respect their own choice of the singular by using the third person singular of ‘she’ and not the plural ‘they’.

nonetheless. She suggested a re-reading of Marx, highlighting that although he focused on capitalism, his 'language of class' alluded to non-capitalist class relations that predated, coexisted with and may succeed capitalism (Gibson-Graham, 2000). The main principle of Gibson-Graham's work is that in 'making visible' non-capitalist practices, we can expand the possibilities for social livelihoods beyond capitalocentric norms (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

In addition, Gibson-Graham (2006) argued for the creation of a new language that makes alterity possible. This project of a new economic language is important in countering neoclassical and non-plural theorisations of economic life and in this thesis I contribute to this not merely through the discussion of social context and the practices of everyday life, but also through structuring the thesis not around the practices of trading, labour or migration but through elements of how people live out their everyday lives; how they communicate; how they relate to their own state and others; how they negotiate gender norms; and how they organise and form their households. This is a structure that foregrounds elements of the social life of the borderlands with which economic practices are so intrinsically intertwined. As Gibson-Graham uses the diverse economies programme to challenge the 'discursive violence of capitalism' (2006: xiii), so I use the practices of everyday to challenge the 'discursive violence' of theorisation and debate in the social sciences that extracts discussion of 'the economic' from its social context. As Gibson-Graham (2006: xi) explains:

'This economy is not simply an ideological concept susceptible to intellectual debunking, but a materialization that participates in organizing the practices and processes that surround it, while at the same time being organized and maintained by them.'

Both Hart et al. and Gibson-Graham believe that by opening new avenues of research that foreground economic diversity, the academy can perform a critical role in community economies worldwide. This is supported by Williams' (2011) call for a foregrounding of research into informal economies. As Wright (2010: 297) proposes, such research can

counteract ‘the debilitating mantra of TINA (there is no alternative)’. In fact what much empirically grounded work is now illustrating, is that there are many alternatives; as Hart et al. summarise, people ‘did not sit on their hands: they expressed themselves in domestic life and organized informally in the cracks of the economic system; they made associations for their own protection, betterment and recreation’ (2010: 5).

The post-socialist and post-Soviet states of Central and Eastern Europe have proven to be fertile ground for exploring non-capitalist practices. Pavlovskaya (2004) provided just one example, as she discussed one Moscow resident’s engagement with multiple economic practices. The subject of the research undertook a wide range of activities in order to secure childcare, food, housing and income in the context of institutional economic change. Wright (2010) suggests that such work parallels feminist analysis, which asserts the need to explore informal as well as formal and unpaid as well as paid work. Within these daily routines (or struggles, as Smith, 2000, refers to them) people are active agents that ‘may reinvent, subvert, reflect, or intensify dominant processes’ (Wright, 2010: 300). However, these agents operate within particular contexts that this thesis will seek to illustrate.

Working within the diverse economies framework, research on countries whose formal economic institutions fail has highlighted the importance of diverse economic practices in ensuring survival or social reproduction (cf. North, 2007 on Argentina and Smith et al., 2008 on post-socialist Slovakia and Poland). Smith et al. (2008) highlight the ways in which urban-dwellers negotiate unstable and segmented employment in the ‘formal sector’ through a number of diverse economic practices. They raise questions, which echo those of Keith Hart, in that if so much economic activity appears to be non-capitalist, is it possible to label post-socialist economies as ‘capitalist’. Carnegie (2008) in her study of rural communities in Oelua, Indonesia, catalogues capitalist and non-capitalist economic practices in order to draw attention to non-capitalist practices as a means for regional development.

She sees the potential as being bounded in a dialogue between development actors and local communities. Whilst being centred on Gibson-Graham's work, there are once more clear parallels with the aims of Keith Hart's work in Ghana.

Questions have been raised about diverse economies that need further exploration (cf. Fickey, 2011). There have been calls for further attention to the ways that people's experiences of diverse economies play out differently along axes of gender, class, race, sexuality, and nationality (Lawson 2005; Oberhauser 2005; Smith and Stenning 2006). Kelly (2005), for example, questioned the ways that power relations inform "community" and household-level decision-making processes, while Aguilar (2005) pointed to the dangers of overidealizing peasant relationships that are themselves potentially oppressive and always complex. This research comes as a response to these calls. Lee's (2000) insistence on the variability and continually contested nature of economic relations has been instructive. He pointed out that social struggle underpins and continually transforms economies. In such economies, neither the social relations of value, the ethics that underpin them, nor the accompanying economic practices are predetermined; rather, they are produced through contested and negotiated processes (Smith, 2007). The empirical chapters that follow explore in depth these processes of contestation and negotiation.

D. Practice and 'The Economic'

At the centre of this thesis is a research agenda that seeks to bring together human, informal and diverse conceptualisations of economic life in the study of their practice. Whilst stabilised, routine, everyday practices have long been the focus of economic anthropology, economic geographers have primarily commenced to engage more rigorously in the study of these actions to explain the construction and reproduction of economic space over the last decade or so (Jones and Murphy, 2010). Interest in the everyday has emerged, in part, as a

result of what have been termed the cultural, relational and institutional turns in human geography in the 1990s (Barnes, 2001; Peck, 2005). This development has enabled geographers to develop a greater understanding of the complexity of and context to the production of economic phenomena, as well as offer analytical possibilities lacking in research carried out on different scales, e.g. macro-regional, institutional, firm. Consequently, we have witnessed the proliferation of research into everyday practices that encompasses ‘a wide range of empirical and theoretical interests’ (Jones and Murphy, 2010: 366-367). In short, whilst geographers may have acknowledged for some time the fact that the economic is ‘practiced’, the focus of study on structure rather than on the agency of individual actors to shape those structures, i.e. the study of the practices themselves, has limited theorisation within the sub-discipline.

Nonetheless, the ‘practice turn’ has not been embraced by all within economic geography and critiques have also been developed that express concern about the value such ‘micro-scale’ studies can add to geographical knowledge. In particular, points have been raised about the possibilities for such research to ‘speak’ to and enhance broader theory and generalisation (Sunley, 2008). In addition, Peck (2005) highlights growing concerns about the fracturing of the discipline and its impact on the relevance and coherence of economic geography as an academic endeavour (Peck, 2005). However, I consider a later argument made by Peck (2005) in the same article to support the continued relevance of research into everyday economic practices as relevant to the discipline – this is the contention that economic geography’s scepticism and critical approach can lead to superficial engagements with new sub-fields. By abandoning research into ‘practiced’ economies due to such critiques, we lose the opportunity to explore how we can draw upon everyday empiricism to engage in some of human geography’s key theoretical contributions. In addition,

opportunities for useful inter-disciplinary dialogue amongst sub-disciplines contending with similar issues are lost.

Gibson-Graham also posits that Marx represents capitalism as totality and that in doing so suggests that it can only be replaced by a totality (2006: 99). For her, this ‘economy’ becomes a locus for reason within society, to which all other aspects of life must submit (ibid: 103). Yet, she believes that ‘the “economy” is a plurality of practices scattered over a landscape’ (ibid: 99). Only research that recognises this plurality can begin to challenge the totality of an ‘economy of reason’. She argues for a release from a representation of history as a ladder, which sees society as moving from traditional to advanced, with capitalism is linked to development (ibid:115). Such an argument links clearly to critiques of the ‘transition’ as transformation (Hann and Hart, 2011) in central and eastern Europe, which is discussed further in the following section. Gibson-Graham’s arguments also relate to studies of the informal economy that have challenged its construction as a ‘backward’ aspect of a capitalist economy, which should be eradicated as part of broader development and advancement (Williams et al, 2007). Noncapitalist has equally been discursively practiced as primitive. However, in moving to explore economic life within the household as a site and in the practices of everyday life, we can present a picture of this life not as ‘taking place’ within capitalism but as engaging with in diverse and complex ways (Gibson-Graham, 2006: 256). We show how the ‘formal economy’ not only co-exists with but is interactive in its relations with alternative forms of market and non-market economic practices (ibid: 256).

E. Post-Socialist Economies

The collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union and its satellite states has proven a fertile ground for research into informal and diverse economies and their practice, as many of the states followed advice from leading economists (Jeffrey Sachs, Anders Aslund) to bring

in sweeping reforms and move swiftly towards establishing market democracies. The struggle between capitalism and socialism on an institutional level provided a framework not only for academic thinking but also ‘the political consciousness of much of the world’s population’ (Hann et al., 2002: 1). Socialism as a system was characterised by the Party meeting the needs of the citizens in what Verdery (1999: 25) terms ‘socialist paternalism’. This gave the state a strong ‘moral’ basis, which Hann (2002: 11) believes market and pluralist economies in the region have not been able to replicate. Due to the focus of the system on accumulation of means of production at a central level (Campeanu, 1988: 117-118), the system developed resource constraints that left the state unable to meet the supply demands of the population on a formal level. Therefore, an informal economy developed in most socialist states, which focussed on consumption and gaining access to goods and parasitic on the formal economy, through the theft of resources from it.

Thus, the informal economy, which has become increasingly dominant in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands since 1989/1991, has its roots in the socialist era and will be evidence clearly in the empirical chapters that follow. Involvement in the informal economy in the socialist era was primarily related to consumption, which ‘socialist paternalism’ had essentially politicised (Verdery, 1996: 28). Gaining access to goods not provided by the state became an act of political defiance. However, it is also important that we look at the way in which views of the past are being reinventing through the lens of post-socialism (Pine, 1998: 111). Whilst, as Hann (2002: 11) states, the market and pluralist democracies have not been able to introduce a moral rationale comparable to that of socialism.

The end of state socialism in 1989/1991 gave rise to the question: what comes next? (Verdery, 1996). Fukuyama (1989) posited the collapse of state socialism as a triumph of the Western idea. This victory signified an exhaustion of alternatives to Western liberalism

(ibid). The liberal democracies that had evolved in 'the West' came to be seen as the key goals for post-socialist societies (Hann, 1998). Economists played a key role in determining the 'route' that these societies would take from centrally-planned economies and one-party polity to a liberal-capitalist system based on democracy and market economies (Sokol, 2001). This approach became known as 'transition orthodoxy', which saw the transition as a form of 'shock therapy' and advocated swift institutional change (Sachs, 1990; Aslund, 1992).

However, by the mid-1990s, this approach had already been thoroughly critiqued due to widespread economic decline, rising unemployment, inflation and increasing regional inequalities, in addition to political, social, ethnic and religious fragmentation, political and institutional instability and increasing crime and corruption (Sokol, 2001; Gowan, 1995; Pickles and Smith, 1998; Rainnie et al., 2002). Burawoy (1998: 302 cited in Round et al, 2008: 150) states, 'Although the markets can be created overnight, their character and consequences cannot be controlled' and it is argued that rather than a fully functioning market system many post-socialist states have seen systems of 'economic involution' (Burawoy et al., 2000), 'chaotic capitalism' (Lane, 2000) or 'virtual economies' (Gaddy and Ickes, 1998) emerge. The literature arrives at a consensus that research into the 'transition' presents a plethora of opportunities for developing theorisation of capitalism and neo-liberalism in particular (Stenning et al, 2010).

Critiques of the so-called transition gave way in the 2000s to a growing interest within economic geography in the 'proliferative' economy (Leyshon and Lee, 2003). Drawing on research by colleagues into diverse economies, geographers studying post-socialist states began to seek to apply this literature to empirical work on the region (cf. Smith and Stenning, 2006). In doing so, they also entered into an area of research already prominent amongst anthropologists and ethnographers in exploring and theorising the 'everyday' economies of post-socialism (Burawoy et al., 2000; Humphrey, 2002; Bridger and Pine, 1998;

Pavlovskaya, 2004, Caldwell, 2004; Hann, 2002). This research has been central to Hann and Hart's (2011) suggestion that there is a place for a reinvigoration of economic anthropology. These accounts of 'surviving post-socialism', primarily sited in the household, were able to evidence with ethnographic depth everyday experiences of the contested transition. As Hann (2002: 10) noted, anthropologists are well-positioned to show how the dominant terminology, such as 'market economy' connect to 'social realities' for the citizens of post-socialist states. As Bridger and Pine (1998: 1) highlighted in relation to their research in Poland and Moscow, there were clearly overlapping themes in the experiences of the communities they studied. From the chapters to come, it is clear that these striking similarities remain in post-socialist states. However, these studies also point to an important lacuna in terms of exploring questions about the long-term embedding of practices initially considered to be focused on 'survival'. Everyday life becomes a site for the study of the meanings given to these repeated actions.

F. Cross-Border Economies of Post-Socialism

Nestled within the work on the 'multicoloured' economies of post-socialism (cf. Sik, 1994), is research into cross-border economies. Economic activity at borders is the result of the arbitrage opportunities created by the border itself (Altvater, 1998). Profiting from these opportunities can be observed across the world, as businesses and individuals import and export goods. Such transactions are inevitably legislated, requiring the procurement of licences and permits, as well as the payment of relevant duties and taxes. However, alongside formal import/export transactions, borders are also sites of informal trade, whose profits are grounded in avoidance of formal payments for permits, licences, taxes and duties. These formal payments are replaced by the much lower costs of informal bribes to customs and border officials, which make small-scale trading profitable. This informal trade contributes to

not only the local economy, but to the national and international trade through circulating commodities and monies back into the formal enterprises.³⁰ As such, cross-border economies are ‘relational’ to both formal and informal economic practices (Smith and Stenning, 2006). They have come to be viewed as not solely a ‘survival strategy’ for households but an ‘enduring alternative site of economic activity’ (Williams and Balaz, 2002: 324).

In the context of the post-socialist states, the numerous economic practices arising as a result of arbitrage opportunities have been studied. Contained within this research are references to open-air markets, cross-border consumption and cross-border small trading (CBST) (Czako and Sik, 1999; Iglicka, 1999; Sik and Wallace, 1999; Sword, 1999). Many of these studies emphasise the variability of these practices over time; seeing them as fluid and embedded in state socialism (Williams and Balaz, 2002). Whilst CBST was already observed to be in decline by the late 1990s (Sword, 1999: 151), the trade has proven to be more resilient on the borders of the former Soviet Union, due to weak global economic integration (Williams and Balaz, 2002).

In their research on Transcarpathia, Williams and Balaz (2002) emphasise the role of ‘gatekeepers’ in CBST and their ability to accumulate capital through the use of power. They suggest that such accumulation is denied to all but a few traders, due to the disparity in power relations. They also explore the socio-economic backgrounds of traders to illustrate that they are a poor indicator of involvement and success in CBST (ibid: 338). In focussing on the roots of trading in state socialism, the article fails to cast a critical eye on other factors affecting CBST. The authors’ use of ‘gatekeepers’ creates a binary approach, which divides traders and border officials, viewing them as involved in a negotiation in which one holds more power than the other. In doing so, they fail to identify differences between traders and also key elements of the setting in which border and customs officials are carrying out their

³⁰ This includes directly into the businesses from which the goods are purchased but profits from CBST are also used to purchase goods, pay for education and home improvements, as well as to establish businesses locally.

duties, particularly the relevance of local social values and understanding that are central to the production of this particular milieu. Therefore, if socio-economic background is a poor indicator of success in trading, as Williams and Balaz suggest, it is important that we ask what other factors may be impacting on experiences of CBST, including for example gender, which is so central to organising labour and work in many post-socialist societies.

Consideration of cross-border economies has focused on trading at the borders and the structures and power relations (Williams & Balaz, 2002), in addition to the role of the trade in the 'transition' (Konstantinov, 1996) and to illustrate the weakness of post-Soviet states (Polese, 2006). However, whilst understanding the 'informal' spaces of the border and particularly 'border-crossing', is vital to contextualising cross-border economies, discourses at the border are often curtailed due to the official environment of customs and immigration control. In their own communities, those involved in these cross-border economies are able to reflect upon and discuss more openly not only their own experiences of the border, but also 'perform' aspects of these economic practices to their friends and neighbours. I argue that observing these interactions is vital to understanding the impact of cross-border economies, but also through exploring their practice and performance, we gain insight into the meaning attached to them and the processes through which this is constructed, contested and negotiated in the context of existing social norms. In a sense, much of the research disconnects these economic practices from their broader social contexts. This thesis will aim to 're-situate' cross-border economic practices within the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands.

G. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have explored literature from geography and anthropology, which informs this study of informal economic practices. In doing so, I draw together the disciplines and focus on synergies between them both empirical and theoretical. I suggest that the

‘human’ economy approach has a common basis with Gibson-Graham’s work and the diverse economies programme. In exploring the issue of the informal economy, it is clear that there is a need for plurality in the way we conceive of informality, as the practices it encompasses are vastly different. I therefore propose framing the research here with theory drawn from the diverse economies. After Smith and Stenning (2006), I view migration as a market practice and cross-border economies as alternative market practices. We have seen a revival of Polanyi’s work on societies as being traditionally shaped by non-market practices and the market posing a threat to them (Hage, 2010). However, I also suggest that engagement with the practice of economies should be posited around aspects of everyday life, rather than within the economic practices themselves. I show through the structure of the thesis that we can use language and how people communicate with one another as a basis for exploring new connections between the communities studied and the rest of the world. I use grounded material relating to citizenship to show economic practices as sites for elucidating power relations in the context of the nation-state and ‘EU’rope. Within the borderlands, I show how differentiated gender relations form a site for exploring inequalities within informal economic practices and finally, I conclude the thesis with a focus on the households of the region, which are not only the key sites methodologically of this research but also conceptually as the locus for decision-making in relation to economic practices.

3. Methodology and Ethics

Introduction

Geertz (1973: 5) describes the analysis of culture as an interpretative science, ‘in search of meaning’. As an ethnographic endeavour, this thesis comprises such a search, reflecting the traditional principle of ethnography to elucidate the ‘native’s point of view’ (Malinowski, 1922 in Schwartzman, 1993). This approach to research is often defined as being holistic and inductive (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999: 9); as an attempt to give context to a study and allow the data to generate theories and guide the focus of the research. It is generally included in the social sciences within qualitative research methods, which are employed by those researchers whose aim is ‘understanding, description, discovery, hypothesis-generation’ (Grix, 2004: 122).

The main objective of this study was to understand experiences of post-socialism in rural communities in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands. As with traditional ethnographies, the primary strategy for data collection was participant observation. The practice of participant observation enables the researcher to become an ‘inside-outsider’ (Agar, 1999); subjectively participating in the life of the community, whilst also making observations, noting and analysing them. The participant observer is in a position of comparing what people say with what they actually do (cf. Bourdieu, 1977). In the context of this study, I also examine the relationship between what people say about what they do in the context of diverse economies, i.e. how they construct an understanding of these economies through discourses around them.

In this chapter I give an overview of the fieldwork carried within a methodological and ethical framework. I discuss the possibilities and limitations associated with an ethnographic study of diverse economies in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands. This assessment differs quite substantially from a typical methodological overview, as it maps the

development of the focus of the research through the prism of ethnographic fieldwork. As Blommaert and Jie (2010: 1) summarise, 'Fieldwork is the moment when the researcher climbs down to everyday reality and finds out that the rules of academia are not necessarily the same as those of everyday life'.

Participant observation enables the study of behaviour in what Hammersley in 1998 described as everyday and not artificial conditions (cited in Brewer, 2000: 18). As with many qualitative methods, the aim is to let theory be generated by the data itself. Fieldwork notes play a central role in describing not only daily observations, but also present an opportunity to reflect on thoughts, ideas and initial theories. The notes should therefore document the analytical process, in addition to providing much of the data to be analysed. This is important for any study attempting to gain an insight into local perceptions and understandings, as a researcher will have their own thoughts and values prior to the work and these may change and evolve as a result of their fieldwork.

Another advantage of ethnographic work is that it in fact incorporates a number of methods. Diana Blank's 2004 study of a Ukrainian border town employs several ethnographic methods. She, like other ethnographers, is able to carry out interviews in an unstructured, informal and conversational form. This is particularly important in the context of this research, as it is analysis of the portrayal of diverse economies in the context of everyday interactions, which is central to the thesis. As Okely (1994: 24) also points out, this type of interaction can help to break down barriers, as some groups can be resistant to formal questioning by outsiders. In such a situation, a researcher can actually minimise their own input, allowing the language of the subject to shape the interview. This resistance was evident amongst a number of groups in both fieldwork sites, particularly in relation to discussion of cross-border small trading (CBST). As Blommaert and Jie suggest (2010:3), 'Asking is indeed very often the worst possible way of trying to find out'.

Formal interviews in an artificial space would not be suitable for the purposes as although it would lead to an articulation by the subject, the researcher would only gain responses to questions based on his or her existing opinions, informed by dominant thought and narrative in that area. This approach was highlighted by Judith Okely, who referred to the way in which researchers are often steeped in knowledge gained from writing in a dominant paradigm by a dominant group (in Bryman and Burgess, 1994: 26). This is therefore of particular importance when examining a minority group, but also when looking at cultures which differ from that of the researcher. This difference does not need to be great, in fact subtle differences and inferences are often more difficult to detect.

I have organised this chapter into four sections: firstly, I give an overview of my fieldwork, highlighting the various strategies used whilst ‘in the field’; secondly, I provide context to the research by exploring the distinctiveness of a dual/multi-sited ethnographic approach; thirdly, I reflect on particular aspects of my fieldwork sites that impacted on participant observation, which noticeably resonate with many of the key themes that emerge in the rest of the thesis; finally, I consider the particular ethical considerations for anyone researching diverse economies and borderlands ethnographically.

A. Fieldwork Overview

At the outset of the fieldwork, I aimed to explore regional identity in a particular section of the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands. My study was to focus on the way that people living in the region related to the spaces of the border more than sixty years after the division of the territory. I first came into contact with the region where I carried out my research in the summer of 2000, when following a research trip to Cluj-Napoca, I set off on holiday for a couple of weeks in Romania to visit some famous local tourist sites. Whilst visiting the Romanian part of the region, I stayed with a family in a local village, who

introduced me to a number of their friends and neighbours. Their talk of the locality, the border and the 'lost' territory to the north led me to conclude that it was central to local life and I resolved to return and research this in more depth. A few years later, I gained the opportunity through funding for a PhD and began my background reading. In preparing for fieldwork in the region, I visited the Ukrainian side of the border for the first time in the summer of 2006.

Central to my research was a focus on understanding the borderlands from both sides and I deliberately wanted to be comparative and non-national. Given the time and budgetary restraints of my research, I was unable to spend a year on both sides of the border. I decided to choose two communities in close proximity to the border, in which I would spend a minimum of six months. Due to the time taken to make contacts and find fieldwork sites and accommodation, in addition to the six months in each village, I also spent more than three months in the region's two major urban centres. Underlying this decision was an assumption of some form of 'shared culture' between the sites, which at the beginning of my research was seen to be a historically locational relationship, based upon the unity of the region prior to the border being established during the Second World War. However, it was also supported by a concept common to the literature on post-socialism, which whilst recognising the different experiences of both socialism and the 'transition', also follows Humphrey (in Hann et al., 2002) and Stenning (2005), who surmise greater linkages between these societies than those found in 'the West'.

What I was to uncover on fieldwork was the difference between visiting the region as a tourist for a few days and living there for more than a year. Whilst the villagers' talk of their region had struck me on my first visit it was entirely absent in my main period of fieldwork from September 2007 to January 2009.³¹ In addition, in the intervening period, the

³¹ I also returned to the region on several occasions during 2010 and 2011 for periods of a few weeks.

region had undergone profound changes, including the impacts of Romanian accession to the EU and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. By the end of my fieldwork, the conversations I had as a tourist in the summer of 2000 had been all but forgotten. This observation is noted by Foster et al. (1979: 328), who highlight the need for those involved in ‘long-term’ fieldwork to continue to study national and economic policy changes that may affect the communities being researched. Whilst my 15 months of research do not constitute Foster et al.’s notion of long-term, the gap between my first visit to the region in 2000 and my later returns in 2006 and 2007, did mark a period of significant change in the political and economic climates in both countries.

However, an initial period of two months spent in Chernivtsi in autumn 2007 appeared to confirm the chosen topic, through contacts with the academic community and unstructured interviews with various historians, sociologists, political scientists and other interested parties. Driven by my desire to look at non-academic understandings of the space³² and being an inductive research process, there was a need for a grounded approach and focus for the study. Therefore, the two distinct periods of six months spent in two villages on either side of the border, in addition to a number of months spent in local urban settlements, led to the discovery of a new subject.

The focus on informal economic practices and their role in the everyday life of these communities soon emerged as a more pressing concern for the two communities. The reach of the proliferation of economic activity at the nearby border into the villages suggested a view that I had not considered. However, the change in focus did not affect the methodological approach; as it became clear that the use of ethnographic methods had been the most appropriate to elucidate new perspectives on the informal economies of post-socialism. In fact, the very nature of the methodological approach taken has been central to

³² I reflect more on this desire in the third section below, which explores my positioning in the field.

the production of a thesis that does not merely sustain existing academic interest in and discourses on this region.

My approach to fieldwork was based on key ideas, one of which involved contact with the field several years prior to commencing this research. In shifting the initial focus of the study through the process of participant observation, I was able to employ one of the crucial principles of ethnography, by allowing my research and data collection to drive the theoretical framework of the resultant thesis. With regards to the decision to study the borderlands as a 'whole', as one 'site', through participant observation in two communities, I drew on a vision of commonalities or 'sub-cultural groups' based in shared history and experiences of socialism and post-socialism. This aspect of fieldwork proved particularly productive, but was not without challenges and is discussed in more detail in the following section.

The period of ethnographic research involved the use of a number of different methods, which I feel it is important I summarise here before going on to reflect on them in more detail in the rest of this chapter and then to clarify in section D. This description provides a brief overview of the methods used, but as there were numerous issues arising from the research, in the following sections, I discuss critically and in some detail the factors shaping the research in the field.

- 1) *Participant observation* - The vast majority of data was collected through participant observation and recorded in a fieldwork diary, which was kept from when I arrived in the region in September 2007 until January 2009 and then also during subsequent trips to the region. I attended key events and visited important local sites, such as school plays and the village cemeteries. This enabled me to develop kinship networks and to probe further relationships between various members of the communities.

Visits to the local cemetery with key informants enabled observation and discussion of key families in the villages.

- 2) *Semi-structured interviews with local academics, politicians and civil servants* - I carried out eight semi-structured interviews with key academics and members of the regional administration in Chernivtsi and also with academics in Suceava. These interviews were largely focussed around the topic of my original research, i.e regional identity in Bukovyna and I was interested in exploring how each of the interviewees responded to the topic. Interviewees were primarily found through the universities in both sites and were selected based on their research and professional roles. They included one ethnographer (Chernivtsi), three historians (two in Chernivtsi, one in Suceava), one geographer (Suceava), one civil servant/lecturer in international relations (Chernivtsi), a senior member of the Chernivtsi regional administration and a political scientist (Chernivtsi). Through the interviews, I also permitted the respondents to reflect on their personal experiences and thoughts as residents of the region; this was particularly interesting in gaining a wide range of perspectives on cross-border small trade and migration from the region. These interviews were then followed by further informal follow-up discussions during the period of fieldwork, as my understanding of informal economic practices and the focus of the research emerged. This was facilitated by an affiliation I developed with both universities, which led to me giving a number of lectures in Chernivtsi and gave me sustained access to academics in order to discuss some of the themes and ideas emerging from participant observation. The change of topic meant that some of the structured content of the earlier interviews did not provide useful material for analysis; whilst all interviews were recorded, only those with relevant material were subsequently

transcribed, coded and analysed. In addition, this was also the reason for less interviews being carried out in Suceava.

- 3) *Unstructured interviews with key participants* - Within the fieldwork sites and in cross-border small trading, in addition to participant observation, I also worked with a number of key participants, with whom I carried out in-depth unstructured interviews to clarify my understanding of particular issues. Many of the key participants feature strongly in the ethnography presented, but as a rule, due to the sensitive nature of the topic and resistance to formal questioning (particularly amongst cross-border small traders), I rarely recorded these interviews and the comments I ascribe to them were later entered in my fieldwork notes from memory.
- 4) *Secondary statistical data* - I also sought to develop a broader overview of the economic situation in both sites through the collection of statistics from the local village councils and also the national statistics offices. This proved easier in Diyalivtsi, where I had developed a relationship with the local mayor on my first visit to the commune in 2006. Consequently, when I approached the local administrator, she copied the most detailed statistical information that had been gathered for the village and submitted to the regional administration. In Gorbanita, my attempts to gain access to similar information for the village were rebuffed early on in my fieldwork in the village by the secretary to the local mayor. I made several further attempts but was always directed to the local branch of the national statistics office in Suceava, which supplied much less detailed census information. Nonetheless, the visit to the mayor's secretary did furnish me with a complete understanding of the modern history of the administration of the village, as she detailed the administrative history of Gorbanita from the 1950s onwards.

- 5) *Survey and mapping of both villages* - To supplement the information gained from the village council in Diyalivtsi and the local statistics office in Suceava, I also carried out a more systematic observation of housing and households in the villages. This I did through walks in both villages, during which I mapped, noted and made observations about households. I generally carried out these walks with a member of the local community and was able to ask questions about who lived in each household and, in particular, to record absences from the household through migration. I was then able to follow up with questions to key participants about specific households and their members, including developing a detailed overview of kinship relations within the villages and how/if these extended across the border and to other countries.
- 6) *Collection of oral life histories* - Finally, I also collected a number of oral histories, which I recorded whilst in Diyalivtsi. These were carried out with five older members of the village community, with whom I had interacted during fieldwork but with whom I had not been able to have more in-depth conversations.³³

B. Experiences of Dual-Sited Ethnographic Research

As Hage (2005) reasons in his own transnational study of migration, this ‘multi-sited’ approach does not reflect the classic anthropological notion of a site, which was viewed as bounded and studied in-depth, as a whole. As an ethnographer cannot reach the same depth within multiple sites, what is done instead is ethnography of sub-cultural groups common to each site. This is crucial to understanding the approach taken in this research, whereby the key themes emerging from research in Diyalivtsi also became the focus of later research in Gorbanita. The process is mirrored to some extent by the development of areas of specialism

³³ The reasons for this were varied, often they were due to gender – some of the oral histories I collected were from men, with whom my interactions were restricted by dominant social norms. However, some were simply due to the fact that I had not developed a relationship that had led to an invitation into their home.

in academic life. In reality, few ethnographic studies capture all aspects of social relations in their chosen site (ibid). Whilst researchers will attempt to continue to produce notes based on all their observations, as key themes emerge, these will invariably become central to each day's commentary.

Using dual-sited participant observation presented a plethora of opportunities in fieldwork; however, it is important to reflect on some of the limitations arising from moving fieldwork site part-way through a research project. Unlike projects which involve the study of a particular group, but in different sites (cf. Hannerz 2003), this project intended to study two separate communities in a border region. It has been acknowledged since the 1970s, that the classic mode of studying communities in situ for anthropologists has changed through the nature of the changing world we study, as well as the expansion of topics covered by the discipline (Hannerz, 2003: 202). However, such research follows the natural flows of people and does not involve a deliberate shift of location in the midst of fieldwork.

Leaving Ukraine and Romania after less than one year meant that all the seasons, which dominate rural life, had not been observed in both fieldwork sites. I therefore had to rely upon asking questions and information, rather than observation of these periods. This proved much easier in Romania than Ukraine. As I had a point of reference, I often discussed with people the way they approached their agriculture based on what I had learned in my time in Ukraine. There was a need to return to Diyalivtsi from Romania to ask all those questions that arose during my time in Gorbanita and with the experience of the other seasons. This is to a certain extent experienced by many ethnographers, who continue to maintain contact with the fieldwork site (Adler and Alder, 1997). Dual-sited ethnography presented the opportunity of a physical distance from Diyalivtsi that promoted reflection, whilst still in the field (cf. Agar, 1996).

In addition to not spending a whole year in one community, moving fieldwork sites proved more challenging than I had expected. I had grown protective of the community of Diyalivtsi and found myself very sensitive to criticism levelled at Ukraine and Ukrainians whilst I was in Romania. Bourdieu (1993) would consider this the gravitational force that pulls us into the social field. Emerson and Pollner describe the attractions of membership as ‘seductive’ to the ethnographer (2003: 33) My experience in Diyalivtsi became a natural reference point for me and the main shop owner in Romania would refer to me as ‘rusoica’ or ‘Russian’ because of my spoken Ukrainian and the fact that I had recently moved from there. I found myself resistant to having to move and this led me to be rather negative towards what I saw in Romania initially. The urge to constantly go back to Ukraine, where I had become comfortable, was very strong in the time I spent in the nearest Romanian city before moving to Gorbanita. I also found that in Gorbanita, I took a more politically motivated stance, which reflected Gupta and Ferguson’s vision of a research area as being a ‘site for strategic intervention’ rather than simply data collection (1997: 39). This intervention took the form of attempting to change negative perceptions of Ukrainians.

This issue of one area becoming a ‘reference’ is not uncommon in ethnographic fieldwork, as many ethnographers enter a number of ‘fields’ during their careers, which construct their subjectivities. However, in the context of dual-sited ethnography, this comparative element is more explicit and it recurs throughout this thesis. The choice to locate firstly in Ukraine created a narrative, which ultimately places Ukraine at its heart and then reflects on Romania as almost an afterthought. I decided to start my research in Ukraine for very practical reasons, as my command of Ukrainian was weaker and I was to spend three months learning Ukrainian in L’viv. It would have been inefficient in terms of language acquisition to follow this stay with six months living in Gorbanita and would have created a three-month ‘hiatus’ from the field if I were to have moved to Ukraine after research in

Gorbanita. This decision undoubtedly had a profound impact on all aspects of the research and can be seen to unfold throughout the following pages.

As a researcher, Ukraine simply felt further from my own culture and thus ‘more exotic’. Part of my involvement in researching this part of the world is ultimately driven by a view of socialist (and later post-socialist) Europe as an ‘exotic other’, by which I was greatly influenced earlier on in my life. It seemed to me, Romania was simply not exotic enough to attract my attention in the same way. I found that this was also apparent in the way in which I was keen to be mistaken for Ukrainian. In actual fact, this was made almost impossible by the behaviour of people in Diyalivtsi, but it did not prevent me from desiring it overall. This is also related to the issue of fatigue, which many researchers face on long periods of fieldwork. With my time in Ukraine being at the beginning of the research, I did display a greater zeal for observation whilst there than I seemed to be able to muster later in Gorbanita. Hage (2005:466) in discussion of using multi-sited ethnography to research migration concludes that to study one site is ‘an exhausting enterprise’, due to the level of engagement required by the ethnographic process. Issues of the impact on ethnographic fieldwork of the personal subjectivities of the researcher were raised by Clifford (1988: 21-54). He describes the predicament of being from one culture and observing another, which becomes further enhanced when moving from one ‘culture’ to another whilst in the field.

The final area that needs to be acknowledged is the impact that continued contact with Romania and extended contact with Romanian migrant workers has had upon my research since returning from the field. In a sense, I have continued to be immersed in Romanian culture since my return. Through contacts in Gorbanita, I have been able to meet with migrant workers in London on a regular basis from the area in which I lived in Romania. In some senses, this has proved useful, when I have been clarifying questions relating to my fieldwork. In addition, I also regularly speak to friends in Gorbanita via the internet. This has

served to give me a sense of continuing to be part of the community, even in my absence.³⁴ In contrast, due to a shortage of access to technology in Diyalivtsi and also the lack of connections between the village and Chernivtsi, for example, I have not maintained the same level of contact. This feels in a sense as though since returning from fieldwork I have been able to get a much greater perspective on the material gathered in Ukraine than Romania. Whilst the time in Romania essentially meant I was able to do a lot of analysis relating to the Ukrainian element of the fieldwork during my time in the field, the same has not been true of the Romanian element.

C. Researching the Ukrainian-Romanian Borderlands

i. A Multi-Lingual Fieldwork Site

I identified language acquisition as a critical feature of my research from the beginning. Ethnographers are able to carry out analysis of local understanding through speech and conversation. Brewer (2000: 74) gives three reasons for assessing the use of natural language; it is a form of social interaction, it presupposes shared knowledge and is inseparable from its social setting. When planning my fieldwork, I was often advised to simply learn Russian to carry out fieldwork in Ukraine; advice which was proffered by colleagues who had spent time in some of Ukraine's major cities. However, my initial visit in 2006 made it clear that although I would be able to engage in conversation and people would switch to Russian to speak to me, I would not be able to follow and understand the conversations going on around me, which were predominantly in Ukrainian or Romanian.³⁵

The acquisition of language for the purposes of ethnographic fieldwork has been described by Clifford (1983:119) as arduous. However, he does concede that ethnography

³⁴ This has been further extended by a visit to Romania as part of the Marie Curie SocAnth programme from January to June 2010, during which I spent 10 weeks in another Ukrainian-speaking community on the Romanian side of the Ukrainian-Romanian border.

³⁵ For more details on the complexities of language usage in the region, see Chapter 4.

and participant observation are consequently ‘unusually sensitive’ in researching a different culture (ibid). As part of my studies of the Ukrainian language, I spent three months in the city of L’viv prior to the period of fieldwork and this linguistic prelude to my fieldwork had a much greater impact upon my research than I had initially anticipated. I chose to learn literary Ukrainian and during this period of study, I began to develop an idea of Ukraine, which caused some difficulties and proved contrary to local understanding in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands.

Learning literary Ukrainian proved something of a barrier to integration into the village, due to the political sensitivity of language within the country as a whole (cf. Bilaniuk, 2005). The reaction to my Ukrainian-speaking led to an insight into a form of direct resistance on the part of the villagers to what they believed this language symbolised, i.e. the Ukrainian political elite. I analyse this relationship further in chapters five and six. In Romania, being able to speak Ukrainian proved to be an advantage, as I was able to speak with the older people in the village and understand them when they spoke in their Ukrainian dialect amongst themselves. Although I spoke more in Ukrainian in the beginning, Romanian increasingly became my main language of communication in Gorbanita and I rarely spoke Ukrainian towards the end of my time there.

I had anticipated that research in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands would prove a linguistic challenge. However, unexpectedly it was not gaining an active knowledge of two other languages (Ukrainian, Romanian) and a passive knowledge of another (Russian), which was to prove the most challenging element, but my reception as a foreigner speaking these languages. For the most part, many Ukrainians still expect foreigners to learn Russian first and foremost. This helps to support the idea amongst many in Ukraine, that the Ukrainian language has a lower status and is less valuable. In a region where all three languages are often mixed with one another, as well as with words from German, I always expected

difficulties in understanding the local dialect. However, I did not anticipate the strong resentment towards L'viv, Halychyna and the Ukrainian political elite that my speaking of literary Ukrainian would invoke and this undoubtedly affected the way that I was perceived and treated in Diyalivtsi.

ii. *Integrating into Village Life: The Role of the Host Family*

The role of the host family and household within which an ethnographer lives has long been acknowledged as central in framing the focus of research (cf. Marcus, 1979: 140). I had very different experiences in Ukraine and Romania in part due to the households in which I chose to live. The family with whom I lived in Diyalivtsi had one of the lowest incomes in the village. My initial attempts to find a host in the village had centred on a contact, who was a professor at the university in the nearest city. Through him I approached one of the village's wealthier families, who had spent time as migrant workers in the UK. This family, however, were busy and reluctant to help as they felt that my presence in their household would place too much pressure on them. Having spent time in the village, I was keen that it be the site of my Ukrainian fieldwork and sought another family to live with. The family to whom I was directed was that of a single woman and her daughter, who occupied a home in the centre of the village, close to the shops and amenities. The woman, Rodika, was not employed and was therefore in a position to spend more time with me, whilst I felt that I could assist within the household, as well as making a financial contribution through the payment of rent.

However, both I and Rodika encountered a number of difficulties during the period of fieldwork, which again reflect themes I analyse further in chapters six and seven. The household was one of the poorest in the village. As a single, divorced mother Rodika wanted to be seen as self-sufficient and not reliant upon outside help. She was particularly opposed to

accepting any help from men and was not keen for me to become involved in her household, over which she had become protective. At the same time, she was unprepared for the spotlight, which my presence would throw upon her and her daughter and became rather resentful of the constant questioning of neighbours and friends regarding my presence. Whilst relieving some of the immediate economic pressure on the household, my presence brought with it new anxieties. Other members of the village community often attempted to solicit criticism from me about conditions in the household. At the same time, Rodika also came under pressure to engage in public criticism of me as unable to perform basic domestic chores. Gendered roles were central to local society and the inability of a female to engage in domestic work would have been an insult and a means to discredit me, a process which my unmarried status also made me vulnerable to. Gender has been noted for its influence in many social research projects (cf. Arendell, 1997; Gurney, 1985; Sampson and Thomas, 2003; Warren, 1988) and I discuss the gendered nature of my fieldwork in more detail in the following section.

In moving to Gorbanita, I attempted to address some of the issues that had arisen in Diyalivtsi. I lived in a separate dwelling in Romania, belonging to a family from Suceava. The house's recent occupant, a man in his eighties had recently passed away and his household was an extension of his neighbour's. This woman was his niece and had spent many of her formative years growing up in his household, as well as nursing him in the final years of his life. As the occupant of the house, Pamela accepted me as a member of her family and I was thus able to live more independently than I had in Ukraine, whilst remaining connected to a village household to enable me to become involved in village life. Having the opportunity to move during fieldwork led me to try to address some of the problems I had encountered in Ukraine. Inevitably, however, this also had an impact on my experience of and interactions with the communities.

iii. The Influence of Gender and Marital Status

The gendered nature of not only field research, but also knowledge has been widely acknowledged (cf. Warren and Hackney, 1990). My status as an unmarried woman of 30 entailed limitations for integrating into life in Diyalivtsi. As I was not performing the role expected of a woman of my age in local society, it became difficult for local people to accept me. However, it was not so much my unmarried status, but my lack of concern for it, which engendered much incomprehension. Villagers in Diyalivtsi often attempted to persuade me to adopt a perspective on marriage that was closer to their own, primarily through criticism intended to induce fear. The lack of status associated with being an unmarried woman at my age became apparent one day when a bachelor in his late forties proposed to me. When I refused his proposal, a friend of his sneered and said, “what choice do you have at your age?”. The perception of me as having lower status as a female due to the absence of a husband persisted during my fieldwork in Diyalivtsi and also to a lesser extent in Gorbanita. A 21-year old neighbour in Romania, who was married with a child, addressed me as ‘child’, showing that my lack of husband and family signalled a lack of adulthood and maturity.

I was also limited in the interaction that I was able to have with men in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita. Village life was highly gendered, with little interaction taking place between the sexes, other than married couples and family. In the spring of 2008, I began working voluntarily in the village restaurant in Diyalivtsi, having developed a good relationship with the owners. This did enable some contact and interaction with men, which was less mediated by restrictive gendered norms. During my fieldwork in Gorbanita, I was greatly assisted through integration into a mixed-sex household; I was able to spend more time with men on the household level. In entering the field, I had expected to somehow be seen differently from women within the communities I was researching and had not anticipated the pressures I

experienced to conform to local gendered understanding. In fact, I found that my gender and marital status affected by positioning within the local community much more than my citizenship.

iv. *Perceptions of 'Westerners'*

In addition to the influence of gender on the research, there were some perceptions of 'Westerners' in both fieldwork sites derived primarily through migrant labour, which impacted my time in the field. Although the majority of migration had not been to the UK, there was a general assumption that where I lived must be the same as Italy or Spain. Significant scholarship in the field of ethnography in the context of globalization has emerged over the last two decades including critiques of the 'field' as bounded (Fardon, 1995; Miller, 1995; Moore, 1996; Long, 1996). Appadurai (1995: 205) questioned whether anthropology's link to locality (the central imperative of fieldwork) could be expected to survive in a 'delocalized world'.

My decision to live in the village and also my visible lack of lavish lifestyle appeared to immediately separate me from these perceptions. This was explained to me one day by a neighbour in Diyalivtsi, when she relayed the story of a local woman who had brought her Italian husband to the village, a man named Enzo. Apparently, whilst his wife had stayed in her parents' home in the village, he had opted to pay to stay in a hotel in the nearest city, shunning conditions in the village as too primitive for him. In staying in the village and accepting these conditions, it seemed that I had not met local expectations of foreigners' behaviour and this was confirmed by friends and colleagues in the region, who seemed both despairing and amused by my fieldwork location. In local understanding, having economic capital should enable me to refrain from living in the rural communities. Many felt that I should be researching life from the comfort of a hotel room in the nearest city and this was

even suggested by a colleague from the local university, who was from Diyalivtsi. He explained to me that there were several buses a day to the village and that I could stay in the city and simply travel to Diyalivtsi on a daily basis.

In one further respect, I was also viewed through the prism of migration, which manifested itself in a belief that I would not be able to perform basic household tasks. This opinion had been informed by the large number of female migrant workers employed as domestics in Southern Europe (see chapter six for further discussion). There was a clear assumption by many people that having domestic help is something of a norm for people living in Western Europe. Any domestic work I performed drew surprised comments even after some time in the village. Whilst I demonstrated non-Westerner traits by living in the village and denying the presence of domestic help in my home, I came to be perceived as an anomaly rather than changing perceptions of ‘Westerners’ as a whole.

By reflecting on participant observation in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands, I have highlighted how my own position in the field has contributed to the themes emerging in the rest of the thesis. In doing so, I have followed Horowitz’s contention that important insights can be gained by exploring the identities ascribed to me by the members of the communities I researched (1986: 411). My responses to many of these interactions highlighted my own subjectivities, which had informed my expectations of fieldwork. I had assumed that Ukrainian language acquisition was central to participant observation, but had not considered the impact that this may have in the sensitive climate of language politics in Ukraine. I was consistently challenged by the ferocity of disapproval towards my failure to conform to gendered norms. My experience reflects Geertz’s observation that I was seen as a representative of particular categorisations (1973: 373). These categories were culturally embedded in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita (Katz, 1983). However, I did become an ‘inside-outsider’ or as one of my neighbours in Diyalivtsi described me, ‘our foreigner’. This was

illustrated by a visit to the village by a friend from Germany in the spring of 2008. After he had left, I entered into a conversation with a friend Sasha and her mother, who had met Uhr. Sasha started laughing at Uhr's spoken Ukrainian. When I pointed out that Uhr spoke well and had an extensive vocabulary, Sasha replied, "Yes, but he doesn't speak like you. You are ours. You speak without thinking."

D. Collecting Data on Ukrainian-Romanian Borderland Households

The research was very much focused on and centred in the household as a site for research. In this section I detail my approach to collecting data on households in the two fieldwork sites. I have already discussed some of the difficulties associated with the particular households in which I lived, so in this section I explore in more detail the possibilities for data collection arising within participant observation.

i. Beyond the household in Diyalivtsi

Rodika, my host in Ukraine, had a very small family – just her and her daughter. Her mother was from Russia and had married her father in Murmansk during the Soviet period and come to live for a time in Diyalivtsi. Unfortunately, her parents split up and Rodika's mother returned to Russia, leaving her to be brought up by her grandmother. After her father and grandmother passed away, so was left with no kin in the village. This fact, alongside her unwillingness to include me in her household's activities, meant that I had to pursue contacts in other households to really expand my ability to participate and observe more of village life.

Two other village families were to become key bases for my research and, in particular, offered opportunities to participate in different economic practices. Alina and Roman owned the village's main restaurant and bar, which they had built with money earned from migrant work in London. Roman had moved to the village when he and Alina married,

as she was the daughter of the former head of the collective farm and had access to a large parcel of land in the village, where they had built a substantial two-storey dwelling. Getting to know Alina enabled me to help out in the bar for free on a regular basis. This was extremely important in accessing men in the village, as Rodika had no male relatives and in another setting such contact with men would have been unacceptable. It also enabled me to carry out unstructured interviews with Alina and Roman on a number of topics. In particular, I could ask questions around their business and gain an insight into the level of regular and repeat trade and question Roman and Alina on the viability of the business. Alina's family was also one of the largest in the village, so I was able to understand the ways in which economic practices could be shared through kinship networks beyond the household level. The bar and restaurant served as a place I could observe the movements of cross-border small traders in the evenings, as many would visit the bar before and after they had made trips through the border.

In addition to Alina and Roman, I also became involved in the household of a woman named Luchika. Her family were one of the larger but poorer families living in the centre of the village. Of the four adults living in her home, none of them had any form of waged employment, so Luchika was a cross-border small trader, as was her son-in-law. Her daughter, Zhenia, stayed at home and looked after her 4-year-old son. She was also responsible for many of the daily household chores, including food preparation. Luchika's husband was not yet of pensionable age but had retired on the grounds of ill-health caused by alcoholism. Luchika and her family permitted me to work on the land with them, whilst Zhenia taught me how to cook. I carried out numerous unstructured interviews with Zhenia and Luchika about CBST and their descriptions were central to developing a good understanding of the trade prior to commencing non-participant observation with traders from Chernivtsi. Luchika's husband was also a keen local historian and I carried out several

unstructured interviews with him relating to his own past and that of his family within the village.

Two young women were also prominent in assisting in my research: the daughter of the shopowner from the neighbouring village and Rodika's 14-year-old daughter. A friendship with the shopowner's daughter also enabled me to observe social interactions in another of the village's public spaces. With Rodika's daughter, I was able to employ some mobile methods of observation and regularly went for walks with her in and around the village, asking questions about many of the homes and people as we passed by. This meant I also gained a general overview of the number of dwellings vacant due to overseas migration and the amount of land currently under cultivation. In addition to these activities, I also visited the local village council and collected the statistics presented in the introductory chapter. I carried out unstructured interviews with key local figures, particularly those from the neighbouring village with whom I had little or no contact on a daily basis, such as the mayor, secretary of the village council and local schoolteachers.

ii. Crossing the border and into Romania

Having gained significant insight into cross-border small trading from my time in Diyalivtsi, I was keen to develop further this research and decided to use moving to Romania as an opportunity. I knew that traders from Chernivtsi offered taxi services through the border and I was able to use these to travel frequently to and from Ukraine during the time I was in Romania. In particular, I developed an understanding with one trader, Kostia, and he became a key participant in the research. Kostia was not resistant to questioning away from the border, so I often spent time with him in Romania whilst he was making his deliveries, visiting clients and so on. This travelling with him was like a form of cumulative interviewing in that each time I crossed the border with him, I was able to ask a number of

questions about CBST. I noted points of particular interest at the border and questioned Kostia about them away from the border itself. Developing this contact with Kostia enabled me to question the other traders with whom I then subsequently travelled. My frequent appearances in Kostia's van certainly assisted in building credibility amongst the other traders.

The research into CBST with traders from Chernivtsi did reduce the amount of time I spent in Romania for research, but I tried to ensure stays in Ukraine were short and returned the same day or the following day, where possible. In Romania itself, I refined and extended the approach I had utilised in Diyalivtsi. However, as I was based in a home owned by two absent siblings, I received invitations to Suceava, where I could interview this family and their friends about certain topics and themes that were emerging in my research. I was especially concerned to gain views of Ukraine and CBST, as well as to explore involvement in cross-border shopping and 'petrol tourism'. I established relationships with key figures in the neighbouring village council, whom I visited regularly to discuss the status of Gorbanita within the commune and extend my understanding of kinship networks and particularly marriage between Gorbanita and the neighbouring village. In visiting the neighbouring village with my various different people from Gorbanita on market day, I was able to identify and experience the interactions between them and their neighbours.

My participation in Gorbanita centred around agriculture and I was unable to gain access prolonged access to some of the more public spheres of life, as I had done in Ukraine. Therefore, I chose to centre my efforts on the village church, which was well-attended and the priest had great influence over how I was viewed within the village. Regular church attendance presented opportunities for me, as people would enter into conversation with me at other times on the basis that they had seen me at the church. I also followed the connections and ties of the adjoining household, into which I was incorporated, to nearby

towns and villages. This was particularly useful in leading me to in-depth interviewing with young people, of whom there were few in Romania. I was able to extend the research further upon spending time amongst Gorbanitians in London after my return. This contact proved central to clarifying particular points during analysis and writing up my research.

Overall, data collection methods were fluid and evolved as part of participant observation. I made every effort to connect with new people in both fieldwork sites and explored different roles and opportunities to participate in both villages. I was able to carry out interviews with key participants in-depth on particular topics, such as gender and cross-border small trading as they emerged. Also, through repeated participation, I found I was able to continue the conversation over time. I sought statistical data from both village councils and used mobility and walking through the villages with participants to both ask questions and listen to participants own commentaries and discourses surrounding the village, certain people and the communities as a whole. This led to the collection of rich, empirical data, which I recorded within my fieldwork diary and my camera.

E. The Ethics of Researching Informal Economic Practices

In researching the diverse economies of a border area, a number of critical ethical issues emerged in relation to the methodological approach taken. Although I have described participant observation as the primary method of research, there were some areas in which non-participant observation was necessary in order to avoid direct involvement in illegal or quasi-legal activities through cross-border small trading (CBST). There was an unwillingness to involve me in these activities on the part of the local community for two major reasons: firstly, due to a fear that I myself would report the participants to the authorities; secondly, that I would draw attention to their trading activities due to my status as a foreign national both at the border and in terms of the state security services. This fear was no more prevalent

in Ukraine than in Romania, but the higher level of involvement in the cross-border trading of cigarettes in Diyalivtsi meant that more people were uncomfortable in even discussing their activities in my presence. Having made one trip across the border with traders from the village in December 2008, I also came to share this concern that I may compromise their trade, as the married couple with whom I made the trip were questioned extensively by border officials regarding my presence in their vehicle.

However, in spite of the very detailed descriptions and representations of the trade I gleaned from within Diyalivtsi, I still felt the need to develop my understanding through direct observation. In fact, I managed to travel in total twenty three times through the local road border crossing, which is also in fact the main road crossing between Ukraine and Romania in this region. On almost all of these occasions, I travelled with people who were involved in various elements of CBST. I chose to make these trips with traders from a nearby city, who also offered a form of unofficial taxi service and frequently carried locals and sometimes foreigners through the border. This meant that I could pass myself off as a tourist and minimise the impact my presence had on the traders' activities. Nonetheless, I was also aware of the risks engaging in this observation posed to my personal safety and to the reputation of my university. In response to this, I developed a friendship with one particular trader, Kostia, and his family and sought to travel and observe with him and his contacts wherever possible. I was able to observe in more detail the transactions that took place at the border and question Kostia on particular issues, which I had not been able to approach with those with whom I had travelled on only one occasion.

With Kostia's help and my early observations, I was able to develop a number of strategies to diminish my 'visibility' at the border. Whilst my spoken Romanian and

Ukrainian often allowed me to be accepted as ‘local’³⁶ in Ukraine and Romania, one area in which I was unable to ‘escape’ my nationality was the border. My passport was also rare for such a road crossing and over time, I began to refer to myself as the holder of a British passport rather than stating I was British. This seemed to confirm that I was therefore just a local who had married overseas or had been born there.

The other reputational and personal risk was to ensure that in observing illegal activity that I did not become somehow involved in it. Taking my lead from the traders, I became aware of their expectations of my behaviour at the border. Firstly, I ensured that I took no alcohol or tobacco goods on my person, so that they could use my ‘allowance’. Secondly, I did not engage in conversation with officials unless addressed directly. I answered questions relating only to my own luggage, which inevitably contained only personal items. I therefore minimised my interaction at the border and remained as passive as possible in border crossings. Kostia would regularly position me in the front of his van, where he stored cigarettes and alcohol. Few customs officials bothered me and my passport often provided distraction enough for discussion. In addition, as a ‘foreigner’ I was also generally exempt from any in-depth searches. I permitted this practice and did not question Kostia in relation to it.³⁷

Informed consent within the inductive process of ethnographic fieldwork is a contested notion. Whilst I made no deliberate attempt to conceal my research activities from any of the people to whom I spoke, I was also unable to be explicit at the time as to the exact focus my study would take. Whether Kostia and others would have consented to the use of the material I gathered through interactions with them is not clear. I discussed the research process with them openly, but none expressed interest in the outcomes of the research itself.

³⁶ Local in the context of this region meant that I was often taken to be a Ukrainian speaker from Romania in Ukraine and a Romanian speaker from Ukraine whilst in Romania.

³⁷ Further discussion of this type of activity is discussed in relation to gender in chapter six.

However, I feel that the removal of all locational and identifying information from the thesis serves as the best framework in which to respect the sensitive nature of the activities I observed.

Whilst in the field, the numerous border crossings led me to see the evasion of taxes and duties, as well as the payment of bribes, as banal. Although I always experienced some fear at the border, as I observed the traders also did, there was something of an everyday nature to the transactions that led me to cease viewing them with my initial trepidation. In coming to recognise many of the traders, the border guards and officials and even the physical space of the border, the border and the illegal use of it became part of everyday life in the region. This led to the development of a perception, which dominated in local communities, that the cross-border activities represented a pragmatic reality of life in the region and few people involved in the activities were condemned by others. Traders also expressed a gratitude for the perceived ‘fairness’ of the regime at the border and the possibility it afforded them to earn a stable income. Over time, as in all ethnographic fieldwork, these local understandings informed my own sense of these activities. However, I maintained the practice of non-participant observation, no matter how banal the notion of the activities became. This stance seemed to be accepted by the people with whom I was in contact on the border and Kostia appeared to understand this instinctively and never made any attempt to involve me in any type of activity. This decision to remain marginal is discussed by Horowitz (1986) and presents a way in which a researcher can negotiate an ‘outside’ identity, which is understood and accepted by the communities researched. In addition to the issues discussed above, my involvement in cross-border small trading would have compromised rather than enhanced my ability to carry out my research within Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita.

F. Conclusions

In summary, whilst the methodological and ethical considerations for the research were similar to those confronting any anthropological approach, the move from Ukraine to Romania and attempting to research informal and at times illegal economies had a set of very specific implications for this study. Although there was a focus on participant observation, non-participant observation was necessary at the border. In addition, the Ukrainian fieldwork site has come to form the basis of the study, with the Romanian research proving more and more to be comparative to Ukraine.

A number of factors whilst in the field affected my experiences in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita; thus impacting on the research. In Ukraine, the use of literary Ukrainian proved a barrier to integration into village life and met with resistance and criticism amongst the local population. In addition, marital status and gender and my attitude towards my unmarried status led to a form of exclusion in both fieldwork sites and restricted research amongst certain groups, particularly men between the ages of 20 and 50 but also in forming bonds with women within the village communities. The economically marginalised position of the Rodika's family proved a challenge and caused difficulties for both Rodika and myself within Diyalivtsi. As did my association with another household in the village, which was marginalised socially due to perceptions of wealth and also the head of the family's role during the Soviet era.

The role that migrant workers had played in informing villagers understanding of the 'West' was also apparent in the way that I was treated in both villages. Numerous expectations were held of my capabilities, some of which I challenged and others which remained until the end of the research period. Also, in Romania, my own personal association with Ukraine and the location of my research in a village that was perceived to be 'Ukrainian'

affected the way in which I was perceived amongst Romanians. I and therefore my research were affected by the experience of having been in Ukraine first.

However, although this was a particular attribute of this study, I am aware that it should not be overstated. Every researcher is informed by their own experiences and subjectivities, be they in their home environment or in the field. Therefore, this impact is perhaps no greater than would be expected for anyone carrying out an ethnographic approach. It also enabled me through maintaining a flexible approach to the study to adapt and learn through the fieldwork process. As with most studies, some issues are expected and can be anticipated in preparing for fieldwork, whilst others become apparent only whilst in the field. The main challenge faced by a researcher is to remain alive to the possibility of change and not to pursue a framework, which the information gained in the field does not support. I believe that in shifting the focus of my research, I responded to this challenge and therefore have been able to develop a thesis, which reflects more honestly the processes taking place in the region.

D. Learning to Speak ‘Village’: Understanding the Cost of Language

Introduction

I went with some friends from Gorbanita to visit some relatives in another village about 20km away. During the visit, I met Constantin, a local politician and a prominent figure in the village. He spoke to me about Romanians living across the border in Ukraine,

Those Romanians have lost all their traditions and some have even forgotten how to speak the language. (Constantin, Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands, October 2008)

To Constantin, the Romanian language was a clear expression of his nationality and the loss of it represented a loss of one of the things that made these people Romanians. Yet, all around him in Romania, even within his own family, Ruthenian speakers were also ‘losing’ their language, almost imperceptibly. The people of Gorbanita rarely disclosed their abilities in Ruthenian to anyone outside of the neighbouring villages and remained a ‘hidden’ group in many contexts.

Language is the set of common sounds and symbols by which individuals communicate. (Lazear, 1999: S96)

In this chapter, I examine the processes of language shift in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands during and after the socialist period. I focus on two key concepts of language – language for communication and language for identification - the interplay between them and their relationship to economic practices. By concentrating on the villagers’ perceptions of their own dialect and of the main modern languages now spoken in these two countries, as well as languages of cross-border economies and migration, I illustrate the way in which informal economic practices are sites for the negotiation of linguistic identity and language perception. My research was in a region generally considered to be part of Western Ukraine, which is often seen as primarily Ukrainian-speaking according to macro-level analysis (see for example Barrington 2002a and 2002b; Barrington and Herron, 2004). However, such

analysis obscures the fact that Russian remains widely spoken throughout the region and that even those who identify themselves as Ukrainian speakers, often do so in opposition to modern, standardised Ukrainian. Moreover, this chapter will use the lens of economic practices to nuance and add to the growing body of literature on Russian as a lingua franca and bilingualism or multilingualism in the post-Soviet space (see for example Bilaniuk 2003, 2005, 2006 and Pavlenko 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009). The contribution will be to illustrate that through exploring the practice and performance of ‘the economic’ in language, we gain an understanding of language issues in the region, which reaches beyond and gives greater insight into language use, which has previously been obscured by a focus on national-level language politics and particularly the role of the Russian language in modern Ukraine.

In examining the Ruthenian-speaking villages of Romania, the chapter also addresses questions of the fate of non-national languages in the process of nation building. Drawing on literature relating to language and migration, I will show how we need to reassess assertions pertaining to the relationship between environment and the ability to deploy language (Blommaert et al, 2005) to consider what happens when people do not migrate, but experience a shift in their linguistic environment due to a change in regime. I assert that language forms a larger site of challenge and dispute in Ukraine than Romania on a rural level due to the lack of formal employment opportunities requiring the Ukrainian language, the persistence of Russian as a setting for dispute nationally and the emerging economic advantages of Romanian, Italian, Spanish and English.

I have chosen to discuss language prior to the following chapter on citizenship, as an understanding of linguistic identity provides a basis for later exploration of perceptions of the state. I elucidate the ‘communicative baggage’ (Blommaert et al, 2005: 198) of the regimes in this region and explain how this plays a role in existing linguistic practices and perceptions of them. The first and most apparent difficulty comes in defining the major languages of

Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita in terms of modern languages. I have therefore divided the chapter into three separate sections. Firstly, I explore the linguistic context of the region, including details of the local dialect, the continuing role of Russian as a lingua franca amongst Romanian and Ukrainian speakers in Ukraine and Romanian perspectives of linguistic difference between Russian and Ukrainian. Secondly, I focus on language and cross-border economic practices, demonstrating the impact that cross-border small trading and consumption have not only on language use, but on perceptions of the value of language. Thus, communication becomes a site for the performance of new socio-economic linguistic identities. These themes are continued in the final section, which considers the relationship between language and migration.

A. Linguistic Context

There are effectively three modern languages spoken in the region: Ukrainian, Romanian and Russian. In this section, I explore perceptions of the region's linguistic diversity and illustrate how understanding of language usage contests attempts to standardise the Ukrainian language and maintains the status of Russian north of the border.

i. Village Dialects

My dad says I can speak three languages already; Ukrainian, Russian and Village.
(Iulka, Diyalivtsi, February 2008)

The idea that their language was separate from the two main modern languages spoken in Ukraine was one commonly expressed by people in Diyalivtsi. Not being aware of the origin of many of the phrases and grammatical structures, most people had come to see their dialect as 'theirs', belonging to their village alone, hence Iulka's reference to 'Village'. The dialect did differ from modern standardised Ukrainian in a number of ways. Firstly, there

was some use of words derived from German, such as ‘shpilaty’ instead of ‘hraty’ (to play) or ‘libsche’ in lieu of ‘krashsche’ (better). However, these could also be found in other parts of Western Ukraine and were generally accepted colloquial terms. Yet there were also some other elements that were particular to this region and not commonly found in other areas; these pertained to the widespread use of Romanian grammatical structures and words within the village, such as the Romanian comparative ‘mai’ being used with a Ukrainian word, e.g. ‘mai velyky’ (bigger).

Romanian words were most often used for items relating to the house and nature. My host Rodika in Diyalivtsi was telling me one day of the lilac in the woods at this time of year and how pretty it would be. She said, ‘we say liliac, but in Ukrainian it is buzok’. After her parents divorced in the Soviet era and Rodika’s mother returned to Russia, she was brought up by her grandmother in the village, who spoke Romanian. She had never learned Romanian in a formal context and therefore, like many others in the village, was unaware of the Romanian origin of the words.

This sense of the ‘uniqueness’ of their language was something that was shared by villagers in Gorbanita.

Almost every village has its own dialect. If you go down the road to XXX, they say a different word for cow from the one we use here and in XXX they also speak differently. (Pamela, Gorbanita, September 2008)

Pamela was referring to the Ruthenian-speaking villages in the area, as Gorbanita was originally home to people who spoke ‘po-ruski’³⁸. For older people in the village, this dialect had remained their native tongue. Although the majority had some competence in Romanian, they spoke amongst themselves in Ruthenian and many did not feel comfortable in speaking Romanian. Having completed just four classes in the village school in their youth, for those

³⁸ Can be translated as Rusyn or Ruthenian.

who had stayed in the village, Ruthenian had continued to dominate. A story told by Dorina of the Second World War highlights the way in which the village's dialect was perceived by outsiders.

My aunt made him some mamaliga, it was different then you know, made from grain and not from corn. The German soldier thanked my aunt for the 'khoroshyy khlib' in Russian and everyone laughed. (Dorina, Gorbanita, August 2008)

The villagers were laughing at the soldier for mistaking mamaliga³⁹ for bread. However, the fact that he did so in Russian suggests that this was a response to the language he heard in the village at the time. Similarly to villagers in Diyalivtsi, the dialect is closest to modern Ukrainian, but is often viewed by outsiders to be Russian.

There was a lack of awareness in Gorbanita, as to the similarities of their dialect with regards to their northern neighbours.

I only know what we say. I know they speak differently there. (Domtsia, Gorbanita, September 2008)

Given their long period of separation in the socialist era and the dominance of Russian north of the border, the people of Gorbanita had come to feel isolated in the language that they spoke. However, on hearing someone was from one of the neighbouring Ruthenian settlements, many villagers would switch to speaking to them in their Ruthenian dialect. Nonetheless, given the small population in the area, most people recognised others from Ruthenian-speaking villages. Villagers from Gorbanita would often point out people with whom I could speak Ruthenian, such as the bus drivers on the route from Suceava.

The ability to speak the language was assumed based on where a person was from and some of those who left the Ruthenian villages and settled amongst Romanian speakers

³⁹ Yellow maize boiled in water, which is often used as a substitute for bread.

bemoaned the lack of opportunity to speak their own tongue amongst the neighbours and in their local community.

No-one here speaks Ruthenian. I never get the chance to speak it here. I have lots of family in your village and XXX, you know. (Domnica, near Gorbanita, October 2008)

Domnica's Ruthenian is peppered with Romanian words, like many middle-aged people in the local villages. She has a yearning to speak the language, but having spent so many years without practice, she no longer converses comfortably and resents this loss of her native tongue. For her, it is still a marker of belonging to her own village, which she is determined to highlight. In terms of linguistic identity, in spite of their dialect being very close to modern Ukrainian, both the villagers of Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita chose to highlight the differences rather than the similarities in the languages. However, in Diyalivtsi, the speaking of 'village' was a point of collective identity, which they shared with some other villages in the area. Tajfel (1978) suggests that much of the categorisation of self and others that is so crucial to our own identity takes place through language. The idea that we create what is known as 'positive distinctiveness' through language to make ourselves feel superior to others suggests our choice of language a deliberate one conveying particular social ideas.

'The Ukrainian case may be seen as a case of complementarity, where divergent language choices are ways of performing ethnicity, signaling an expected performance of social differences.' (Bilaniuk, 2006: 5)

Bilaniuk is referring to the use of 'pure' Russian and Ukrainian in bi-lingual conversations in Ukraine, yet her point is valid in the choice to use 'impure' language, i.e. 'Village'. There was a clear movement in Diyalivtsi not to conform to standardised Ukrainian, as this was not felt to be 'their' language, but one being imposed from the outside. As one professor at the university in Chernivtsi stated, "these people speak three languages badly". He meant this as a criticism of those speaking mixed languages in rural areas, but it

was clear that for people in Diyalivtsi, the use of this language was a way in which to exclude outsiders and distinguish themselves as a group. However, I would assert that this was reaction to their lack of ability to speak Ukrainian, Russian or in fact Romanian well. In doing so, villagers of Diyalivtsi developed an understanding in which they chose to speak ‘Village’, i.e. they were being ‘non-accommodating’ in their use of dialect in bilingual conversations. This representation of the use of ‘Village’ enabled them to cover some of the difficulties they experienced with standardised languages. It was part of an overall tendency to overstate language ability in the village, which will be discussed further on in the chapter.

Therefore, there is a need to nuance Bilaniuk’s (2006) discussion of accommodation and non-accommodation in bilingual conversations. Her research discusses people who either have or do not have the ability to speak the language of their interlocutor. Non-accommodation occurs in cases where both people can speak the language of the other, but make an active choice to do so in the other language, with her example being Ukrainian and Romanian. In the case of Diyalivtsi, people do not accommodate because of a lack of ability in the other language, but choose to represent it as an ideological non-accommodation. This is done as a reaction to criticism of their ‘impure’ language by local and national elites. In this sense, the ‘impure’ language becomes a site of identification, which opposes a dominant idea and does not acknowledge any weakness in their language skills.

ii. *The Perception of Ukrainian as an ‘Outside’ Language*

Although I have referred to the language spoken in Gorbanita as Ruthenian, it is important to highlight that this does not reflect a vastly different language from that which people in Diyalivtsi referred to as ‘Village’. This was confirmed by Pamela in Gorbanita, when she came in one day and heard a recording I had made of an old man in Diyalivtsi. ‘They speak just like us!’ she exclaimed and was visibly shocked by the similarity of the

language. People in Diyalivtsi, just like those in Gorbanita, felt that their language was separate from modern Ukrainian, which was now being taught in school. My host Rodika's reaction to the Ukrainian subtitles on a Russian soap opera one day typified the people of Diyalivtsi's reaction to standardised Ukrainian,

No-one actually really speaks like that; like they write there I mean. Well, except you of course! (Rodika, Diyalivtsi, December 2007)

There existed, however, at the same time a great deal of animosity towards modern Ukrainian, which they perceived to be the imposition of a 'new' language, one which had never been native to or spoken in this region. This was highlighted one day during a visit to the village shop by a number of men from L'vivs'ka oblast', who were working on a construction project at the nearby border. Inna, the young woman working in the shop, was from a nearby Romanian-speaking village, yet spoke Ukrainian in the same way as others in Diyalivtsi. When serving the men, one of them corrected Inna's use of the word for a glass from 'stekan' to 'sklianka'. Inna looked genuinely confused by the word and I later overheard her confirming with a Ukrainian-speaking woman from the village, if the 'correct' word was indeed 'sklianka'. The shift in the linguistic environment since 1989 has created issues of communication and linguistic identity for villagers, who up until that time had always considered themselves to be Ukrainian speakers.

'A lack of competence to communicate adequately is here not seen as a problem of the speaker, but as a problem for the speaker, lodged not in individual forms of deficit or inability but in the connection between individual communicative potential and requirements produced by the environment.' (Blommaert et al, 2005: 198)

The villagers of Diyalivtsi proudly boasted of their linguistic abilities in the context of foreign languages, yet their resistance to Ukrainian was apparent even in the way as was treated, as discussed in the methodology chapter. One of the most commonly-cited reasons

for not speaking standardised Ukrainian was it was seen to be too difficult. As Iulia, a woman in her twenties explained, ‘I prefer to read in Russian, as Ukrainian is too hard for me.’⁴⁰ Iulia and several other women in the village would often exchange books, all of which were written in Russian. These books were predominantly light-hearted romances and one of the reasons for many villagers having the perception that Ukrainian was difficult was the lack of this type of reading material in the language.⁴¹ At school, Ukrainian classic literature, such as Shevchenko and Franko is taught and the new wave of Ukrainian writers now being published is not in this genre.⁴² Therefore, little or nothing appears to be published in the Ukrainian language to meet the needs of this group of women, who inevitably turn to Russian to fill the gap. At the same time, the idea that Ukrainian is a difficult language is maintained, due to the complex nature of the texts available in the language. Concerns about the continuing low status of Ukrainian are widely voiced (Bilaniuk, 2005; Kostenko, 2004). Whilst policies do give an official advantage to Ukrainian, this is often undermined by free market forces, which favour Russian (Taranenko, 2007). Russian’s presence in the entertainment market is perceived as being particularly powerful (Pavlenko, 2008). This has led some to conclude that the Ukrainian language must be further supported to enable it to compete against Russian (cf. Kuzio, 1998).

The villagers of Gorbanita denied even a commonality of language with the Ruthenian-speaking villages in the vicinity. Their language did not form the basis for a shared identity. On an official level, Ukrainian and Ruthenian have come to be viewed as the same language⁴³ and this has also lead to a blurring of ethnic identities. Over time, the use of

⁴⁰ For some women, their choice to read in Russian represented the fact that they had been to school in the Soviet era and Russian was the language of instruction. However, being just 24 years old, Iulia had been educated in Ukrainian at school, yet still maintained that Ukrainian was more difficult than Russian.

⁴¹ Part of the reason for the exchange was also a reluctance to invest in new books and some of the circulating did date from the Soviet period.

⁴² Examples include Oksana Zabuzhko, Yuri Andrukhovych and Maria Matios.

⁴³ Romanian census data classifies the ethnic groups as Ukrainian/Ruthenian and Russian/Lipovan (also known as Old Believers).

the language in the village had slowly begun to be diluted, through marriage with Romanian speakers and also the modern education system. A conversation I overheard between an older man and his young grand-daughter typified this process. As they walked along, the old man spoke to her in Ruthenian and she responded in Romanian. She comprehended almost every word her grandfather spoke, but was unable to converse in the language. This practice is commonly referred to as ‘non-reciprocal bilingualism’ (see for example Bilaniuk, 2005) or ‘mutual passive bilingualism’ (Schiffman, 2006). A distinction is made between this type of bilingualism in which each interlocutor understands but is unable to converse in the language of the other and ‘non-accommodating bilingualism’ (Bilaniuk, 2006: 3), in which each interlocutor chooses to respond in another language, in spite of having an active knowledge of that of his interlocutor.

In neighbouring Ruthenian-speaking villages, there was also a challenge to the local dialect from Ukraine. Since 1991, a number of initiatives have begun to assist fellow Ukrainian-speakers across the border in Romania. These initiatives have included the production and dispatch of Ukrainian language materials to local schools⁴⁴, the availability of places at the pedagogical sixth form in Chernivtsi and cross-cultural projects through universities, museums and other organisations in the region. Standardised Ukrainian is used in these texts and students who left their villages to study in Ukraine returned speaking a distinctly different language from that maintained in their homes and local communities. There remained a resistance to modern Ukrainian for a number of practical reasons.

I completed my studies at the pedagogical school in XXX, but after that I decided to finish my studies here in Romania. It didn't make sense to continue in Ukraine. What could I do with a degree from there? (Sorin, near Gorbanita, January 2009)

⁴⁴ These include the publishing house, ‘Bukrek’ <http://bukrek.net/>.

Sorin's comments highlight his need to gain a recognised qualification in Romania for his future career plans. He also complained that having studied Russian and Ukrainian had not served him well, as he saw English as being more valuable, alongside Romanian, for a future in the financial sector.

Sorin's perception of the value of Ukrainian was shared by many others in the Ruthenian-speaking villages in the area. A conversation with Doina, an English language teacher from a school in a nearby village, highlighted the perceived value of the Ukrainian language.

The children used to speak in Ukrainian amongst themselves, because they knew I didn't understand. They would use Ukrainian words for things sometimes, but that doesn't happen so much anymore. A few years ago, the parents voted to have all classes at the school in Romanian, so that their children would not be disadvantaged linguistically. (Doina, near Gorbanita, August 2008)

She confirms the lessening use of Ukrainian, in spite of efforts from across the border and also explains that this was an active choice by parents; a choice concerning the future prospects for their children. This gave a greater sense that the language was one of the village only, one to be confined at home and of little use outside of this limited geographical space. It also highlighted, as did Sorin, that many Ruthenian-speakers in the area did not see value in maintaining the language in the future.

There was evidence in support of the villagers of Diyalivtsi's claim that standardised Ukrainian did not reflect their way of speaking historically. The criticism of Inna by men from L'vivs'ka oblast' reflected part of a national discourse against 'surzhyk', a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian (cf. Bilaniuk, 2005). This criticism is based on the idea that 'surzhyk' is a corruption of 'pure' Ukrainian by Russian, yet an examination of the village dialect in Diyalivtsi and the Ruthenian of Gorbanita highlights that in the case of the Ukrainian-

Romanian borderlands, such an assumption may be incorrect. Firstly, many of the words, which are perceived to have been borrowed from Russian, may have already been used in the region as borrowings from Romanian. The simplest example of this is the use of ‘da’, rather than ‘tak’, to mean ‘yes’, but there were many others. Another example was the months of the year; villagers were more likely to use the Latin-based words from Russian rather than the Ukrainian variants derived from Church Slavonic. This usage again was seen to be a Russian influence, when most claimed that it had come from Romanian. In fact, it appeared that older people in the village simply did not understand the months in their Ukrainian form, which was confirmed by a conversation with an elderly woman, in which I was assisted by Nastia.

Me: “Ia poidu travnia v Rumuniii.” (I’m going to Romania in May.)

Matko: “Koly?” (When?)

Me: “Travnia.” (May.)

Matko: “Koly? Ia nichoho ne rozumiiu...” (When? I don’t understand anything....)

Nastia: “Mai, matko. Vona skazala schob poide v Rumuniii mai.” (May, Auntie. She said she is going to Romania in May.)

Matko: “Da mai, dobre.” (Yes May, good.)

Although the dialect spoken in Gorbanita may not have remained entirely untouched by Russian in the socialist period, there was little evidence of formal influence. Firstly, although Russian was taught in school, very few of the villagers completed enough schooling or used Russian on a regular basis for the impact to be significant. Secondly, it was those who had stayed in the village who had predominantly maintained the use of the language, meaning that the language had remained within their own community. Their own reaction to the ‘different’ language represented by modern Ukrainian suggests, just as people in Diyalivtsi had done, that this was not the native language of the region.

In viewing their dialect as non-national, the villagers of Gorbanita did not present any challenge to a Romanian national identity. At the same time, they did not aspire to a Ukrainian identity, one of the reasons for which was a perception that Ukrainian was a different language from their own. Whilst there were a number of other factors influencing their lack of identification with a Ukrainian identity, the perceived differences between modern Ukrainian and their own village dialect were significant. For the villagers of Diyalivtsi, standardised Ukrainian was one of a number of ways in which they felt they were being 'ruled' by outsiders from Kyiv and L'viv. For them, there was also a lack of identification with this language and consequently with Ukrainian national identity. They, in fact, used and maintained their own dialect as a form of resistance to the Ukrainian national idea.

iii. The Continuing Dominance of Russian

Discussion of the Russian language and its role in the region is also extremely pertinent to contextualising language usage and the region's diverse economies. In this section, I expand on some of the points introduced above in the exploration of perceptions of Ukrainian. For the people of Diyalivtsi, as for many during the Soviet era, Russian became the language of the work place. After a period in which Romanian had been enforced as the official language of the region, Russian acted as a newly-imposed and seemingly less-resented lingua franca. As there were few ethnic Russians in the region at the time of the Soviet occupation, the use of a language from outside of the region was acceptable to both main ethnic groups, i.e. Romanians and Ukrainians. Most people from Romanian and Ukrainian villages alike grew up bilingually and unlike in other areas of Western Ukraine, Russian came to dominate much more quickly, as it was spoken by the two main groups.

‘As a result of this imbalance, Russian speakers could afford to be monolingual, speakers of titular languages aspiring to social advancement had to be bilingual, and minority language speakers had to be either bilingual (with Russian or the titular language as a second language) or multilingual.’ (Pavlenko, 2008b: 282)

Romanian speakers in the northern part of the region rarely became multilingual in the Soviet period, i.e. learned Ukrainian, due to the fact that it had up until this point never been used officially in the region, in either education or administration. In contrast with other parts of Western Ukraine, this region has not so enthusiastically embraced the revival of the Ukrainian language. This is partly due to the perception discussed above that standardised Ukrainian is not in fact perceived to be a revival of their language, but the imposition of a new one, which was never native to the region. However, the advancement of Ukrainian language policies is seen to be hampered by the continuing use of Russian (Fornier, 2002; Arel, 2002; Marshall, 2002; Bilaniuk, 2003).

Russian is still used as a lingua franca by both Ukrainian and Romanian speakers. Whilst for Ukrainian speakers, even if they do not speak the standardised Ukrainian currently being used at a national level, the switch to Ukrainian as the official language in Ukraine has not been a challenging one. However, for native Romanian speakers, who had already had to learn Russian as a second language, the shift has proved more complex.

First I had to learn Russian and now they want me to learn Ukrainian. Well I won't. I am too old to learn another language. (Dima, Diyalivtsi, December 2007)

There was some evidence that Ukrainian was beginning to gain ground in education. Diyalivtsi's neighbouring settlements almost all had Romanian-speaking schools. However, just as in Gorbanita, it seemed that these schools were becoming less popular, according to a conversation with Maria, a teacher from a Ukrainian-language school in a nearby Romanian-speaking village.

Every year we have more and more pupils, as more parents decide to send their children here instead of the Romanian school. They think it is better to be educated in Ukrainian now.
(Maria, near Diyalivtsi, November 2007)

Parents' fears concerning their children's futures were confirmed by Oksana, a lecturer from a university in Chernivtsi. As she herself was from a Ukrainian-speaking village in a more remote part of the region, she had little patience with the pleas of her Romanian-speaking students.

These people cannot write an essay in Ukrainian. I spend most of my time crossing out Russian words. Sometimes, when they are really bad, I return their essays and tell them to resubmit them in Ukrainian! (Oksana, Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands, October 2007)

Oksana's comments were supported by the experiences of Inna, a graduate of the local university, who had lost her job as a Ukrainian teacher at the Romanian-speaking school in the neighbouring village.

The head-teacher asked me to leave after he found some of my marking of students' work. I had corrected things that were already right and replaced them with the wrong thing! (Inna, Diyalivtsi, January 2008)

Inna had left her Romanian-language school to attend school and university in the Chernivtsi, having had a few hours of Ukrainian instruction a week at school and knowledge of the language spoken in surrounding Ukrainian villages. Neither of Inna's parents spoke Ukrainian and their language at home had always been Romanian. Unfortunately, this level of language did not prepare her for university and she returned to her village having paid bribes to receive both her degree and her specialist postgraduate language diploma. When she was unable to continue in her work, she went to work for her parents in their local business.

However, it was not just the Romanian-speaking population who struggled with standardised Ukrainian in education and on an official level. Alla was a young woman from a

Ukrainian-speaking family, whose parents had sent her to a Russian-language school in a nearby town. The school was perceived to be the best in the area and Alla went on to study and then become a lecturer at the university. Her active knowledge of Ukrainian had diminished over the years and she was now often dependent on colleagues to correct her academic papers and publications in Ukrainian. Whilst her own parents continued to speak Ukrainian at home, she would respond in Russian, in what Bilaniuk would describe as ‘non-reciprocal bilingualism’.

At first I chose to speak Russian as it seemed more intellectual. It was the language of my studies and Ukrainian was only really spoken at home. However, now I really can't speak Ukrainian very well and I do regret it. (Alla, Chernivtsi, March 2008)

Whilst Alla had made a choice to speak Russian when she was younger, it had replaced Ukrainian as her mother tongue and she clearly felt that it now hindered both her career and prospects in Ukraine.

‘The decision to abandon one’s own language always derives from a change in the self-esteem of the speech community. In the cases of language shift one could observe that members, very often the younger generation of minorities, regard their own community as being inferior. Those members frequently try to change their ‘negative’ social identity by adopting the language (and social identity) of the dominant group . . . Language shift thus has to be understood as one possible strategy for members of minority groups who have developed a ‘negative’ social identity to change their inferior position. In cases where this strategy is chosen by all members of a minority speech community we could expect the extinction of the old vernacular.’ Brenzinger et al. (1991: 38)

The maintenance of Russian in the region was also assisted on an official level by some of the policies at the university on teaching foreign students. All exchange students visiting the university on official exchange programs from the US were taught Russian and

not Ukrainian as a basic language. Learning Ukrainian remained optional, whereas Russian was compulsory; thus, giving higher status once more to Russian, not only in the perception of foreign, but also local students.

Both of the main linguistic groups in the region play a role in maintaining Russian. The prestige of Russian, which has been widely recognised in the post-Soviet space (see for example Pavlenko, 2006 and Bilaniuk, 2006), means that many Ukrainian speakers continue to choose Russian over their native tongue in a learning and workplace context. In addition, amongst older Romanian speakers, there has been a resistance to learning Ukrainian. For them, Russian continues to bridge the gap and permit communication with their Ukrainian neighbours and has remained the *lingua franca* in the region. Interestingly, Russian maintains its status because it does not belong to one particular group and in this region, in some respects, has become less-politicised in the local context as a language than Ukrainian. In spite of having gained ground in the official sphere, Ukrainian still lacks status on an informal level. An example of this came in the form of Vasyl' a civil servant in Chernivtsi, who was ethnically Romanian and had been brought up bilingually, speaking Romanian and Russian. In 1991, Vasyl' had been given three months to learn Ukrainian and had done so to a suitable level to satisfy his superiors. However, on a day to day basis, all of Vasyl's colleagues still spoke to him in Russian. Almost all of his non-written professional communication was in Russian and being fairly senior, his Ukrainian-speaking colleagues simply accommodated him.

In addition to prestige and its role as a *lingua franca*, Russian also maintained its status as a language of opportunity in Diyalivtsi. Many villagers spoke of their travels in the Soviet Union when they were younger. The majority of them had gone to work for short periods in Siberia or were sent with the armed forces to the Baltic States. Some spoke of their 'nostalgia' for the freedom of this travel. Although it was often obligatory, the perception was

one of mobility as freedom. Russian was the language of this mobility and was therefore associated with freedom and opportunity within the village. After 1991, it had remained so, with many men migrating to work in construction in Russia, where salaries were higher. Although earnings were lower than those in countries in the EU, the risks and costs associated with this type of migration were lower. Russian, therefore, remained a valuable language to those in Diyalivtsi. As work in official positions, in which Ukrainian was necessary, continued to be beyond the reach of most people in Diyalivtsi, Russian maintained its standing as a language of potential earning opportunities.

South of the border, in Romania, there was a commonly held belief that Ukrainian and Russian were in fact the same language. One of the key reasons for this was a simple mistranslation of ‘po-ruski’ into Romanian as ‘limba rusa’ or Russian, rather than Ruthenian. Another factor was the lack of comprehension of both languages. For linguistic and political reasons⁴⁵, few people in Romanian-speaking villages in the region had retained any real knowledge of Russian from the socialist era. However, from the small amount of Russian they knew, they recognised some words spoken in the Ruthenian villages and assumed their neighbours to be speaking Russian. This was also supported by their experiences of learning Russian at school with Ruthenian speakers.

When we used to have Russian classes at school, the children from XXX used to get really annoyed with us as we did a little work and always got the best marks. The Russian teacher used to really like us and knew that we would learn everything quickly. Sometimes I wouldn't go to the lessons and yet I was still better than all the other children. (Andrei, Gorbanita, May 2010)

The people of Gorbanita were generally referred to in the neighbouring village as ‘the Russians’. When they would attend events in the local village or simply visit the weekly

⁴⁵ Ceausescu pursued a national approach to socialism, referred to as ‘socialism in one country’, which led to a distancing from Moscow and improved relations with ‘the West’ (cf. Verdery, 1991).

market, I was informed that those in the neighbouring villages would say, ‘the Russians are coming’. This perception was partly founded in the idea that the people of Gorbanita spoke Russian and not Ruthenian. These discourses in Romania all served to negate the existence of a separate Ukrainian language and added to the continuing role of Russian.

iv. *Romanian Language Assimilation*

For the villagers of Gorbanita, the process of linguistic assimilation, which started in the inter-war period, continued after the northern part of the region was ceded to the Soviets during the Second World War. However, some of the biggest changes came through the reorganisation of the village collective farms over the socialist period. Gorbanita was originally part of a collective with three other Ruthenian villages to the north. The head of the collective came from Gorbanita and was still referred to in the village by many people as ‘the president’. In 1968, the collective farms were reorganised and Gorbanita, along with another Ruthenian village to the south, was placed in a collective with a larger Romanian village. Whilst the village had been in a collective with neighbouring Ruthenian-speaking villages, there had been little need for the workers on the collective farm to speak Romanian. Those in higher positions within the collective had learnt the language, but many villagers continued to speak only in Ruthenian. During this time, however, Romanian had begun to be spoken more widely in the village by those who left the village to work in factories either in local towns or in other parts of Romania.

During the socialist period, the region of study experienced a high level of migration to other parts of Romania. Having lost the main urban centre to Soviet occupation, there were less opportunities for employment in the region. This was a predominantly agricultural region and consequently had little industry and a lower standard of living than other parts of Romania, in particular Transylvania. The towns and cities of Transylvania, as well as

Bucharest, became sites of permanent or temporary migration for many workers from the region. Just as Russian had become the language of education and the workplace in Diyalivtsi, so Romanian became a necessary part of life in Gorbanita. One local woman, Dorina, commented that the Ruthenian language in Gorbanita had been lost because of the ‘success’ of the village. She was referring to villagers who had left for work and education in other areas. Many married and settled in Romanian-speaking areas and few continued speaking Ruthenian once they had left.

Some of the villagers of Diyalivtsi had some understanding of Romanian, due to family members having been Romanian speakers; however few of them claimed Romanian as their mother tongue. Only those who had married into the village from the surrounding Romanian-speaking villages truly saw it as their mother tongue and they formed a small minority in the village. They could often be seen talking together and were also the most likely to speak Russian or heavily ‘russified’ Ukrainian. Unlike the Ruthenian speakers of Gorbanita, many Romanian speakers, like their Ukrainian counterparts, maintained their native tongue throughout the Soviet period. There was a separation of the language of the workplace, i.e. Russian, and the language of the home. Diyalivtsi had been part of a collective farm with three neighbouring villages, of which one was Ukrainian-speaking and the other two were Romanian-speaking. Consequently, for those who worked on the collective farm, just as for those who worked in the factories and urban centres in the region, Russian was dominant as a *lingua franca*.

Romanian speakers from the Ukrainian side of the border formed a larger linguistic group in the Soviet Union when included with Romanian speakers from Moldova and other areas. Soviet nationalities policy actually gave them this collective identity and they were

categorised as Moldovans. Unlike Ruthenian speakers in Romania⁴⁶, they occupied a fairly continuous geographical area. Their language, however, does not reflect standardised Romanian due to the influence of first Russian and then Ukrainian. Most speakers do not have a high level of written language, which can be illustrated by the following text message, *Da eu oi vorbi ku el wi loi lua pawaportul tau. Nai grija.*

Written correctly in Romanian, this would read,

*Da, eu voi vorbi cu el și voi lua pașaportul tau. N-ai grija.*⁴⁷

Apart from spelling and grammatical mistakes, there are also two other clear indicators of the influence of the Cyrillic alphabet. The first is the use of the letter ‘k’ instead of ‘c’, which has become popular also in Romania in text language and also internet forums, etc. The second, which would clearly be confusing to a Romanian speaker from Romania, is the use of ‘w’ to represent the Romanian letter ‘ș’, in English ‘sh’. This is clearly taken from the Cyrillic ‘ш’ and for anyone with an understanding of Moldovan, as it was transcribed in the Cyrillic during the Soviet era, would be clearly understandable. For those only used to the Latin alphabet, its use would be confusing. Overall, Romanian speakers did express a collective linguistic identity, but this did not necessarily translate to a shared national identity with Romanians from Romania itself.

The socialist period served to assimilate Ruthenian speakers from the south of the border into the dominant national language, through migration and the creation of a ‘Romanian-speaking’ collective farm. At the same time, Soviet nationalities policy and the use of Russian throughout the Soviet Union had an impact on not only the use of Romanian by Romanian-speakers, but also on the creation of a ‘Moldovan’ ethnicity and language, which separated the Soviet Union’s Romanian speakers from those in Romania itself.

⁴⁶ Ruthenian speakers can also be found in the Romanian region of Maramures, but are separated from those in Bukovyna by the Carpathian Mountains.

⁴⁷ Translation: Yes, I’ll speak to him and I’ll get your passport. Don’t worry.

In this section, I have shown in detail the contested nature of language in the Romanian-Ukrainian borderlands. Whilst national studies of language in Ukraine have often focussed on the debate on the status of Russian and Ukrainian, I have shown that in a multi-lingual area, such as the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands, the addition of a further minority language and local dialects amplifies the complexity. Positioned within this disputed milieu, language has become a key site for identity formation in both Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita. Exploring language gives insight into broader social change and also provides historical context to not only linguistic practice, but also economic practices. However, discourses on the differing values of particular languages have also begun to emerge. Although Ukrainian has gained status in official terms, the dominance of informal economic practices in these communities and the lack of formal employment insert a further layer of contestation, which I consider in the following two sections.

B. Language and Cross-Border Economic Practices

The status of the Romanian language has shifted in recent years due to the proliferation of cross-border economic activities. The language has come to be seen as more useful in Ukraine for cross-border small trading (CBST) and in gaining employment in the many retail services targeting Romanian consumers. In contrast, due to the high number of Romanian speakers in the shops and at the market in Chernivtsi, Ruthenian speakers from Romania rarely enjoyed any benefits to their shopping due to their language skills. Whilst the villagers of Diyalivtsi regularly discussed their abilities in Romanian and viewed such knowledge as valuable, no-one in Gorbanita alluded to any advantages to being able to speak Ruthenian in terms of cross-border economic practices.

i. *Cross-Border Small Trading*

In December 2007, I crossed the border to Romania with Alla and Dima, two Ukrainian speakers from Diyalivtsi. The young couple made such trips on a daily basis to trade cigarettes in a nearby Romanian border town. As neither of them spoke Romanian, their activities depended on and were embedded in a network of Romanian speakers from Ukraine and Ukrainian/Ruthenian speakers from Romania. Their language skills did not enable them to deal directly with Romanian speakers in Romania and their profits were affected by the 'commission' charged by their bilingual intermediaries. When living in Gorbanita, I observed how bilingual traders from Ukraine were able to come and sell products and goods directly at local markets and with local businesses. The knowledge of both languages proved to be a means of gaining income both through direct trading activities and also through acting as an intermediary to other traders.

Trade between individuals is facilitated when all traders share a common culture and language. A common culture allows individuals to trade with one another without intermediaries. In the case of language, this is most clear. If two agents speak the same language, they can negotiate a contract without the use of a translator. A common culture allows the traders to have common expectations and customs, which enhances trust. (Lazear, 1999: S97)

Lazear highlights that being able to trade in the same language enhances trust. He also goes on to discuss the cost implications of the use of a translator or intermediary.

In reality, trade can occur between individuals with different cultures or languages. In the case of language, a translator can be used. In the case of culture, mistrust and misunderstandings can be avoided by hiring individuals who are bicultural to act as liaisons. But such activity is costly, and it is best to think of the value of a trade as the net gain

associated with being able to conduct the trade without engaging the services of an intermediary. (Lazear, 1999: S98)

It was a desire to maximise profits in trading across the border that made the acquisition of Romanian language important to the people of Diyalivtsi. It was notable that of those traders from Chernivtsi, who were most actively engaged in these activities, many were ethnic Romanians. Most were able to trade with contacts in Suceava and operated a dual role of providing transportation for people wishing to travel between to the two urban centres, as well as engaging in some trading as well.⁴⁸ Many travelled across the border in their own minibuses/vans, whilst those in Diyalivtsi used cars and mopeds or were dependent on hitching a ride with someone crossing on the main road. The Romanian language and being able to speak it well, was a clear advantage in negotiations with buyers of goods in Romania. However, as Lazear concludes, those who benefit most are the bilingual. Ukrainian speakers to the south of the border, who engaged in the cigarette trade, money changing, etc. with the villagers of Diyalivtsi did benefit from their knowledge of Ukrainian. Nonetheless, as the sellers of the goods, the onus was upon those from Ukraine to meet the needs of their market by speaking Romanian. This reveals that language reflects the growing inequalities between Ukraine and Romania, as the disadvantaged position of Ukrainians that leads to cross-border small trade is made, remade and practiced through language.

⁴⁸ The profitability of their trade is highlighted by the homes these people were currently building. Around the Chernivtsi, many large new homes are being built; some of these belong to cross-border traders and are built from the profits of this trade.

ii. *Working in Retail and Cross-Border Consumption*

The removal of the Ukrainian visa regime for Romanian citizens has led many to travel across the border to buy Ukraine's cheaper goods⁴⁹ for their own personal use or to sell on in Romania. This has led to a rise in the number of businesses on the Ukrainian side of the border crossing catering to their needs. To avoid having to travel all the way to Chernivtsi, many Romanians prefer to use the petrol stations and shops that have sprung up near the border. These businesses charge a premium compared to their counterparts in Chernivtsi or in nearby villages and they also provide much-needed employment in rural communities. The benefits are not always evenly felt though, as Romanian-speakers are in greater demand to deal with the wave of Romanian clients. Inna, a young woman from the neighbouring Romanian-speaking village to Diyalivtsi, whom we met earlier in the chapter, came to me very excited one day about an offer of employment.

The owner of that new shop on the main road by the border has offered me a job. He approached me directly and really wants me to work there; to speak to the clients. (Inna, Diyalivtsi, February 2008)

Inna was approached due to her knowledge of Romanian, which was not shared by most people in Diyalivtsi.

Whilst many of the villagers in Diyalivtsi were keen to learn some Romanian to help in this trade, few from Gorbanita spoke of a need for Ukrainian in their shopping trips to Ukraine. I travelled one day with a young couple from Gorbanita, Anca and Dumitru, to a large market in Chernivtsi. Dumitru was from Gorbanita, but had worked for a number of years in France and had no working knowledge of Ukrainian. Anca was from a nearby Romanian-speaking village. When we arrived at the market, I initially accompanied them and

⁴⁹ As a general guideline, at the time of research, certain household goods and produce were between half of the price and ten times cheaper in Ukraine. Petrol was approximately half the price it was in Romania and cigarettes and alcohol could be as little as a tenth of the price. Since that time, subsequent research shows that increases in prices following the economic crisis in Ukraine has made such trips less appealing, but they remain popular, particularly prior to important celebrations, such as Easter and Christmas.

was translating between them and the stallholders, but it soon became apparent that such translation was not necessary as most stallholders knew enough Romanian to deal with Anca and Dumitru.

It is clear that the emergent cross-border economic practices privileged knowledge of Romanian and abilities in Romanian were frequently discussed amongst the villagers of Diyalivtsi. The reasons for this were clear, as Romanian proved to be useful not only to those trading across the border in Romania, but also in gaining jobs and customers in Ukraine itself. By contrast, there seemed to be few benefits related to the speaking of Ukrainian for the brief shopping trips made by Romanian citizens to the north of the border. Nonetheless, there were Ukrainian speakers in Romania profiting from acting as intermediaries to monolingual Ukrainian traders from across the border. Cross-border economic practices reinforced perceptions of the low status of the Ukrainian language within Diyalivtsi, whilst at the same time presenting opportunities for speakers of Romanian. In a sense, language can be viewed as a symbolic site for the reproduction of growing regional economic disparities. The next section examines how a new role for the Romanian language was being negotiated and imbued with value indirectly in the languages of international migration.

C. Languages of Migration

During the 1990s and into the 2000s, Russian remained important as a language of migration in Ukraine, with many men from the region continuing to go to work in construction in Russia, where salaries were higher. Although earnings were lower than those in countries in the EU, the risks and costs associated with this type of migration were lower. Russian, therefore, had remained until recently a valuable language to those in Diyalivtsi. However, Russian was also beginning to lose its economic value as migration to Southern Europe grew and by the time of my fieldwork in 2007-2008, no migrant workers from the village remained in Russia. The most popular destinations for workers from Diyalivtsi were Italy and Spain,⁵⁰ with the majority of workers being female⁵¹, but including also some younger men, who had left together with their wives.⁵² In Gorbanita, Italy and France had become the main sites of migration, with some people from the village now moving from France or Italy to the UK in particular, to gain higher salaries.⁵³ In contrast to Diyalivtsi, most of the migrants were men or young families.⁵⁴ The growth of the remittance economies and the shift in migration to Southern Europe had implications for perspectives on language and language acquisition.

i. Romanian as a Useful Language

The Romanian language had come to be valued not only for cross-border trading, but also in migration. Natalia, a middle-aged woman from Diyalivtsi, walked with me through the village one day and we got talking about migration to Italy.

⁵⁰ The popularity of Italy as a destination was confirmed in a poll carried out by the Centre for Peace, Conversion and Foreign Policy of Ukraine (CPCFPU) in 2005, where 60% cited Italy as an attractive option, 32% Portugal and 25% Spain, with just 8% choosing Russia (Dikiy, 2007).

⁵¹ This feminisation of migration is discussed in detail in chapter six.

⁵² For more on migration from Ukraine in the 1990s and 2000s, see Kotsunenکو, 2007.

⁵³ Since Romanian accession to the European Union on 1st January 2007.

⁵⁴ For more on migration from Romania and Ukraine to Italy see Castagnone et al. 2007.

It really helps to know Romanian, you know? People who speak Romanian find it so much easier to learn Italian. (Natalia, Diyalivtsi, November 2007)

The same opinion was voiced regularly by others in the village, such as Anatolii, a migrant worker in Italy, who returned to Diyalivtsi in the winter of 2007/2008 to visit his family.

You know, it took us all these seven years to even start to get comfortable in Italian. The first two or three years were really hard; we didn't understand anything. It's easier now, but I wish I had known some Romanian. (Anatolii, Diyalivtsi, December 2007)

Knowledge of Romanian had had little status in the Soviet era, with Russian as a lingua franca and a lack of opportunities to travel outside of the Soviet Union, there was no economic reason for the people of Diyalivtsi to actively learn or maintain any knowledge they had. However, the growth in cross-border economic practices and migrant labour to southern Europe have all led to a growing awareness in Diyalivtsi that Romanian has actual economic value. Although the non-possession of Romanian language skills does not act as a complete barrier to these activities, it is widely perceived that such skills could assist villagers in their participation in them. As Rampton's study of young people in 1995 showed, speakers can cross linguistic boundaries, even with a very limited knowledge of a language. For most of the people of Diyalivtsi, when speaking of language acquisition, it was this limited but functional knowledge of language to which they aspired. To 'know' a language was to know enough to carry out trading deals or the other economic activities associated with them. Therefore, existing language skills enabled economic practices but language acquisition was also being shaped by emerging economic activities.

ii. *Hidden Ukrainian*

In contrast to the usefulness of Romanian, the Ukrainian language was to a certain extent ‘hidden’ in international migration. There were two main reasons for this: firstly, that for heritage speakers from Gorbanita, they integrated into the Romanian migrant community and a knowledge of the language of the country of migration and Romanian were the only visible ones; secondly, due to the fact that immigration by the people of Diyalivtsi was often illegal or began illegally, they were also often forced to hide their native tongue. Raluca was a native of Gorbanita and had grown up speaking Ruthenian at home. She had married a Romanian speaker from a neighbouring village and she and her husband, along with their small child, were living and working in London. Raluca shared her home in London with another Romanian family from Transylvania. One day, when visiting Raluca, I spoke to her and her brother in Ukrainian, something we had done in the past. The two women from the other family in the house expressed shock and surprise in hearing Raluca speak another language. She had lived with them for two years and in that time had made no reference to being from a Ruthenian-speaking family. Given her own husband’s inability to speak the language, she had simply never felt the need to make reference to it or use it. Raluca then had to explain to the two women that she was from a ‘Russian-speaking’ village.⁵⁵

Alina, a woman from Diyalivtsi who had spent three years living and working in London, explained how she hid her Ukrainian knowledge and instead came to use Russian:

We had some good friends from the Baltics, Russian speakers, you know? They were very good friends, really they were and we understood one another well. I have tried to contact them since we got back, but I couldn’t. They were good people, Lena and her husband. We spoke Russian to them, you know? They were illegal, like us at the beginning, but then they

⁵⁵ This is a mistranslation into Romanian of ‘po-rus’kii’, in which most villagers from Gorbanita referred to themselves as speaking ‘limba rusa’, i.e. Russian.

could use their own passports after a year or so, you know? They became members of the European Union. (Alina, Diyalivtsi, January 2008)

Unlike in Italy, where there were large numbers of Ukrainian migrants, Alina and her husband were more isolated and found themselves making contacts on the basis of Russian, rather than Ukrainian. In addition, they had begun their stay in the UK with Greek passports, but later, like Lena and her husband, held passports from one of the Baltic States. This meant that Russian proved useful not only in terms of meeting other people, but also became their ‘official’ language with their false passports, as they posed as Russian speakers from the Baltics. Romanian, in contrast, did not become hidden in migration in the same way as Ukrainian and was considered to be useful by the people of Diyalivtsi in learning the Latin languages that were dominant in migration from the village.

iii. Acquiring the Languages of Migration

In this section, I have discussed the languages of migration, which differ from those previously explored as they cannot be seen to historically form the basis of identification. However, the acquisition of them has become an important factor in the economic practices of everyday life both in and away from the village. They have become crucial to social status and standing within Diyalivtsi in particular and to a lesser extent in Gorbanita, as local society and social capital is remade through economic practices. Modern foreign languages used in migration and the acquisition of them have come to represent for most villagers a means to gain access to earnings through both migrant work and also through higher-status jobs in Romania in particular. Several authors have suggested that in many post-Soviet countries English and Russian represent languages of opportunity (Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun, 2008; Nagzibekova, 2008). Yet, my research in Diyalivtsi has shown that in the context of

communities dependent on multiple economic practices, these two languages proved less important than Italian, Spanish and even Portuguese.

In Diyalivtsi, the ability of ‘their’ people to learn other languages and work in other countries was a frequent topic of conversation and also of pride. ‘Performing’ language was valorised through economic practices. People were often introduced in terms of what languages they speak or where they had been for migrant work. Of those who had returned to the village, there was a clear belief amongst other villagers that they spoke the language of the country they had migrated to fluently. My neighbour, Domtsia, was one of the few people in the village who had never been involved in migrant work. Her comments were typical of the views held in the village on a collective level about their migrant workers,

Our people move somewhere new and within the first few days they know what to do, they know how much things cost and they quickly learn the language. (Domtsia, Diyalivtsi, December 2007)

The few people who had returned permanently from migrant work abroad would do little to contradict this view publicly. They would demonstrate their linguistic abilities through a few words or a phrase and the other villagers would nod appreciatively at this demonstration of linguistic competence. However, many people did confess in their own homes that they had had difficulties in even basic communication. Serhii, who had migrated to Italy, explained the problems he had encountered one day in a conversation with me,

I know what it is like to live overseas. When I first got to Italy, I quickly realised that the standardised Italian I had learnt was completely not like the way that people speak. (Serhii, Diyalivtsi, January 2008)

Methods of learning language prior to migration rarely included any language classes or training, as such learning opportunities were only available in Chernivtsi and the costs were beyond the budget of those seeking such work. In addition, they were generally targeted

at graduate and therefore also beyond the educational level of those in Diyalivtsi. My neighbour Lena was in her fifties and very keen to travel to Italy for migrant work. She frequently visited us and tried to persuade Rodika to join her in migrating to Italy. On one occasion, I asked Lena about how she planned to learn Italian.

I've got an Italian dictionary. I've been trying to study it for some time, you know, learning the words and everything. I haven't learnt much though. (Lena, Diyalivtsi, March 2008)

Lena's approach to learning Italian was similar to language learning I also encountered in Gorbanita. Through their own experiences and those of other migrant workers, it was well known that many of the jobs required very little knowledge of the language. This was illustrated by an entreaty made to me one day by Luchika, an older woman in the village, who had migrated for a year to Spain. She asked me about the possibility of migrant work in the UK and when I pointed out that she didn't speak any English, she replied, "don't people there have housekeepers?" For Luchika, such work did not require any command of the language. She explained to me later,

I learnt the Spanish words for things quickly when I was working in the kitchen, you know? Potatoes, spoons, plates and so on. (Luchika, Diyalivtsi, April 2008)

For Luchika and others like her, knowing a language meant merely being able to understand what was expected of her. It was in this way that Romanian-speakers had such an advantage, as even without lessons, most could move to Italy and understand the tasks assigned to them.

The formal education system in both Romania and Ukraine did not reflect the need to learn the languages of migration. Most schools in Romania saw teaching in English and in French, with English and Russian dominating in Ukraine. These languages did not represent the reality of the economic opportunities for people in Diyalivtsi and have only recently become important in Gorbanita. Whilst young people, such as Sorin, did talk of English for

their future career prospects, few people in Diyalivtsi or Gorbanita were in a position to gain the education necessary for such careers. This reflects the contrast between formal and informal employment in Ukraine and Romania. Whilst the education system was focussed on producing people with skills for the formal sector, those necessary for informal employment and the diverse economic practices were overlooked and had to be developed independently.

D. Conclusions

In the context of language in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands, there are several factors affecting not only the use of language for communication purposes, but also perceptions of language and identification with particular languages. Given the history of the region, there is a need to draw on several bodies of academic literature to theorise language and linguistic identity. In addition to general theories of the social meaning language conveys, these also include literature on multilingualism and migration, diaspora and language, the use of lingua francas and the value of language in economic transactions. The Russian-speaking population of the post-Soviet states have been described as a ‘beached diaspora’ (Laitlin, 1998: 29). However, it has also been suggested that the term ‘diaspora’ does not capture the position of most Russians living in post-Soviet countries, who do not see Russia as their homeland; instead they identify with their states of residence (Barrington, 2001; Barrington et al., 2003). The same can be said of Romanian speakers in Ukraine and Ruthenian speakers in Romania. For them, there has been no movement from their own original settlements; they still reside in the same place. The changes which have taken place have been in the regimes governing them, over which most feel they have no control. ‘Multilingualism is not what individuals have or lack, but what the environment, as structured determination and interactional emergence, enables and disables them to deploy.’ (Blommaert et al, 2005: 213)

This sense of powerlessness in terms of language and language choice has led to a resistance in the case of Diyalivtsi to forms of modern standardised Ukrainian. They identify instead on a local level with their language or ‘village’. Traditionally, sociolinguists viewed language planning as a positive phenomenon that was aimed at supporting minority languages (Baker, 2006). However, criticism of this approach suggests that language planning is in fact a political process in which ‘policies often create and sustain various forms of social inequality’ (Tollefson, 2006: 42). Such inequalities are apparent, both in the language policies of the socialist and post-socialist Romanian governments and within the current Ukrainian administration. Both regimes, in pursuing a nationalising agenda, have disadvantaged minority groups in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands. Whilst legislation protects the rights of these minorities, in reality people are required to gain knowledge of the dominant language in order to gain employment in the official sphere. Einar Haugen argues against the loss of any form of language, which such nationalising language policies entails:

‘and yet, who are we to call for linguistic genocide in the name of efficiency? Let us recall that although a language is a tool and an instrument of communication, that is not all it is. A language is also a part of one’s personality, a form of behavior that has its roots in our earliest experience. Whether it is a so-called rural or ghetto dialect, or a peasant language, or a ‘primitive’ idiom, it fulfills exactly the same needs and performs the same services in the daily lives of its speakers as does the most advanced [sic] language of culture . . .’ (in Clark et al., 1998)

In contrast, the use of Russian as a lingua franca in the Soviet period in Ukraine was viewed more positively, as it did not represent the dominance of one particular indigenous linguistic group over another. Pavlenko (2008b) distinguishes three groups of factors, which impact upon the use of Russian as a lingua franca in the post-Soviet space. The first group relates to the ethnic and linguistic composition of the population. In countries such as

Lithuania, ethnic and linguistic homogeneity is seen to have facilitated the shift to Lithuanian, whilst in Georgia, the multi-ethnic population has determined a continuation of the use of Russian. The second group of factors (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Giger & Sloboda, 2008) relates to the low status of the titular language in comparison with Russian, e.g. Ukrainian and Belarusian. The final group are of regional and global forces, which favour the use of global lingua francas, including Russian and English. In this region all of these factors are currently having an impact, however consideration of economic practices gives a fuller and more complete understanding of the processes taking place.

However, Pavlenko does not comment on the fact that on a local level, certain languages may have a greater impact than global or regional lingua francas, because of similar global forces. The diverse economic practices of the borderlands, particularly migrant work and cross-border small trading had heightened perceptions of the economic benefits of one language of the region, namely Romanian, and several languages from outside the region, primarily Italian and Spanish. These languages rarely featured in the planning of language policy on a national level, yet had local significance. The threat posed by such languages was rarely discussed, as so much emphasis has been placed on the role of Russian. However, in both Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita, the lack of access to employment requiring Ukrainian, led to a growing need for skills in Romanian for cross-border trading and retail work close to the border, in addition to Italian and Spanish for migrant work.

Blommaert et al. (2005) assert that the environment in which immigrant workers find themselves can render worthless their existing language skills. To extend this argument, a change in environment through political shift can be seen to have the same effect in this border area. Whilst the Romanian side of the border has seen stability in terms of the language policy environment for almost 100 years, to the north of the border, their neighbours are now coming to terms with the third change in official language over the same

period. The local dialect developed in Diyalivtsi has become the focus of linguistic identity. The portrayal of this dialect as being apart from modern standardised Ukrainian reflects a reaction to the notion that their language is somehow ‘impure’ and also reveals a lack of identification with the Ukrainian national ideal. The inability to speak literary Ukrainian is, thus, portrayed as a ‘non-accommodation’, making it ideological or political.

In linguistic terms, perceptions of Ukrainian and Russian in Romania have also not facilitated identification between the villagers of Gorbanita and their northern neighbours. Contact with the Ukraine through cross-border consumption and exposure to the use of Russian as a *lingua franca* in this region between Ukrainian and Romanian speakers have further exacerbated ideas that their own village dialect is not spoken to the north of the border. Thus, linguistic difference has been established between groups whose language is effectively the same. The physical border has been given meaning as a ‘linguistic’ border through political, social and economic processes (Cole and Wolf, 1973). By exploring language and economic practices, we gain insight into not only how these practices are shaping language use and identity, but also the role this plays in understanding constructions of Ukrainian and Romanian as nationalities and the way these are being (re-)valorised. Language as a site clearly demonstrates the growing inequalities at the borders of ‘EU’rope. Nonetheless, this analysis raises several questions about how these newly constructed and shifting identities are grounded in citizen-state relations. It is evident that this complex linguistic context forms part of the basis for the way in which villagers construct and understand their relationships with their respective states and negotiate their citizenship, which is the topic of the following chapter.

5. Practicing the Economies of Citizenship

Introduction

First came the Germans, then the Romanians, then the Russians and now we have the Ukrainians. (Vasyl', Diyalivtsi, March 2008)

Vasyl' was one of many people in Diyalivtsi who expressed the idea that 'the Ukrainians' were the latest in a long line of occupiers in the region, in spite of the fact that he saw himself as Ukrainian in terms of ethnicity and nationality. As Strayer commented in 1970, 'a state exists chiefly in the hearts and minds of its people; if they do not believe it is there, no logical exercise will bring it to life'. Bourdieu (1999: 53) questioned how citizens could objectively imagine a state, when their own thought processes were curtailed by that state through socialisation and education. In this context, postsocialist states represent a striking case study, as the majority of the population were educated and socialised in a different state from the one that now exists. Although this may not provide the necessary objectivity to which Bourdieu refers, it does in a sense provide an expressible subjectivity.

In this chapter, I explore economic practices and citizenship from the perspective of people in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita. I illustrate their expectations as citizens of a state, particularly in relation to their economic rights, and argue that a state's failure to meet these expectations not only leads to the growth of informal economic practices, but also affects citizens' relationships to and identification with the state. Consequently, I argue that the people of Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita are developing their own notions of what their statehood signifies. This development is being shaped significantly by transnational perspectives developed through CBST and migration. The focus is on behavioural traits, their performance and discourses surrounding them, rather than ideas developed and promulgated through the traditional means of official nation and state-building (Miller-Idriss, 2006).

Much of the scholarship on citizenship over the past two decades has sought to build upon Marshall's *Citizenship and Social Class* (1992, originally published in 1950), in which Marshall moved the idea of citizenship beyond purely individual rights and liberties to encompass social and economic rights. The focus has often been upon particular categories, such as women, ethnic minorities, disabled people. What has emerged from the literature is a view of citizenship as fluid or a 'contested truth', which is politically and historically constructed (Somers, 1994: 65). However, there is also a need to explore the ways in which this view is constructed, negotiated and even negated through economic practices in the present.

'Such a comprehensive account must distinguish between at least three aspects of citizenship: citizenship as status, which denotes formal state membership and the rules of access to it; citizenship as rights, which is about the formal capacities and immunities connected with such status; and, in addition, citizenship as identity, which refers to the behavioral aspects of individuals acting and conceiving of themselves as members of a collectivity, classically the nation, or the normative conceptions of such behavior imputed by the state.' (Joppke, 2007: 38)

In regions such as the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands, with low levels of formal employment, much of the economic life takes place in unregulated alternative economic spaces (Leyshon et al., 2003). The state's ability to impute normative conceptions of behaviour in these spaces is greatly reduced, shaped by routinised practices of informalisation. Alexander (2002, 77) has shown the processes by which 'reductionism' can lead to the state coming to symbolise just a couple of stereotypical elements, normally negative. Transnational processes, which CBST and migration can be viewed as, have been described as nationalising (Verdery 1998) through the creation of new categories of inclusion and exclusion—by redefining what practices and people count as national (cf. Berlant 1997).

However, the question arises as to how and in what ways citizens of the borderlands draw on their experiences to generate their own notions of collectivity. To consider this question in more detail, I have divided this chapter into three distinct sections. In the first, I consider economic perspectives on citizenship by exploring discourses of the past, of experiences of citizenship in the former Soviet Union and the Socialist Republic of Romania. I show how these discourses have framed views of citizenship economically in Diyalivtsi in the post-Soviet era. Secondly, I examine the economic practices through which these borderland communities most frequently come into contact with agents of the state – cross-border small trading and consumption. Finally, I conclude the chapter with analysis of migration, suggesting that experiences of working in other countries have a profound impact on the ways in which these communities comprehend their relations with their own state.

A. Economies of Citizenship

In this section, I explore narrative performance of the past that constructs citizenship as culture in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita of the Soviet and socialist periods. I explain how in giving meaning to the border, local communities also came to understand their own roles as citizens in Socialist Romania and the Soviet Union. Sabine (1934: 328) argues that there is a need for context and that the state therefore is historically contingent. The socialist period formed the basis of local understanding and identification prior to the upheaval of 1989/1991 and was crucial in the development of society-state relations in the post-socialist era. I reveal how the economic status of the Soviet Union and thus the border that delineated its citizens was paramount north of the border. It was a phenomenon that was very particular to this border area, due to the existence of a ‘poorer neighbour’, i.e. Romania. Therefore, the border and the state to which it was attributed became (in popular understanding) a protector of economic rights and status. In addition, the stable employment situation in the Soviet Union

frames the economic instability experienced post-1989/1991 in local narratives and in the final section I explore the impact of viewing citizenship economically on local views of the state in Diyalivtsi.

i. *Soviet Nostal'hiia (Nostalgia)*

Oh, how I would love to go back to Siberia; such beautiful, clean nature. We were there for just a few months, as you know it is frozen most of the time, and there were a few hundred people from all over the Soviet Union. I feel such nostalgia for that place; such a beautiful, clean place. (Rodika, Diyalivtsi, November 2007)

The above is from a conversation with Rodika, my host, and is representative of many such conversations I had with people of her age in the village. Several recalled trips to the Baltic States as part of the Soviet forces, others also travelled to Siberia for short periods. The one element all of their stories had in common was the use of the word *nostal'hiia* or nostalgia. For them, these were feted and celebrated in discourse. They often many expressed a desire to return to this past. For many of those who found themselves living north of the border after 1944, being part of the USSR gave them greater opportunities for travel than they had ever experienced before and although the travel may have been compulsory, it was narrated as representing a freedom in tales of the past. Mobility for villagers was predominantly temporary, unless it resulted in marriage. However, such cases were rare, aside from one woman who had a mother from Murmansk and another younger woman who had married into the village from Southern Russia, I was told there were no other 'Russians' in the village.

Movement for work within the Soviet Union had contributed to a sense of 'closeness' to Russia and other Soviet states and a 'distance' from nearby Romania.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ I do not suggest that this contact in the Soviet era is the only factor impacting on this 'distance', as others also commented on 'evident' cultural, ethnic and linguistic proximity in my time in the region.

‘Distance,...., is as much about different ways of categorising and understanding the same things, as it is about geographical reach. Just as the state classifies actions, responsibilities, and relationships in one narrative of order, so do farmers, officials, and workers place their own structure of understandings upon their lives.’ (Alexander, 2002: 76) In a sense, this reveals that meaning was given to the border, a true sense of distance from those to the south of it. However, the key basis for difference and differentiation from those to the south was drawn from the economic status of the Soviet Union compared to Socialist Romania. This very much reflects the construction of imaginative geographies of the border, giving a sense of how these discourses were central to village life and identity.

One of the main bases for nostalgia for the Soviet period in Diyalivtsi was the ability to work and provide for their families. One day, I was watching a program about furniture-making in the Soviet period with my host Rodika and she was keen that I understand the quality of the furniture produced at the time.

Look! Such lovely furniture and really good quality. I could afford to furnish my house in those days. I could afford everything I needed on my own salary. (Rodika, Diyalivtsi, November 2007)

Rodika was a chef, who had found little work since she was made redundant from a restaurant in a nearby village a few years ago. She now tried to meet hers and her daughter’s needs with UAH380 per month in sickness benefit for a heart condition, self-provisioning from their small garden, making alterations to clothes, helping older people in the village and taking seasonal work in the village post office. During the winter months, she and her teenage daughter occasionally went to neighbours’ houses to eat and to keep warm. Rodika was nostalgic for being able to support herself and having an income that met her needs. Here we see a strong sense that formal economic practices, such as employment were viewed more positively than informal practices, in spite of their proliferation and widespread acceptance.

In Gorbanita, I encountered similar expressions of nostalgia for the economic stability of the socialist period.

When we had Him⁵⁷, things were worse but better as well, in a way. People always had enough to live on and now I really struggle on my pension. Now I don't really have enough, but what can I do? I'm too old to work now. (Silvia, Gorbanita, August 2008).

However, such statements were mostly tempered with recognition that there were also difficulties associated with this period. Any problems associated with the Soviet period were seemingly under-communicated in Diyalivtsi, as a conversation with Zhenia, a younger woman, revealed her frustration with how the era is portrayed in the village:

These people have just forgotten how bad it was. They have forgotten about all the beatings from the brigadier and how we couldn't do anything or go anywhere. All they remember is how much cheaper things were and how stable life was if you went to work, came home and didn't try and change anything. (Zhenia, Diyalivtsi, March 2008).

Zhenia's comment reveals again a focus on economic status and issues within Diyalivtsi, which was echoed to a lesser extent in Gorbanita. In both cases, the economic role of the state in providing a stable economic environment for citizens is deemed to be important and is a crucial part of the nostalgia expressed for the era.

It is also important to remember that these comments were made almost 20 years after the collapse of the Ceausescu regime and 17 years after the fall of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the concentration on economic issues also reflects how villagers feel about what has happened since that time. In a sense, nostalgia can only exist for something that one once had (or imagined that one had) and has since been lost. There was a sense that involvement in politics or the expression of political opinions was a luxury for the wealthy, who weren't

⁵⁷ Refers to Nicolae Ceausescu.

implicated in the daily struggle to provide for one's family⁵⁸. A conversation I had with Rodika in Diyalivtsi as I left a retired couple's house one day was a typical expression of this opinion.

What did he have to say? Did he talk to you about politics? It's alright for him to occupy himself with politics. He was a policeman, you know? So he has a big pension. He doesn't have to fight for money. (Rodika, Diyalivtsi, April 2008)

For Rodika and many other households in Diyalivtsi, the economic difficulties of post-socialism frame the economic emphasis being placed on reflections on the Soviet era. In a sense, the economic stability of the era only became important when it no longer existed and freedoms such as political expression are devalued and even ridiculed in the current context. I will discuss the consequences of this for modern society-state relations later in the chapter. In 1976, Scott suggested that peasant morality prioritises economic survival and that the actions of others, including governments, are judged on the basis of how they affect the struggle to survive.⁵⁹

ii. Cross-Border Consumption in the Soviet Union

Cross-border consumption is not solely a feature of post-socialism and was widespread within the Soviet Union and other socialist states in the region (Williams and Balaz, 2002: 324). For the people of Diyalivtsi, the Republic of Moldova became a key economic destination in the Soviet era.

In the Soviet era, I went to Chisinau and I couldn't believe all the things you could get there that weren't available here. We used to come back with our bags stuffed full of goods.

⁵⁸ MacKinnon (1989) suggests that political refers to power relations, rather than being monopolised by the state. In this comment, a man able to engage in a relationship with the state is seen to have power due to economic stability. Those without this are essentially without power to engage in such a relationship.

⁵⁹ See for a further example Beinart and Bundy, 1987.

You could even get Fanta there in Soviet times. We don't really go now, because of the border I suppose. (Lena, Diyalivtsi, February 2008)

This type of travel was a means of dealing with the 'economies of shortage' (Kornai, 1992). Travelling to Moldova was easy, there was no border and more importantly, there was an incentive to travel, to gain access to goods not available in the Ukrainian SSR or at least in this region. In a sense, this type of traffic across the border and the idea of travelling elsewhere to get goods are not new for most people in Diyalivtsi; however Moldova's position in the Soviet era has not been maintained since 1991. In fact, many people in Diyalivtsi expressed gaining some comfort from the fact that 'at least we are not Moldovan'. Whilst earlier trips from this period were to consume, the people of Diyalivtsi now found that they were involved in a day way in cross-border economic practices, namely trade.

What this served to do was to further tie the local community into the Soviet Union and gave them a sense of belonging. Moldovans became '*nashi*' or 'ours' and its proximity to the region made it a more readily accessible than other parts of the Soviet Union. Whereas the nearby Romanian border was rarely crossed, Moldova came to play an economic role in village life, filling gaps left by the local economy, particularly in meeting demand for rarely-available Western and consumer goods. Memories of trips to Chisinau, to the large central market were fondly narrated. There was also a sense of freedom of choice and the belief that the Soviet Union offered greater opportunities than the present day in Ukraine. Attitudes towards Moldova were contrasted sharply by views of Romania throughout the socialist era.

iii. *Poor Romania*

Perceptions of Socialist Romania as a ‘poor’ country were widespread in Diyalivtsi and the surrounding region. Understanding this perception within the context of the local area is crucial to citizenship perspectives on both sides of the border.

People here don't live like poor people. Our way of life is not poor like it is there in Romania (Rodika, Diyalivtsi, 2007).

Rodika's view was one I encountered regularly in Diyalivtsi and was often used to warn me before I moved to carry out fieldwork in Romania. It was explained to me that I could not expect to receive the same sort of reception when I travelled to Romania and, in particular, that people would not ‘feed me’. Hospitality in the form of feeding guests was exceptionally important to most villagers and the failure to do so was seen as a sign of a lack of material wealth.

The view of Romania as poor had developed in the socialist period and came to play an important role in local understanding to the north of the border. Ceausescu's isolationist path for Romania under socialism meant that the inhabitants in Gorbanita had gained little experience of other socialist states or peoples. During the socialist period, some of those in Gorbanita had been able to travel for study and work to other parts of Romania. Several families had middle-aged sons and daughters permanently based in Bucharest. Others went for temporary work in Bucharest or other large centres and had since returned.

When I was younger, my father-in-law offered to build me a house in his village. I thanked him but told him that I didn't want one. I lived in the block and at that time it was the best place to be. If only I had known then what I know now! The block was fine when I was younger, but I'm getting older now and thinking of retirement. Life in the block has no attraction for me now. (Vasia, Gorbanita, August 2008)

The rapid industrialisation of the socialist period in Romania meant that many people left their parents and homes in the village to work in factories and jobs in the rapidly-expanding towns. Unlike in Diyalivtsi, where people were sent for periods to other parts of the Soviet Union or travelled on a daily basis to factories by bus⁶⁰, Gorbanita saw an emptying out of its population. Younger people left for towns and cities in the region and beyond. Today, the village has no administration left and forms a small part of a collective with the neighbouring, much larger Romanian-speaking village.⁶¹

Consequently, for the territory to the north of Suceava on the way towards the border, which is where Gorbanita is located, there was little investment in the socialist era. Those who wanted to achieve a higher status simply left and there was something of a left-behind feel to the region. A look at the housing stock in these settlements illustrates this, as traditional village houses built in the 1950s are only now being replaced.⁶² Diyalivtsi, in contrast, has a large number of homes, which although still of a traditional layout in some respects, are much larger than those in Gorbanita and many were constructed in the 1980s, with extensions being added at a later date.

⁶⁰ I was told that seven or eight buses used to leave village every day for factories in the region.

⁶¹ There is a further reason for the neighbouring village's growing population compared to Gorbanita, which is religion. A large proportion of the neighbouring village's population are Protestants, primarily Pentecostal or Seventh Day Adventist. Consequently, many families have a greater number of children than the Romanian Orthodox families of Gorbanita. Therefore, even if several children left to work in other areas, at least some would remain in the village. This contrasts sharply with the 2-3 children per household in Gorbanita, most of whom left the village and return only for visits.

⁶² Most of these houses were built by the villagers themselves and had the traditional format of two rooms separated by a corridor. The majority also had a summer kitchen in a separate building and a variety of outbuildings/a barn.

Figure 5: A house in Diyalivtsi, built in the 1980s



Figure 6: A traditional village house in Gorbanita, built in the 1950s



Towards the end of the socialist period in the 1980s, most Romanians suffered severe economic hardship due to Ceausescu's policies and attempts to pay off national debts. The people of Diyalivtsi, with their street lights and modernised homes would look across the border into the blackness of Romania at night, where power shortages served as an indicator of the struggles of those south of the border.

You know in Ceausescu's time there were no lights there. It was completely dark, just like it is here now. Oh, how things have changed. (Liuba, Diyalivtsi, January 2008)

Whilst the villagers of Diyalivtsi fondly remembered travelling to the Moldovan SSR to gain access to consumer goods, no such possibilities were available to the inhabitants of Gorbanita. However, there were increasingly shortages of more basic services in Romania in the 1980s, as Liuba's comment highlights. Electricity and gas supplies were often interrupted and the life in the block, which Vasia had been so keen on in his youth, became more difficult.

We lived in the town when Adriana was a baby, but I hated life there. We had to build a ceramic, wood-burning radiator in our flat, as the heating was only on for a few hours a day in winter and it was too cold for the baby. We lived on the fourth floor and there was no lift, so I had to carry the wood and the baby up the stairs and I was so thin then. I insisted my husband build us a house here in the village as I couldn't live there anymore. When we bought the land around 1980, people thought we were mad to leave the town, but a few years later, they were all telling us how right we had been. (Ana, Gorbanita, May 2010)

In narrating their time as Soviet citizens, people in Diyalivtsi focused on economic stability, which had enabled mobility. Economies of shortage led to cross-border consumption, but these were fondly narrated as trips to Moldova and punctuated by the fact that incomes were sufficient to enable such trips. The nostalgia appeared to be centred on the 'consumption' aspect of the trip, which differed from current trading through the border.

Whilst both sets of practices involve mobility the significant variation in the aim led to differing experiences, as well as the construction of dissimilar narratives. Discourses of Socialist Romania were less nostalgic due to the worsening of the economic situation in the country at the end of the socialist era. The poor conditions south of the border were noted by people living in Diyalivtsi; for them, to be a Romanian citizen implied poverty.

iv. *Viewing Citizenship Economically*

Economic expectations of citizenship emerged as central to discourses criticising the Ukrainian state.

I'm a qualified accountant, you know? I qualified a few years ago; I even have the photos of my graduation. But it's not worth me taking a job in XXX. The salaries are too low. I would have to pay for travel and food, which I make from scratch now at home. There would be no one to do the work around the house and in the garden. (Zhenia, Diyalivtsi, March 2008)

Zhenia and her husband's only income was from his trading of cigarettes and other goods across the border to Romania. She used to join him in this activity until she had their son, whom she now cares for at home. There is no pre-school care in the village, so she expected to stay at home with him until he goes to school at the age of seven. Her husband made two trips on a weekly basis to markets in two towns in Romania. For this family and many in Diyalivtsi, engaged in migrant work or cross-border small trading, the lack of opportunities to earn a high enough and stable enough income in their country's formal economy is clearly a important factor in their decision to trade; they are, as such unwilling entrepreneurs. The stability of public and private sector incomes was one a key consideration for most.

I used to work in construction with a guy here, but I got tired of working and receiving no pay. Sometimes we would get paid and at other times we wouldn't and I couldn't rely on them. The boss was no good, a drunk. I had to find a way to get money on my own and not to

have to rely on people like him. The construction sector is full of them. (Kostia, Chernivtsi, August 2008)

Valeria, a village council worker from Diyalivtsi's neighbouring village described a similar situation in the public sector in late 2008.

It was alright in the 1990s, if we didn't get paid for some time, we didn't have anything to pay out ourselves really. I haven't been paid for two months since the crisis began and they haven't told us when we will be paid. I have a mortgage now and I am frightened of losing my house. (Valeria, near Diyalivtsi, November 2008)

In the 1990s, few people had the kind of debts, which many of them have taken on due to the relative stability in the 2000s. Other friends shared fears about losing cars and other possessions that they had bought on credit. I overheard a conversation one day in Diyalivtsi when I was visiting from Romania between my host and our neighbour. Rodika had recently bought a satellite dish from a local town on credit.

Luchika: *Have you been to pay your money for the satellite dish?*

Rodika: *Yes, I went and paid last week.*

Luchika: *Did they tell you that people were having problems paying because of the crisis? I heard that many people cannot pay their debts.*

Rodika: *I don't know, I didn't ask. I just go and pay my money and leave. It's not my business.*

Rodika's family was one of the poorest families in the village. She had become accustomed to surviving on very little and the small debt that she had taken out with the shop in the local town was a big decision for her. However, the concern pertaining to the payment of debts was evident amongst all groups in the village at the beginning of the global economic crisis.

The difficult economic situation in Diyalivtsi had led to criticism of their state and a nostalgic view of Soviet citizenship, as having provided economic security and incomes to

meet household needs. Improvements in Romania since 1989 have brought earlier conditions into sharper focus in Diyalivtsi, as they attempt to understand the changes that have resulted in a fall in their own economic capital. It is this shift that I explore in the following section.

B. Cross-Border Economic Practices and Citizenship

In the region in which Diyalivtsi is located, differentiation on ethno-national terms is not possible due to the large number of Romanian villages in Ukraine. I argue here that as the border in this region cannot be understood in ethno-national terms, the view of it in economic terms (which Liuba's comment from the previous section illustrates and the role of economic practices in the construction of this view) that developed in the Soviet period in Diyalivtsi, has shifted to a basis of patterns and competencies in consumption resulting from experiences of cross-border economic practices, which serves to dichotomise those living south of the border. Differing layers of the past are shaped into a narrative that becomes very much part of the present. In creating this dichotomisation (Eidheim, 1971) they also form values that need to be maintained in the community and a new form of collective identity based on consumption emerges. In addition, cross-border trading (CBST) and cross-border consumption bring local people into regular contact with 'representatives' of the state. In the final part of this section, I explore the impact that encounters with corruption at the border is having upon views of the Ukrainian and Romanian states.

i. Self-Provisioning as Distinction

Whilst Romanian culture has long reified the 'peasant' and traditional, rural way of life as central to Romanian national identity (Verdery, 1991 and 1993), villagers in Diyalivtsi were keen to emphasise their lack of knowledge relating to agricultural production. When crossing the border to trade in Romania, Ukrainians would often comment on the poor quality

housing that is discussed above. Ukrainian citizens would invest a great deal in the modification and upkeep of their homes and other goods seen to demonstrate wealth and status and did not value investment in self-provisioning, which was still the focus of village life for many on the Romanian side of the border.

He brings in workers from somewhere else, I don't know where. They look Chinese to me.
(Vitaliy, Diyalivtsi, May 2008)

Vitaliy's comment relates to farmland outside Diyalivtsi, which is leased and farmed by a man from a neighbouring province. Much of the land was leased from households in Diyalivtsi, few of whom farmed more than the gardens behind their homes and perhaps one small field close to the village. Thus, people were brought in from outside the region to work the land, but much lay fallow.

In the Soviet period all this land was farmed, you know. Look at it now! Nobody uses it! It's a sign of how bad things are. (Anatoliy, Diyalivtsi, March 2008)

The lack of agricultural cultivation in areas not immediately surrounding the village also reflected the lack of available and willing labour. Unlike in Gorbanita, where few people had jobs or work of any kind outside of the village, most people in Diyalivtsi were funded by some formal, but predominantly informal economic practices and work, i.e. migrant labour and cross-border trading. In Gorbanita, farming was the main occupation and the focus of village life. *You've seen what my mother is like. All she thinks about are her animals; rabbits, chickens and what we are going to kill next.* (Codrut, nearby Romanian town, September 2008)

Codrut had spent little time Gorbanita, as his mother had returned there only when she reached pensionable age. As an urban-dweller for most of his life, Codrut saw his mother's views and the village way of life as being somewhat ridiculous. However, for those who had stayed in or returned to the village, of every age, agriculture was the dominant occupation.

Attitudes towards land in the village also contrasted with those in Diyalivtsi. Andrei stated the following in relation to land he had just inherited from his grandfather:

He gave me two pieces of land. I chose half a hectare up by the church, because it is flat land, all in one piece and easy to farm. I will probably rent it out to someone until I can come back and use it. Then there is another piece, about half a hectare as well, but it's not so good, as it has a bit of a hill and is not so easy to get to (Andrei, Gorbanita, April 2010).

Andrei's grandfather had land closer to the main road in smaller plots, but he had chosen the best agricultural land. In Gorbanita, land was viewed in terms of its farming potential, which contrasted with Diyalivtsi's focus on land for commercial development.

In spring 2008, I entered the shop in the centre of Diyalivtsi, to find it buzzing with the news that Vovak had bought an old barn and small plot of land at the village crossroads, near the bus stop. Vovak was rumoured to be the richest man in the village and had paid \$5000 for this very small piece of land. Speculation had already begun as to what Mr Vovakk would build on the plot; a new cafe or a pharmacy seemed to be the most discussed options. The price of \$5000 was high for land in Diyalivtsi, for example a traditional house with a large garden for cultivation a little further away from the centre had sold for just \$1000 a year before.

Agricultural land was heavily farmed by householders in Gorbanita, where even a household containing two pensioners was likely to farm three times as much land, as a multi-generational household in Diyalivtsi. Whilst young people in Gorbanita spoke of learning agricultural techniques from childhood, people in Diyalivtsi laughed at their inability to cultivate their small plots.

When I was seven or eight, my grandfather made me my own little scythe, with a smaller handle and blade. He took me out in the fields, up by the grazing land, you know on the hill? He taught me how to scythe. (Andrei, Gorbanita, July 2009)

The first year I tried to grow carrots was when my husband was still here. The crop failed because we didn't know what we were doing! It failed again for the following couple of years, but now some of them come out alright. (Domtsia, Diyalivtsi, April 2008)

For the people of Diyalivtsi, self-provisioning was not only perceived to be unworthy of financial investment, there was an attempt to emphasise the 'unnaturalness' of such work. This also reflected the fact that many of the people living in Diyalivtsi during the Soviet period were employed in industry as described in the first section of this chapter. Conversely, in Gorbanita during the socialist period, work was generally restricted to the collective farm with factory workers and others relocating to nearby towns rather than commuting from the village.

The differences in the value placed upon self-provisioning in communities on either side of the border therefore reflected perceptions grounded in historical representations of 'peasant culture', as well as a more diverse set of occupations being present in Diyalivtsi than Gorbanita in the socialist period. Whilst villagers in Gorbanita invested heavily in maximising the productivity of their agricultural land, in Diyalivtsi status was conferred onto property and personal appearance. In this way, the villagers of Diyalivtsi distance themselves from the perceived poverty of agricultural labour similar to the class distinction Bourdieu describes the bourgeoisie as making in privileging the aesthetic over material needs in their consumption (Bourdieu, 1984). This constructs a national form of Bourdieu's notion of habitus, whereby privileging the consumption of goods for the home and clothing over investment in agriculture reflects particular ways of seeing the world in Diyalivtsi. In contrast to Bourdieu, who suggests only the bourgeoisie have the economic capital for choosing the aesthetic, other authors have argued for 'aesthetic distinction' as being evident in low-income populations, such as those under discussion here (cf. Watt, 2006; Holston, 1991; Kellet and Moore, 2003). This seems to run contrary to research on post-socialism that suggests self-

provisioning is not accessible to the very poor (cf. Smith, 2002) and that it is culturally significant (Caldwell, 2004). However, much of this research has focused on self-provisioning amongst urban dwellers and the use of dachas. Self-provisioning in the rural context is accessible to most and whilst it may involve social networks and working together (Caldwell, 2004: 116), we see from Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita that the perceived value of self-provisioning can not only be vastly different but also form the basis for constructing distinctiveness. However, perhaps this distinction is better understood as agricultural labour rather than self-provisioning, which was evident in Diyalivtsi, simply on a smaller scale.

The widespread practice of farming small plots has been theorised as involution (Burawoy, 2000) or re-peasantization (Rose and Tikhomirov, 1993), particularly when involving urban dwellers. The discourse I have portrayed in Diyalivtsi reflects the way in which through farming only a little, villagers have rejected a peasant identity and embraced much more readily the economic opportunities presented by migrant labour and cross-border small trading (CBST), in spite of the illegality generally involved in such activities. There is a clear economic rationale behind this, with both activities being more profitable than farming, however, in other areas, such economic arguments have been ignored in favour of the pride and dignity associated with food cultivation (Zavisca, 2003). In Diyalivtsi, the importance of dichotomising Romanian citizens and their practices has clearly added a further dimension to the practice. To cultivate food with any intensity is viewed to be a peasant identity, which is ascribed to Romanian citizens and therefore is not desirable for those in Diyalivtsi. They strongly emphasised their lack of agricultural capability by mocking both food cultivation and their own involvement in it. So whilst it was necessary for sustaining most households, only small plots were farmed to maintain a difference from the more intensive agricultural labour observed in Romania.

ii. *Consumption as a Distinctive Practice*

I now shift my focus to a further distinction that the villagers of Diyalivtsi make between themselves and the Romanian shoppers crossing the border through a series of discourses or narratives that frame the ability to consume at the lowest possible prices as a distinctly Ukrainian practice. This ability is viewed as a form of embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997) that mitigates the potential impact on self-perceptions of status of a reduction in economic capital. Since 2008, the Romanian shoppers, who travel to Ukraine, have been demonstrating their greater spending power in the various shops, retail outlets and markets on the main road from the border to Chernivtsi. In the city itself, Romanian vehicles line the road around the large market.⁶³ The daily influx had led some level of resentment amongst many of the Ukrainians I met, who struggled to pay the higher prices of consumer goods and felt this was due to the large numbers of Romanian shoppers.

They come and they pay really high prices for things and it means that everything is more expensive for us. The traders know that the Romanians will pay the higher prices, so they don't care if you complain. They know you can't go elsewhere, not like the Romanians. If things are too expensive there, they just come here. (Kostia, Chernivtsi, March 2008)

In Diyalivtsi, views of the Romanian shoppers also focused on the high prices paid for everyday goods. Inna was a Romanian-speaker from the neighbouring village whom we met in the previous chapter. She had recently left her parents' business in Diyalivtsi to start work in a shop near the border. She came to us after she had been working there a week or so to tell us about her new job and the Romanian clients.

⁶³ The market is well-known beyond the immediate vicinity. Many friends I spoke to from other parts of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova remembered trips to this particular market from their childhood. In 2010, on a long train journey in Romania, I met an elderly woman, who was returning from visiting the market. She explained that since she had retired, she used her annual free return train ticket to travel Suceava and then on to Ukraine, a journey of more than 15 hours. The market is at the heart of the economic life of the city, which became apparent when floods in 2008 (the market sits on a flood plain) closed the market for more than three months. This had such a devastating effect on the local economy that it prompted a visit from the then Prime Minister of Ukraine, Yulia Tymoshenko, who promised help to get the market back up and running again.

You wouldn't believe the prices they pay for things. Everything there is much more expensive than it is here in the village and they come and pay these prices! (Inna, Diyalivtsi, May 2008)

Whilst in Diyalivtsi, I often engaged in conversations about where to get goods cheaply with villagers, even those with higher incomes. There was a pressure in the village to display the ability to consume 'competently' or to risk a decline in social status. Almost every shopping trip or purchase was analysed by others to ascertain whether goods had been purchased for a reasonable price.

A visit by Luchika, a friend of my host family, illustrated the performance involved in demonstrating this distinct cultural trait. Luchika came to see us after a visit to a nearby market town. She brought with her all the goods she had purchased for an upcoming religious feast day. Such occasions generally necessitated the purchase of particular food products and household items to participate in the ritual elements of the celebration. Information regarding the best places to buy these goods was a valuable commodity in the village. Luchika carefully removed each of the items from her shopping bag, telling us how much she had paid for them. Amongst the items is a towel⁶⁴, which Luchika was concerned she has paid too much for at 15UAH. She looked warily at my host, to see how she would react to the news and was visibly relieved when she merely shrugged her shoulders. My host did not show a great deal of interest in the purchases as she had no plans to buy any of the items at present, however the sharing of information on prices and goods is something that is seen to be a sign of friendship, which is why Luchika came to us. In doing so, she both reinforced her ability to consume well and passed on information to help her friend do the same, should she have wished to. Whilst these practices themselves were not new and could also have been observed in other parts of the region since 1989/1991, they emphasise and the social capital relating to them had increased dramatically as a result of Romanian cross-border

⁶⁴ Towels are used on feast days to wrap around the bottom of large candles, which are lit when the priest visits the home.

consumption. Romanian nationals had become the focus of these discourses; leading to different narratives and approaches to constructing these practices.

Whilst the villagers attribute their declining economic capital to corruption and mismanagement on a national and political level⁶⁵, they are able to gain cultural capital through discursively performing and reinforcing the importance of astute consumption. I am not suggesting that the care and time dedicated to consumption are not driven by low incomes, but that in making this a distinctive cultural trait through discursive performance that contrasts with Romanian shoppers, the villagers are able to transform the low incomes that challenge their previously-held status into one in which they can engage in status-seeking. Villagers often discussed the prices that others had paid for goods as a way of forming opinions on them. In such an atmosphere, outward displays of the prices paid for goods became more important than the aesthetic value of the goods. Many households in Diyalivtsi have unemployed and underemployed members. These people are able to utilise the time they have to ensure that they get goods as cheaply as possible. This form of dichotomisation acknowledges their current economic situation, but places another more important quality ahead of having a large income; that is being able to gain the most from your income.

There was no recognition of the fact that in crossing the border to purchase goods, people from Romania are trying to achieve the same goal. Even the goods purchased at the higher prices Inna discussed are much lower than those in Romania. The focus is upon the fact that there are cheaper goods to be found in the vicinity and the people of Diyalivti's discourses and narratives surrounding consumption required that extra time be used if possible to access these goods. This focus on consumption reflects Pels' (1998: 96) assertion

⁶⁵ Most villagers differentiated themselves from the 'Ukrainians' in power in Kyiv and also 'Halychynans', who were seen to be corrupt or unable to manage and run the country effectively. *These Ukrainians cannot run our country, they don't get anything right. I think we will probably just go back to how things were, you know? The East will go back to Russia, the West to Poland and us to Romania.* (Dima, Diyalivtsi, January 2008)

that consumption can be seen to be social and relational, i.e. part of a group performance, rather than an individual activity. As Berdahl (1999) highlights in the German context, consumption for the households of Diyalivtsi has come to symbolise a cultural competence. Pels et al. (2002: 2) suggest new approaches towards material goods and their role in making society. In this example, it is not the goods themselves but the prices paid for them that play a role in creating an understanding of self. Berdahl (2005) explores the ways in which through German reunification citizenship became linked to consumption, creating consumer-citizens. Whilst in Germany this process took place ‘from above’, my research in Diyalivtsi illustrates the role of this village community in developing a central position for consumption in identity formation. The trait is seen to belong to Ukrainian citizens and not their Romanian neighbours. This supports Miller-Idriss’ (2006) focus on everyday experiences of citizenship. Through cross-border consumption and cross-border small trading, which have become embedded in the local economy in recent years, the people of Diyalivtsi have developed new means for constructing distinctiveness, based on a reframing of existing practices.

The most explicit connection between citizenship and consumption is made in a recent study by Néstor García Canclini, who points out that ‘redefining citizenship in connection with consumption and political strategy requires a conceptual framework for examining cultural consumption as an ensemble of practices that shape the sphere of citizenship’ (Canclini 2001:22). In Diyalivtsi, ideas of consumption are developed locally and reflect a reaction to the lack of economic prosperity and freedom to consume. Consumption is relatively monotonous due to low and unstable incomes, so villagers use the ability to gain goods at a cheaper price as a means for differentiating themselves not only from their neighbours within the village, but more importantly from the Romanian citizens crossing the border daily to purchase goods in Ukraine. Those with larger incomes are expected, for the most part, to share partake in the same practices.

iii. Corrupting Citizenships at the Border

Alexander (2002: 5) describes how the state is manifested through local officials, legal forms, buildings, public celebrations, military and educational discipline. In this border region, where cross-border small trading and consumption are a feature of everyday life, the villagers' most frequent contact with officials and legal forms were generally at the border in the shape of soldiers, customs and immigration officials. The border personnel formed a point of everyday discussion in Diyalivtsi and were spoken of on first name terms. These 'encounters' are having a profound effect on the way in which communities relate to their own and each other's states. Corruption and the informal uses of the border undermine the official rules of the state and ultimately the state's ability to govern (Ledeneva, 1998). Communities begin to operate partly outside of state control and this can best be illustrated by a conversation I had with Kostia, a Romanian speaker from Chernivtsi, who having previously supported his family through migration to work on construction sites in Portugal, was now involved in cross-border trading. I asked Kostia about his opinion of the upcoming changes that Romania's Schengen membership may entail for his cross-border trading:

I don't really know. It is not something I think about. They said things would change when Romania joined the EU, but as you can see, we have found a way to continue. I suppose we will have to find another way. It is hard to say now what will change, we just have to wait and see what happens. (Kostia, Chernivtsi, July 2009).

Kostia's comment highlights that although officially the new rules and regulations may already be known, the unofficial consequences of these changes are not clear.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ It could be argued that comparison with Ukraine's other borders with Schengen states, such as Poland, Hungary and Slovakia may reveal some of the possible implications. However, there seemed to be a sense that the unofficial rules which operated at the border were developed locally and could not be applied elsewhere. Kostia highlighted this when he referred to an experience he had in buying a second-hand van from Austria, which he brought through customs in Chop in Zakarpatts'ka oblast': 'Those people at customs in Chop are bandits! They told me it would cost 4,000 Euros for the van and then when it arrived they asked for 7,000 Euros. Where am I going to get 3,000 Euros? That would never happen here' (Kostia, Chernivtsi, October 2008). When he talks of 'here', Kostia is referring to the local border crossing. In addition, there is also the issue of being

At the border, laws and regimes are negotiated on a daily basis through a set of unwritten rules or what Lefebvre (1967) would call ‘mists’. Traders are able to navigate their way through the border primarily through the payment of bribes. When a new border regime is established, traders wait to see the impact that it will have upon the existing unofficial order at the border. Possibilities to trade may initially be limited until a new unofficial regime emerges, in which trade options may in fact change or be enhanced.

The perspective of cross-border consumption in Gorbanita differed from that experienced through CBST from Diyalivtsi. At the time when the global economic crisis began to develop, I was in Romania and frequently contacted friends in Ukraine to ask about the situation there. Nothing was reported on Romanian news and many local people seemed unaware of the difficulties being experienced across the border. However, when the Ukrainian currency collapsed on the international market, it raised a level of excitement amongst some Romanian citizens. The relative stability of their own currency meant that many saw this as an opportunity to profit from the even lower price of goods in Ukraine.

It was during this period that I made the shopping trip to Ukraine that I described in the previous chapter with my neighbours Anca and Dumitru. Upon arriving at the market in Chernivtsi, we headed straight to the bank, where the couple exchanged their Euros, with which the man had recently returned from his work in France. As we stood in the queue for the exchange, we were joined by Ukrainian stallholders, who were anxious to change the hryvnia they had for Euros. The exchange rate had been stable at around 7.5UAH to the Euro for the period I had lived in Ukraine⁶⁷. However, on this day it was around 11.5 at the market. One woman behind us in the queue noticed my travelling companions’ Euros and offered to

‘known’, which is seen to assist in getting goods through the border, as Ana explains: ‘I am not known at the border. The border guards wouldn’t let me through if I tried to bring in cigarettes. You have to be known’ (Ana, Sighetu Marmăției, April 2010). Ana’s statement highlights the fact that perhaps as Kostia is known to the guards at the local border it would be easier for him to cross. This suggests a reciprocity to border crossing in that traders must know and adhere to the unofficial rules but they also benefit from being known by the border guards, which enables them to enact these rules.

⁶⁷ June 2007 – June 2008.

give the same exchange rate as the bank. I translated the offer to Anca, but she was suspicious of the woman's motives and refused.

A few days after the trip I had heard from a friend in Ukraine that the rate had reached 15UAH to the Euro and the National Bank had stepped in to stabilise the currency. Later the same day, I was discussing the Ukrainian situation in Gorbanita with a neighbour's son, Mircea. He had travelled to Ukraine just one day before I had visited with my Anca and Dumitru. Upon hearing that the exchange rate had been 11.5 the following day, he was angry at the missed opportunity to make his Euros go further. The news that the rate had peaked at 15 made him even more resentful.

Whilst capitalising on the price differences that the border presented was important to Mircea, he also sought to minimise the time taken to travel to Ukraine.

We leave really early, at about 5'o'clock and try to get to the market and back here quickly.

Last time we were back by 9'o'clock. (Mircea, Gorbanita, December 2008)

For Mircea, getting his shopping done quickly was also important and not merely getting the goods. He had to get to work and did not have as much time to invest in his consumption practices as the people of Diyalivtsi, who do not conceive of time as an issue.⁶⁸ Mircea also cited time as the reason for paying bribes to border officials, a practice of which he did not approve.

Oh yes, the Ukrainians and their 'tradition'. I pay them some money just to get through quickly. They keep you waiting so long if you don't and I haven't got time to sit around at the border. (Mircea, Gorbanita, December 2008)

Mircea's description also highlights a differing perception of the corruption at the border from that encountered in Diyalivtsi. When travelling from Ukraine to Romania with

⁶⁸ Even those who had formal employment would take time off work where necessary to shop. Employers were generally sympathetic to and understood the need for such trips, especially if a particular occasion such as Easter or a wedding were approaching.

Kostia one day, we were stopped at Ukrainian customs for some car parts he had in the back of his van. After we arrived in Chernivtsi, following a long delay, he described what happened to me.

You don't want to know how much I had to pay them to get through. I can't tell you; I'm too embarrassed. I know what to do, I have to declare half of what I have and then they don't look. If you declare at least half it is fine. It's my own fault. (Kostia, Ukrainian town near Diyalivtsi, October 2008)

For Kostia, a Romanian-speaking, Ukrainian citizen, the system at the Ukrainian border is clear, he knows how it functions and if he adheres to the unofficial rules, he is able to cross with his goods, unhindered.

The Romanian border, however, represented a greater challenge to Ukrainian citizens. Luchika, a middle-aged woman from Diyalivtsi, who trades cigarettes across the border, explained how she decides who to approach in Romanian customs.

You can always rely on Adi; I try to go to him. I never go to that woman, what's her name? She is really strange and she's always reporting us, as well as her colleagues. (Luchika, Diyalivtsi, May 2008)

Concern over who to go to when passing through Romanian customs was confirmed by Kostia and his mother one day when I travelled across the border with them.

Kostia: *Who shall we go for? Quick, we have to decide.*

His mother: *I don't know I can't see. Oh, hang on a minute, not her. Go to the left.*

Kostia: *Who's on the left? I can't see.*

His mother: *Go anyway! Anyone is better than her!*

Kostia: *Oh look, it's Adi! God helps!*

For the traders from Ukraine, they pay a set bribe at Ukrainian customs and pass easily, but it is the unknown nature of getting through Romanian customs that informs their experience of the border.

Ukrainian and Romanian citizens experienced the border differently and they consequently had contrasting perceptions of the corruption they encountered. Kostia viewed the corruption at the border in Ukraine to be helpful and transparent. For him the corrupt border officials reinforced his own choices to not adhere to state laws and to earn his income outside of formal employment. This situation is different to his experiences of Romanian customs, which are fraught with tension, as he tries to gauge the reception he will receive. It is the Romanian state in this context that creates uncertainty and threatens his trade. For Mircea, as a Romanian cross-border consumer, the corruption at Ukrainian customs does not enable but hinders his activities. In Gorbanita and surrounding areas, interactions with corrupt border officials created negative perceptions of Ukrainians as a whole.

In this section I have highlighted the processes by which encounters with those from across the border, their communities and their border officials through cross-border economies have led to discourses that seek to dichotomise Ukrainian and Romanian citizens. In Romania, the focus has been upon encounters with corrupt Ukrainian border officials, which has led to discourses of Ukrainians as being corrupt. By attributing greater value to aesthetic forms of consumption, such as home improvements, rather than self-provisioning, villagers in Diyalivtsi are able to maintain a sense of economic status that defines their Romanian neighbours as poor. In addition, where the greater economic capital of Romanian citizens becomes evident in cross-border consumption, critical discursive performance is used to highlight their ability to purchase goods more cheaply than their neighbours.

C. Migratory Citizenships

In this final section, I highlight migration as another way in which the people of Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita practice their citizenship. I argue that whilst experiences of migrant labour may have had striking similarities prior to 2007, EU membership has led to a growing disparity between the two communities. This divergence has emerged as a contentious issue in state-citizen relations in Ukraine, which contributes to a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the Ukrainian state. For the villagers of Diyalivtsi, this provides a further and related challenge to their perceptions of their own status in relation to Romanians, which could only be mitigated through distancing themselves from the 'state' they believed to be responsible for their failure to also become a member of the EU.

i. *Ukrainian Experiences of Migration*

Migrant workers who return to Diyalivtsi often find themselves the centre of attention as other villagers openly question them about their legal status and what their plans are in their host country. I overheard such a conversation one day between my neighbour Luchika and a woman who had returned home briefly from Portugal:

Luchika: *How did you get back? Did you fly? How much did it cost?*

Woman: *I came by plane to Kyiv.*

Luchika: *Don't you know that there are direct flights from Chernivtsi to Madrid now? They are just 130 Euros.*

Woman: *Oh, OK.*

Luchika: *So, what's your status there now? Can you travel?*

Woman: *I have permanent residency, so I can travel to all EU countries. I have got all the documents now.*

Luchika: *When did you get back? How long are you staying?*

Woman: *I got back just a few days ago and I'm leaving on Monday.*

Luchika: *Why haven't you been to the centre of the village?*

Woman: *I was there on Sunday.*

Luchika: *And you didn't come and visit us?*

Luchika was obviously impressed by the fact that this woman had managed to gain the right to remain in Portugal. She herself had spent a year in Spain and two of her sons were still based there, legally but without the right to stay indefinitely. Luchika's time in Spain had not proved very successful and she was also fearful about her youngest son, who had not managed to find work there and may have to return to the village.

The conversation had started in front of a large number of people as Luchika trying to show her superiority over others through her knowledge of the flights, but ended with her looking a little deflated. Her husband's ill health and the arrival of a grandson had forced her to return from Spain, clearly emphasising the value of care which has driven the proliferation of feminised migration globally.⁶⁹ On another occasion she confided in me how tough she had found her time as a migrant worker.

I used to cry every day because I didn't understand what they wanted me to do and the way I was used to doing things they didn't like. The manager would come and complain to me all the time and I just didn't understand because I wasn't used to their way of things. They weren't nice people and they didn't understand why I missed my home or my family or why it was such a big thing when we had the Orange Revolution. (Luchika, Diyalivtsi, April 2008)

Luchika found the criticism of her domestic work very hard, as she was very proud of her skills in the home, particularly her cooking. However, this complaint of not being understood as a 'Ukrainian' was something she went on to explain further.

⁶⁹ See chapter six for more on this.

Romanians and Moldovans are not good people, but we Ukrainians are different. In Italy, they punish us because of the way these people behave, but we are good people. (Luchika, Diyalivtsi, April 2008)

Alina, who had spent three years working in the UK, expressed a similar sense of exasperation at people not seeming to understand what it was to be Ukrainian.

People in the UK don't know where Ukraine is. When I told them I was Ukrainian, they kept saying to me that it was in Russia. This really annoyed me because I am not Russian (Rodika, Diyalivtsi, December 2007).

Kostia, a Romanian-speaking friend from a nearby town, had a different perspective on the way he was treated when he was working in Portugal.

Many of the Ukrainians there didn't behave themselves whilst we were there, drinking and....you know. They had a bad reputation there. We tried to just get on with things and ignore them, because we didn't want people to think we were like them. (Kostia, near Diyalivtsi, June 2008)

For Luchika and Alina, the experience of migrant work overseas had led them to identify more strongly with where they were from, creating a sense of Ukrainian national identity. In particular, it had made them more 'Ukrainian' and led them to identify with Ukrainians more strongly. However, for Kostia, the experience of being a Ukrainian overseas was one in which he tried to distance himself from his fellow citizens. In all cases, they were trying to deal with assumptions made about them due to their citizenship (if not nationality – Kostia was ethnically Romanian) when working overseas. All felt frustrated by not being able to represent themselves as they wished because of the ideas held about their nationality in their host country. These perceptions seemed to be drawn from experience of other nationals and also from what they believed to be a lack of understanding of where they are from. In both

respects, there was a frustration that their citizenship as identity, i.e. nationality as identified, constructed and stereotyped by others, was dictating their reception in their host country.

ii. *Romanian Migrant Workers and EU Accession*

Gorbanita, like Diyalivtsi, had experienced widespread migration since 1989; however experiences of migration in terms of citizenship have differed in some respects, particularly since Romania's EU membership in 2007. Unlike in Diyalivtsi, where migrants initially travelled to Russia and Central Europe and the 1990s and early 2000s, people in Gorbanita migrated to Greece and then Italy. Most of this initial wave of migration was illegal and Liviu, a young man from Gorbanita, described how migrants travelled to Greece.

They would take a minibus to the border and then cross on foot at night. You would travel with someone who knew where to cross and pay him some money. People stayed out of the towns, because if they were caught, they would be sent back immediately, because they were even in the country illegally. (Liviu, Gorbanita, April 2010).

Liviu's remark that they were in the country illegally reflected the changes in Romanian migration that came as Romania entered the accession process. As Romania's relations with the EU developed, travel became easier and most people used the 90-day visa-free regime to travel to EU countries and a system of bribes developed involving Romanian officials, to enable longer stays. Liviu went on to describe how he would travel to work in France.

We travelled to France by minibus and the driver would stop in places along the way, maybe Germany or Belgium. There were about 15 of us I suppose and we went through Hungary and Austria. They would check our passports and stamp them when we left Romania and then the Hungarians. After Austria, there were no more borders, so no-one checked. We would just say we were tourists. We would stay longer than three months and then we would have to resolve things when we got back to Romania. If they caught you, they would put a

restriction on your passport and you couldn't leave for a year or two. I would usually give 50 or 100 Euros to the Romanian border guard and I never got a restriction. (Liviu, Gorbanita, April 2010)

Whilst Liviu had successfully worked in France for three years prior to Romania's EU membership, others in the village were caught for illegal migrant work. Andrei, a young man now working in London, told me about a friend of his from Gorbanita, who was twice caught by Romanian border officials:

Vasile was caught by the border guards twice, did I never tell you? When he was working in France, his grandfather died and he had to come back for the funeral. He had been in France over a year, or maybe about a year, I can't remember. Anyway, when he got to the Romanian border there was an inspection from Bucharest. None of border guards would take his bribe. They gave him a restriction of two years on his passport and he missed the funeral. (Andrei, London, July 2010).

However, Vasile was determined to return to France and used a contact to purchase a false passport. He managed to arrive in France, but Andrei went on to tell me what happened when Vasile next returned to Romania with his false passport.

There was a young border guard there⁷⁰ and he noticed the false passport straight away. He asked Vasile where he got it and put it through the scanner. The passport was really bad and the photo had even started to come away. They called him to the court and were going to send him to prison, but you know he has an uncle that works at the XXX factory in XXX? Well, his uncle gets on well with the managers there and they had some contacts in town. All he got was a restriction in the end. He was at home for a long time after that. (Andrei, London, July 2010).

⁷⁰ The fact that the border guard was young also implied that he was new to the job. This relates to the earlier point about the unofficial rules of the border. New border guards must learn the unofficial rules through the time they spend at the border as these will rarely be discussed but over time become apparent through observation.

Whilst some of the villagers of Diyalivtsi would also often enter legally into EU countries with tourist visas and then work illegally and overstay the allowed period, many continued to travel illegally either crossing into the EU as Liviu described or by using false documents. Most Ukrainians were forced, at least on an official level, to hide their citizenship as many did not have the right to be in the country at all as Ukrainian citizens. For Andrei and others, there was a need to hide simply the fact that they were working. However, the precarious and confusing nature of their status was explained in another conversation I had with Andrei.

I was coming out of the underground one day in Paris and the police were stopping people and checking their documents. For a moment, I panicked and started to pass without stopping, but the policeman came after me. He stopped me and checked my passport and then he told me off for not stopping. He told me that all I had to do was to stop and show my ID the next time. (Andrei, London, August 2009).

In moving to London in 2008, Andrei had renounced the opportunity to continue working legally in France. New laws imposed by the UK government gave Bulgarian and Romanian nationals the right to reside and to work on a self-employed basis but not to be employed without gaining an accession worker card. Andrei did not get the necessary documents and was continuing to do undeclared work. When I asked Andrei about his choice to migrate, he cited the higher salaries, but also the desire for change as the reason for his move. Irrespective of their right to work, having freedom of movement, Romanians have been able to travel more frequently back home than their Ukrainian counterparts. The need to migrate has not altered with EU accession and continues to play as important a role in Gorbanita as it does in Diyalivtsi. Whilst a number of factors have been driving migration⁷¹,

⁷¹ For more on migration and the motivations of migrant workers, see White (2010).

many of which are not solely economic, legal citizenship has had a vast impact on the way that migration is practiced.

In return, in the practices of migration, the people of Gorbanita and Diyalivtsi have developed particular views their own states, not solely through what they see in the countries they migrate to, but also in the limitations and possibilities for migration that their own citizenship entails. Whilst the Romanian government may not be providing possibilities within the country itself, EU accession has to some extent changed experiences of already-existing migration and opened up new possibilities. This has occurred at the same time as possibilities for Ukrainian citizens, particularly men, have been reduced. In a region where what happens across the border has become an important marker for Ukrainian citizens, the opportunities are leading to widespread dissatisfaction with the Ukrainian state. Because of the nationalising policies of the state, it is often reduced to being referred to as ‘the Ukrainians’ and a discourse that distinguishes local communities from the state has developed, as Vasyl’s quote at the start of this chapter reveals.

These Ukrainians cannot run our country, they don’t get anything right. I think we will probably just go back to how things were, you know? The East will go back to Russia, the West to Poland and us to Romania. (Dima, Diyalivtsi, January 2008)

As stated at the beginning of the chapter, the nationalising processes that often lead to the reduction of the state to a few key stereotypes (Alexander, 2002) have shaped migratory practices and also representations of migrations. In Diyalivtsi, it is the local processes and understanding of transnational processes that are creating these new categories and actually excluding the newly nationalising forces of the state.

D. Conclusions

If it is widely accepted that one of the causes of the collapse of state socialism was its failure, quite literally, ‘to deliver the goods’ (Borneman 1992:252), then one of the failings of both the postsocialist Romanian and Ukrainian states should be seen as not delivering the opportunity for their citizens to gain access to the goods that are now being delivered. As Terence Turner (1997) commented in relation to Eastern European states, providing access to goods has become ‘their essential basis of legitimation’. This failure relating to economic rights, i.e. pensions on which citizens can survive or job opportunities with realistic salaries, therefore undermines the credibility of the state. In Diyalivtsi, most villagers had to look to informal economic practices to gain access to a sustainable income.

These stories contrasted sharply with how the Soviet era was portrayed in Diyalivtsi, as one when every household could afford to meet its own needs. This was not always achievable within the local context however and a dependency on travelling to the Moldovan SSR for goods became part of the life of the village. Not only was the Romanian border never crossed, but the relatively better economic situation in the USSR meant there was no economic factor to drive even illegal crossings. Many of the freedoms associated with Ukraine’s independence were undervalued and even ridiculed in the context of the worsening economic situation in Diyalivtsi. This appears to be an expression of what Holston and Appadurai have noted:

‘Citizenship concerns more than rights to participate in politics. It also includes other kinds of rights in the public sphere, namely, civil, socio-economic, and cultural. Moreover, in addition to the legal, it concerns the moral and imperative dimensions of membership which define the meanings and practices of belonging in society.’ (1996: 200)

The Romanian state was also failing to provide incomes and goods within its own territory, which was highlighted by the need for citizens to migrate to other countries for

work, but also to cross the border to Ukraine to purchase many staple goods. Whilst for many younger people migrant labour remained the solution to lack of employment, for pensioners and those in employment, a dependence on cheaper goods from Ukraine had developed, whether they were bought directly through shopping trips or indirectly from the many market stalls and shops in the region that stock Ukrainian products. Alexander (2002) asserts that a state can change historical understandings through laws, e.g. by making polygamy illegal, something which was understood to be acceptable within particular religions has been shifted by state law. However, diverse economic practices that operate outside of the law also challenge the state by creating values based not upon the law itself, which is what the state intended, but the conscious transgressing of it. If citizenship is not 'just a bundle of formal rights but the entire mode of incorporation of a particular individual or group into society' (Shafir, 1998:23), then involvement in the informal economy could be seen to be one way in which we can assess this mode of incorporation. When communities such as Diyalivtsi have become almost exclusively dependent on informal income opportunities, it is clear that the community is not being incorporated into a state-managed or state-normalised society, i.e. as it is being formed by state legal instruments. Outside of state institutions and formal employment, villagers are developing alternative modes of understanding, which reflect their own practicing of the economic and a clear divide develops.

Changes in policy affecting diverse economic practices and especially those relating to CBST and migration threaten not only material reproduction of communities but they also challenge the ways in which people within them construct their relationships with neighbours, the state and the wider world. The people of Diyalivtsi have been able to interpret the proliferation of cross-border economic practices in a way which conveys positive cultural traits. However, this is accompanied by a critical approach to their Romanian neighbours, who are conferred a new and central role in the life of the village. The

‘darkness’ from across the border until 1991 represents not solely a physical absence of lighting in Romania, but also a ‘lack of seeing’ from the Ukrainian side. There was not only a shortage of knowledge about what happened across the border but also insufficient desire to know. The border represented a limited role in local thinking until the mid-2000s, when cross-border small trading and later consumption have brought the Romanian side clearly into focus. Whilst on a national level, changes in Romania have not been central to policy-making, for the villagers of Diyalivtsi, Romania’s continued growth serves to distance them further from a political elite with whom they had already grown disillusioned. Romania has become part of ‘Europe’ in local understanding; a place with whom they as Ukrainians form an unequal relationship. The challenge to policy-makers therefore relates not solely to economic disenfranchisement, which has generally been dealt with through a *laissez faire* approach on both sides⁷², but also how to actively engage with citizens whose basis for understanding their own place in the world is being formed through differing ‘practices’ of the economic. As this discussion has taken a view of collective experience in Ukraine and

⁷² Whilst the ‘unofficial’ policy from regional and national government has been a *laissez faire* approach to CBST that recognises its importance in the local economy, the Ukrainian side represents just one party officially involved in the border regime. Romania had also adopted until recently a similar unofficial approach, aware of an inability to offer real economic alternatives to people living in the borderland communities. Apart from the occasional ‘scandal’, in which some arrests would be made and activities may cease for a while, the trade has been permitted to continue. However, there is anecdotal evidence from return visits to the region that recent EU pressure on Romania to tackle corruption and secure its borders led eventually to a change of border personnel, which appears to have slowed down (although not stemmed) the flow of goods from Ukraine to Romania. At the same time, the 2008 global financial crisis led to rising fuel and food prices in Ukraine, which continue to deter Romanian shoppers. Given previous experience relating to the shift from migration to CBST, it seems unlikely that Ukrainian policy-makers will or can intervene on an economic level to enable traders to replace the income lost due to the above changes. As CBST itself primarily attracted those occupied within other aspects of the diverse economies, particularly following disruption to opportunities for migrant labour, it seems that the communities themselves are likely to be the key sites of initiative in responding to the contraction of CBST. With little or no ‘formal’ alternatives becoming operative, the result is likely to be greater involvement in or intensification of existing diverse economies, such as self-provisioning or migrant labour.

Romania, it raises questions about if and how we can differentiate the social dimensions of economic practices. The next chapter is dedicated to exploring gender and processes of gendering in the borderland; elucidating gendered inequalities and differentiation of informal economic practices within Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita.

6. Understanding Men's and Women's Work: Gender and Economic Practices

Introduction

‘Of course, we cannot show anything but a great appreciation for the work of women. Besides, appreciating the activity of workers, peasants and intellectuals, I have included, always, also women who, from a social point of view, cannot be treated separately. It is not practically possible to judge the activity of women torn from the general activity of our nation, from the struggle of the entire people for the edification of multilaterally developed socialist society, from the efforts to raise all citizens of the country to a higher level of life and civilisation.’ (Nicolae Ceausescu)⁷³

In this chapter, I explore to what extent the diverse economies of both Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita are gendered. Traditionally, gender has been one of the key factors influencing involvement in economic life, as the following comment made to me illustrates.

No, no, no, you mustn't go and get water from the well, that's a man's work. I'll do it! Go on, leave it to me! Go and help my wife in the kitchen with the food and I'll bring the water in to you (Victor, Gorbanita, January 2010)

The socialist period engaged many women for the first time in the waged labour force, yet was unable to completely alleviate the weightier responsibility placed on them within the home. This led to what was known as the ‘double burden’ (cf. Corrin, 1991), which was a gendered outcome resulting from socialist policies to create equality for women within the workforce and the continuation of female domination in the domestic economy. ‘The liberation of women in any society involves a dual process – entry into the national economy and relative withdrawal from the domestic economy’ (Corrin, 1991: 249). It was the socialist

⁷³ Speech given by Nicolae Ceausescu to the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Romania from 18-19 June 1973, regarding the role of women in the political, economic and social life of the country. Cited in ‘Documente ale Partidului communist roman - Rolul femeii in viata economica, politica si sociala a Romaniei socialiste’ Editura politica, Bucuresti, 1973.

regime's inability to assist effectively in female 'withdrawal' from and male 'entry' into the domestic economy that created the double burden.

Kligman (1992) expanded this to be a 'triple burden' on women from the 1980s in Romania, with the growing pressure put on women to be 'reproducers' in support of the socialist cause. Most socialist regimes employed a number of means to promote population growth, from propaganda and financial incentives, through to legislation and coercion. Ceausescu's pronatalist policies were amongst some of the most far-reaching in the region and were based upon a desire to increase the country's workforce in order to pay off foreign debts and secure independence from Moscow: reproduction thus became part of nationalist rhetoric and took the role of the state directly into the bodies of its female citizens.

Much of the literature on gender in post-socialist spaces focuses on women, and given my position whilst in the field, but also as a result of my empirical findings, this chapter continues this focus. The spotlight on women has a basis not only in the double or triple burden during socialism, but also due to a number of studies suggesting that women are more likely to experience higher levels of unemployment, job discrimination and poverty than their male counterparts since 1989/1991 (Dickinson, 2005, Voorman, 2005, Pollert, 2003, Hesli and Miller, 1993, Hubner et al, 1993 and Braithwaite and Hoopengardner, 1997). However, in this section, I highlight that in respect of diverse economies, the global feminisation of labour and particularly the demand for care workers in Southern Europe, opportunities for women have been rising at a time when those for male migrant workers (more specifically those from outside of the EU) are diminishing. At the same time, women who have remained in Diyalivtsi have become heavily involved in CBST, yet many operate in distinctly different ways from their male counterparts, particularly in getting goods through the border. I therefore conclude that in examining not only formal but also informal economic activities and employment, distinct differences begin to emerge between the two cases from Romania

and Ukraine, providing evidence that many aspects of the new economies of post-socialist village life actually favour over-employment of women and the under-employment of men both in the domestic and international economy, but reflect the inequalities of the formal labour market in terms of income.

This chapter has three distinct sections, which explore traditional gender roles, gender and migration and gender in cross-border small trading (CBST). In the first section, I explore traditionally gendered roles within both communities and their centrality to the maintenance of a household. This discussion provides the context for understanding the gendered impacts of migration and CBST. In the second part of the chapter, I explore the villages as two separate case studies. Firstly, I consider the feminisation of migration from Diyalivtsi and its implications for households due to disruption to traditional gender roles. I then contrast Diyalivtsi with Gorbanita, where masculine and mixed-sex migration is predominant. Here I explore the impact that this type of migration has upon relations between households and therefore on village society as a whole. Finally, I consider gender in cross border small trading (CBST), the other main form of income generation in Diyalivtsi. I argue that border crossings and trading are also gendered but that their impact upon traditional gender relations is less than that of migration.

A. The Construction of Normative Gender Roles

Before commencing discussion of normative gender roles, it is important to highlight that I conceive of gender not as two binary and necessarily opposing categories, but as interplay of differing roles, which are generally portrayed within village life as belonging to one sex or the other. This draws upon Butler's performative view of gender, 'the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being' (Butler,

1990: 33). In this context, male or female roles may be performed by a member of the opposite sex, but this is commonly conceived of as somehow ‘unnatural’. It is suggested as something that ‘has to be done’ and deviates from the ideal or the norm. People engaging in roles not traditionally seen to be of their gender will often be singled out for comment (predominantly in the form of pity or criticism) and the ‘unnaturalness’ of what they are doing is used to reinforce existing ideas on gender roles.

‘Traditional’ gender roles in Dyalivtsi and Gorbanita were multi-faceted. Firstly, there was a view that men’s engagement in formal employment was more ‘natural’ than that of women, who were expected to take on more responsibility in the home, particularly as carers as a result of their ascribed reproductive role. Secondly, formal employment did not release men from gendered expectations of their contribution to the maintenance of the household. Self-provisioning and the maintenance of property and land also necessitated the investment of time in one’s own household and those belonging to kin and neighbours. The ‘natural’ division within the household sees men as being responsible for more physically demanding tasks, such as house repairs, scything, chopping wood and potato planting. Women were not expected to operate machinery used in the agricultural process. However, I do not wish to give the impression that women were not involved in physically strenuous work. Most women contributed considerable to self-provisioning, which often involved long hours of labour in the fields during sowing and harvesting seasons. In addition, women were also expected to provide food for all those working on their land. Feminised tasks also included animal husbandry (feeding the animals, milking, cleaning the animals and their quarters), sewing, traditional crafts, cooking and cleaning.

Victor’s comment, in the introduction to this chapter, is just one of many I heard in both fieldwork sites, as people explained to me the very exact division of household tasks amongst men and women. Victor is 90 years old and has difficulty walking, yet he forcefully

refused to let me do a task, which he considered to be men's work, in spite of the fact that both he and I knew it would be much easier for me to draw the water myself. Victor's wife, who was in her early eighties, later explained to me how his determination to maintain the traditional roles was also impacting on her.

He wants us to keep a cow, but who has to look after the cow? I do. I have to feed it and milk it and all because he wants fresh milk. He won't let me get milk from the neighbour, because he doesn't think it is right that I go and speak to a man. He thinks there is something going on. I tell him that I can't look after the cow, but he won't let me get rid of it. (Silvia, Gorbanita, January 2010)

The concept that men's and women's work existed had not lessened over time in the village, as a conversation I had with Victor's grandson illustrated.

I never learned how to cook; that's women's work. My grandmother, my mother and my sisters know how to cook but no-one ever taught me how. I learned to do men's work, such as chopping wood and scything. It's not that I can't cook; I just don't know where to start. I could learn, but other men would laugh at me if they found out that I was helping my wife with the cooking. (Mihai, Gorbanita, December 2008)

Such ideas were no less prevalent amongst younger people in Diyalivtsi, as Maria explained.

Our women will not enter the bar at all during Lent. Some of the men do, but the women don't. It's not right. They maintain the traditions. They will stay at home and make preparations for Easter. (Maria, Diyalivtsi, April 2008)

Thus women's role within the household and village society was also moral and religious. Women were expected to maintain traditional values and practices, which necessitated male participation, but it was primarily women who were responsible for the preparations for such practices. These preparations were 'female' because they generally entailed tasks assigned to women in the household on a daily basis, notably cooking, sewing and craft-work.

In both Gorbanita and Diyalivtsi, men's work continued to include the upkeep and construction of buildings and those households without men capable of such tasks would often have to pay or barter with active males in the village to secure assistance. Rodika explained the predicament she had faced since she and her husband had split up.

I started the new house with my husband a few years ago. I suppose I will have to finish it on my own now. I don't know where I'll get the money from now. The plan was for it to be fully plumbed with a bathroom and kitchen. Maybe I'll have to get a passport and start going to Romania. Where else will the money come from? (Rodika, Diyalivtsi, December 2007)

However, Rodika went on to suggest other ways in which she may obtain construction and renovation services in the village.

Can't you just flirt with him and get him to convert my loft into a summer room? You wouldn't have to do much; we all know he is impotent anyway. I know he really likes you and you could just tell him that you won't do anything unless he agrees to convert my loft! (Rodika, Diyalivtsi, March 2008)

Rodika said the above in a conversation we had about a local builder and although she smiled and laughed about it, there was also a serious point being made. She herself was rumoured to have been involved in an affair with Vitaliy, a man in the village, whose wife had been away for several years working in Italy. This man had helped with several small projects in her house and garden. Whether the rumours were true or not, knowing Rodika's dire financial situation, most people in the village had assumed that sex must have been the way in which Rodika had managed to enlist the man's help. What was apparent was gendered discourses within the village not only created 'natural' roles for men and women, but also directed the skills developed by males and females. These skills were expected to be combined within a household, forcing single sex households to seek to create new networks to gain access to

men or women possessing these abilities. However, the social control exercised over male and female relations made establishing such networks difficult from a moral standpoint.

Both Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita were hetero-normative, patriarchal societies, led by gendered decision-making and power. Discourses surrounding relations between the sexes gave a more active role to men in Gorbanita than Diyalitsi. Males and females were dichotomised in Gorbanita, with non-kinship relations between the sexes often being ‘sexualised’ in village discourse. The phrase ‘to talk with’ was often used to imply a relationship.

He did talk with a girl from XXX for a while. I don't know what happened but he doesn't talk to her any more. He never tells me about these things anyway. I don't know if he is talking to anyone at the moment. (Pamela, Gorbanita, December 2008)

In this way, village discourse actively restricted contact between males and females, as observed verbal communication could lead to rumours and insinuations. The role of initiating contact between males and females was generally ‘masculine’. Non-normative discourses of females engaging men were developed, e.g. Dorin explained to me what happened in a visit to the local shop:

I was being chased by the girls outside the shop. They were asking me lots of questions, as they don't know me. One of them even blocked my exit. It was really bad; they are very uncivilised these girls. (Dorin, Gorbanita, December 2008)

Men also used distinct patterns of discourse in relations with women, particularly when in the company of other males. Through these discourses the ‘bodies’ become ‘sexed’ (Gatens, 1991), with different notions of male and female bodies being reproduced. Communication between men relating to young women in particular generally focussed on corporeal aspects of these women, creating sexualised notions of the female body and affirming the dominance of sex in relations between men and women. The male ‘body’

becomes the norm, with the female body being ‘othered’. This process, would generally involve comments relating to parts of women’s bodies that are anatomically different, such as their breasts, but also through conversations about body parts that were constructed as being different, such as their legs or bottoms.

I like this girl in Siret. She is very pretty. She has small breasts, but a very nice bottom and legs. I could look at that bottom all day. You know that all the men watch her and talk about her when she walks along the street. I have seen it. (Dorin, Gorbanita, December 2008)

Both villages could be said to constitute distinctly gendered spaces, which the repeated performance of particular tasks by men and women continued to create and maintain. Central to local understanding was the view that men should be primarily responsible for earning income for the household, which would give women the time necessary for extra responsibilities in the household, primarily caring for children and other dependent relatives. However, household and agricultural tasks were also clearly gendered, with young people developing skills primarily on a gendered basis that also constructed heterosexual relations as the means through which to build a sustainable household. Whilst relations between the sexes in both communities were restricted by discourses emphasising the sexual nature of male-female relationships, women in Gorbanita were subject to a much more limiting, male-dominated set of social norms than was observed in Diyalivtsi. In the following two sections, I explore the challenge that migration and CBST present to the gendered norms that were so fundamental to the organisation of economic and social life in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita.

B. Gendering Migration

In this section I explore Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita as two separate case studies in order to illustrate that gendered migration can have differing outcomes for the households the

remittances are intended to sustain. Diyalivtsi presents a case study of feminised migration, which results in a physical withdrawal from the domestic economy. In the second case study of Gorbanita, migration is dominated by men and family groups. In this context, I describe the conflict generated between households as competition and resentment amongst the women left behind emerge.

i. Diyalivtsi: A case study of feminised migration

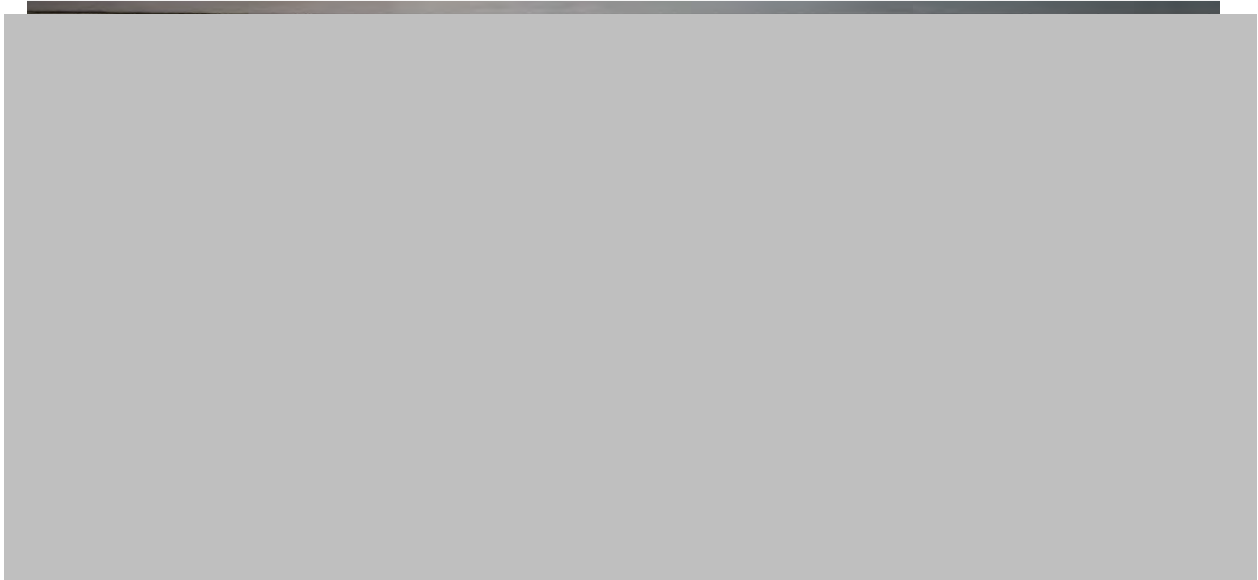
On New Year's Eve 2007, I joined a group of young people from Diyalivtsi at their table in the village restaurant. I got talking to two young women in particular, Olia and Iryna, about their mothers, who were both working as carers in Italy. Iryna was a student at the medical faculty in Chernivtsi and Olia had recently left the same university and was working as a waitress. They explained to me that they had not seen their mothers for more than seven years, as both were working 'without papers' in Italy and had not returned to the village since they left. The remittances sent back by their mothers had been used to pay for their university education and Olia had also purchased a flat in the city, where she now lived during the week, coming home to visit her father at weekends in Diyalivtsi. Iryna was in the final year of her studies and her father was the only doctor in the village, working at the small clinic in the neighbouring village. I asked Iryna if her mother would be returning once she had finished her studies.

Well I still have to pay to get work when I finish and I won't earn much for the first two years, whilst I am still training. Then there is my sister. She is still at school at the moment, but will be starting university soon and who is going to pay for that? No, I don't think my mother will come back soon. (Iryna, Diyalivtsi, January 2008)

Olia and Iryna's stories reflected a number of observations I had made since moving to the village a couple of months earlier. I had visited the village school on numerous

occasions for shows, feast days and plays prior to New Year's Eve and each time I had observed a small number of mothers present. The events had been attended predominantly by the children's grandmothers and a small number of fathers. One of these grandmothers had asked me to take a photo of her granddaughter and to get a copy made to send to her daughter (the girl's mother) in Italy. She explained that her daughter phoned often and it would be nice for her to see how her daughter had grown, as she hadn't been able to return for a number of years.

Figure 7: Children in traditional costume performing a play for the feast of St Andrew in Diyalivtsi, December 2007.



The absence of women of working age in Diyalivtsi was evident in various aspects of everyday life and in this section, I argue that it illustrates how the 'practicing' of the economic by women through migration is disrupting the gendered division of labour leading to discord within households, which the remittances from migration are intended to sustain.

The transformation of gender relations is an intrinsic part of the global and regional migration movements and is still neglected by much of the mainstream literature on migration as well as by policy-makers worldwide (Phizacklea, 1998). Various forms of gendered and locational inequality within the job market and a lack of available services to

facilitate female employment have impacted upon women's decisions to migrate. In most CEE and FSU countries women have experienced higher levels of unemployment and longer periods of unemployment than men in the period since 1989/1991 (Glass and Kawachi, 2001). However, the gendered nature of unemployment has been shown to vary sectorally (cf. Ghodsee, 2005). For women who have been able to find employment, earnings are often lower than their male counterparts. Russia and Ukraine have seen the biggest growth in earnings inequalities of all the post-socialist countries in CEE and FSU (Rokicka, 2008).

Following the collapse of state socialism in the region, many women were being excluded from the labour force at a time when much state support was being withdrawn (Stenning, 2004). As Corrin (1991: 242) suggests:

'Yet the economic scene is such that many women will have little choice about returning to the home, and will in fact be forced to become unpaid domestic workers, possibly having to deal with a constantly shrinking budget.'

Numerous key services provided by socialist regimes were no longer available. For example, Diyalivtsi had no kindergarten and most mothers in being more heavily involved in caring and the domestic economy (Fodor, 2006) were expected to remain at home with their children until they started school at the age of seven.

One of the key challenges to the traditional household roles performed by men and women in Diyalivtsi has been the growing dependence on women to provide income into households. In her article on a Ukrainian village in Transcarpathia, Dickinson (2005) describes how men have remained the primary earners in most households in the context of migration. However, evidence from Diyalivtsi highlighted that most households were now becoming dependent on female income more so than that earned by men. This feminisation of migration has also been the subject of recent studies by Ukrainian researchers (cf. Tolstokorova 2009a, 2009b, 2010).

One of the key factors driving the feminisation of migrant labour observed in Diyalivtsi has been the increasing demand for care workers, particularly in Italy and Southern Europe (Bettio et al., 2006). Demand for female care workers has been developing at a time when the availability of traditionally male migrant occupations, such as construction work (see Dickinson, 2005), have been decreasing. Italy's 'care drain' has been widely commented on (cf. Bettio et al 2006). In Italy, women have traditionally assumed the burden of care, particularly of children and elderly relatives, but also of disabled family members. As Italian women have become engaged in employment outside the home, the demand for live-in carers has increased. This situation is facilitated by relatively high pensions and also the state's decision to give monetary benefit to families to care for elderly relatives (Bettio et al, 2006: 273). In a sense, state care and institutionalised care are underdeveloped and female immigrants have become an important resource for many families.

Therefore, a demand has been created for care workers, not only in Italy, but in other Mediterranean countries. Women carers are clearly preferred in these roles as 'caring' is seen through repeated action (Butler, 1990 and Fodor, 2006) to be a female occupation in both societies. Also there is a contrast in the isolation of this type of work compared to men's migrant work, which tended to be in construction, e.g. team-based, and fits in with traditional views of male and female roles within these communities. This also ensures a 24/7 care pattern, which many of the elderly people need, by keeping the care-worker on the premises, sometimes with and sometimes separately from the rest of the family (Keough, 2006; Elmhirst, 2007). From the point of view of the migrant workers, these positions have a number of benefits, particularly in the context of illegal or semi-legal⁷⁴ migration. Carers primarily live with families or elderly relatives and do not have to seek accommodation. In

⁷⁴ I distinguish between illegal migration, in which women enter the country illegal through false documents and semi-legal in which they may have the right to enter the host country, but may not have rights to work or may have remained in the country after a visa has expired.

addition, they are often paid directly in cash by their employers, thus enabling them to work without detection for long periods of time.

Observation and conversations in Diyalivtsi, such as those discussed above support the view that labour migration from this part of Ukraine is becoming feminised. Whilst some women do this work to supplement low household incomes, others become the sole wage-earner, sending money home not only to support their husbands and children, but also to enable their husbands to establish businesses and set up their own means of generating income for the household. However, there was also a growing sense that men in Diyalivtsi were not using the remittances appropriately or filling the gap in the domestic economy left by their wives. The following is from a conversation I had with a neighbour, Oksana, about another neighbour, whose wife was working in Italy and had left him to care for their three daughters.

You've seen what he's like? His wife is sending money from Italy and he is drunk all the time. He gets the girls to do all the work in the house and he doesn't care for them. They are frightened of him. You know the oldest daughter? She was happy to leave. To get away from him. (Oksana, Diyalivtsi, April 2008)

For male migrant workers from Diyalivtsi, several factors emerged in the context of diminishing opportunities for them to migrate. Firstly, EU and then Schengen membership of countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic had made it difficult to obtain the necessary visas for travel to work. In addition, EU enlargement had also curtailed the willingness of employers to gain visas and offer employment to Ukrainian workers due to the availability of workers from the new accession states. This situation was confirmed by Lyosha, a local taxi driver, who had previously migrated for work in the construction sector in Spain.

I worked in Spain you know? It was easy for us to go to work in construction a few years ago, but now things have changed. I came back and I am working here now. I missed

my wife and my children. But you see there are so many women gone from here now. (Lyosha, Chernivtsi, February 2008).

However, in addition to lessening opportunities to migrate, Luchika suggested a further reason for the feminisation of migrant labour from Diyalivtsi. During one visit to Luchika's house, she showed me some photos from the short time she had spent in Spain.

I went to work in Spain and my husband came with me. Our son was already there with his wife and children. I worked in a restaurant, but my husband could not do anything, he just stayed at home. You see how ill he is with his drinking. Our daughter was pregnant here so after three months I sent him home to help her. Even then he couldn't cope and I came home after she gave birth to look after the house. (Luchika, Diyalivtsi, January 2008)

Luchika's view that heavy drinking and alcohol dependency was a factor in a reduction in the number of male migrants was supported by a conversation I had with Kostia, a trader from Chernivtsi, which I also refer to in the previous chapter.

I worked for three years in Portugal, you know? In construction. I just got on with things and did my work, but of the Ukrainians there didn't behave themselves whilst we were there, drinking and....you know. They had a bad reputation there. We tried to just get on with things and ignore them, because we didn't want people to think we were like them. They were always getting drunk and causing scandals. Even my boss said I was different from the others. (Kostia, Chernivtsi, June 2008)

In another conversation I had in Diyalivtsi, one man suggested that heavy drinking had been an issue amongst the male population prior to 1991. However, during the Soviet era, with full employment, he attempted to show that heavy drinking was not seen to be an inhibitor to work.

I used to work on the collective farm, you know? I was a tractor driver, but we used to drink all day. No-one ever said anything to us but we did have to hide sometimes as you had to pay

if you were caught drinking. The price was normally three bottles. The president decided to try and reduce the drinking for a while and there was less alcohol available. But we are clever people and we distilled spirits at home, really strong they were. (Yura, Diyalivtsi, December 2008)

Yura's tale is contradictory. He discusses how 'no-one ever said anything to them' about their drinking, yet he clearly also states that they had to pay bribes in alcohol at times if they were caught drinking. In addition, he commented that the head of the collective farm had tried to limit drinking through restricting the amount of alcohol available, providing a clear indication that heavy drinking was not only acknowledged but that measures were being taken to combat it.

The shift in focus to women as the primary earners through migration was not reflected in a change in attitudes towards men taking up traditionally female occupations. In many cases, the women left in the village have been expected to care for a higher number of family members with little help and support. Zhenia, who was the only female sibling in her family with two older and one younger brother, remained at home and was responsible for the cooking and cleaning for the extended family. This role was integral to the household and prevented her from working as an accountant, for which she had been trained. With no play school in the village and her mother trading cigarettes across the border, there were no childcare facilities available to Zhenia. Her father's ill health and her husband and mother's cigarette trading to earn money had left Zhenia carrying out not only the caring, cleaning and cooking roles traditionally seen to be for women, but also a lot of heavier work around the house and in the garden. At the age of twenty three, Zhenia claimed that her health was already being affected by the stress of her daily routine. She was taking medication for her heart and regularly complained of chest pains and palpitations.

In households from which mother's had migrated, such as Olia's and Iryna's, the burden to provide care had significantly increased for grandmothers. With older children often away studying, their grandmothers were involved in the day to day running of the household, cooking, cleaning and looking after younger siblings. Multi-generational households were often 're-created' as a result of a migrant mother. Other women in the village of working age often expressed concerns about the ability of grandmothers to cope with this extra burden.

That boy standing outside smoking has no respect. But what can you do? His mother is in Italy and I know his grandmother tries to control him, but she can't really. He just does what he likes. (Vera, Diyalivtsi, March 2008)

These observations had led some women to take part in a form of 'collective' parenting, as they tried to assist older women in providing care for their grandchildren. This role involved a variety of tasks, from helping children to prepare for school plays and other dances and festivities, to disciplining them and offering emotional support and advice. This collective parenting was extended not only to kin but to neighbours and often created reciprocal links between households, through which male labour may also then be exchanged, as well as food and produce. The single-mother household in which I lived was often the focus of such advice and support, as not only children, but younger married women would visit for assistance in putting their hair up or to discuss a husband's unreasonable behaviour. Tolstokorova (2009a) shows how even from Italy, women migrants were actively involved in transnational parenting through regular phone calls home and sending packages home to their children. However, there were key areas in which transnational parenting failed to meet fulfil the role assigned to mother in village society. These were most apparent at times of festivities, when feminised skills in hairdressing, costume-making and decoration were particularly evident, but also in emotional support (Keough, 2006).

It is clear that the reasons for the feminisation of migration from Ukraine are multifaceted (cf. Willis and Yeoh (2000), Knörr and Meier (2000), Morokasic et al. (2003), Pessar (1999) or Mahler (1999)). They involve a growth in 'feminised' care opportunities in Southern Europe concurrent to a reduction in possibilities for traditionally masculine work in construction due to EU accession, in addition to what is perceived as a growing inability of males to perform in economic life due to alcoholism (see also Elmhirst, 2007 on Malaysia). The feminisation had created a clear 'care gap' in the households of Diyalivtsi, which rather than becoming masculinised, was remaining a feminine domain through the participation of other women, including grandmothers, sisters and even non-kin females. What can be observed in terms of 'care' is a 'transfer' of the problem of providing care from Southern Europe to some countries in Eastern Europe, including Ukraine and Romania. This has been noted in other parts of the world, particularly Asia, which have experienced a similar feminisation of migration (cf. Parrenas, 2001 on the Philippines).

Keough (2006) explores views of migrant mothers as being one of 'blame' from those left at home. In contrast they themselves are creating a 'new moral economy' in which their migration becomes the responsible thing to do and a sacrifice being made for their children. Evidence from Diyalivtsi suggests a widespread acceptance of this practice as a 'norm' within village society now. However, unlike in Keough's (2006) Moldovan example, the main blame for the migration is seen to be not female but male, as the traditional male role of providing for the family has had to be assumed by many women. Even highly-trained men within the village are no longer able to support their families and are reliant upon their wives' remittances. In addition, the care gap left by these women is not being filled by their economically inactive or underactive husbands, but by other females in the village. In the context of Diyalivtsi, it is not migration itself but the challenge it poses to gendered roles within households that places their reproduction and survival in peril.

ii. *Gorbanita: A case study of male and family migration*

In Gorbanita, just as Dickinson (2005) described in her Transcarpathian village, migrant labour was still predominantly male in nature and of the few younger people left in the village, almost all were women, whose husbands were the primary earners of income in the household. Some men in the village were able to provide enough income through work in Romania itself, whilst others used seasonal or long-term migration to support their families. Research has shown an increase in female migration from Romania since EU accession, with 13 female migrants for every 10 males (Morokvasic, 2008). This trend did not seem to be reflected in migration from Gorbanita, suggesting that there may be other factors influencing the gendering of migration. In Gorbanita, no married women had left behind their husbands and families to support them through remittances from migrant work. Most of the married women who had migrated had done so with their husbands and their children as well. There were a number of reasons for this, driven by both local understanding and also opportunities for migration, which I discuss thoroughly in this section. Whilst many women from Diyalivtsi migrated illegally, opportunities for semi-legal or legal migration from Gorbanita were much greater. In addition to the care work available to women in Italy, Romanian men also found work in low-paid agricultural, manual and construction jobs in Italy, France, Germany and more recently the UK.

However, to state that men were the main migrants because of the dominant value of men as the primary earners would simplify the issue. What emerged were also social pressures creating fears of female infidelity, which acted as a barrier to solo female migration. There was evidence that men in Gorbanita held an underlying view of women as possessions, but more fundamentally a belief that women could be ‘taken’ or ‘stolen’ by other men, i.e. as almost inert objects, without their own will and/or the ability to refuse the

advances of other men. This was clear in the 'stealing of the bride' tradition during wedding receptions. The bride would at some point be taken away to a local disco or hostelry by a number of young men. She then had to be found and a price paid for her return by the groom. Mircea typified this attitude in a conversation about his wife.

I told her she couldn't go to Italy. It was wrong. I had to find work myself overseas. If she went, I don't know what she would do. Perhaps someone would steal her and she would not come back. She's my wife, but I don't trust her when she is on her own. I don't trust her. Perhaps she will cheat on me if I am not around to keep her. (Mircea, Gorbanita, December 2008)

However, whilst some men expressed doubts about their wives migrating, there was a sense of confidence in leaving their wives behind in the village. This confidence was driven by the restrictive nature of village society and lack of freedom young women experienced. Infidelity was seen to be less likely to occur in the context of the village, firstly due to an absence of men of a suitable age as a result of migration. In addition, young women lived primarily with their husbands' relatives and those that didn't were open to public scrutiny within the village of their behaviour. With kinship networks from the village extending to nearby towns and as far as Suceava, there were virtually no realistic opportunities for clandestine activity. In addition, childcare and animal husbandry prevented women from leaving the village for longer journeys and almost none of the young women were independently mobile. Within such a community, young women experienced little freedom and effectively close supervision of their actions, which meant that migrant husbands or boyfriends would learn of their female partners' actions within just a few hours of any indiscretion. Andrei, a young man currently working in the UK, who had previously migrated to France, recounted how his sister told him of his then girlfriend having a date with another man within just a few hours, even though it was in a neighbouring village.

My sister phoned me on Sunday and told me she had heard that my girlfriend had been to the disco in XXX with an older man. Why would she go to the disco in XXX if she didn't have anything to hide? My sister had spoken to a friend of hers who had been at the disco and she phoned her straight away on Sunday as she knew Livica was with me. I phoned her immediately and asked her where she had been last night and she said she was at home, so I knew that she was lying to me. (Dorin, London, April 2009)

Wives of male migrants frequently became the focus of speculation. This is exemplified by Anca, a young mother of two, whose husband Dumitru had spent all of their married life as a migrant worker in France. He would usually come home twice a year and in 2010 purchased a car for his wife. When I returned to Gorbanita in April 2011, I was approached by a number of other women in the village, speculating about Anca's movements and infidelity.

You don't think she's a saint do you? She's always going to town in that car and I heard she has a lover. She's always wandering after men. Her husband is stupid if he thinks she needs that car for the children. She never takes the children anywhere. She's always on her own!

(Raluca, Gorbanita, April 2011)

Discourses focused on fidelity reveal a clear desire on a community-wide level to 'control' other inhabitants through the imposition of moral restrictions. Raluca's comment also highlights resentment amongst households due to growing inequalities created by migration. Raluca's own financial situation was very unstable due to irregular income from her migrant worker husband. Anca was a much younger woman, but Dumitru had provided her with a better home and even her own car.

The lack of 'carers' also affected elderly people and had slightly different dimensions in Gorbanita, which had a greater ageing population than Diyalivtsi. Those young women who were left in the village found themselves under increasing pressure from older women to

help them. Many older women were offering their homes in exchange for care, but there were not enough young people to meet their demands. After kinship networks were exhausted, people had begun to look to neighbours for assistance.

Although there was an overall shortage of young people in Gorbanita, the situation had been exacerbated by migrant work overseas. Often, because of the salaries that young people could earn through migration, the offers of their homes from elderly relatives no longer secured them support in their old age. Having been used to living very frugally, some elderly people failed to spend their pensions and almost all were concerned about keeping their money to pay for hospital bills and medication if/when they became ill. This contrasted with a comment made by the mayor's secretary in the neighbouring village, who claimed pensions needed to be higher in Romania. It would seem to the contrary that pensions would be sufficient if informal payments were not necessary for health care, etc. and that the main issue lay in gaining access to physical help and support. This situation was 'feminised' in two ways, firstly in that women had longer life expectancy and were more likely to suffer due to the lack of carers in the village and secondly that it was younger women who were primarily expected to provide care. Younger men in the village often helped elderly neighbours in planting and harvesting crops, with house repairs and other 'heavy' work, but this was normally paid work.

In Gorbanita, the gendered nature of households, which envisioned female labour being employed within the domestic economy and male labour outside of the home being exploited for income, were not threatened by male and family labour migration. However, migration was creating inequalities within the village that caused inter-generational and inter-household conflict. Caring for the elderly was a moral rather than an economic obligation, as the income from remittances offered young people the possibility to gain regular income and form their own households, breaking the dependence on inheritance of property from elderly

relatives. Young married women who remained in the village were subject to strict moral restrictions. Amidst the growing inequalities arising from male migration, discourses of infidelity could be used as a means to discredit rivals and created inter-household conflict.

C. Gender and Performance in Cross-Border Economies

In this final section, I explore the gendered aspects of cross-border economies, which primarily relate to cross-border small trading from Diyalivtsi. In doing so, I consider two key issues: firstly, female sexualised performance at the border to secure passage through customs and secondly, the use of kinship networks by women in CBST that limited and restricted their trade.

i. Gendered border crossings

In addition to the ‘feminisation’ of migrant labour in Diyalivtsi, many women were also involved in cross-border small trading (CBST) again sometimes as the sole income into households, but also to supplement formal incomes earned by their husbands and other household members. A queue of women lined up at the bus stop in Diyalivtsi, dressed in their best clothes and carrying varying numbers of bags, was a common sight in the morning in the village. Whilst solo male traders involved in CBST would depend on the border’s system of bribes to smuggle cigarettes and other goods through the border, solo female traders from the village employed gender-specific means to secure passage for them and their goods through the border. These means were centred on sexualised performance, made possible by the hetero-normative and patriarchal context of Romanian customs. This type of activity was clearly described in a conversation I overheard in Diyalivtsi between Luchika and Rodika, my host. Luchika was trying to persuade Rodika to start trading cigarettes across the border to generate much-needed income in her single-parent household:

You've got large breasts. You'll have no trouble getting through the border. They like that, the men at the border. You know Sveta? She's just like you. When she started at the border she kept making mistakes, as she didn't know what she was doing. But she was bending down to pack her bag and one of the men noticed her breasts and he helped her. Now she uses them all the time and she has no problems at customs. (Luchika, Diyalivtsi, March 2008).

Male traders also played a role in this performance, using the bodies of female travelling companions to build relationships with Romanian customs officials. The companions were sometimes their own wives or daughters, but they also capitalised on transporting younger women across the border. This was illustrated by a conversation I had with Zhenia, Luchika's daughter, who until the birth of her son had crossed the border on a regular basis with her husband to trade cigarettes.

I used to cross the border as well, you know? There was one border guard there who really liked me. He knew I was married, as I used to cross with my husband, but he didn't seem to care. Dima encouraged him when he used to comment on me and he was always asking about me after I stopped crossing. (Zhenia, Diyalivtsi, March 2008).

The way in which the male traders would discuss their female passengers with customs officials was typified by a conversation I witnessed between Kostia and a male customs official in 2009 when travelling from between Romania and Ukraine. Kostia was discussing both me and another young woman, who was travelling with her husband. He and the customs official commented on the 'pretty girls' that Kostia was travelling with and Kostia encouraged the official to approach his minibus and inspect us more closely. The official did not enter into a conversation with either of us, but commented only to Kostia. Kostia was a Ukrainian trader⁷⁵ with whom I had travelled on a number of occasions and I noticed that he

⁷⁵ Of Romanian ethnic origin.

and many others would place younger women in the front seats of their minibuses, whilst older women and men would sit in the back. These young women were clearly sexualised in interactions with customs officials, with male traders verbally drawing attention to them. Customs officials would rarely then search the area where the young woman sat, which was commonly used for storing cigarettes and alcohol. The role of female companions was often passive, unlike in the scenario of solo female traders. They were not expected to engage in the performance between the male trader and customs official.

There has been an increase in academic literature focusing on the sexualisation of the female image within the region and in particular the view of eastern European women being generated through prostitution and the sex trade. As Kligman and Limoncelli (2005) conclude, prostitution and the sex trade can perhaps be defined as an economic ‘boom’ that has brought Eastern Europe into the global economy. In Bulgaria’s case the use of sexuality in advertising images has resulted in criticism from the EU Parliament and Ibroscheva (2009: 5) concludes that it ‘promotes and mainstreams the sexualisation of the female body as the ‘norm’, as both expected, and in fact, desired mode of identifying a woman’s worth’. This literature does not focus on the sexualisation of the female form within communities themselves, but looks predominantly to outside processes, particularly those relating to involvement in diverse economies. However, the use of sexualised performance for women as part of CBST illustrates other indirect and banal uses of female sexuality, which operate on an everyday level in village life and not through phenomena such as ‘mail-order brides’ or prostitution and trafficking of women from the region as a whole. These banal uses of female sexuality are intersecting with traditional views of gender to create sexualised femininities.

The sexualised performance in which solo female traders were involved was a response to the hetero-normative and patriarchal regimes at Romanian customs, which reflected the broader gendering of local society discussed in the opening section of this

chapter. The performance itself demonstrated an understanding of Romanian male 'sexualisation' of the female body. However, at the same time, it also created difference between Ukrainian and Romanian females, as it was men who were expected to lead and engage in this sexualisation in Romania, with women remaining passive. This had a profound impact on the gendered discourses emerging from CBST on both sides of the border.

Firstly, in Diyalivtsi, an image of 'Romanian' men has developed that is also linked to this performance. This emerged in a warning from my neighbour Luchika.

You need to be careful when you go to Romania. The men there really like foreign women. They are always chasing after our women. (Luchika, Diyalivtsi, April 2008).

Female traders' sexualised engagement with Romanian customs officials had created the notion that the focus of their discourses was 'foreign' women and not women in general. Unaware of the Romanian context, Luchika interpreted her interactions at the border as being directed towards non-Romanian females. These sexualised discussions of females in Romania were in fact common, but were rarely engaged in by women, even when they were the focus of male conversation.

Secondly, engagement in sexualised discourses and performance at Romanian customs generated a particular view of Ukrainian females in Romania. In Romania, sexualised performance and discourse was developed and initiated by males. Whilst the engagement in sexualised performance by Ukrainian female traders was encouraged at the border, it was perceived in a negative fashion away from customs. Dorin summarised the image developing in Romania concerning Ukrainian women.

It's so easy to sleep with a Ukrainian girl, not like it is here in Romania. (Dorin, Gorbanita, January 2009).

The female traders' active role in sexualising their bodies was understood as reflecting possibilities for actual sexual relations. Such a performance inferred an open attitude towards

sexual relations, which due to the moral restrictions discussed in relation to migration from Gorbanita, was unlikely to be reflected by female behaviour in Romania.

Whilst this is not the only factor influencing gendered understanding on either side of the border, it is clear that the sexualised performance of femininity in CBST was having a marked impact in these rural communities and was a product of the 'Romanian' customs context and a form of performance actively engaged in by male and female traders. Luchika's comment shows how this performance was then discursively integrated into village life in Diyalivtsi; changing women's perceptions of their bodies and the role they could play in generating income through CBST, whilst Dorin reveals the negative impact upon perceptions of Ukrainian females amongst local Romanian communities.

ii. Gender and Mobility in Cross-Border Small Trading

The second area I wanted to address in this section relates to gendered aspects of CBST resulting from the higher levels of independent mobility amongst male traders, which is referenced above (cf. Williams and Balaz, 2002). Only a few women in Diyalivtsi had access to their own form of transport.⁷⁶ For the most part they used local buses to get to the border and then travelled across the border by finding a space in another trader's vehicle. This meant that not only were women more restricted in terms of their access to markets once they were in Romania, but also that women were more likely to make numerous trips across the border in the course of a day and there was a distinct feminisation of spaces close to the border on the Ukrainian side, as women appropriated local businesses to prepare for their border crossings.

Almost all the small businesses near the border had also become spaces of cross-border trade. Traders avoided the official bureaux de change and relied instead upon

⁷⁶ Alla, whom we meet in the next chapter, is one of just two young women I met, who used cars in CBST.

unofficial money-changers to be found near the border crossing. These included the owners of the local restaurant, which was used by many as a base to change money and make deals for goods being taken into and brought back from Romania. However the vital service provided to the traders by the restaurant was relied upon to a greater extent by women from the surrounding villages, who didn't have the means to travel to nearby towns to sell and purchase goods. The small insurance hut, intended to uphold the Ukrainian legal requirement for all visitors to hold valid medical insurance, was used as a base for female traders to rest between trips across the border and to hide cigarettes on their person before attempting a border crossing. Female traders from Diyalivtsi utilised their personal relationships with the insurance companies' sole female employee to make use of the hut and the employee was also involved in the trade directly.

Below are more details of the conversation I overheard between Luchika and my host Rodika, in which Luchika was advising her friend on getting cigarettes through Romanian customs:

You know that sometimes they will send you back many times. I have to go and leave some cigarettes and try again. I always tell them I have three cartons and I pretend I don't speak Romanian if they ask anything else. Sometimes it can take six attempts, but I get through eventually. (Luchika, Diyalivtsi, April 2008)

This practice was almost exclusively female, as men, such as Luchika's own son-in-law, were able to restrict their trips to only a few every week, because their independent mobility enabled them to carry many more cigarettes through the border on one visit and the size of the resulting transaction would using net a sum that enabled the payment of bribes to officials.

Taking smaller amounts of goods through the border also restricted the women's ability to negotiate deals with intermediaries in Romania. Few of the border town's major

distributors were interested in small quantities of cigarettes. Therefore, differential access to means of transport led to gendered aspects of CBST, which meant that women were less profitable than men in their trade. Having to make several small trips across the border every day gained them less income than men who travelled in their own cars twice a week. Women were unable to attract large ‘clients’ for their small quantities of goods and were unable to guarantee passage through the border by paying bribes, as the cost would have precluded making profit if they were to do so on each occasion. Towards the end of my time in Diyalivtsi, the growing gender inequalities of CBST began to be addressed by the arrival of a new form of transport from Italy. Female traders started to invest in small scooters to take them through the border in the summer months. Although less effective than a car in concealing cigarettes, the scooters had storage space under the seat, which enabled the smuggling of larger quantities of cigarettes than concealment on the body.

Figure 8: A woman from Diyalivtsi on a scooter that had been purchased for cross-border small trading, May 2008.



iii. *Gender and Kinship Networks in Cross-Border Small Trading*

The small quantities smuggled across the border by women compared to men did limit their access to larger distributors and markets in Romania. However, there was also another factor, which led women to be reluctant in creating and maintaining such links – fears for personal safety. The larger distributors across the border were predominantly male and moved in circles of organised crime. Male traders would often travel at night to supply cigarettes to them. The owner of the local shop in Gorbanita regularly received deliveries of cigarettes and alcohol from Ukraine at night, from one such distributor.

I don't have a choice. People can get cheap cigarettes from Ukraine everywhere and no-one would come to me. I have to do this for my business. (Mihai, Gorbanita, December 2008)

Female traders from Diyalivtsi were concerned about the threats to their personal safety posed by such trips both in terms of travelling at night and physical vulnerability to attacks by male distributors. Many of the services in the Romanian border town were highly organised and informally regulated. The consequences for those breaking the rules within the town could be severe and even life-threatening. This was illustrated by the shooting of a woman and her young daughter in 2010, the details of which were relayed to me by a woman from Gorbanita, who worked in the town. The woman's husband was a money changer, who had used capital earned from migrant work to set himself up in business after returning to the town in 2009. The man had attempted to attract business by offering better exchange rates than his competitors, who generally offered relatively standardised rates as part of an informal agreement. The man had a large amount of success in attracting Ukrainian traders and this resulted in growing resentment amongst his competitors. He was reportedly requested to cease exchanging money at favourable rates by competitors, but failed to heed their warnings. As a result, two local men entered his home late one evening when he was out

and fatally shot his wife and daughter. Whilst such occurrences were rare, the story highlights the perilous nature of dealing with intermediaries in the context of CBST.

These intermediaries were also difficult for women to access due to the male-dominated gender norms present in local Romanian society. Women were rarely considered to be equal to men in business circles. I observed this exclusion of females from transactions on a trip I made at night with Alla and Dima, a young couple from Diyalivtsi. Alla had much experience of trading cigarettes across the border on her own, both prior to and following her marriage to Dima. After crossing the border, we drove slowly through the Romanian border town, as Dima searched for his contact. Having passed through the town and exited towards a neighbouring village, I became aware of a car following us and Dima pulled into a small track road that led to two houses. Once there, Alla and I waited in the car whilst Dima negotiated a price with the two men. The negotiations were protracted, with Dima returning frequently to the car to ask Alla to recalculate the prices. During the exchange, the two Romanian men merely greeted Alla and her attempts to enter into the negotiation were rebuffed. On the way back to town following the completion of the transaction, Dima and Alla argued about the price the men had paid. Dima chastised Alla for her involvement in the transaction.

I told you not to say anything. Why did you talk? You know they won't listen to a woman. I felt stupid when you started talking. (Dima, Romanian border town, December 2007)

Consequently, solo female traders had come to rely more readily on kin in Romania to distribute goods. Luchika had an aunt living in the Romanian border town and cousins in a Ukrainian-speaking village next to Gorbanita, with whom she traded cigarettes. She visited these households during the day and from here the cigarettes were sold on directly to households in the village. Gorbanita had a similar kinship network across the border, which

supplied the village with a number of goods, primarily the everyday items sought on shopping trips to Ukraine, such as matches, sunflower oil, rice and washing powder.

The use of kinship networks also reduced the profitability of CBST for women, as their families in Romania would invariably pay less in order to ensure a profit through the onward sale of goods. In addition, kinship obligations and the risk associated with handling Ukrainian products would make women feel obliged to sell goods more cheaply.

I have family in XXX, you know? On the road to Suceava. I generally go to them to sell because it is easier. They pay less, of course, but they are family! (Luchika, Diyalivtsi, March 2008)

Unlike migration, experiences of CBST reflected traditional gender roles in Diyalivtsi. Women used gender-specific tactics in crossing the border, which supported sexualised views of women in Romania. However, these tactics also increased the possibility of having to make several attempts to cross the border, reducing efficiency and profitability. Having greater restrictions on their physical mobility, they were unable to gain the same returns as male traders, who used vehicles to cross the border. Due to social restrictions on interactions with male intermediaries and fears for their personal safety, they were more dependent on kinship networks for distributing their goods. Whilst such networks offered greater security and stability in trade, they also reduced incomes, as women felt obliged to offer goods at cheaper prices.

D. Conclusions

Whilst the previous two chapters have dealt with the communities of Gorbanita and Diyalivtsi as a whole, in this chapter I have shown how gender inequalities are practiced through economic life in the villages. I have discussed in some detail the processes by which practices become gendered, focussing in particular upon migrant labour and CBST. Clear

differences are emerging between Ukraine and Romania in terms of the gendering of migration. There has been a feminisation of migration from Diyalivtsi in recent years, as a result of marginalisation in the formal employment sector, increasing alcoholism amongst men, opportunities for care work in Southern Europe and reduced possibilities for work in 'male-dominated' spheres due to EU enlargement. Whilst female migrants with husbands and partners were more likely to be able to tap into networks and also to gain legal status, many single women from Ukraine remained working illegally and this often meant lower pay and exploitation.

Networks as well as transnational social practices and activities are not gender-neutral. On the contrary, gender is structuring the new spaces. Networks are developing along gender lines and the activities and social practices of migrants are influenced by and influence gender relations in the home country as well as gender relations in the migrant community abroad. (Dannecker, 2005: 659)

Mahler (1999: 707) suggests that women have never been pressured to migrate as in the case of male migrants. This contrasts with Diyalivtsi, where there is a pressure, but this invariably comes from the trend of other women migrating and the possibilities it affords families due to their remittances. Gorbanita represents a case study of male migration, whereby women were under greater pressure to actually stay at home and 'care' rather than earn through migrant work. Elmhirst (2007) notes that the rapid incorporation of women into export-dominated factory work and their associated rural–urban migration has attracted considerable attention over the past couple of decades, with particular consideration given to its social effects (Grossman, 1979; Greenhalgh, 1985; Ong, 1987; Wolf, 1992). Within an ongoing debate about global restructuring, flexible labour and the construction of a female industrial labour force (Standing, 1989; Elson, 1996), much academic and popular commentary in southeast Asia has focused on the impacts associated with the global

feminisation of labour, either for women themselves as they are seen to negotiate negative stereotypes and the pressures of ‘rampant’ consumerism (Ong, 1987; Mills, 1999; Silvey, 2000, 2003), or for families as mobility and female labour-force participation challenge so-called Asian family values (Wolf, 1992; Chant and McIlwaine, 1995; Mills, 1995). Such debate is pertinent to Ukraine and is only now beginning to emerge as a topic of specific concern within the academic literature. Tolstokorova’s recent work (2009a, 2009b, 2010) has opened this debate with exploration of the impact on Ukrainian families. My research in Diyalivtsi shows that whilst women may be taking up the traditionally male role of providing income into the household, their role in the domestic economy is not being assumed by their husbands. The result is an attempt by other women in the village to fill the ‘care gap’, yet households remain under threat due to the low numbers of females able to carry this burden.

In contrast, Gorbanita’s dependence on male migration has increased conflict between households. No longer dependent on inheritance from elderly family members and tasked with maintaining their own households without spousal support, young women are unwilling and unable to assume caring for an elderly relative. In addition, the growth in remittances has created evident inequalities within the village and young women whose husbands have migrated have become the subjects of intense scrutiny and moral censure. Women from lower-income households have begun to use discourse of impropriety and infidelity to discredit their peers, causing conflict and often leading the wives of migrant workers to feel isolated from the local community.

Elmhirst (2007) argues that masculinities have been largely ignored by users of this post-structuralist approach. As Thompson (2003) noted from his study of masculinities in Malaysia, the feminisation of the workforce ought to be seen as an important factor in shaping masculinities: around changing gender configurations of paid work (and in finding or not finding work) and in family and sexual relationships. A key concept within the literature

on masculine identities has been that of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ – that is, a form of masculinity occupying a hegemonic position in a pattern of gender relations, and produced within a particular gender regime (Connell, 1995). Connell links the emergence of a hegemonic masculinity, embodied in the egocentric footloose business executives and political elites, to the rise of contemporary global capitalism and global patriarchy (Jackson, 2001). A number of studies have taken these ideas forward to explore how men connect to hegemonic masculinity or myths of masculinity (Silberschmidt, 2001; McDowell, 2002), and the consequences of failing to hold the resources needed to achieve an idealised masculine identity. These are expressed within some analyses as ‘protest masculinity’ (McDowell, 2002). More recently, those working from a post-structuralist position, and particularly that associated with Butler’s (1990) concept of performativity, have suggested that lived relationships are much more complex and contradictory than a single notion of hegemonic masculinity implies, and that identities are more fragmented, fluid and ambivalent than a conceptualisation based on a unified notion of ‘hegemony’ could ever suggest. Mac An Ghaill (1994), for example, suggested that masculinities are inherently complex and unstable, that they have to be continually maintained and policed in everyday interactions. Masculinities, in other words, are regarded as being in a process of becoming, and as such, are contextual and forged through social interactions. (Elmhirst, 2007: 227-228). In Diyalivtsi, my restricted access to males within village society, due to social barriers on male-female interaction made obtaining information on the impact of feminised migration on masculine identities very difficult.

The change in attitudes that Corrin discusses as necessary for equality has still not come about. In addition, the recognition of the value of ‘domestic work’ has developed even less than in Soviet times, as grandmothers and other women have stepped in to take up roles abandoned by female migrant workers. Pine (1998: 115) explains how women’s work is often

‘hidden’ as being that of ‘helping’, particularly kin, whether that be on the farm or in small enterprises. Payment for these roles is irregular or even in kind. This is also clear in Gorbanita, where men’s work in the village is often rewarded monetarily. My description of Diyalivtsi contrasts sharply with Pine’s research in the 1990s, in which Lodz women were refusing to leave their homes because of kin, support, childcare, etc. However, as Pine points out, this later changes for single young women and can be extended to all women (in my research) by the 2000s.

Exploring CBST shows the ways in which the gendered spaces of the border and gendered aspects of the trade serve to reinforce, rather than challenge existing gender roles. Sexualised performance at the border in response to male-dominated Romanian customs creates a negative view of Ukrainian women within local Romanian communities. My research in Diyalivtsi also showed that women are less profitable in their trading for a number of reasons. Firstly, they generally do not have access to cars for trading and consequently carry fewer goods through the border, which in turn affects their ability to access distributors and gain higher prices for goods. They are also excluded from negotiations with male intermediaries due to the social expectations on female roles that were discussed in the first part of the chapter. Negotiations with these intermediaries are also perceived as posing threats to personal safety and often require travel at night. Consequently, women’s trade is focused more on utilising kinship networks, which are more reliable and stable, but also less profitable. Therefore, the informal economic practices of the border reflect broader societal gender inequalities and more specifically those of lower salaries for women in formal employment. The economy, as practiced informally in the region can be seen to have a complex representational relationship with gender. The performance of gender through economic practices, but also the practice of different economic tasks by men and women, is re-made through discourses in both fieldwork sites that ensure the continuing dominance of

hegemonic masculinities. Unfortunately, my data did not enable further exploration of these masculinities, but there are definite possibilities here for further research. In the following, final chapter, I continue some of the themes that have emerged in this chapter relating to gendered roles by exploring economic practices and marriage.

7. The Heart of the Household: Practicing Economies of Household

Formation through Marriage

Introduction

To conclude the empirical findings of this thesis, the final chapter explores the very scale from which earlier discussions have been extrapolated: the household. It reflects the ethnographic approach taken in the research and brings together important discussions regarding social reproduction in the very spaces in which most of the practices that seek to ensure this are determined. The success of households in reproducing themselves is based upon gendered and hetero-normative understandings that see men and women develop different skills throughout their childhood and adolescent with the view to bringing these together through marriage to create sustainable and reproducible households. Therefore, much of the discussion in this chapter will centre on marriage itself as the primary mode of household formation in the region. Borneman claims there has been an ‘assumption among social theorists that in the "modern world"-into which every culture, not only those in the West, is supposed to be rapidly entering, if not already "there"-marriage has lost or is losing its significance’ (1996: 216). Such an assumption may also encompass the post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, there has been a gendered impact in the region relating to higher female unemployment and a subsequent ‘retreat to the household’ (Pine, 2002) for women. For the women of Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita, whose economies have become embedded in informal economic practice and alternative economic spaces, this has led to a growth in the economic importance of marriage, as Rodika explains in relation to her 15-year-old daughter:

I waited until I was 28 to get married, but it was different then, I could travel for work and I was independent. I went to Siberia. But what choice is there for her? (Rodika, Diyalivtsi, January 2008)

In addition, the emergence of the remittance economy has incorporated a transnational complexity into the ways in which households through marriage are initiated and maintained across borders. Socially, marriage has continued to be the primary framework acceptable for creating sustainable households and reproduction essential to the entire life-course, from care in childhood through to old age. In this chapter, I detail the way in which marriage has come to be understood in these communities in the post-socialist period and ask what role informal economic practices have played in this.

‘Marriage is among the demographic events that are the most sensitive to social changes. In most cases, the patterns of nuptiality closely follow the socioeconomic development path of a society, having fundamental impact on the norms of transition to adulthood, family formation, and fertility.’ (Kulcsar, 2007: 323)

I argue that in the context of these two communities, whilst the rituals of wedding preparations and the wedding ceremonies and receptions themselves bore unsurprising similarities, there were some differences in how each community conceived of marriage itself. Leading on from the previous chapter, these conceptions of marriage were gendered differently, forming the basis for what it meant to be a married or unmarried man or woman in the context of village life. To this end, I have chosen to view marriage from two standpoints; firstly, the way in which marriages are formed and secondly, how they are maintained. I commence the chapter with an overview of three different types of household in each of the fieldwork sites. This section serves to illustrate the centrality of marriage in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita and the marginality of single-parent households both socially and economically. It also provides crucial context to the ensuing discussion of household formation through detailed analysis of household incomes, expenditures and labour. In the second part of the chapter, I discuss the economies of household formation, by exploring the ways in which marital partners are sought and secured. I argue that whilst the socialist period

to some extent saw a break from the traditional dowry-giving marriage transactions previously dominant in the region and a rise in ‘marrying for love’, the economic situation in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands in the post-socialist era has led to the emergence of new forms of marriage transactions, which are intrinsically linked to the continuing importance of informal economies. In addition, the socialist period had no significant impact on the basic premises underlying marriage in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita, which sustained views of marriage as the only socially acceptable framework for reproduction and as a means for young women to gain status and leave their parental home, thus relieving their parents of the ‘burden’ represented by a daughter. The final section in this chapter explores the ways in which marriages are maintained in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita in the context of informal economies. Here, I present changing perspectives on the wedding ritual, as well as discussion of views on sex, reproduction and fidelity as pivotal to marriage and household reproduction and I conclude the chapter with an assessment of divorce and its potential implications for the survival of particular households.

A. Introducing the Households of the Ukrainian-Romanian Borderlands

The purpose of this section is to briefly introduce households in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands and provide detailed description of economic practices, divisions of labour, income and expenditure. In order to understand how informal economies are practiced, it is essential that household economic practices are reviewed and summarised to provide context to the rest of the chapter, which focuses on household creation through marriage and the economies of the wedding ritual itself. This section of the chapter is divided into two further sub-sections: the first presents three households in Diyalivtsi, which can be broadly defined as low, middle and high income; the second section presents three households in Gorbanita. I have tried to choose relatively similar types of households in each

setting, to enhance the usefulness of the comparison between the two fieldwork sites. Nonetheless, there are clear distinctions between the two villages.

Diyalivets'kiy Households

i. Rodika and her daughter

Rodika was my host in Diyalivtsi and features heavily in some of the ethnographic data presented in previous chapters. Rodika's daughter, Helena, was 14 years old and her father (Rodika's ex-husband) was living near Kyiv. Rodika's mother had left her father and returned to Murmansk during the Soviet period. Her father had been an only child and died in his early forties, leaving Rodika with only her grandmother as immediate kin, who had passed away shortly after Helena was born. Helena's father was reported to be an alcoholic and was not working but was in receipt of an army pension as a veteran of the Afghan war. Although Rodika had received confirmation from the courts that she was entitled to some of this pension for child maintenance, she was not receiving payments from her ex-husband at the time of my fieldwork. Rodika herself had not worked since she lost her job in a nearby restaurant a few years ago and was in receipt of the lowest level of disability pension of 380UAH/month for a heart condition. Nonetheless, Rodika was engaged in a wide range of economic practices to supplement her income. During the main harvesting season, Rodika did casual day labouring for a farmer in the neighbouring village (see Pallet and Nefedova, 2007 for examples of this type of agricultural work in rural Russia). She claimed that this was paid at 50 UAH/day: there were up to 4 weeks of this type of work a year. In addition, she also helped an elderly woman living on the edge of the village for which she received payment in kind. For example, she assisted this woman in slaughtering a pig in the late autumn of 2007 and received a small portion of the meat as a result. Rodika also grew limited crops in the garden behind her house – primarily carrots, onions, garlic, potatoes, tomatoes and beans.

Rodika possessed the village's only working sewing machine and took in clothes for repair and alteration, charging between 10 and 20 UAH per garment. She also stated that she worked at the post office during busy periods, but this work seemed to be erratic and none was available during the six months I lived in Diyalivtsi.

Rodika's home⁷⁷ was a source of great pride to her and she invested a great deal of time in its upkeep. She had started to build a new home behind her existing house with her husband but this had remained incomplete and the house had no running water or even a pit latrine.⁷⁸ Rodika and her daughter shared their well with the next-door neighbour. In terms of expenditure, Rodika was very frugal, buying only basic staples such as bread, spaghetti, salt and sugar from the village shop to supplement the produce grown in the garden. This meant that when supplies ran low, she and her daughter would sometimes be forced to visit neighbours to eat with them or to ask for meat or other more expensive food items.⁷⁹ Rodika was unable to afford wood for heating in the winter, although she would light fires with rubbish and debris from the garden at the coldest times of the year. She and her daughter shared one room throughout the coldest months, which they heated with a small electric radiator. This meant that Rodika's electricity bill, which was 50-60UAH during the summer months could reach 300UAH per month in winter.

Rodika also took out a small loan for a satellite dish in spring 2008, for which she paid 30UAH in cash to a retailer in a nearby town every month. However, prior to this, Rodika rarely left the village even for shopping trips, due to a lack of available funds. The exception came when it was her daughter's birthday and she travelled to the nearest town to visit a factory shop and bought her daughter a leather coat and a small ornament. Rodika's

⁷⁷ See figure 5 for a photograph of Rodika's home.

⁷⁸ The wooden outdoor toilet housed a metal bucket, which had to be emptied regularly at the bottom of the garden.

⁷⁹ During the time I lived in Diyalivtsi, a number of people approached me to inform me that Helena was suspected by many of stealing goods from neighbours and local shops. One woman insisted that this had caused tension between Rodika and her friends and neighbours, but much of this discussion appeared to lack evidence of the thefts and was based upon Helena having been present in the periods when the losses were suffered.

outgoings were low and she managed her budget very carefully. Such a low monetary income had to be supplemented by various different practices in order for the household to survive. In spite of being in receipt of sickness benefit, Rodika was forced to undertake a wide array of sometimes physically demanding work to meet the needs of her small family.

ii. Serhii and Yulia

Serhii was a retired policeman, who lived with his second wife Yulia. Serhii was relatively unpopular in the village, due to his previous profession, but also as a result of a perceived air of superiority, which saw him involved in local politics. Serhii and Yulia were both pensioners in the late sixties, but his pension provided the main income into the household at 2000UAH/month. Yulia's pension was in the region of 600UAH/month; she had worked in a low-level clerical job in the nearest town until her retirement when she reached 55. The couple had both been married before and had no children together. Their home was unusual in the village as it had two storeys, although the upper level was not converted into living accommodation and was used primarily for storage. They had a beautifully maintained Lada from the Soviet period that still ran well and served as a signifier of Serhii's previous position.

Whilst Rodika was involved in a vast array of economic practices, Serhii and his wife were comfortable in living on their pensions, but also kept a cow and some chickens and farmed their small garden plot. They did not appear to leave their home often to visit others in the village. Yulia was occasionally seen in the village shop, but Serhii rarely left the confines of his courtyard. He normally ventured out in his car with his wife to go shopping in Chernivtsi once a week. Their home was well-stocked with coffee and other luxury food items, such as branded biscuits and chocolates. Yulia was also exceptionally proud of her

cow. As discussed in the previous chapter, it was Yulia, as the woman, was responsible for looking after the cow and the barn, including feeding, milking and grazing.

On the occasions I visited, Serhii seemed content to spend much of his time at home, reading and watching television. His wife did the majority of the household chores, including cooking and cleaning, with Serhii being responsible for house and car maintenance. They heated 1-2 rooms with wood during the winter at around 1000UAH for three months. Their monthly electricity bills were unlikely to exceed 80UAH even during the winter. Even though they had a much higher food budget than Rodika and also had to pay for petrol, they would have had comfortable savings. Both of Serhii's children from his first marriage (boys) were married with their own families and worked in professional jobs in Chernivtsi. They visited only once in the time I was in the village but not at Christmas or Easter. In fact, the blessing of the Easter baskets was the only time Serhii and Yulia came together with others in the village. They did not frequent the restaurant and had an indoor bathroom, so did not use the spa.

iii. Alina and Roman

Alina and Roman were a married couple in their early thirties with twins, a boy and a girl, who were 11 years old. The children attended the village school, where Alina was a teacher of English and Geography earning 700UAH/month. Alina was a graduate of the university in Chernivtsi and Roman was from a village north of the city. The couple had spent three years as illegal migrant workers in London from 2003 to 2006. Initially they held false Greek passports, which they later exchanged for passports from one of the Baltic States. Alina's father was the former head of the collective farm and they were one of the wealthiest families in the village. Alina's sister lived in Chernivtsi, where she had an apartment and the couple's children, having become accustomed to it whilst their parents were overseas, lived

with their grandparents for most of the week. Alina's father bought a brand new Toyota Avensis during the period of fieldwork in the village and was a senior figure in the customs service at the local border crossing.

Alina and Roman had built a large house on a site on the outskirts of the village. The house was very ostentatious – much more so than Alina's parents' comfortable but relatively modest house in the centre of the village. The two storeys housed more than 350 square metres of accommodation, furnished with high-quality marble, wood floorings and two indoor bathrooms. Within this space, however, they lived primarily in two rooms, the kitchen and their bedroom/lounge, as well as making use of one of their bathrooms. The upstairs of the house was only used for the children in the summer and the vast reception rooms were opened solely for large family parties and gatherings. Their outgoings for heating were higher than those of Serhii and his wife, as they had a central heating system using fire bricks in a furnace in their basement, although this was heating just one or two radiators in general during the winter. However, Alina and her husband had also built and were operating a restaurant and bar in the centre of the village.⁸⁰ Whilst Alina complained that the bar rarely took more than a few hundred hryvnia on a daily basis, they did profit from key feasts and also weddings. In fact, they were planning to expand the upstairs of the restaurant to attract larger weddings by the summer of 2009.

It was, therefore, difficult to know how much the couple's income was overall. They certainly had the most significant property assets of any household in the village, but Alina claimed that her work at the school was to guarantee them a steady income, which the restaurant and bar did not. They cut costs where possible, with the bar rarely being well-lit and the central heating, which was powered by the same slow-burning fire bricks they used at

⁸⁰ The location of the business was controversial as some villagers claimed that the land used had been set aside for a school during the Soviet period but that Alina's father had appropriated the funds and kept the land for his daughter.

home, only being used when there were sufficient clients. Nonetheless, the couple did appear to be significantly better off in material terms than anyone else in the village. Alina had a video camera with which she filmed school events and was always to be found wearing fur coats and hats in the winter. Given the outgoings from their business and the takings I observed whilst working there at non-peak times, I would estimate their net profit to be in the region of 3000UAH/month, rising significantly (by a factor of 5) during wedding season and on feast days. Given that they were set to expand the entertainment space, it is likely that they gained enough during these busy periods to support such a capital investment. Alina had indicated in one conversation that the funds she and Roman had earned working in London had been exhausted with the house renovations and construction of the existing bar and restaurant.

Also striking in Alina and Roman's relationship was the less gendered nature of the division of tasks between them as a couple. Given that they spent much of the day in the restaurant, either separately or together, they both took their meals there and Alina rarely cooked at home. Roman did drive to the wholesalers, but was generally accompanied by Alina, although she did not get involved in the heavy lifting and unloading of the goods. Working such long hours,⁸¹ they spent little time at home, but Alina did take charge of the cleaning. Nonetheless, she was greatly assisted by time-saving devices such as a washing machine and microwave, which were not available in many other households in the village. Her parents' help in looking after the children also assisted Alina greatly. In addition to the restaurant, the couple also helped on the family's garden plot and in some small fields close to the village. Therefore, even a high-income household in the village, with formal employment for one member and an established business was still involved in self-provisioning. As most people were at work in the fields during sowing and harvesting

⁸¹ The restaurant opened at 7.30am and closed most evenings around 11pm, but would be open considerably later during holidays and for festivities.

periods, Alina and Roman could confidently close the restaurant or leave just one person (always a family member) there to run it, due to the low levels of custom.

Gorbanitan Households

i. Doina and her girls

Just like Rodika, Doina and her girls formed the only single-parent household in Gorbanita. Doina was 31 and had three daughters aged 12, 8 and 6. She and her husband had separated when she had discovered he was having an affair with a Romanian woman whilst working in construction in London. Doina was not yet divorced and had no formal payments being made to her by her husband in London.⁸² At the time I lived in Gorbanita, Doina depended primarily on her child benefit of 300RON/month and £100/month she was receiving from her sister (who had migrated to London with her husband and small son for work) for looking after their grandparents. Raluca, Doina's sister, had taken on the grandparents' house and was now responsible for looking after them in their old age (their grandfather was 90 years old and their grandmother was aged 84 – more details about their household can be found in the following sub-section).

Doina lived with her girls in a traditional 2-room house in the village, not far from the main road. Unlike most other people in the village, Doina had no summer kitchen and used a small gas ring in the area between the internal and external walls at the back of the house to prepare food for her daughters.⁸³ However, the family spent much time at her grandparents' house down in the valley, a 30-minute walk from the centre of the village. Here Doina and her girls were able to use the kitchen and draw upon the elderly couple's food stocks, which were extensive due to sustained investment in their smallholding since her grandfather had

⁸² In fact, it took almost three years after I left the village for Doina to get her child maintenance payments approved by the local courts and for her to start receiving assistance from her husband.

⁸³ In 2011, Doina's house was seriously damaged at night by a fire that was caused by faulty wiring and the gas bottle used for the ring not having been closed properly.

retired in 1981. They kept a cow and several chickens, as well as farming a number of fields in the valley, producing wheat and corn for flour, fodder for the cow and a wide selection of vegetables and beans. Doina's grandfather was proud of his orchard, with many apple, pear and cherry trees and closer to their house the couple grew numerous soft fruits, such as plums and strawberries.

Doina's other sources of income came from day-labouring for elderly neighbours during harvesting season – this was generally paid in cash, but occasionally in goods/produce. However, it was another form of interaction with the village's elderly population, which was proving profitable if somewhat difficult for Doina. For a number of years she had worked on her grandfather's part to ensure he received a disability pension on top of his war, factory and collective farm pensions. As a result, her grandfather permitted her to take 300RON/month from his pension. She had also helped some elderly neighbours with the paperwork and often accompanying them for medical tests in order to increase their pensions and although this did not net her a steady income, it gave an occasional boost to the household finances through small cash payments or gifts of meat, clothes and/or household furnishings.

However, in general Doina was very much dependent on her grandfather for extra handouts to support her and her girls. Without the opportunity to feed them in her grandparents' home it is unlikely they would have received hot meals at all during the winter, due to the poor conditions in their home. Doina's latrine was also over-flowing and the family had no money with which to build a new one, in spite of the fact that her grandfather had donated a large quantity of oak planks for this purpose. Doina's outgoings were high, with prices for children's clothes being a major expenditure, as well as travel to nearby towns to get access to all the things her children needed, including a better-stocked pharmacy. Doina had a second-hand computer and paid for internet via a USB stick and although the

signal was slow and unreliable, it enabled the girls to do their homework and to stay in contact with their father, who was still in London. Bills were more than double those of Diyalivtsi, with electricity costing the same in RON as UAH (exchange rate during fieldwork was approximately 1RON=2UAH). Doina was paying around 60RON/month for electricity but bills came only every quarter and she often struggled to pay them, frequently borrowing money from her sister or brother in London.⁸⁴

Whilst Doina assisted with self-provisioning on other's plots, hers was almost the only household in the village that did not farm her garden plot. The area around the house was overgrown and uneven. She had a small plot to the rear in which she had tried to plant potatoes, but the crop was poor and having paid a horse-drawn plough, she became discouraged. Overall, Doina's income was erratic, but on a certain level was comparable to that of Rodika, as was her situation. However, unlike Rodika, Doina had a large family who helped and supported her both through food and monetary donations. This meant that Doina was often less concerned about budgeting than Rodika, but expectations of access to the internet at home for school work and the wealth of many families due to migrant remittances also meant that Doina was under pressure to provide her children with more resources than Rodika. Indeed, after the news of her husband's affair became widely known in Gorbanita and the neighbouring village, her children frequently became the focus of bullying at the local schools, where they were told that they were poor because they didn't have a father. Her grandfather's redistribution of some of the excess from his pension, was vital to her small household's reproduction. However, Doina showed much initiative in taking on and assisting elderly neighbours with their pensions and various other brushes with officialdom. In this sense, she benefited from the differing demographic situation in the villages. The children and grandchildren of Gorbanita's aging population were often living in various urban centres,

⁸⁴ Doina rarely repaid these loans from her brother and sister, in spite of referring to the action as 'borrowing'.

whereas in Diyalivtsi, older members of the community were generally supported by younger relatives living in the village itself.

ii. Victor and Silvia

Victor and Silvia were Doina's grandparents, at the ages of 90 and 84, they were the oldest couple in the village. Victor had been forced to serve in the Romanian Army during the Second World War and had escaped from a prisoner of war camp somewhere in western Europe. He had married 16-year-old Silvia not long after his return and they had been together for almost 70 years. Both had actually retired during the socialist period and due to considerable amounts of hard work on both their parts they had a comfortable income in their pensions and also a thriving smallholding, which they still managed with only minimal outside help and support. In fact, although Doina was paid by her sister to look after them, it was apparent that they also supported and cared for her in very practical ways, such as financially and in giving food to her and her children.

Victor had three main pensions – a war veteran's pension, a work pension and a disability pension as he was partially sighted. Together these totalled more than 1500RON/month. However, his work pension was due in part to his wife's hard work on the collective farm. Victor had spent most of his working life in Bucharest building the metro and other railways. Silvia had stayed behind in the village, looked after the home and brought up their two surviving children.⁸⁵ Silvia had worked double the workload expected of a woman on the collective farm and half of her work was put in a husband's name. Men were expected to achieve twice the productivity of women on the collective farm, so the work Silvia did for Victor resulted in him receiving half of a man's collective farm pension in addition to his

⁸⁵ Silvia had lost further children in infancy, as well as having had a number of miscarriages.

pension for working on the railways in Bucharest. Silvia herself had a small pension of just under 500RON/month.

However, Victor and Silvia had saved much money since 1989 due to the productivity of their smallholding. Their outgoings were extremely low, as they had left the house to Raluca, who paid all the bills and was in charge of general maintenance and upkeep. Victor was unfortunately beginning to suffer from dementia, which manifested itself in many ways, one of which was in keeping a very tight hold on his pension and preventing Silvia from spending any of his money on the household. He was keen to take care of the major costs relating to the death of himself and his wife and had invested in a plot and headstone at the cemetery, as well as oak for their funeral caskets during the period of fieldwork. Although Raluca and her husband paid the household bills, Victor was responsible for supplies of wood that heated the home throughout the winter. As part of the agreement with Raluca, Victor and Silvia lived primarily in the summer kitchen throughout the year. The main house was used for storage and visitors only, therefore keeping both the work and costs involved in maintenance lower. Victor estimated that at the beginning of every winter he had enough firewood chopped and stored in one of his out-houses to last three years.

Victor's other expenses related to the upkeep of their small-holding, these included the payment of tractor drivers for ploughing their various fields and garden, purchasing fertiliser for their fields, paying vet bills for their cow and stud fees for a bull. Additional income was generated each year or two by the sale of a calf (see Pallot and Nefedova, 2007 on animal husbandry for profit as part of 'personal subsidiary farming' in rural Russia), which had previously netted a significant sum but by 2010 the opportunities to sell the calves and the profitability of this activity were waning, with prices falling to around 80-100 euros (approximately half the price that could have been achieved in 2007). Almost all household

expenses, such as supplementary foodstuffs, detergents, etc. could all be paid for by Silvia out of her small monthly pension.

iii. Mihai and Valeria

Mihai and his wife Valeria owned the main shop in Gorbanita and were the wealthiest couple in the village. They were both in their mid to late fifties and had no children. Mihai's mother lived with them in their home which was at the centre of the village on the main road behind their shop/bar. Mihai had been born in the village and had a brother, who lived just a few hundred metres away. Relations between the brothers were strained, as Mihai's mother often helped his brother by giving him money from her pension. Mihai believed that as he was looking after his mother, such monies should come to him and the antagonism between the brothers meant they rarely spoke. Mihai's wife, Valeria, was from a Ukrainian-speaking village a few miles away and was very popular with all the villagers. She was perceived to be a kind, highly religious woman, whose sadness at not having been able to have children was widely commented on in the village.

Mihai's business was thriving due to the lack of competition in the village and the highly immobile, elderly population.⁸⁶ Prices in his shop were around 20% higher than those in the neighbouring village, but the costs of travelling to the nearby village and the low number of buses meant that he did not lack custom. Many elderly people in the village would complain about the prices both amongst themselves and to Mihai and Valeria, but as long as trade remained steady, Mihai saw little need to make adjustments. Many of his fresh goods, such as oranges and bananas, often sold out during holiday and feast day periods. As well as household items and food, Mihai also operated a bar, which had a steady stream of customers during weekdays and was particularly busy on Sundays when most of the village's women

⁸⁶ Elderly villagers living in the valley could take up to 30 minutes to walk the 2-3 kilometres to Mihai's shop on the hill.

were at church. Mihai and Valeria took it in turns to attend Sunday church services, whilst the other would stay in the bar to meet the demands for Sunday drinking amongst customers. Mihai and Valeria had competition to the bar within the village, as a younger couple had a smaller establishment just a few metres away. However, the other bar was smaller and generally frequented by younger people, who tended to spend a large amount of time there (particularly on winter evenings) but spent less money than Mihai's older clientele.

As with Alina and Roman's business, it is difficult to estimate the profits generated of Mihai's business. He owned a modest Dacia Logan, but had spent large sums of money on renovating his home and business in recent years. Like Alina and Roman, he rarely kept his business premises warm and well lit to keep fuel and electricity costs down. However, he was well-known within the village for his philanthropy, often providing loans and even giving sums of money to those in need. This had led to various rumours and much speculation about the financial arrangements behind Mihai's extra-marital affairs. He had been having a long-standing affair with a married woman in her forties, to whom he was known to regularly give sums of 200-300RON. Doina was reluctant to accept any help from Mihai because of what she felt to be his expectations of some form of sexual relations in return. Unlike Alina and Roman, then, Mihai and Valeria's profits lay in their steady stream of customers, who certainly spent more during holidays and feast times but with no capacity for weddings and a simple bar, rather than a restaurant, income appeared to be steady and less erratic. I would estimate the businesses' net profit to be in excess of salaries for local professionals, i.e. school teachers and doctors, and place them at around 3550RON/month (710GBP) on average.

Similarly to Alina and Roman, Mihai and Valeria shared many of the tasks related to their business. However there was a clearer gendered division of labour and with Valeria being less likely to be found serving drinks in the bar and undertaking all of the domestic

chores, such as cooking and cleaning. This reflected some of the differences in the highly gendered nature of Romanian society discussed in the previous chapter, but also was possibly related to generational differences between Mihai and Valeria and Alina and Roman as a younger couple in Diyalivtsi. In addition, it was widely commented upon in the village that Valeria was the key accountant, with Mihai struggling to deal with the businesses' finances. Therefore, Valeria was generally responsible for cashing up the days takings as well as making and receiving orders. In spite of this contribution, Mihai was very much the decision-maker in terms of the couple's outgoings and a number of villagers suggested that Mihai used violence against his wife to maintain his hegemonic position in the business and home. In addition, Valeria was also said to suffer abuse at the hands of her mother-in-law in the home who regularly beat her for pausing to talk during her round of chores. Effectively, all outgoings were controlled by Mihai. Valeria had little say in financial decisions and in addition to all the tasks described above, Valeria was also caring for her elderly parents in their village. To do this, she had to use local bus services, as Mihai refused to take on any employees in the shop.

Figure 9: A table summarising the typical monthly income, expenditure and fixed assets of households in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita⁸⁷

Household	Average Net Monthly Income in GBP⁸⁸ (Includes all monetary income from wages, pensions and informal work)	Estimated Fixed Monthly Outgoings in GBP (Includes rent/mortgage, utilities, food and any loan payments)	Estimated Value of Fixed Assets in GBP⁸⁹ (Includes property and businesses)
Diyalivtsi, Ukraine⁹⁰			
Rodika and Helena ⁹¹	58	33	4500
Serhii and Yulia	260	150	6000
Alina and Roman	370	207	25000
Gorbanita, Romania⁹²			
Doina and her girls	220	170	6500
Victor and Silvia	400	130	10000
Mihai and Valeria	710	258	25000

B. Household Formation through Marriage

Just as marriage is the primary means for household formation, so the decision to marry was generally based on a set of key assumptions in both fieldwork sites. These assumptions

⁸⁷ All data is based on estimates derived from information collected from the families themselves both during and after fieldwork.

⁸⁸ The rate used for converting UAH to GBP is 10:1, which was the prevailing exchange rate in Chernivtsi for the period of fieldwork. This rate did change later in 2008 due to the world financial crisis that led to the devaluation of the UAH on the world currency markets (from 5 UAH to 1 USD to 8 UAH to 1 USD). The rate used for converting RON to GBP is 5:1, which is also based on the prevailing rate during the period of fieldwork in Romania.

⁸⁹ Primarily relates to the value of property, i.e. homes and businesses. Based on sold and for sale prices of comparable properties in both sites at the time of fieldwork.

⁹⁰ Data from the Ukrainian State Statistical Service gives average monthly household income for the Chernivtsi region of Ukraine as 1051UAH (approximately 105GBP) in 2007 and 1402UAH (approximately 140GBP, although possibly less due to the world global financial crisis and devaluation of the UAH) in 2008. This compares to a Ukrainian average of 1351UAH for 2007 and 1806UAH for 2008. Average household expenditure for Chernivtsi region exceeded average income at 1722UAH in 2007 and 2590.4UAH in 2008. Data accessed at www.ukrstat.gov.ua on 12/10/2012.

⁹¹ Rodika's income was almost doubled by my rental payments (400UAH/month) during the period of fieldwork. I have not included these here, as I judged them to be temporary and not part of ongoing income streams.

⁹² Detailed household income data was not available for Suceava county, but average net monthly household income for Romania as a whole was 1038RON (208GBP) in 2007 and 1306RON (261GBP) in 2007.

included the idea that men should be the main earners within the households, while the female role is best limited to the domestic economy, care-giving and reproduction. The below discussion considers why these social norms have continued to dominate household and marriage formation, in spite of the gendered nature of some of the sweeping changes associated with informal economic practices. In addition, I highlight here newly-emerging mechanisms for securing an advantageous marriage and the clear differences between the roles young men and women are expected to play in marriage formation on either side of the border.

i. Dowries, Patrilocality & the Value of Female Labour

Victor and Silvia, whom we met in the previous chapter and whose household is described in greater detail in the previous section, illustrate the dowry-giving common to arranging marriages amongst land-owning peasants in pre-industrial Europe (Schlegel, 1991). Dowry tends to occur in more stratified societies in which wealth or status can be gained by the bride's family through the match (Harrell and Dickey, 1985). When Victor returned to the village from the Second World War, he soon entered into negotiations to find a bride. After the war, due to the small number of available men of marriageable age, Victor was able to gain an economically advantageous marriage.

I took Silvia because her father offered me some good land, which was next to our land by the church. Of course, I felt sorry for her. She was young and her mother had died and her father had remarried. (Victor, Gorbanita, December 2010)

Silvia explains that she took the opportunity to leave her family home after other women in the village warned her of the difficulties she would face living with her new stepmother. Victor often gave the impression of having taken pity on his wife and when describing their years together, he rarely acknowledged the work she had done to sustain their home and

family. Indeed Schlegel (1988: 301) points to the importance of dowry and particularly property in regions where female labour is not highly valued. The property given to a bride is a form of payment for her move to the patrilocal residence, which is apparent in the transfer of good agricultural land to the bridegroom in Silvia's case. Silvia's explanation also reinforces the idea that marriage was the only means by which a young woman could leave her parental home.

Unlike some other forms of property and wealth transfer and exchange in marriage, a property dowry has embedded in it longevity of investment, which could become a factor in any decision to divorce, as women such as Silvia (and their families) would lose the property if they had no children. Silvia's grandson, Liviu, explained that in addition to the land she also brought the home furnishings, linens, etc. with her that traditionally formed a woman's trousseau. At the same time, however, the parents of a bridegroom would be expected to pay for the wedding. Liviu recalled the efforts his grandmother made when he was a child to provide his two sisters with a similar trousseau to her own.

You know my grandmother used to spend the whole winter sewing every evening. I remember that from when I was young. She also saved wool from the sheep in the loft to spin and make wall hangings for them. But when they got married they didn't want them. It wasn't fashionable anymore. You've seen them. Now she has them all over the house. They were supposed to be for my sisters' weddings. (Liviu, Gorbanita, April 2011).

The trousseau that had been so important to Silvia at the time of her marriage was no longer of use to her granddaughters. Their understanding of how to form and transact a marriage was formed on a different basis, rooted in the changes that took place in the intervening socialist period.

ii. *'Marrying for Love' under Socialism*

Under socialism, the formation of collective farms meant that families in rural areas were no longer able to transact marriages to the same extent through the payment of dowries. As women were drafted into the workforce, many saw an improvement in their economic situation (Massino, 2009). Increased physical and social mobility led to a greater sense of freedom, particularly for those from traditional rural, agrarian societies. Massino (2009) suggests that this gave women greater control over many aspects of their lives, including decisions regarding partners. Consequently, there was a shift away from marriages based on familial and/or financial obligation towards 'companionate' or 'love' marriages, of the type seen across much of Europe and North America in the last 100 years (Hirsch and Wardlow, 2006). Most of the women in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita with whom I discussed this subject and who had married during the socialist period cited love as being involved in their decision to marry. Luchika, a neighbour from Diyalivtsi, told me how she met her own husband.

When I was 18, I started working in the village shop. You know I'm a stranger, from another village? I came here to work and Anatoliy came to the shop regularly. We started to talk. He was in the Army. He was older by ten years and I thought he was too old for me. Everyone said he was too old. My parents told me he was too old. But I fell in love. What to do? I was young. We married and when I was 19, I gave birth to our first child. Then three more children; one every year! (Luchika, Diyalivtsi, April 2008)

Liviu's mother, Irina, also met her husband when working at a factory in a nearby town.

You know my grandparents didn't really like my father but before him she had one from [...], who used to drink a lot. My grandfather chased him from the house and forbade my mother to marry him. They thought that my father was better than him, so they didn't say anything. (Liviu, Gorbanita, May 2009)

Luchika and Irina's stories highlight the decreasing direct financial contribution made by parents in marital transactions as their previous wealth, primarily relating to land and animals, had been collectivised. Nonetheless, parents and older members of village society were still the 'moral keepers' of marriage; influencing decisions through emotional advice and support and in Irina's case even forbidding her marriage to an unsuitable man. This meant that marriages that enabled women to gain wealth and status were still sought, but the focus changed to be upon the newly-emerging elite of 'communists'⁹³ in the village. As Florin explains,

You know Mircea the brigadier?⁹⁴ I heard a lot of women were after him when he worked on the collective farm. He has that big house near the exit from the village towards [...], you know? (Florin, Gorbanita, December 2008)

Kinship played a major role in these types of marriages as those with family members who could access goods through functions within production (managers in the collective farm, nearby factories) and distribution (co-operative stores, logistics and transport) were often seen to be advantageous matches, as they would 'look after their people' through goods from the shadow economy and inflating individual productivity to pay higher salaries. Without an influential family member, it was often impossible to secure a marriage which would improve a young man or woman's economic or social status.

The mobility and economic improvements of the socialist era did create a new freedom for men and particularly women from rural communities, presenting greater opportunities to marry for love. However, underlying ideas concerning what constituted a 'good' marriage, i.e. one which improved economic or social status, remained but were

⁹³ People within both villages referred to those with an official role as 'communists', which included high-profile figures, such as the head of the collective farm, the head of the village shop and co-operative and the village brigadier.

⁹⁴ Brigadiers were the collective farm managers in the village, who oversaw the workers and production. Most were still referred to by this title, as it differentiated them from others with the same name. Surnames were still generally not used and jobs or trades were used instead, for example other Mirceas in the village might be known as the blacksmith, the mechanic or the engineer.

transferred to a focus on key workers within the collective farm and other socialist enterprises and their families. These new elites were often able to leverage their positions to gain kinship connections through marriage that added to their pool of accessible resources in terms of goods from the shadow economy and influence in the local branch of the party. Both the pre-socialist and socialist periods have contributed to social norms surrounding marriage transactions and spousal searches. Importantly, they both continued to define marriage as the normative framework for family and household reproduction (Kulcsar, 2007) and didn't challenge the gendered roles discussed in the previous chapter.

iii. Informal Economic Practices and Investing in Marriage

Following on from the contextual discussion above, in this section, I explore the ways in which the worsening of the economic situation in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita since 1989/1991, has led to the emergence of new types of transactions in marriage formation. Whilst traditional dowry-giving no longer exists, it is my contention that new forms of 'investment' are being made into marriage formation in both communities, based on the traditional roles of men as primary earners of income and daughters as an economic burden to be 'passed' to another household, generally patrilocal or neolocal (Warner, Lee & Lee, 1986). Within the context of Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita, these new transactions relating to marriage were very often dependent on income acquired through involvement in informal economic practices.

Earlier in this chapter I included a quote from Rodika, a single parent in Diyalivtsi. In most of the time I lived in the village, Rodika's 14-year-old⁹⁵ daughter Helena regularly discussed finding a spouse. As an only daughter, her mother believed that encouraging Helena to marry as quickly as possible and move in with her husband's family would be the

⁹⁵ Helena turned 15 during my fieldwork and was seeking to marry at 16/17.

most effective means to improve living conditions for both of them. As one of the lowest income households in the village, as described above, Rodika and Helena were sometimes forced to look to neighbours to provide them with food towards the end of the winter months when stocks of their own home-grown produce were dwindling. Unable to invest substantively in her daughter's search for a spouse, Rodika assisted by spending some of the small family income⁹⁶ on beauty products and clothes for her daughter, as well as providing support and advice. Rodika was not alone in investing monetary and emotional resources in assisting her daughter in forming a marriage. For adolescent females, departure from the family home was still dependent on and the result of marriage and there was a growing trend amongst young women to marry earlier than their mothers. It was expected that a marriage would transfer the economic responsibility of a daughter to another household (reflecting earlier patrilocal and neolocal moves in marriage formation). Helena's marriage would give Rodika the opportunity to pursue some of the activities associated with informal economies that were prevalent in the village, potentially including migration. I overheard Rodika's neighbour attempting to persuade her to go to Italy with her on a number of occasions for work, but Rodika always pointed to her daughter as the reason why she could not leave.⁹⁷

Due to the perceived burden a daughter placed on a household, arranging or 'making' marriages often involved a young woman's parents, but can be seen to be socially embedded.⁹⁸ Marriage was central to the discourses around the ambitions of young women

⁹⁶ See figure 10 for a summary of Rodika and Helena's income, expenditure and assets.

⁹⁷ On one visit to Kyiv, Rodika asked me to purchase a Ukrainian-Polish dictionary and expressed a desire to travel to work in Poland.

⁹⁸ There are, of course, also legal frameworks for marriage in both countries. These frameworks institutionalise gender differences. In Ukraine, a man may marry at 18 and a woman at 17, however courts may grant the right to marry to anyone from the age of 14 if they believe this to be in the interests of the individual concerned. Similarly, Romanian law defines the age of consent for marriage as 18 for a male and 16 for a female. Anyone over the age of 15 may apply and gain special dispensation for marriage from a district court. The legislation in Romania gives the age of consent to sexual relations as 15, but statutory rape charges may apply to anyone having sex with a minor between the ages of 15 and 18 if they are deemed to have abused a position of authority or influence in these relations. In Gorbanita, all the men I spoke to regarding marriage and sexual relations considered a girl under the age of 18 to be a minor and considered sexual relations with such a girl to be not only morally reprehensible but also legally punishable. In addition, although not explicit in giving an age of

and men in both Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita. However, the emphasis on gaining a good husband was far greater for young women. Nonetheless, there were distinct differences in terms of the role a young woman should play in attracting a husband. As discussed in the previous chapter, Romanian patriarchal⁹⁹ society suggested women take a more passive role in this activity, with the emphasis being upon young men to find a wife. So the role of wife (and later mother) whilst being one of the most important in terms of female identities, was to be determined more so by men than women. In contrast, young women in Diyalivtsi found themselves under social and parental pressure to play an active role in seeking out a husband. In order to gain wealth and status through marriage many families felt it necessary to invest in further studies in higher education for their daughters, as Oksana, a young woman from Chernivtsi explained:

Have you seen some of these girls, the students? The way they dress? I really don't believe that they come to university like this every day. They come to university to find husbands and their parents pay because they think they will find better husbands here than at home.
(Oksana, Chernivtsi, October 2007)

Oksana's thoughts were echoed by the experiences of Inna, a young university graduate from a neighbouring village, whom we have already met working occasionally in her parents' shop in Diyalivtsi.

My father didn't like the boyfriend I had at university. He only had two fingers on one hand. He loved me and he is rich and has a very good job, but my father told me I couldn't marry him because he was handicapped. Now he is angry about all the money they spent for me to go to university. I didn't find a husband and now I don't see my friends from university. I

consent, Ukrainian law considers sex with a minor under the age of 16 to be prosecutable as 'debauchery'. Further details for Romania can be found at <http://e-juridic.manager.ro/Codul-familiei.html>, accessed 12/04/2011 and for Ukraine at <http://www.minjust.gov.ua/0/9809>, accessed 15/04/2011.

⁹⁹ In using patriarchal I wish to highlight the dominance of men in authority and decision-making roles within a community and discourses that naturalise this dominance of power, which subordinates females.

don't know where I will find someone. You see what it is like in the village. (Inna, Diyalivtsi, January 2008)

Inna's perception that she had failed to find a husband affected her acutely and dominated much of her conversation. At 23, Inna considered that she had already arrived at an age in which her chances of marriage to a suitable husband were greatly diminished. Inna and Oksana both refer to the use of family funds to gain a wealthier husband through a university education, however Inna's father felt that the stigma attached to a disability would lead to a loss of status, even if the match was economically advantageous.

Rather than the direct payments made to husband's families in the villages as a dowry prior to the socialist period, a sense that young women from more affluent families can use wealth indirectly to secure a husband at university has emerged. For those from rural villages, these funds are almost invariably gained through the remittance economy or CBST. Inna's father had sanctioned the marriage of her younger sister to one of the richest young men in the neighbouring village. She, like Inna, had been to university in Chernivtsi and although she did not make a match at university, she returned to the village as a teacher.¹⁰⁰ Her new profession gave Inna's sister the opportunity to negotiate a marriage to one of the more skilled craftsmen in their village.

In addition to education, young women in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita were expected to focus on enhancing their physical appearance in order to attract a husband. This also fitted in with the more passive role women were expected to take in marriage formation in Gorbanita. Rather than investment in education, investment in beauty was more time-intensive and entailed less expenditure, making it accessible to lower-income households. Rodika spent much time assisting Helena in preparing for festivities in the village, including more than

¹⁰⁰ Inna herself had also studied to be a teacher, but had paid bribes to pass her exams and was sacked from her job at the village school within a few months, when her lack of knowledge came to the attention of the headteacher.

four hours to prepare her for a role in a school play.¹⁰¹ Notions of female beauty as central to marriage became apparent when I was visited by a male German friend, Uhr, who worked in Chernivtsi. Alla was a young woman who had recently separated from her husband and was keen to meet Uhr as a potential suitor. On the day of Uhr's visit, he and a mutual female Ukrainian friend, Masha, arrived from Chernivtsi mid-morning. Alla came to visit soon after their arrival and had clearly made considerable effort over her appearance. She and Rodika joined us as we discussed Uhr's work. Uhr was involved in organising German cultural activities in Chernivtsi and discussed a recent art exhibition. The conversation was in Ukrainian, but Alla soon became bored and left. Later on, we visited the local restaurant to eat and Alla, along with some of her friends also came into the restaurant and joined a nearby table. I later heard the mother of one of her friends consoling Alla as she complained about how 'boring' the conversation with Uhr had been. This woman told Alla not to worry as all foreign women were ugly and she was clearly more beautiful than them. She stressed that it was not Alla's fault that Uhr had shown no interest in her. I had been struck by Alla's shyness around Uhr and her failure to try to engage him in conversation, however it was clear from the conversation I overheard, that Alla felt her role lay in making an effort with her appearance and that any move to conversation should have come from Uhr himself. In his time in the village, Uhr engaged in conversation with a number of people, visiting one neighbour and discussing cooking, taking a guided tour of the village with another female neighbour. Alla could not understand Uhr's failure to take an interest in her, having spent so much time on her appearance.

Migration and remittance economies had also introduced new elements into expectations of wealth and status to be gained from marriage. This became apparent when I

¹⁰¹ It is worth noting here, that Helena's appearance was also important to Rodika in constructing an image and discourse that she was able to provide for and take care of her family without the assistance of her ex-husband. This emerged on several occasions during my fieldwork in Diyalivtsi.

attended the village school in Diyalivtsi on the eve of the feast of St Andrew. These festivities included the performance of a play in which all the unmarried girls in the village would visit an elderly fortune teller to seek information on the origin of the girl's future husband. The young girl, who was playing the role of an elderly woman, then pronounced this to the assembled audience. Whilst this play may have been traditional to the village, the origin of the future husbands undoubtedly spoke to the informal economies of the region. The way in which each pronouncement was received by the assembled audience or parents, grandparents and teachers, illustrated new perspectives on an advantageous marriage. One young girl was told her husband would be from the village itself, which met with much derision and laughter from the audience. A similar response came for the suggestion of a husband from a nearby town. Kyiv was less derided, whilst the suggestion of an Italian husband led to approving cheers.

Figure 10: 'Fortune-teller' at the village play on the feast of St Andrew in Diyalivtsi, December 2007



Whilst in other parts of Ukraine and the region, the search for a foreign spouse has focussed upon the internet and dating agencies (cf. Osipovich in Stulhofer & Sandfort, 2005),

for the young women of Diyalivtsi migration presented the most likely means by which they would secure a foreign husband. The desire to meet a foreign husband was based upon the perceived ability of such a man to provide income that would not necessitate female involvement in formal employment. A conversation I had with Alla regarding Uhr further illustrated this. I explained that Uhr would soon be returning to Germany when his contract ended and Alla stated that this wouldn't be a problem. Upon enquiring as to what she would do there and how she would manage with the language, Alla replied, 'I don't need to speak the language to look after the house, do I?' She seemed confused by the suggestion that she should be expected to contribute outside of the home.

The idea that marriage offered young women independence was based on the traditional view of men as wage-earners, which was being undermined by the feminisation of the remittance economy. However, rather than adjust expectations of marriage, young women were encouraged to still view it through this gaze within the village, but merely to work harder in order to find a 'good husband' in terms of his earning capacity. As seen above, this led to huge 'competition' between young women to find husbands, with parents being willing to 'invest' in this by sending them to university. This competition for a husband can be likened to Mauss' gift 'to get your man you have to seduce him and dazzle him ... you must get in before the others and make exchanges of the most valuable things' (Mauss 1967:26). In addition, some young women had begun to seek husbands abroad as a means to gain this economic stability, in spite of having gained financial independence through involvement in cross-border small trading (CBST).

There was also evidence that the search for foreign husbands was being interpreted in a very similar way to that of the increase in spending power across the border in Romania. Whilst having and gaining a foreign husband was seen to be prestigious for a woman from Diyalivtsi, primarily due to the financial standing of a foreigner, these men were also often

ridiculed. This enabled a discourse, which again mitigated the negative impact on local understanding that this seeking of foreign husbands may have. One particular example of this was the story of Enzo, an Italian man, who was married to a woman from Diyalivtsi. They lived in Italy, but had returned to the village to visit her parents and Enzo had refused to stay in the village, opting for a hotel in Chernivtsi. Almost all the villagers would burst into laughter at even the mention of Enzo's name. When in the village, even his wife had made fun of him, telling stories of his effeminate characteristics and laughing alongside her old neighbours.

In contrast with Diyalivtsi, women in Gorbanita rarely spoke of finding husbands and the focus was upon young men to seek wives. Numerous young men commented on the difficulties of this task in the light of young women's expectations. Informal economic practices and particularly migration had impacted upon the qualities valued by young women, as Andrei, a young man from Gorbanita explained:

You've seen how stupid the girls are here. If a boy goes away to work in France and comes back with a car the girls all love him. They think he is rich. They don't have any idea. They don't think about whether he is a good guy or not. They are only interested in the money, but most of the time the guys have no money and the car is cheap, but the girls don't care about this. (Andrei, Gorbanita, May 2010)

Andrei's comments were confirmed by EAlla, a young woman from a nearby town whose grandmother lived in Gorbanita. I visited EAlla's home with her grandmother and EAlla ushered us into her bedroom to show us photos of her boyfriend on her computer. She said, "What do you think? He's got lots of muscles". Her grandmother replied, "Well, if you like him, good, good". EAlla, seeing her grandmother's lack of interest then announced quickly, "He has an A6, grandmother, you know, an Audi, the big one". Learning to describe men 'economically' was something I also observed in Diyalivtsi. I entered into a

conversation with Inna one day, in which I enquired as to how things were with her new boyfriend. Inna replied, “Look, he bought me this phone and this one; so two phones. This one cost 1000 hryvnia and the other was the same. He bought me some jeans for 300 hryvnia. He took me out for a meal in Chernivtsi and he paid for everything”. Andrei and some other young men had become frustrated with this view of their own value and potential as a husband.

The use of diverse economic practices in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita had led to new forms of transactions in marriage, whereby parents sought through investment in education and latterly beauty to enhance their daughters’ chances of marriage. In spite of the financial independence afforded to some young women through CBST, marriage remained essential as the result of social pressure regarding women’s idealised role within the domestic economy and in reproduction. Migration had given rise to the potential for foreign men to fulfil the gendered role of earning income, which had been compromised amongst Ukrainian men by the feminisation of migration. In contrast, with migration having remained a masculine occupation in Romania, male migrant labour offered the potential to attract young women.

C. Economies of Marriage

As Doina and Rodika’s single-parent households illustrate, reproduction was perceived to be easier for those households that were based upon a marriage. In this section I explore the economies of marriage and the gendered roles necessary to ensure the maintenance of a marriage, or as Betzig (1989: 658) states ‘what conditions must be met in order for the marriage to last’. I begin with the wedding ritual as a transfer of wealth between generations in the village (Kligman, 1988) and the implications of informal economic practices in terms of developing a more financial role for the couple’s ‘godparents’ or ‘sponsors’. I then explore sex within the context of marriage and pose questions relating to

the impact of migration and growing economic inequality upon socially accepted norms surrounding pre-marital and extra-marital sex, as well as finally, divorce.

i. *The Economies of the Wedding Ritual*

Weddings are commonly perceived as being the most spectacular and largest of ritual events, involving significant economic investment (Creed, 2002). As Liviu stated in relation to discussion of traditional wedding rituals in Gorbanita, whilst a young woman's parents may invest heavily in her preparation for marriage and finding a spouse, the cost of the wedding itself was usually borne by the groom's parents. Wedding guests would give money and gifts to the young couple when attending the reception and the sum received would normally be announced at some point during the evening. The most important guests financially were *nashi*, who acted as 'godparents'¹⁰² or 'sponsors' of the wedding and would participate in the religious ceremony and earn a place on the top table at the reception. The financial contribution made by the *nashi* is usually expected to be far greater than of the other guests and is widely known and discussed during and after the wedding.

In the post-socialist context, as more and more young people have begun to organise weddings without parental support, the role and particularly the financial contribution of *nashi* has become increasingly important.¹⁰³ Whilst a young couple may previously have been able to use the monies gained from the wedding for some of the costs of establishing a home, buying furniture, etc., they are often now used to pay for restaurants and expensive musicians (Buchanan, 1996). *Nashi* are usually older couples, who having been married for some time are able to transfer some of their wealth to a younger couple. Many will have been godparents at the bride or groom's baptism, others may be older cousins and uncles/aunts, but

¹⁰² This is the same word in Ukrainian and Romanian and is also used for couples who are godparents at a baptism.

¹⁰³ As Pine (2000) notes in Poland, there has also been an increase in 'Western' traditions at weddings, such as white bridal gowns replacing national dress and restaurants hosting receptions rather than the village hall/cultural centre.

equally they could also be wealthier members of the village community. For *nashi*, the wedding ritual offers them the opportunity to display their wealth and gain status within the village. Indeed, some couples actively seek the role because of the prestige associated with it, as Liviu explains in relation to his sister, ‘She really wants to be *nasha* at my wedding; to be the big lady’ (Liviu, Gorbanita, December 2010).¹⁰⁴

Most *nashi* in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita were able to take on the role only through income from informal economic practices. At a wedding I attended in Diyalivtsi, the *nashi* were a middle-aged couple, who were distantly related to the bride. They were held in high regard within the village, with the husband having been successful in migration to Holland and later having reinvested his money through larger-scale cross-border trading than was seen amongst many of the other households and establishing his own construction firm. At the same time, few people referred to the role of the groom’s parents in paying for the wedding. The wedding ritual was often viewed by the guests in terms of value for money, therefore a higher sum spent on musicians, food, drinks and venue could potentially generate higher returns in terms of monies received from guests. At a wedding I attended in Diyalivtsi, I was surprised to hear one of the wedding guests shouting angrily when the festivities ceased at four ‘o’ clock in the morning. The man complained, “I gave 200 hryvnia to come to this wedding and if I want music, there should be music.” However, spending large amounts on a wedding could be an unwise investment if the couple were not able to attract enough guests. In fact, many older people in both villages spoke of attending weddings as being prohibitively expensive. They were much less likely to attend weddings held in restaurants as opposed to the local village hall, as they were unable to contribute the expected funds.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Most *nashi* would agree a contribution prior to the wedding and this was expected to be at least 1,000 euros. If one couple were able to give more than the other, to save face at the wedding, both would give the same and the wealthier couple would then give a further sum to the newly-weds separately after the wedding.

¹⁰⁵ At the wedding I went to in Diyalivtsi, the minimum expected contribution per person was 200 hryvnia (£20 based on exchange rates in January 2008). In Gorbanita, a couple attending a wedding in a restaurant would

Income from informal economic practices was becoming increasingly important in the marriage ritual as young couples have become more dependent on *nashi* to contribute to the costs of their weddings. Many young people and their parents also use the income from migrant work to pay for weddings, which have maintained their focus on raising funds for the young couple. In order to achieve an income from their wedding, most young couples have to balance the cost of the wedding with how many guests they can expect to attend and how much each guest is likely to give. Large, ostentatious weddings may be a sign of the wealth and social standing of a family, but to be seen to be successful must also be attended by a large number of high-paying guests.

ii. *Sex, Reproduction and Fidelity*

Childlessness and infidelity have been shown to be key factors in the dissolution of marriage (cf. Jacobson, 1959; Betzig, 1989) in both traditional and post-industrial societies. However, reproduction is also considered to be central to the reproduction of households, particularly in terms of the elderly care. Whilst marriage was the normative framework for sexual relations, pre-marital sex and extra-marital sex were present and tolerated to a certain extent in both fieldwork sites. Views on pre-marital sex were gendered in both communities, with a young woman being expected to have sex only with men with whom they had discussed marriage or who had demonstrated the ‘seriousness’ of their intentions. Casual sex would reflect negatively on a young woman, rather than her male partner.

But how could you have sex without knowing that he was serious about you? I just don't understand. You know Anna? I heard that she is like a prostitute in town. She will sleep with any boy for money. Seriously. She's a prostitute. (Inna, Diyalivtsi, March 2008)

expect to give at least 100 Euros. Weddings in the village hall would be more likely to attract gifts rather than money and expectations would be lower, at around 50 Euros per couple.

Inna's own sexual relations with her boyfriend took place in hotels in Chernivtsi, where, she had insisted on explaining, he had paid for the room, taken her out to dinner and bought her gifts. However, she felt that as her own boyfriend and she had discussed marriage that pre-marital sex was acceptable.

With reproduction so central to the family, household reproduction and in particular femininities, women were often expected to secure their reproductive health and this generally was seen to result from minimising casual sex. Pre-marital and extra-marital sex therefore represented a threat to a woman's sexual and reproductive health, as well as her social standing. There was an awareness of the increasing risk of contracting sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) in Dyalivtsi,¹⁰⁶ however both there and in Gorbanita, the use of condoms was generally seen to be emasculating.¹⁰⁷ Consequently, limiting sexual relations to one partner through marriage was also seen to be a way in which to reduce the risk of contracting STIs.

I am so glad I have my husband now, because you don't know what illness a man has. I wouldn't like to have sex with a man because it is hard to trust them with all these illnesses, you know, infections? (Alina, Dyalivtsi, January 2008)

Within marriage, sexual relations were also gendered, with men perceived to be responsible for the quality of a couple's intimate life. Liviu had an affair with a married

¹⁰⁶ Rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, continue to increase in Ukraine. The country has one of the highest adult HIV-prevalence rates in Eastern Europe- 1.4 percent in 2003 and an HIV-incidence rate of 23.8 per 100,000 in 2005, which is among the highest in the world (Feshbach & Galvin, 2005). At the same time, the country has also seen an increase in incidence rates of gonorrhoea, chlamydia, herpes, and syphilis throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s (Barnett et al. 2000; Mavrov & Bondarenko, 2002). By 2003, the incidence rates for syphilis and gonorrhoea had reached 97 cases per 100,000 and 51 cases per 100,000 respectively (Feshbach & Galvin, 2005). The economic situation in Ukraine also means that those infected may face financial barriers to treatment that result in them remaining infectious for longer (Kelly and Amirkhanian, 2003).

¹⁰⁷ In the time I lived in Dyalivtsi, I frequently helped out in the local bar and restaurant, which stocked condoms for sale. Not one sale of condoms was made from the full box stored behind the bar. This does not mean that condoms were not used, but most of the young men I spoke to refused to use them for a number of reasons. Many felt them to be unnatural and insisted that condoms inhibited their pleasure in sex. Young women discussed the difficulties of suggesting the use of condoms with their partners and stated that they feared the repercussions within their relationships.

woman in Gorbanita and explained that she had justified this through her husband's failings as a lover.

She said her husband didn't know how to do it, you know, sex. She said he wasn't a good lover and that she had no choice but to find someone else. I heard that she left him a year later for another man. (Liviu, Gorbanita, May 2010)

Such a role further supported the view of pre-marital sex as being more acceptable for men than for women, as they needed to become good lovers to maintain marriages going forward. Other young men spoke directly of their skill as lovers as a way to establish their status and attract young women.

Girls always say I am a good lover, you know? That I am better than other boys. I don't want to boast but that is what they say. One girl said I was like a bull, you know? (Dorin, Gorbanita, December 2008)

In both communities, a car was very much a luxury item, but for young people represented a powerful symbol of freedom and sexual freedom in particular. In Gorbanita, cars were the most likely sites of sexual activity for any unmarried young couples. In Diyalivtsi, where fewer young people had access to cars, such activity was restricted. However, it was clear that cars were also important as spaces of sexual relations, but more specifically were connected to infidelity, as a friend Yura explained:

You know why I want to get black windows in my car, yes? It is so that I can have sex with women there. I know I have a wife and I shouldn't have sex with other women, but maybe I would like to. So, I have ordered my new car to have these black windows in the back. You see that many people have them here in Ukraine. This is for sex, always for sex. I think all men would have these windows if they could. (Yura, Diyalivtsi, March 2008)

Fidelity was traditionally seen to be an integral part of maintaining a marriage and the Orthodox Church was particularly instrumental in nurturing and sustaining this idea as a

social norm (Dollahite & Lambert, 2007). In both communities, women were generally seen to be the keepers of the Orthodox faith and few men ever attended the church except on special occasions. Fidelity was actively promoted by the church, yet the village priest in Gorbanita acknowledged the difficulties young wives of migrant workers faced due to the long separations they endured. In a conversation with one young woman, whose husband was away working in London, he said, “I don’t know how you have managed so long on your own, it must be very hard for you”. Whilst not all villagers adhered to the Church’s teachings, they were hugely influential in framing marriage as the normative base for not only co-habitation, but also sexual relations and reproduction.

In spite of the influence of the church on fidelity, extra-marital sex was to some extent more acceptable in Diyalivtsi than pre-marital sex, as sexual relations were understood to be physically essential to both men and women. Roman, a local businessman, expressed this view in a conversation with me one day, “living for a long time without sex is not good for you, you know? Physically, your body needs sex.” Rodika, as a divorced woman, had been rumoured to have had affairs with a number of men in the village, whose wives were away working overseas. Such liaisons were seen to be a natural part of the separation caused by migration. However, few men in Gorbanita supported this view in relation to their own wives. In spite of the difficulties acknowledged by the village priest, young married women whose husbands were migrant workers found themselves at the centre of social pressure and scrutiny to remain faithful. In Diyalivtsi, a man’s role in maintaining a marriage was thus both economic and sexual, yet the economic role could be seen to be primary. Men who could provide for their families were unlikely to fear extra-marital relations on the part of their wives. Their income enabled them to ‘keep’ their wife at home, with their wives become ‘fetishized’ as objects.

Anca, a young woman from a neighbouring village who had married an older man from Gorbanita, was an example of the dilemma faced by male migrant workers in leaving their wives. Anca had married Dumitru when she was 16. Several people suggested that Anca's father had actively encouraged her to marry Dumitru as he owed Dumitru money from France, where they both worked. Anca had felt the marriage to be a good one, as her husband not only had steady work in France but he lived with his grandmother and was expected to inherit her house. However, by the time I moved to Gorbanita, Anca and Dumitru were already experiencing some financial difficulties. Whilst Dumitru was in France, Anca had argued with his grandmother, as she felt his new wife was lazy. Consequently, Dumitru and Anca moved in with his aunt, who had a smaller house in the centre of the village. When Anca found out she was pregnant, she had pushed for them to build a small house on the same plot for their new family and Dumitru had taken a loan from Mihai village shopkeeper to fund the construction.¹⁰⁸ Relying on help from family and friends, the small house was completed in time for the baby's birth. Dumitru continued to spend most of his time in France in an attempt to pay off the debt and rumours began to circulate in the village about Anca and the village shopkeeper, Mihai, whose household was discussed in detail in the opening section of this chapter. It was widely believed that Mihai was the father of Anca's second child and that Dumitru knew of the situation but due to his debt was unable to confront the older man or prevent the affair. Therefore, migrant labour may form the basis by which men are able to attract wives through wealth, but in the context of a marriage, migration becomes problematic to a man trying to fulfil the gendered role assigned.

The notion that extra-marital sex and infidelity were more acceptable for men with higher economic standing, such as Mihai, was echoed in Diyalivtsi. A local businessman, Vovak, was very wealthy and had a wife and one son. He lived in a large house on the edge

¹⁰⁸ Loans outside of kinship networks were always invariably made by local businessmen, who often used them to increase their influence within the community.

of the village and openly courted young women, offering to pay for sex where necessary. I witnessed a conversation between Vovak and Inna, in which he asked her how much she would like to be paid to sleep with him. Inna later explained to me that Vovak often paid young women for sex and that his wife was aware of the situation. In Gorbanita, one young woman, whose husband was working in London, felt that his infidelity was inevitable. However, she broadly accepted the fact that he may choose to use prostitutes but didn't perceive this to be a threat to her marriage. Her main concerns focussed on her husband finding a mistress, for which she felt unable to forgive him. Infidelity is generally perceived to be the primary cause of divorce in Western societies (cf. Amato and Previti, 2003) and also figures in studies of non-Western societies (Betzig, 1989). Betzig (1989: 661) suggests that infidelity is so central to conjugal dissolution, as a new lover can threaten all that a man or woman hopes to gain from a marriage, including 'social, economic and reproductive resources'. The use of prostitutes results in the transfer of some economic resources to another woman, but doesn't pose an overall threat to a marriage that a new lover does. Migration and dependence on remittances have led to a broader tolerance, if not approval, of extra-marital sex in certain circumstances in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita. Those women who depend on a spouse to provide income into the household, which has been fashioned as 'the ideal' in many post-socialist contexts, are often less able or willing to challenge their husbands regarding extra-marital sex.

iii. Divorce

In Diyalivtsi, having secured a husband, women were also expected to maintain their relationship and the shame of a separation or divorce even in cases of domestic violence and abuse was still often felt by the female. Alla had met her husband Dima through cross-border small trading. He left her and returned to his first wife for a couple of weeks in the time that I

lived in the village. The reason Dima had left Alla was that she had used some of the money from her trading to purchase a foreign-made, second-hand car. Dima had not approved of the purchase but when Alla refused to return the car they had argued and he left. Alla's mother was furious that her daughter, who had only managed to find a husband in her late twenties had then defied him and held her responsible for his departure. Alla's mother beat her and told her she must do anything she could to repair the relationship. Alla, like many younger women in the village, came to Rodika seeking support and advice. Rodika was the only divorced woman in the village and gave bold advice, which young women were unlikely to receive elsewhere in the village. She strongly believed that she had stayed with her own husband too long because of pressure within the village and bitterly regretted this. Alla and her husband did reconcile and by the time I finally left the region in January 2009, were expecting a baby.

The shame of divorce was also experienced by Pamela during the socialist era. Pamela was a neighbour of pension age, who had initially left Gorbanita in the 1970s, following a divorce from her first husband. Pamela claimed that the marriage had failed due to the intervention of his family. However Pamela's former sister-in-law (Silvia) maintained that she had been unfaithful. Silvia had been so incensed by Pamela's behaviour that she stood outside Pamela's mother's home (on the main road through the village) shouting 'whore'. Pamela had then moved to a nearby town, where she lived for 35 years before returning to care for her elderly mother. Pamela's story highlights that much of the freedom experienced in the socialist period lay in the ability to move, particularly to urban areas, where intimacy and sexual relations outside of the framework of marriage were also more acceptable. However, this process of moving away from the village to gain choice and sexual freedom signalled a divergence of perspectives on marriage between urban and rural areas, as many of the traditional values underlying a union remained in Gorbanita. Unlike in

Diyalivtsi, where mobility was often short-term, with younger people returning to the village, Gorbanita became predominantly a retirement village, with fewer and fewer young people and families.

Christianity and in particular in this region, the Orthodox Church, had a very influential role in upholding the institution of marriage. In socialist Romania, due to the central place of the Orthodox Church in Romania's national idea (Korkut, 2006), the Church was able to retain elements of its role within the country, although it was dominated and regulated by the state. This has primarily been linked to Ceausescu's pursuit of 'socialism in one country', which sought to break Romanian ties with and dependence on Moscow (Stan and Turcescu, 2000). In Diyalivtsi, as part of the Soviet Union, the Orthodox Church was severely weakened by the atheistic policies of the regime, including the promotion of 'scientific atheism' (Froese, 2004a). However, the revival and 'return' to the Orthodox Church that has been noted in much of the region (Froese, 2004b; Barrett et al, 2001) seems to confirm a continuing commitment to the teachings of the Church.¹⁰⁹ Co-habitation and therefore the formation of a household were viewed in both communities to be exclusively within the framework of marriage. The Church was often active in asserting its views on cohabitation outside of marriage through the refusal to admit co-habiting couples into the church building. In communities whose key festivities and events centre on the Church, such a rejection could severely limit participation in the social life of the village.

The rest of Pamela's story illustrates the pressure that co-habiting couples experienced within Gorbanita. Having left the village following her divorce in the 1970s, Pamela had lived with a man for 30 years in a nearby town. She and Ioan returned to the village in 2003, when her mother became ill. Pamela was of pension age and she nursed her mother and later her uncle who lived next door until their deaths. Pamela had a strong faith

¹⁰⁹ Within this region, there is competition in this revival amongst three of the 'national' Orthodox churches - Ukrainian, Romanian and Russian.

and the church next to the hospital where she had worked formed a large part of her life in the town. Upon returning to Gorbanita, she was refused entry into the village church by the priest. He said he would not permit an unmarried woman who was cohabiting with a man to enter the church. Pamela was distraught about the situation and she and her long-term partner immediately organised a wedding to legitimise their co-habitation in the eyes of the church and also within the village.

Rodika's story was one of the most poignant in the context of the social pressure placed on women to remain with their husbands. Rodika's husband was from a village near Kyiv and they had met whilst she was working away in the Soviet period. Rodika had not married quickly, but spent more than two years getting to know her husband, Vitaliy, before they married and he moved to Diyalivtsi. Vitaliy had been a hard-working and charming man according to Rodika. They had invested much time in home improvements and had begun the construction of a new home on the plot behind their house in the late 1990s. The house was to have an indoor bathroom and kitchen, which Rodika longed for. Rodika's first child, a girl, was born in 1993, but her husband's drinking increased and by the time of her second pregnancy two years later, she was already suffering from domestic abuse. Her husband beat her during the pregnancy and their son was born with severe difficulties. He died on the same day he was born. Rodika stayed with her husband for a number of years and finally divorced him in 2006, when he moved back to his own village to live with his mother.

The years of abuse that she suffered had been witnessed by her daughter, Helena, and the extent came to light in a conversation I had with Helena at the beginning of 2008. Helena and I were discussing her future husband and she said, "After you have seen your mother dragged around the house by her hair by your father, you know how important it is to find a good man. I know I will not marry a man who drinks like my father." Many people in the village were sympathetic to Rodika's situation. She herself had been brought up by her

grandmother after her father and mother separated and her mother returned to her native Murmansk. Her single-parent household was perhaps the poorest in the village, yet Rodika was fiercely proud and strongly fought against being pitied. She spoke out against any type of dependence on men and on one occasion said to me, “Men think that we women need them, but we don’t. They need us. That is what they don’t understand.” However, Rodika herself cited her husband’s failure to contribute to the marriage as being the main reason why she eventually divorced him. Of course, this was also driven by unwillingness to discuss domestic violence with other members of the village community. However, it does highlight that non-performance of an economic role was seen to be a legitimate reason for divorce.

When another young woman, Zhenia, came to see us in tears one day, Rodika was equally fierce in her advice. Zhenia’s husband’s family had been successful migrants to Italy and were relatively wealthy. They had not approved of his marriage to Zhenia, whose family were one of the poorer households in the village. He had moved in with her family after they married, but Zhenia was frustrated and upset by what she believed were his mother’s attempts to continue to control him. She complained that whenever his mother asked him to do something that he would respond immediately and abandon his responsibilities within their household. Rodika’s response was simple, “You should leave him now whilst you are still young and can find someone else. He will not change. Look at me, by the time I left my husband it was too late.” Her comment illustrates her own regrets, but she was very much a lone voice within Diyalivtsi. Even those who were sympathetic towards Rodika could be heard to comment on the fact that she had chosen badly in terms of her husband. This reflected the view that women should be instrumental in seeking a spouse in Diyalivtsi, which was discussed above.

As highlighted in the previous section, feminised migration also created opportunities for women to find a foreign husband. In some cases, this meant divorcing a husband left

behind in the village. Inna was for a time dating a man from her neighbouring village, whose own marriage had broken down due to his wife's migration to Italy. Vassilyi was in his early thirties and had married a local woman in the late 1990s. He worked in construction for a number of years in Russia and had raised enough money to purchase a car and some land on which to build a home in the centre of the village. Land in such a central location had cost Vassilyi all of the money he had earned from his work in Russia and by the early 2000s, the higher salaries on offer for female care workers in Italy had led the couple to decide that Vassilyi would stay in Ukraine and work in construction, whilst his wife migrated to Italy. As an illegal migrant, his wife could not return to Ukraine for an extended period of time and eventually found an Italian man whom she wished to marry. She divorced Vassilyi and after the marriage took their daughter to live with her and her new husband in Italy.

Vassilyi's wife was not alone in considering the possibilities of marriage to another man during migration. Alina was a mother of two, who had not long since returned to Diyalivtsi from a period of three years working in London illegally with her husband Roman.¹¹⁰ Alina had been married for a year at the age of 18, but she had divorced her husband after he beat her during a pregnancy and she miscarried. She and her second husband had met shortly afterwards and less than a year after they married she gave birth to their twins. Alina's father was one of the wealthiest and most respected in the village and had given her land and some funds to build a house in the village. Alina taught in the village school, but her salary was small and her husband had no income. In 2003, they decided to migrate to London, as they had heard the wages were higher than elsewhere in Europe. They made it to the UK with false documents and went on to live and work in the capital for three years. Alina described the long hours and exploitation common to many stories of illegal

¹¹⁰ Their household is described in the opening section of this chapter.

migrant workers and the tension that this and the long period away from her children created within her marriage.

There was a man at work, John. He was older than me but I knew he liked me. I knew he would have married me and I thought about it. One day I even said to Roman that I would leave him for this man to stay there in England. I love Roman, but it was so hard and I knew that John was kind. I even thought that I would divorce John after a few years and then I could bring Roman and my children to England as well, legally. (Alina, Diyalivtsi, January 2008)

Whilst the difficult economic situation in both villages had challenged traditional reasons for divorce to some extent, informal economic practices presented new challenges to the maintenance of marriages, in particular through migration. These issues are located at the very heart of household reproduction, as divorce was a key factor in the economic and social marginalisation; often consigning women and their children to poverty, by preventing women from working to support their children and limiting educational opportunities for children within the households. For women who had migrated from Diyalivtsi, the opportunity to secure a husband who could provide economic stability was alluring. The view within the village that sex was a physical necessity for men and women made extra-marital sex as the result of long separations less likely to lead to the dissolution of marriage than it had traditionally. Whilst this difficulty was also acknowledged within Gorbanita, young women were still under pressure to remain faithful to their husbands, whilst accepting the almost inevitability of extra-marital relations on the husband's part. However, when another man intervened economically in a marriage due to a lack of income provided by a husband, this compromised a man's ability to assert himself within a marriage and to demand fidelity from his wife. Through migration the transnational nature of intimate lives (Bloch, 2011) has confronted the traditional views of marriage within the region. Distinct differences were

apparent between Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita, which reflected the gendered nature of migration, which having been male-dominated in Gorbanita, has reintroduced female economic dependence on spouses and greatly restricted mobility and choice.

D. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have explored the ways in which the practicing of informal economies in the context of the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands and more specifically the growth of the remittance economy have affected household sustainability through marriage and marriage formation. Within households and consequently in the formation and maintenance of households through patrilocal or neolocal marriage, female labour has continued to be undervalued and the securing of a spouse remains more central to the prospects of young women than men. Unlike in the socialist period, young women are once again becoming the direct focus of investment by parents in order to secure an economically and socially advantageous match. This investment has centred around education, both as a means to gain status within the village but also on universities as sites for securing a marriage that will remove daughters from their family home, thus improving the reproductive ability of their own household, whilst ensuring that they contribute to another through domestic work and child-bearing. In Gorbanita, low levels of female employment and male migrant labour have focused young women's attentions on material wealth as a key driver in marriage formation.

Marriages are once again being 'transacted' on the basis of normative gendered roles, which see men as the primary earners of income and women as based in the household, caring for children the home and elderly relatives. Nonetheless, the focus on young women to take the initiative to form marriages in Diyalivtsi contrasts sharply with their peers in Gorbanita, who were expected to marry but to be less active in engaging openly in a search

for a spouse. In village discourses this represents a return to the 'natural' gendered order, which was disrupted by socialism's incorporation of women into the workforce (Pine, 2002). It also reflects a resurgence in the influence of the Orthodox Church in these communities, creating moral and social pressures to place marriage at the centre of the household and social reproduction.

Within the wedding ritual itself, engagement in informal economic practices have challenged the primary economic role of the groom's parents and placed greater economic demands on *nashi* and the young couple themselves. In order to gain the economic benefits traditionally associated with the giving of money and gifts at a wedding, young people often have to balance the costs they will incur with expected attendance. Large weddings in restaurants must be supported by a large number of guests, paying a higher sum than those held in village cultural centres and halls. Even members of the young couple's immediate family may feel unable to attend a large, ostentatious wedding, as they may not have the necessary funds to offer to the young couple, which would bring social shame. Being *nashi* has become a display of not only social standing for older couples but also of economic wealth and is most often funded by income from CBST and migrant labour. Thus, the role of *nashi*, which was traditionally religious has become central to the economic viability of the ritual.

This chapter also explored some of the precepts seen to be central to maintaining a marriage and therefore a household, including the economic role of men as income earners, reproduction and fidelity. It is clear that migration has led to increasing acceptance of infidelity and extra-marital sex. However, gendered perceptions of pre-marital sex remain and whilst young women are not expected to remain virgins until their marriage, they are expected to limit sexual relations to serious relationships that may lead to marriage. With long-term migration being so widely spread and touching so many households in both

communities, whilst fidelity is held to be the ideal for the maintenance of a marriage, even local religious leaders have come to recognise the difficulties faced by married couples. At the same time, the role of income earner normatively viewed as male has been challenged within Diyalivtsi by the feminisation of migration. Some women migrants have married foreign men and this has had an impact on perceptions of seeking a spouse within the village. The rituals associated with St Andrew's day highlighted how this had filtered down into village life. However, the impact on perceptions of Ukrainian men was mitigated by discursive performance in the village that often ridiculed these foreign spouses. In addition, as marriages remain patrilocal or neolocal, a foreign spouse takes a woman away from the village and whilst this may be traditionally seen as the removal of the 'burden' a dependent female may create on a household, it also affects social reproduction of the community as a whole. Women do continue to play a role in village society as reproducers and in the domestic economy, which is recognised by the local discourses that are key to the creation of social norms.

In her work on post-Soviet female migrants in Turkey, Bloch (2011) suggests that the 'intimate circuits' or personal lives of migrant workers are often forgotten. She concludes that whilst female migrants draw on intimacies with Turkish men to facilitate their remittances home, they also fall in love (ibid: 14). Therefore, I do not wish to suggest that decisions surrounding marriage and marriage formation can be reduced to economically rational decisions. The mobility of the socialist period that enabled women to marry for love has left its mark on these communities. Young women do still speak of love as being part of their choice to marry and although new forms of transactions have occurred in marriage formation, they do not entail the direct exchanges of dowry that were present prior to the socialist period. What this chapter shows is that as economic considerations relating to marriage have become increasingly influential since 1989/1991. Driven by a diverse range of economic

practices, the villagers of Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita are approaching marriage differently. New perspectives on marriage emerge, which although based on traditional ideas are transformed by funds from and experiences of migration and CBST.

In returning to the household in this final chapter, I have explored marriage as an economic practice in itself, but also how it relates to other elements of ‘practicing’ economies, e.g. cross-border economic practices and transnational migration. This multiplicity of scales as they meet in the household has been a key theme emerging throughout the thesis; resonating with the initial research questions and suggesting the pivotal role of household, as perhaps one point of entry into the economy (Smith, 2002), but as far more central if we seek to understand the representations of economic practices, their meanings, performance and embedding in the communities in which they are active. Marriage is so central to household formation in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands that discussion of ‘practicing’ economies in this region could not be concluded without in-depth exploration of not only marriage formation but also marriage maintenance. In fact, it would be almost possible to interchange the words marriage and household in parts of the discussion in this chapter. The final chapter now returns in more detail to the initial research questions and summarises the overall contribution of the thesis.

8. Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to explore the informal economies of post socialism as they are practiced in two rural communities on either side of the Ukrainian-Romanian border, which had experienced significant change in their everyday economic activities, due to rising unemployment and increasing job instability, since 1989/1991. The rural communities of the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands have become dependent on migrant worker remittances, cross-border small trading and consumption and a wide range of non-market economic practices for not only daily but also long-term survival or social reproduction (Katz, 2001; Stenning et al., 2010). This thesis, therefore, looked to address two key questions:

- a. How are informal economies in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands practiced?
- b. How do communities construct and embed meanings for these practices?

The four empirical chapters, explored the practices of migration and cross-border economies and their role in social reproduction in Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita. They elucidated how at differing scales the practices were being performed and represented, demonstrating how they were giving meaning to language, citizen-state relations, gendered spaces and processes, as well as at the heart of the household itself through marriage. To achieve this, an inductive, ethnographic approach was taken, using participant observation as the main method of data collection. The rationale for the structure was to show economic practices embedded in aspects of everyday life and shaping and being shaped by relations at a number of different levels. This was to lead the way in challenging discourses and economic theorisation that places the economic practice itself at the centre of discussion. The key findings of this study centre on the considerable variety in the practices of migration and cross-border consumption and trade, but also in the very complex relationship developing between practice, representation and valorisation.

Informal Economies in Practice in the Ukrainian-Romanian Borderlands

Practicing Informal Labour Migration

The thesis illustrated how informal economies have come to dominate Ukrainian and Romanian villagers' engagement with the market. In the period since 1989/1991, the region has experienced widespread economic upheaval, which has seen almost full employment replaced by high levels of unemployment, significant underemployment, increasing instability in labour markets, falls in real wages and a reduction in the support provided by the state (Sokol, 2001). As both Ukraine and Romania have introduced changes to establish market democracies (Bradshaw and Stenning, 2004), so their citizens have been forced to find alternative forms of economic practice in order to reproduce their households. There were many similarities in the responses from the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands that also resonated with research carried out across the post-socialist space, as reviewed in chapter two. Documented and undocumented migration has been at the heart of this response, as Ukrainians and Romanians have sought other opportunities for paid labour.

Initial waves of migration from Ukraine took place in the 1990s to construction and low-skilled hospitality sector and cleaning jobs in central and southern Europe and Russia (Dickinson, 2005). However, EU enlargement had a significant impact on opportunities for Ukrainians to find any type of work as employers were less likely to sponsor visas or make use of undocumented workers due to the availability of migrant labour from the new EU member states from 2004. This led to a feminisation of migration from Ukraine in the early 2000s, as women were able to gain roles as carers in Italy, Spain and Portugal. By the time of my fieldwork in the region in 2007-2008, villagers in Diyalivtsi pointed to these three countries as the most common destinations for migrant workers. However, as I have shown through discussion of Alina and Roman's household, higher-wage destinations such as the UK were desirable but unattainable to all but the most wealthy families in the village due to

the costs involved in purchasing false documents and travel to London. The undocumented status of many Ukrainian migrant workers had led to long periods (several years) away from home as their remittances were used to pay not only for day to day costs in their households, but also for education, new homes and investments in business ventures.

Villagers in Gorbanita spoke of kin and friends in Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Germany, Denmark and the UK. As in Diyalivtsi, migration for many had been precarious due to their undocumented status and restrictions applied by certain EU member states regarding the employment rights of Romanian nationals following accession in 2007 meant that even EU membership did not mean an end to exploitation and a status with equal labour rights. There were some women absent from the village working as domestic carers in Italy, but overall, migration was primarily dominated by men and families from Gorbanita. Entry in EU accession talks and later membership had at least made movement free and easier for migrant workers and unlike their Ukrainian counterparts, Romanian migrant workers returned home at least once a year and often more frequently. Many come to oversee construction of properties, which is being funded by work overseas.

The practices of informal labour migration were therefore differentiated as might be expected in terms of the restricted mobility of Ukrainian migrants in Southern Europe. Patterns of feminised migration from Ukraine were in line with processes observed elsewhere when female migrants become part of global care chains, as women in Italy have been drawn into the formal labour market leaving a care gap. As caring was normatively constructed as a feminised task in Diyalivtsi, the absence of women of working age led to grandmothers and other female kin and neighbours assuming the care role of those who had left, whether with children, the sick or elderly relatives. This contrasted with the underemployment of males in the village, few of whom assumed all the normatively female tasks in the household, which would have been carried out by absent female kin. Hardly any households in Diyalivtsi had

access to the internet and female migrants depended upon phone calls home to keep in touch with their families.

In contrast, Gorbanita's dependence on male migration has increased conflict between households. No longer dependent on inheritance from elderly family members and tasked with maintaining their own households without spousal support, young women are unwilling and unable to assume caring for an elderly relative. In addition, the growth in remittances has created evident inequalities within the village (Wegren, 2005) and young women whose husbands have migrated have become the subjects of intense scrutiny and moral censure. Women from lower-income households have begun to use discourse of impropriety and infidelity to discredit their peers, causing conflict and often leading the wives of migrant workers to feel isolated from the local community. Nonetheless, villagers did have widespread access to information and communication technology, which made keeping in touch easier than for female migrants from Diyalivtsi.

With so many opportunities for migration being available in Southern Europe, informal labour migration from Diyalivtsi led to a questioning of the relevance of national-level policy and particular with regards to an education system that provides Ukrainians with the skills they needed to reproduce their households. This was highlighted in chapter four through discussion of language, with Romanian gaining status due to its linguistic proximity to the language of migration. These issues seemed removed from national debates, which continued to rage relating to the status of Russian. Informal labour migration as a practice in Gorbanita and Diyalivtsi entered into many aspects of everyday, reducing the available labour force and threatening the reproduction of some aging households by removing support and carers from the local community.

Practicing Cross-Border Small Trade and Consumption

Since the mid-2000s, as an alternative to migration, numerous households in Diyalivtsi had begun to take advantage of rising prices in Romania to sell goods from Ukraine across the border, particularly cigarettes. By avoiding the taxes and duties either through a bribe or sexualised performance, villagers were able to sell the goods on for a profit. The trade had grown in significance and by the time of my fieldwork, many households had come to depend on this practice as the sole or main source of income. Alongside traders from other parts of the region, particularly Chernivtsi, the people of Diyalivtsi flocked to the border on a daily basis to make the journey to nearby towns, villages and markets in Romania. In chapter five, I demonstrated in detail how the practice of cross-border small trade reflected gendered norms and was particularly influenced by sexualised gender relations in Romania. The practice also increased the desirability of a knowledge of Romanian language and Romanian-speaking traders from Chernivtsi were successful in securing contacts and developing relations in Suceava and beyond, whilst most traders from Diyalivtsi were restricted to the use of intermediaries.

At the same time as traders from Ukraine were crossing the border to Romania with goods to sell, there was a steady stream of Romanian shoppers crossing into Ukraine. Motivated primarily by low prices for petrol, shoppers also purchased items from local shops and markets. This practice had changed the local landscape, with new shops and petrol stations opening on the road from the border to Chernivtsi. However, more importantly it created a demand for Romanian-speaking staff in retail positions, which was a barrier to formal employment for the Ukrainian-speaking households of Diyalivtsi. As a practice, it also challenged Soviet-era views of Romania amongst the local population in Ukraine and led to the emergence of new discourses, which will be discussed further in the following section.

Self-Provisioning and Non-Market Transactions in Practice

Whilst self-provisioning has been less prominent as an informal economic practice in the thesis, there were clear distinctions between Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita, highlighted in chapter five. Self-provisioning remained on a small scale but still important in terms of meeting household needs in Diyalivtsi, Gorbanitan households invested time, money and also had help from kin in nearby towns to farm much larger plots per household and produce greater quantities and varieties of produce. Animal husbandry was also much more prevalent in Romania and through the practice of self-provisioning, gender as a locus for organising work and labour was evident, as discussed in chapter six. In exploring households in Gorbanita and Diyalivtsi, I also discussed a wide range of other seasonal informal work and non-market transactions, which some of the poorest households employed to sustain them. This was most evident in the villages' only single-parent households, where single mothers Doina and Rodika often helped elderly neighbours and relatives in exchange for food or money.

In the ethnography of these households the complex portfolio of diverse economic practices really became apparent. Rodika's household in particular often struggled to meet the two members' basic needs without the support of friends and neighbours. Rodika called upon a wide range of skills and networks. However, she was limited to a certain extent by gender relations and the fact that so much of the focus of household formation and reproduction was centred around marriage. Whilst Rodika protested that she did not need a man in chapter six, it was clear that those households with an economically active male were likely to be better off than her own. This was related to the heteronormative approach to labour that is elucidated further in chapter seven's illustration of the influence of informal economic practices on marriage.

Whilst these diverse economic practices were important to a certain extent in marginalised households, it was clear that for others cross-border small trading and informal labour migration, which neither Doina nor Rodika were able to engage in due to childcare, offered the best opportunities for households to lift themselves out of poverty and to rise up the newly-emerging village hierarchy (Pallot and Nefedova, 2007). In spite of Gibson-Graham's (2008) insistence that we look to non-market alternatives and show their possibilities to counter hegemonic discourses of capitalism, it is clear in the case of the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands that as Hann and Hart (2011) suggest, we should be asking why people continue to look to the market as a solution, even in states which have a history of an alternative economic system. There are numerous reasons for this emerging in the ethnography that relate to gaining status within village society, as well as attempts to secure economic futures like Kostia, in addition to widespread acknowledgement of the temporary nature of opportunities that leads to a desire to profit whilst it is still possible.

Giving Meaning and Value to Informal Economic Practices

The second question of concern in this research project related to the meanings being constructed for the informal economic practices that have (re-)emerged in the region since 1989/1991 and more specifically in the 2000s. Whilst the discussion of these practices themselves above is useful, it reflects empirical accounts from across the the post-socialist space since the collapse of the command economies. In order to provide real insight this thesis responded to a need to analyse these practices in situ and to reflect on the ways on which they were entering into local understanding through observation of local discourses and performance of the practices in the communities of Diyalivtsi and Gorbanita. It is this point from chapter two that I return to, when I suggested that we should not permit the removal of these practices from their context to enable analysis. Research into informal

economic practices and attempts to theorise them in the post-socialist context have been useful, but this thesis presents clearer ideas on the complexity of the processes and/or struggles associated with interpreting and negotiating these practices.

By exploring contact between Ukrainian-speakers of Gorbanita and Ukrainians north of the border through cross-border consumption, chapter four highlights how informal economic practices can foster divides and a sense of difference that give a physical border meaning as a 'linguistic' border. These ideas were then further developed in chapter five by discussing citizenship; informal economic practices fuelled a nostalgic view of the Soviet era in Diyalivtsi, as a time when every household could afford to meet its own needs. Changes in the economic balance north and south of the border and the emergence of cross-border small trading and shopping had forced a significant re-evaluation upon those living north of the border, which fostered a sense of alienation from national-level politics and the rhetoric of freedom and independence for Ukraine. Here we see a clear example of the ways in which informal economic practices shape and define state-citizen relations.

However, this process was not limited to the Ukrainian context and in Romania it was clear that the failings of the state that led to mass migration to EU countries and flows across the border to Ukraine for cheap goods were also crucial in shaping views of the state amongst Romanians. The practices of economic life in the Ukrainian-Romanian borderlands that operated predominantly outside of the law also challenged the state by creating representations and values through performance and discourse that were based not upon the law itself, which is what the state intended, but the conscious transgressing of it. This evidently links to Verdery's (1996) point on the politicisation of consumption under socialism. Yet, as Wegren (2005) explains in relation to the peasantry in Russia, these practices are not sites of conscious resistance to the the transition to capitalism in themselves, but more as resistance and opposition to the impact this has had upon the lives of those

involved. If citizenship is not ‘just a bundle of formal rights but the entire mode of incorporation of a particular individual or group into society’ (Shafir, 1998:23), then involvement in informal economic practices could be seen to be one way in which we can assess this mode of incorporation.

When communities such as Diyalivtsi have become almost exclusively dependent on informal income opportunities, it is clear that the community is developing values and understandings that come into conflict with, challenge and even alienate them from the state. Outside of state institutions and formal employment, villagers are developing alternative modes of understanding. Therefore, these modes reflect the alterity of economic practices being explored in this thesis. The challenge to policy-makers therefore relates not solely to economic disenfranchisement, which has generally been dealt with through a *laissez faire* approach on both sides, but also how to actively engage with citizens whose basis for understanding their own place in the world is being formed, transformed and developed through the lens of non-regulated economic practices. Indeed, the original contribution of this thesis lies not in its in-depth, rich description of these practices, but in demonstrating the complexity of the ways in which they are represented and experienced through representation in these borderlands. Without this type of study then the alternative spaces of understanding that are being created could not be elucidated and explained.

In addition to state-citizen relations, cross-border small trading presented opportunities not for challenging but for asserting dominant gendered divisions of labour and discourses. Highly sexualised gender relations in Romania at the border led to performances by male and female Ukrainian traders and hegemonic masculinities in Romania prevented women from being able to develop their trade across the border. At the same time, self-provisioning and consumption became foci for generating new values and meanings in

Ukraine, which enabled the people of Diyalivtsi to mitigate the implications of economic growth in Romania and imbue themselves with distinct superior cultural traits.

Through the prism of routinised, everyday practices, it is clear that the ways in informal economies are represented and performed and given meaning are embedded in the history of these communities. Practices impact on gender roles and marriage, which underpin household formation and non-market practices, through the formation of kinship networks, which are central to reciprocity in terms of labour. Gendered outcomes of the informal economies also erode relations between households, which have traditionally depended on one another for assistance in self-provisioning. Informal economies undermine the use of traditional languages, which had bound together the minority-language communities in each region and formed the basis of many non-market negotiations and transactions, being used to build trust. In the final section of this chapter and the thesis, I return to some of the key literature from chapter two.

Returning to Humanity, Diversity and Informalisation

Having responded to the two research questions posed in the previous sections, I wanted to take this final word as an opportunity to revisit some of the discussion from chapter two and thinking ‘practically’ about economies. Whilst I do not take up Gibson-Graham’s call to foreground non-market economic practices in this thesis, I am indebted to their critique of capitalism as an entry point into my thinking about informal economic practices. In particular, I was bolstered by the call to arms for performing alterity and also challenging dominant languages and discourses in relation to thinking about economies. Efforts to infuse economic life with humanity are evident throughout the thesis, from the structure, which eschews a focus on economic practices themselves, to the rich and detailed presentation of ethnographic material that plunges into the lives of those living in the Ukrainian-Romanian

borderlands. Their voices, which I return to time and time again throughout the thesis, remind us that discussions of economies should always be human (Hart et al, 2010). Having been marginalised by the so-called 'transition' and with national governments that are often pursuing agendas which seem to bear little relation to the needs of the people of the region, we see the emergence and organisation of informal economic practices in these cracks, as Hart did in 1960s Accra. However, not only are these practices appearing, but they are also being interpreted, negotiated and given meaning by the communities in which they have become embedded.

It is my assertion that these complex, historically situated meanings and values are derived from economic practices and are often missing from comprehensive analysis of informal economies. As economic geographers draw more readily upon the study of practice as an epistemological approach in the sub-discipline, an increasing space for interactions with Hann and Hart's (2011) reinvigorated economic anthropology begins to emerge. In a sense, given the depth of data gathered during fieldwork, I feel I have not been able to explore several more interesting avenues that emerged. There were so many more findings from the data that could have been explored here and going forward, there are clear opportunities to engage in topics of interest to geographers and anthropologists. In the gender chapter, I touch but do not expand upon issues relating to gendered mobilities and the construction of newly gendered spaces through cross-border small trade. Distinct from existing gendered divisions of work and labour, there is clear potential to explore these ideas further. In addition, in entering into households and their formation and reproduction, I focus on marriage but further analysis could be carried out of kinship networks and particularly those across the border that are used for trade. I explore numerous aspects of informal labour migration that could be analysed through engagement with the vast literature on transnational lives, particularly in 'EU'rope. Finally, this is a study of informal economic practices that is

situated at a border and within borderlands. The thesis explores to some extent the ways in which these practices give meaning to that border, but there is scope for reframing the ethnographic material to advance theorisation of borders and borderlands in the future.

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