A narrative analysis of the stories told by female foreign care workers in Bologna, Italy

by

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ABSTRACT

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A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STORIES TOLD BY FEMALE FOREIGN CARE WORKERS IN BOLOGNA, ITALY

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This thesis investigates the lived experience of economic migration of eleven female foreign care workers (FCWs) working in Bologna, Italy. The principal aim of the study is to examine how these women construct their experience of migrating through the stories they tell.

The methodology involves semi-structured interviews in which participants reflect on the migration process, their motivations for the move and the difficulties they faced once in Italy. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and then analysed.

In the first stage of analysis, similarities and differences in the narratives were identified in order to identify common themes. Subsequently, stories told in the interviews were identified. Positioning theory was employed to explore both what was said and the way in which it was said with close attention paid to the interactive nature of the stories and how they relate to wider societal discourses, especially those regarding care workers in Italy.

The findings of this study demonstrate that, even though each migration experience is different, the interviewees share awareness of certain discourses regarding both immigration in Italy and care workers in particular. Through positioning theory I demonstrate how the women resist certain negative discourses in order to alternatively position themselves as making agentive career choices. The findings are discussed with reference to the efficacy of this methodological approach and suggestions for future research.
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I, Catherine Jane Blundell, declare that the thesis entitled

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and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- none of this work has been published before submission.

Signed: ...........................................................

Date:..............................................................
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Italian terms and abbreviations used

ACLI = Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani, a lay Catholic social and political association.

Caritas = an international confederation of Catholic charities. In Italy Caritas is a pastoral organization which works on the ground to help vulnerable people (through hostels, soup kitchens, emergency disaster relief etc.) and also raises public awareness of issues such as poverty through commissioning research. See www.caritasitaliana.it

COLF = an acronym which derives from collaboratore/trice familiare, a domestic worker.

decreto flussi = an administrative act which sets out the annual quota for non-EU workers who want to enter Italy for work. In theory, these are for the use of foreigners who have not yet moved to Italy.

extra-communitario = anyone from a country outside the EU, although often used in a derogatory sense.

INPS = Istituto Nazionale della Previdenza Sociale, manages pension and social security contributions. See www.inps.it

ISMU = Iniziative e Studi sulla Multietnicità, an independent body which promotes research on ethnic and cultural diversity in Italian society. See www.ismu.org/en/

ISTAT = Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, the National Statistics Institute. See www.istat.it

nulla osta = a declaration of no objection; in this case a declaration that there are no impediments to an immigrant being and working in Italy.

nonno/nonna = grandfather/grandmother

xv
permesso di soggiorno = permit to stay = a permit issued by the police which allows a non-EU citizen to stay in the country for longer than eight days, or longer than 90 days if they have a visa for tourism.

sanatoria = a periodic amnesty to legalize the status of clandestine immigrants.
PART ONE – PUTTING THE RESEARCH INTO CONTEXT

1. Introduction and Background

It is a warm autumn day and the small park is full of mothers and grandparents with young children and dog walkers enjoying the afternoon sunshine. On the edge of the park, sitting on the benches are a group of elderly Italian women, two sitting on the bench and one in a wheelchair nearby, talking quietly to each other. On the next bench, three middle-aged Romanian women are laughing and holding an animated conversation. To the casual observer, these two groups may not seem related but to most Italians it is immediately obvious that these are three badanti; live-in carers who are employed to assist an elderly person in all of his or her daily tasks.

This thesis is concerned with the lives of these carers who are currently working in Bologna, Italy. It grew out of a desire to gain a better understanding of the experiences of the many foreign women I see every day accompanying elderly people in the city. Despite their strong (and growing) presence in the city, they seemed to me to be largely overlooked by the community as a whole. Whilst other groups of immigrants attract more attention (both positive and negative), carers are for the most part invisible to those who do not employ them or need their services and, subsequently, they are often not as integrated into the community to the same extent that other foreigners might be. This is the result of many factors; long working hours within the home restrict the amount of time they have to interact with Italians, language difficulties, especially for carers who have recently arrived, can make communication difficult, and, sometimes there is a conscious decision on the part of the women themselves not to integrate into the city that they regard as only being a temporary home.

Despite their apparent low profile, foreign carers now live and work in virtually every city, town and village in all regions of Italy. The reasons behind this phenomenon are complex but in essence there has been a growing demand for live-in carers thanks to an increasingly elderly population combined with a lack
of alternative welfare solutions. Thanks to better health and nutrition, at least in the West, we are living in a society where it is not particularly unusual to live to ninety or more. This situation is particularly relevant in Italy which is the European country with the highest proportion of elderly residents: in 2015 21.5% of the population was aged 65 and over. Moreover, there has been a gradual decrease in mortality in this age group, meaning that at the age of 65 women can now expect to live an additional 22 years and men an additional 18.3 (ISTAT, 2015). However, despite a general improvement in the health of the population, increased longevity inevitably brings with it a greater need for elderly care. In Italy there has been a shift over the last half-century from this care work being undertaken largely by family members to the present situation where one of the most common solutions is to employ a (usually foreign and female) care worker to live with the elderly person concerned. These care workers or carers, colloquially known as badanti, facilitate the daily lives, not only of the people they are employed to look after, but also of the family members (especially the women) who have been freed of the task of carrying out care work themselves. As a result of my initial curiosity I began to ask myself what these women were doing here, why they chose to come to Bologna and how they felt about their lives here. Therefore, very broadly, my research began with the question, “What is it like to work as a foreign carer in the city of Bologna?”

In this chapter I explain how I first became interested in this topic and describe the process of developing the research questions which eventually formed the backbone of my project.

1.1 Developing the Research Questions

On examining the research literature available, it became clear that while my perception that foreign carers are overlooked may be true of the general community, it is far from being true of the academic research community. Indeed in the last decade, hundreds, if not thousands, of research articles have been published about migrant care workers in general and migrant care workers in Italy in particular. However, after a closer examination of the data available, it
would be fair to say that a good deal of this research falls into two categories: firstly, studies based on quantitative data (often in the field of economics) which tend to concentrate on the macro themes of welfare and immigration, focussing on changes in the migration flows of carers, age groups and nationalities involved etc. (see Caritas e Migrantes, 2015; Del Boca & Rosina, 2009) and secondly, qualitative studies (mainly in the field of sociology) which use narrative data to identify thematic content (Catanzaro & Colombo, 2009; Vietti, 2010). Their focus is usually on the content of the interview rather than the way in which the discourse is constructed. When the data used is narrative in form then it is the “storied content of personal narratives – plots, characterization, and themes” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011:7) rather than how and why the narratives are produced that is of interest. Whilst both type of studies have been very useful for me to gain a better understanding of many aspects of the lives of carers, I believe that there is still a lot more that could be discovered through taking a more sociolinguistic analytical approach to this topic. In particular, I decided that I did not want to limit myself to analysing what was said but also wanted to examine how it was said. I thus became interested in approaches taken in particular by sociolinguists to migrant narratives, especially those researchers who examined both these aspects of narrative (the how and the what) and in this respect my own research path was considerably influenced by Anna De Fina (working on Mexican migrants to the US) and, coming from a more sociological background, Rhacel Parreñas (working on transnational feminism and migration).

From the outset I decided that I wanted to do qualitative research with the aim of focusing on individual experiences of migration. Using data from interviews seemed to be the obvious way to proceed as I was interested in hearing from the women themselves rather than relying on statistical information. As I began to read through the literature on different approaches to qualitative research, I realised that narrative analysis was going to be at the core of my research data. In particular I became interested in narrative as the key site where identity is achieved and maintained; in other words, identity as a “discursive and performative” phenomenon (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006).
In attempting to better understand how exactly I wished to use narrative, I also became caught up in the debate over what exactly “narrative” and “stories” are. This is far from being a simple question to answer and for a long time I was unsure to what extent I should constrain my own understanding of what narrative is. Would I, for example, be ignoring useful data if I took a narrow definition of story? To what extent can narrative as opposed to other fieldwork data shed light on migration contexts? I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 4 and return to it in Chapter 7. However, one of the key elements which helped me to decide on a narrative approach is the idea that stories (especially stories elicited in interviews) are particularly rich an occasion for reflection and self-assessment on the part of the teller which makes them especially interesting as a topic of analysis (Linde, 1993). Moreover, stories are not told in isolation; interactionally oriented approaches to their analysis can be a useful tool for understanding how identities are co-constructed (De Fina, 2009) with the interviewer; an aspect which I found particularly interesting. In this regard, scholars such as Alexandra Georgakopoulou and Michael Bamberg, among others, have influenced my thinking of what constitutes a story and what we mean by story analysis as I explain more fully in Chapter 4.

Crucially, I take the position here that the meaning of any narrative comes both from the local context in which it is produced (including all the people present, even if they do not actively participate) together with the larger context of master narratives which circulate in society (Stevenson & Carl, 2010). For this reason, I have decided to take an approach which combines micro-analysis of the data but retains an interest in the “larger picture”. Using Positioning Analysis as a primary tool, I combine these two analytical lenses to focus on how the women’s stories are used to construct, maintain and reject identities at a local level whilst also asking whether they draw on or reject dominant cultural narratives and, if so, how this is achieved. To sum up, over the course of my reading, my research focus evolved from a rather general “What is it like to be a carer in Bologna?” to a more defined set of questions which asked:
1. “What are the stories behind the decision to migrate to Italy as a care worker?”

2. “What can the ways in which these stories are narrated tell us about the experience of being a care worker in Bologna nowadays?”

3. “How do the narrators manage and construct their identities in relation to wider narratives which circulate in our society?”

Finally, although the number of interviews under consideration is necessarily limited due to the type of in-depth analysis I wish to undertake, I believe that in order to produce a robust research project it is important to avoid falling into the trap of gathering a collection of anecdotes, interesting though they may be. Therefore, one of my aims is to ask whether my analysis, which looks closely at individual experiences of migration, can point to more general trends. This leads me to an additional research question regarding my methodological choices:

4. “How successful is Positioning as an analytical tool for analysing narrative in interviews?”

I address this question in Chapter 7 following my analysis. Here, however I start with a brief linguistic note on the terminology used.

1.2 What is a badante? Definitions and controversies

The term *badante* comes from the Italian verb *badare* meaning to mind, look after or pay heed to. A person who does this is a *badante* (plural: *badanti*) i.e. a carer of someone or something. However, in recent years the term has come to be used almost exclusively in the context of a foreign woman looking after an elderly person, usually in a live-in capacity.

The term is not without its critics. Pojmann (2006) claims it is viewed negatively by the women themselves, although I did not encounter this opinion myself. The politically correct *assistente familiare* is more ambiguous but is sometimes used in a formal or bureaucratic context. Others argue that the term *badante* is reductive as it suggests a passive activity of surveillance rather than the active
work that it actually involves (Sarti, 2009) or that it is offensive to both the carer and the person being cared for as it was originally a term that was solely used for those who looked after animals (Francesca Degiuli, 2010). Social historians point out how the term has recently come to the fore, along with the use of nationality categories such as *la filippina* as foreign women have become the dominant workforce in this sector. Previously-common terms such as *la donna* or *la colf* referenced the workers' gender but not their role or their nationality (Catanzaro & Colombo, 2009).

On the other hand *badante* has the advantage of being the least ambiguous and easily recognisable term in Italian and is used by the women I interview to define themselves. It has even entered the Ukrainian language thanks to its adoption by Ukrainian carers (Grilli & Mugnaini, 2009).

There is no clear and universally-accepted translation of *badante* into English and I have seen a myriad of terms given in the literature; personal assistant, caretaker, informal carer, informal caregiver, migrant care worker and private carer, to name but a few. I feel that all of these terms are rather ambiguous and used across different disciplines and thus do not easily refer only to the type of work I am investigating. Taking all these arguments into consideration, I have tried to avoid using the word *badante* as much as possible, preferring to use the more neutral “carer” or “care worker” whilst reminding the reader that in all cases I generally mean a live-in carer who is not Italian, unless specified otherwise.

### 1.3 Organisation of the Thesis

In Chapters 2 and 3, my aim is to provide a context for my study, to better understand where Italy stands in relation to global research on immigration. In Chapter 2, I examine the main areas of literature which informed my own research. The field of migration studies is vast and in continual growth so I

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1 donna = woman, COLF= collaboratrice familiare (family helper)
concentrate on four areas which were particularly pertinent: transnationalism, the feminisation of migration, migrant domestic workers, and identity issues relating to this field. My own study includes women of four different nationalities but the area of data collection is geographically limited to Bologna, so here I also discuss the studies that have already been carried out which focus on this city and discuss where further work needs to be done. My focus in this chapter is on the academic research which has been carried out in this area, whereas in Chapter 3, I look at the demographic statistics regarding carers and discuss the practicalities of living and working in Italy, including the legal and bureaucratic issues, as well as the day-to-day details of what the work entails. In the second half of this chapter, my interest turns to the relationship between the carers and society as a whole, both how they are dealt with by the State and how they are presented in mainstream media.

In Chapter 4, I present my research design as well as the methodological framework that underpins it. I discuss the difficulties of the data gathering process and the subsequent choices made regarding the type of analysis to undertake. In particular, I decide how to define narrative and story for the purposes of my approach, a decision which I revisit in the conclusion when I assess the results.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I present the data itself which is based on the qualitative interviews undertaken with the eleven principal care workers interviewed (along with several other participants who were also present at interview). The two chapters focus on different aspects of the analysis. Chapter 5 is intended to give a “global impression” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber 1998:63) of each interview by teasing out the common stories which are told and looking for recurrent themes. The purpose of this is principally to provide a context to better understand the more detailed analysis in the following chapter. The close story analysis in Chapter 6, using mainly Positioning Analysis, gives a deep insight into the way the participants construct their identities, not only in relation to others, but also in relation to society at large. I discuss to what extent agency is important in facilitating emerging identities which differ from the more commonly-told stories.
Finally in Chapter 7, I conclude by answering the research questions posed in this chapter. I also take the opportunity to reflect on the research process and suggest other possible future developments. In the Appendix I include information regarding the interview process and data collection protocols in addition to information about the extracts used in Chapter 6 and a list of the transcription symbols used.
2. Working Away: theorizing migration and domestic work

The number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly over the past fifteen years reaching 244 million in 2015, up from 222 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000.
(United Nations 2016)

In this chapter I present a discussion of part of the theoretical basis of my research and look at how it draws on existing literature. My project is based on a micro-level study of narrative and, as such, is situated in a sociolinguistic framework of narrative research, more particularly of narrative-in-interaction. The narrative theory underpinning this approach is discussed in Chapter 4, along with the methods used. The aim of this chapter, however, is to assess how current debates in the social sciences have influenced our understanding of how migration takes place in the 21st century, and especially how these debates relate to my own research which draws on ideas from sociology, anthropology and migration studies in setting a context for the analysis. In addition, I discuss what new directions I believe we should be looking into for future research.

Migration has taken place throughout history as people have moved between areas and crossed national borders in search of better jobs, or to escape poverty or war. Clearly, we are now living in a period when the topic of (im)migration is almost continually in the media and fierce debates rage over such issues as ethnic homogeneity, (un)employment, and terrorism. However, it should be remembered that the present situation is not that unusual; for many (Western) scholars, the age of mass migration is regarded as being between 1846 and 1949 when some 59 million left Europe for the Americas, Australia, New Zealand and South America (Stalker, 2000:4). What has changed in recent times is the geographical scope of migration which up until the Second World War was largely transatlantic in nature whereas now it involves movements from and to all parts of the globe (Castles, Haas, & Miller, 2013) and touches on all aspects of
society, frequently shaping government policies and changing the nature of the places we live and those places and people that have been left behind.

It is not my intention here to examine the economic theories behind migration as my approach is very much micro rather than macro in scope. My aim is to take a closer view of the personal experiences of a group of women living in Bologna who have all made the decision to leave their home countries in search of work here. While they are in many ways typical of the approximately 750,000 foreign carers believed to be working in Italy in 2013 (Lodovici et al. 2015), and share certain common experiences, they are, at the same time, individuals with personal stories to tell. In order to better understand them, this chapter focuses on four key areas in migration studies which have shaped and informed my own project; transnationalism, women migrants, foreign domestic workers, and migration identities. As might be expected, these are not discrete categories and there is considerable overlap between them.

2.1 From integration to transnationalism

Although migration is certainly not a new phenomenon, the way we think about and understand the migration process has undergone many changes. Developments over the last half century, especially as regards approaches to the study and understanding of globalisation, have altered the ways in which many scholars theorize migration.

A key figure in this field, the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, draws our attention to the sophistication of modern globalisation which he describes as “a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing centre-periphery models” (Appadurai, 1996:32). Appadurai proposes five ways in which information and ideas are able to move globally. He calls each of these areas of interest “scapes”, thus he refers to an ethnoscape (a movement of people), a mediascape (the production and dissemination of information), a technoscape (interaction through ever-faster technology), a financescape (the movement of global capital), and an ideoscape (ideologies of states and political
movements seeking power). Each of these five scapes is not to be regarded as a closed set as they can and do influence and be influenced by each other. Of particular interest in the present context, is the idea of the ethnoscape, used here to refer to the “landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals” (1996:33). The concept of ethnoscape encompasses the carers who come to work and live in Bologna. These carers, as we shall see, are what Appadurai terms “moving groups” (1996:34) who move back and forth between Italy and their countries of origin as well as other destinations. Moreover, Appadurai also argues that even people who do not physically move from their place of origin are influenced by these flows of cultural knowledge as they come into contact with different ways of imagining the world both through contact with others who travel and through the media which reproduces repertoires of alternate lives. Thus, these alternative ways of imagining our lives are no longer the preserve of the rich but influence all members of modern societies.

Indeed, there has been an increasing awareness that, facilitated by a number of factors related to globalisation such as new communication technology as well as improved transport links which make travel across geographical space faster and easier (Giddens, 1991) it is common for migrants to retain strong links with their countries of origin and return there often. So, whereas once we tended to think of immigration in terms of “migrant-sending” countries and “migrant-receiving” ones, this distinction (which some argue was never very accurate anyway) is no longer clear cut and many countries experience both immigration and emigration, albeit with one or the other dominating at any given moment (Castles et al., 2013). This is particularly important in Italy and in other Southern European countries which up until the 1970s and 80s were used to experiencing more emigration than immigration (Triandafyllidou, 1999b). Now public discourse on migration centres both around immigration into the country (especially from irregular migrants) and the problem of the “fuga di cervelli” or brain drain; young, highly-qualified graduates who leave the country in search of better career prospects.
These changes have led to the conceptualization of transnationalism; defined as “a growing number of persons who live dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders” (Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt, 1999:217) and “systems of ties interactions, exchange and mobility [which] function intensively and in real time while being spread throughout the world” (Vertovec, 1999:447). Migration can no longer be thought of as being a one-way journey with people leaving one geographical area and taking up jobs and remaining more-or-less indefinitely in another. Instead, many migration scholars have shifted to a “transnational” approach to capture the dynamic nature of current migration which differs from other types of migration, both past and present. For example, Kearney draws a distinction between transnational and diasporic communities: diasporas are characterized by a complete cross-section of people from one geographic area “who yet retain a myth of their uniqueness and interest in their homeland” (Kearney, 1995:559) whereas transnational communities are seen as spanning two (or more) distinct geographical communities and maintaining contacts with each.

Although critics have argued that transnationalism is overused as a concept, with virtually all migration now being defined as transnational in nature, I think it is a relevant way of looking at the sort of migration undertaken by the carers in my research. Indeed, it has been argued that in origin, transnationalism was coined as a term to focus on the “grassroots activities of international migrants across borders as being something distinct from the dense and continuous relations of macro-agents such as multinational or transnational companies” (Faist, 2010:13) and this narrower definition definitely ties in with the activities of the women in this project; sending remittances to family members, managing household affairs and monitoring children’s progress at school from a distance and regular trips back home are all examples of transnational activities which were discussed by interviewees. This latter activity could also be interpreted as an example of circular migration which is frequently seen in a transnational context. Circular migration is not always defined in the literature but I understand it as meaning that the migrant worker moves repeatedly between his or her home country and
destination country, although not necessarily to the same region. Moreover, some scholars only use the term to refer to unregulated or semi-regulated forms of migration (Vertovec, 2007) while others apply the term more broadly (Triandafyllidou, 2013a). In her 2013 study of Ukrainian domestic workers in Italy, Vianello (2013) found that circular migration was very common, although often bureaucratic hurdles lead to women staying longer than they may wish to in Italy in order to await permits. I found the same among the women in my study.

2.2 The feminisation of migration?

While a considerable amount of literature has been published on migration, up until fairly recently there has been a tendency to fail to differentiate between migration undertaken by men and migration undertaken by women. Consequently, although throughout history women have always migrated, it is only in the last few decades that they have been fully studied in their own right. By the mid 1980s and 90s more attention was starting to be paid to how gender was central to the decisions made regarding the migration processes and their outcomes (Tastsoglou & Dobrowolsky, 2006).

We are now seeing a further shift away from men being the primary focus of interest (and women not generally being considered, except perhaps as dependants following in the footsteps of their husbands or as being left behind in their countries of origin) to the current interest in women as being active agents in the process of migration. Current approaches recognise the key role women have to play in migration flows. Indeed, not only are women often the ones who initiate the decision to move abroad (Brettell, 2014) but they frequently become the chief breadwinner for the family unit (Caritas Internationalis, 2012; Vargas-Lundius, 2008) and in many international migration streams women outnumber men (Donato, 1992). All three of these circumstances are applicable to domestic workers in Italy as we shall see in the next chapter. This gendered focus is essential in giving a clearer picture of the phenomenon since when examining migration solely from a male perspective, we risk overlooking important data and not seeing the whole picture.
Now, faced with an abundance of literature regarding female migration as well as the visible presence of many foreign women accompanying the elderly in just about every Italian neighbourhood, it is easy to come to the conclusion that female migration must have greatly increased in the last few decades, but is this what is meant by the so-called “feminization of migration”? Many scholars have pointed out that this term is misleading. Undoubtedly, in Italy there are a high number of women migrants who enter the country on their own without any male family members. Globally, however, the picture is not the same. Although immigration has increased considerably in certain geographical areas such as the US and Europe where women migrants now slightly outnumber men (United Nations, 2015), the total number of women moving beyond national boundaries has only increased very slightly; it is estimated that in 2000, 49% of migrants globally were women, a small rise from 46.6% in 1960 (Zlotnik, 2005).

What has definitely changed is an increased scholarly interest in how women’s migration trajectories differ from men’s. Over the last few decades the first serious discussions regarding the effect of gender on the migration process have emerged and there is a growing realization that gender permeates every aspect of migration, impacting at all levels and sometimes in unexpected ways. In her overview of research into gender in migration studies, Pessar (1999) notes that the effect of paid overseas work on gender relations is not simple and is certainly not consistent for all female migrants; sometimes women achieve increased emancipation through work, sometimes they attract a greater social stigma for not measuring up to traditional family ideologies. Another study looking at Honduran-US transnational families, found that gender was important at every level of the migration process, from the decision to migrate to familiar reorganization, and the sort of work women have access to (and the resulting wage differential) (Petrozziello, 2011). Clearly, the fact that gender can and does have an impact on migration is now universally acknowledged in the field of migration studies. Therefore, an alternative interpretation of the “feminization of migration” is to understand it as referencing this interest rather than pointing to a statistical increase in women’s migration.
It is this gendered approach which has informed my own study of women carers in Italy, in particular with a regard to how the women maintain their identity as mothers and manage their households from a distance, as shall be further explored in the section below.

2.3 Migrant domestic workers

Related to the growth in interest in gender in migration studies, there has also been a surge in the number of articles and books which deal with the phenomenon of migrant workers taking on domestic work (childcare, eldercare and cleaning/maintenance work). The high number of women working in this sector has lead to an interest in areas which particularly regard gender issues such as reproductive labour, emotional labour and transnational mothering.

Many of the key studies in this area were published around the turn of this century and shone a light on this previously underrepresented area. A thorny dilemma for many feminists is that as Western women have begun to participate more in the paid workforce, they have reduced the number of hours spent on reproductive labour: the housework, childcare and care work that makes it possible for society to function and for paid work to be undertaken. However, this slack has not been picked up by men to any great extent, rather it is the foreign migrant workers (almost always women) who have stepped into the gap and enabled their female employers to undertake better-paid work. In “Doing the Dirty Work” (2000) Anderson’s wide-reaching study looked at migrant domestic workers in six European countries, including Italy. She found that there were several reasons why this type of work was carried out by foreign women; economic forces relating to home countries meant that it was financially viable to move abroad to work, the “care gap” (declining fertility rates combined with an increase in female employment rates in Western Europe) led to a need for carers, the widespread perception that care work is “female work” meant that women were especially sought after and finally, elements of racism and colonialism fed into discourses that some races were better suited to this type of low-paid, “unskilled” work than Europeans.
In the 2002 book, “Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy” Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2002) took up many of the same ideas and extended them to a global scale. They believe that the driving force behind this phenomenon is the widening pay gap between poor and rich countries which has meant that highly-qualified women working as teachers and nurses in the Philippines can only expect to earn around a quarter of what they can earn as an “unskilled” maid or care worker in Italy (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002:18).

This in turn has lead to a commodification of care where women from poorer countries can be paid to look after other children (or the elderly) in a foreign country. The emotional and psychological effects of carrying out this type of work can be devastating as the emotional attachment that is generally required to look after others makes it difficult to carry it out dispassionately. Bridget Anderson recounts the words of an Ivorian working as a nanny in Parma, Italy;

“I cared for a baby for his first year...The child loves you as a mother, but the mother was jealous and I was sent away. I was so depressed then, seriously depressed. All I wanted was to go back and see him....I will never care for a baby again. It hurts too much.” (Anderson, 2002:112)

The carers I interviewed also contended with forming close attachments to the people they looked after. Some of them described the relationship as being like looking after a family member, calling the elderly person nonna (grandma) for example and eloquently describing how dependent they had become on each other. The reluctance to leave the person they are looking after can mean that they find it difficult to balance their work with the need to return back home; Sofiya, for example, says that she missed her own son’s wedding because the woman she looked after was taken into hospital and she did not want to leave her. Vira says that she feels that she is part of the family and takes part in family celebrations, such as Christmas dinner.

While undoubtedly many of the women are sincerely very attached to the people they look after, the job of caring (like other service tasks) comes with an expectation that the worker will act with tact and understanding, if not affection. In her earlier seminal work “The Managed Heart”, Hochschild noted that emotional labour;
requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward
countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others. (Hochschild,
1983:7)

The psychological work that is involved not just in appearing caring and
supportive, but also repressing any negative feelings such as those of disgust (for
example of intimate care tasks) or of anger or impatience, is mentally taxing.
Indeed, in her study of paid homecare assistants in the US, Rivas (2002) found
that emotional management was regarded by carers as the most difficult aspect
of the job, more so than the physicality of the work itself. Several times
throughout my own interviews, the women referred to the importance of feeling
at ease with the person they were looking after and also the negative
consequences of being unable to successfully manage the relationship. However,
too frequently emotional labour is an undervalued aspect of the work
relationship, only becoming more visible when something goes wrong, for
example if the carer develops a mental illness such as depression.

As well as providing care as part of their paid work, many of the women who
work in the domestic sector are involved in caring for their own geographically-
distant families and this type of transnational mothering has become a key area
of study. In *I’m here but I’m there* (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997) the authors
posit the idea that such women “reformulate their own mothering to
accommodate spatial and temporal gulfs” (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila
1997:552). They found that long hours and low wages (in the USA) meant that it
was also impossible for a live-in worker to have her children with her in the
country, consequently such workers were obliged to resort to transnational
mothering. They argue that long-term, this decision meant going against the
prevailing discourse that biological parents should raise their own children; a
decision that necessitated a redefining of what it means to be a mother. Instead
of being physically close to their children, these mothers had to interact from a
distance and work hard to make sure she is there emotionally, if not physically,
for them. In order to accept such a role, they note that many of the women told
themselves it was only a necessary, short-term measure, despite the fact that they
often ended up staying indefinitely. Similarly, in her ground-breaking study,
Rhacel Parreñas (2001b) found that socialized gender norms such as the idea
that the father should be the main breadwinner in the family, caused additional emotional strain on the female workers who moved abroad for work and were “mothering from a distance”.

Overall, it seems that for many years, the emotional aspects of undertaking domestic work abroad were not fully explored but this is changing, with a so-called “emotional turn” in social sciences permeating through to studies which focus on migration (Albrecht, 2016). Thanks to the research of the authors cited above, as well as many others following in their footsteps, we have not only a greater understanding of the psychological burden of this type of migration but also a key to understanding other aspects of the migration process. For example, within my own interviews, it was clear that the decision to migrate as well as subsequent decisions to move from one area of Italy to another were not based purely on financial motives. Moving towards friends and family members was one factor that encouraged a move. For example, Vira originally moved from Ukraine to Caserta because she had a sister-in-law working there but then moved on to Bologna because the sister-in-law, her own sister and her friends found work in Bologna and wanted her to come too. However, she remains very attached to the family she worked for in Caserta and still sees them regularly.

2.4 Identity and migration

An interest in identity can now be found across all the social sciences and has become “an established part of the sociological tool kit” (Jenkins, 2004:8). Indeed, it is hard to find a study that does not take into account identity in some shape or form. It is particularly relevant in analysis regarding narrative such as Positioning Analysis and in Chapter 4, where I explain my methods, I look in more detail at how identity is used in this context. Here, however, I am interested in examining how identity and migration intersect and how that is relevant to my study.

The current thinking, especially among those who regard themselves as social-constructionists, is that identity as a fixed entity, an “absolute self” which can be
revealed through discourse analysis, is no longer relevant. The post-modern view of identity is that it is fleeting, dynamic and most importantly constituted in discourse: identity is an interactional accomplishment (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2004). In other words, we are not concerned with a psychological phenomenon but with a social and cultural one, and so the way that we construct our identity is based on the world around us, including not only the immediate context where the narrative takes place (the micro level) but also the larger societal context (the macro level). But what does this mean exactly within the context of migration studies?

Firstly, migrants face particular challenges when drawing on social, cultural and linguistic resources and these challenges are not quickly resolved. Benmayor and Skotnes (1994:8) note that migration “is a long-term, if not life-long process of negotiating identity, difference, and the right to fully exist in the new context” and this is especially true for racial groups that are particularly prone to being marginalized.

When identities are negotiated in a migration context, agency and power are closely connected (Lanza, 2012) meaning that migration narratives are a rich source of information regarding identity. Agency is an abstract concept which is widely-used across sociolinguistics but is not always fully-defined, however Ahearn’s provisional definition that it is the “socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (Ahearn, 2010:28) is a good place to start. The way we act in a situation is inevitably tied up with the context we find ourselves in. Thus the way that a speaker acts does not just rely on the locally-occurring interaction: it cannot be divorced from the wider context.

When someone is described as being more or less agentive it is a way of looking at the extent to which they own their actions. For example, Bamberg examines the case of the former US senator, John Edwards who in the course of an interview moved from a highly-agentive position as a young man who was dreaming of playing a part in society to a low-agentive position where he talks about not being accountable for what happened to him (Bamberg, 2010). Agency can be used to challenge prevailing attitudes. For example, in Tyldum’s (2015) study of female
migrant workers from Ukraine, she found that while Ukrainian men were largely respected for their decision to move abroad for work, for women the situation was more ambiguous and, in particular, female migration was constructed as problematic and in conflict with the mothering ideal of staying at home with the children. She argues that unless we see women as agentive in their migration journeys, we risk seeing female migration as being interpreted as intrinsically problematic.

When identities are negotiated in a multilingual setting then they often occur in situations where the balance of power is not equal and language (or lack of language competence) can be used to marginalize minority groups or individuals (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2004). This is particularly relevant for my study where I found that lack of linguistic competence led to the inability to negotiate successfully for better work conditions and pay and an increase in the imbalance of power between the worker and the employer. Conversely, the women who had managed to legalize their position and obtain a standard work contract were able to communicate well in Italian.

For this reason, language and language learning are key areas of interest to those studying migration and identity. A key example of this is Bonny Norton’s well-known study of five immigrant women in Canada (Norton, 2000) which examined the language learning paths taken by them. The results showed how closely language acquisition is related to power relationships, with learners needing to be able to practise their nascent language competence with native speakers but, at the same time, being denied access to the networks which would allow them to do this. For the carers interviewed in Bologna, lack of access to Italian language networks was particularly marked as their work was mainly done within the household, often their only regular Italian-speaking contact being the elderly person who (in several cases) was unable or unwilling to speak to them.
2.5 Studying Bologna

As well as more general studies on immigration and domestic work, some studies have been published looking specifically at care workers in Bologna. “Con La Valigia Accanto al Letto” (Maria Adriana. Bernardotti, 2001) is a collection of articles which discusses the challenges immigrants face in order to secure appropriate housing in Bologna. In this volume, of particular interest is the chapter regarding Filipino domestic workers who, thanks largely to their reputation as being good and trustworthy workers, find it relatively easy to find a live-in position, even if they have only recently arrived in Italy. However, according to the author, they find it more difficult to move out of live-in positions and into private accommodation (and thus to a more long-term stay in the country) as letting agencies prefer to rent to those who work in jobs which are perceived as being more stable, such as factory or office work (Zontini, 2001) while at the same time they are not eligible for state-funded accommodation due to being in full-time work. In my study I also found that some of the women regarded the possibility of living in their own accommodation and working only during the day as being something to aim for once they were established in Bologna, although others had decided against it due to the upheaval and higher living costs.

Zontini is also the author of a book published in 2010 (although the data used is from a decade earlier) which compares two groups of migrants; a “male-led” group of Moroccans and a “female-led” group of Filipinos, comparing and contrasting the way they deal with their transnational lives in two geographical areas (Bologna and Barcelona). Here the author’s analysis is based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork and is particularly interesting in that it moves away from seeing the motivation for moving in purely economic terms, instead focusing on the agency that women demonstrate in the migration process from within the social, cultural and economic constraints which undoubtedly exist (Zontini, 2010). In this way, we can see that it is in line with current thinking which questions dominant paradigms of women migrants as passive trailing spouses and examines how women can and do initiate the migration process. In both these studies, however, the author’s focus is on the content rather than the
construction of the narrative itself. The data, though undoubtedly rich and interesting, is transcribed in such a way as to eliminate the context (including the interviewer) in which it is told and takes a sociological rather than a linguistic approach.

My own research on the Bologna context seeks to address two issues which are currently underrepresented in the literature; firstly, migration is a field in which circumstances can rapidly change. New and amended laws, the current refugee crisis and the economic downturn are just three reasons why the situation in Italy in 2016 is different to what it was even a few years ago. Consequently, a more up-to-date study of the situation can always add something pertinent to the ongoing debate. Secondly, as outlined above, the majority of studies undertaken in Italy, whilst qualitative in nature, do not use narrative analysis as a research tool and, where they do, it is not grounded in a close analysis of the text as my own research is.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter's purpose was to discuss what I see as the key theoretical areas which have informed my own research and give examples of studies which I think are particularly relevant.

Current research on migration is strongly influenced by the huge increase in interest in gender that has taken place over the last few decades. Indeed, at the start of my study, I did not set out to take an overtly feminist approach, yet the more I read about this subject the more I found that this was ingenuous, as gender issues were omnipresent in all phases of the migration process and so could not be ignored. Thus, my reading of the literature in this area steered my research into new areas and I shifted my focus from an examination of the relationship between the elderly person and the carer, to an investigation centred on the carers themselves. Consequently, I found that the authors discussed above (as well as others) challenged me to pay more attention to the
way the experiences of the women interviewed were influenced by gender norms.

Although there is no doubt that there is a huge body of work regarding female migrant workers in the Italian context, I believe that the approach that I have chosen which combines micro and macro analysis is not common and can add much to our current knowledge. In fact, the majority of the narrative studies carried out in this field, tend to either be large-scale studies where narratives are used primarily to gather demographic information or very close analysis where the aim is to understand how narrative itself is constructed. My study aims to bring these two elements together in that I am interested in what the construction of the narrative tells us about the wider picture of being a carer in Italy. Furthermore, the fact that this study was carried out in a second language (L2) for all the participants (myself included) is also relatively unusual and, despite some difficulties, I believe that it was largely a positive element of the process. The pros and cons of this particular choice are discussed in the concluding chapter.

Finally, cross-disciplinary approaches are still relatively rare in the social sciences as far as Italian-based studies are concerned, but I hope that in the future there will be more of this type of cooperation between disciplines. I believe that sociolinguistics, and particularly narrative analysis can usefully be employed especially where a close analysis of what is happening on the ground relates directly to large-scale economic processes such as migration flows and employment levels both within Italy and beyond.

In the next chapter I go on to look in more detail at the current situation in Italy as regards demographic information and the practical aspects of coming to the country to work in the domestic sector including the bureaucratic process of obtaining a work permit and the problems it can cause.
3. Italy and Bologna: putting caring into context

Mamma mia, dammi cento lire
che in America voglio andar
Cento lire io te li dò
ma in America no, no, no.

Traditional song

The popular song cited above tells the story of a girl who wants to leave Italy, as her brothers have done, and seek her fortune in America. It is also a reminder of the long history of emigration from Italy. Although its origins are uncertain, the song has existed in various versions probably since the 1850s when Italian emigrants were setting out for South America. Later on, North America became a more popular destination and the number of people leaving the country grew to number in the millions. Italy's shift from being largely a country of emigration to a country of immigration is well-documented (Garau, 2015; Hellman, 1997; Mignone, 2008) and it is only in the last few decades that Italy has become a country that receives large numbers of migrants and has begun to deal with the societal changes that reversal entails. It is the consequences of this shift which are the subject of the present chapter.

First of all, I trace a brief history of recent immigration into Italy and consider where foreign carers fit into these general trends as well as discussing the reasons why they are so sought after by Italian families. I then give a brief description of the research setting: the city of Bologna. Next, I discuss the demographic data which gives us a better picture of who the carers are in terms of nationality, age and gender. My interviewees come from different countries and I explain to what extent they conform or not to current migration trends. I also clarify what tasks a live-in care worker is expected to perform.

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2 Mum, give me a hundred lira
I want to go to America
I’ll give you a hundred lira
But you’ll not go to America (my translation)
The second half of this chapter (from section 3.6 onwards), examines the relationship between the individual and society by looking first of all at the legal process of moving to Italy to work. In particular, I am interested in what the possible repercussions are for the estimated 469,000 (Lodovici et al., 2015:18) working either without a valid permit or without a valid contract. In theory, foreign migrant workers face considerable bureaucratic hurdles once in Italy (especially if they are from outside the European Union) in addition to the cultural and linguistic difficulties they may face in adapting to a new country. However, in practice, there is a long history of foreign workers being allowed to enter the country to undertake this type of work even without the correct permits. I examine these apparent contradictions and the reasons behind them.

The search for a job is a key moment in the migration process and I consider the various ways in which immigrants who have entered the country go about finding and securing work and the networks they establish to help others to find it. Finally, I shall discuss how immigration is portrayed in newspaper articles, on television and in other media sources and in particular, whether carers are positioned differently to other categories of foreign workers.

3.1 Migration and Italy

In the century following 1876, twenty million Italians left the country altogether. Although the economic boom of the 1960s slowed down this trend considerably, it greatly increased the number of internal migrants who moved from the south to the north of the country in search of work (Pojmann, 2006). However, in the 1970s and 80s this began to change as southern European countries (in particular Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece) began to experience an increase in immigration to their shores which were no longer merely seen as a stopover on the way to more northerly European neighbours, but as a destination point (see King (2001) for a more detailed analysis of the reasons behind this change).

Adapting to this relatively abrupt change in demographics has been a challenge for Italy. Pojmann (2006:9) notes that unlike France, Germany and the United
Kingdom which have a longer history of large-scale immigration, Italy has a more diverse immigrant population (partly due to not receiving immigrants from ex-colonial countries) and thus has had to deal with an influx of more culturally-diverse people, although this may longer be the case as more diverse migration has increased even in Northern European countries. Moreover, whilst it is true that overall, the immigrants living and working in Italy come from all over the globe, each nationality is not equally represented geographically across the country; specific sectors of work and areas in Italy tend to attract specific nationalities and/or genders and this ethnic specialization is particularly true of live-in carers.

3.2 The needs of the family and the arrival of the badanti

Italy, along with other Western European countries, has a large (and growing) elderly population who require care. Although some of this care is done in rest homes and hospitals, a large proportion is done in the family home. Here, I discuss the economic and cultural reasons why so much of the caring in Italy is carried out in the home.

Clearly, the need to look after the elderly is a universal problem, yet not every country relies on the work of live-in carers to the same extent that Italy does. Economists and sociologists point to a number of contributing factors which have led to a preference for this type of care work.

Firstly, with more and more women working\(^3\) it is frequently impossible for elderly care to be undertaken by daughters or daughters-in-law as was once the norm. This is especially true when women (who tend to have children relatively late in northern Italy in any case) are already juggling work with childcare

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\(^3\) Reyneri notes that although in Italy there has traditionally been a low presence of women in the job market, this increased from 22.5% in 1968 to 31.3% in 1999 (Reyneri, 2002). More recently, changes to pension laws saw more women continuing to work into their 50s and 60s and by the third quarter of 2016, it was estimated that 51.7% of all women between the ages of 20 and 64 years of age were in employment (ISTAT 2016b). However, it should be noted that there are sharp differences between the North and the South.
commitments. However, as already noted in Chapter 1, at the same time as family members are finding it harder to care for their elderly family members, the need for care is also increasing as we are living longer than ever before. It is estimated that a fifth of households include at least one member over the age of 75 - and 75% of carers look after someone who falls within this age range (Salvioli, 2007). In fact, Bologna itself has one of the most elderly populations in the country; 23.2% of residents are over 65 years of age but more importantly, 3.8% of the population are categorized as “very elderly” at over 85 years of age – and this is a category which is growing (Quadrelli, Santolini, & Pagnini, 2014).

While in some countries this care gap is filled by the state, this is not the case in Italy. A strong relationship between the employment of home care workers and the lack of public care provision is widely reported in the literature. Southern Europe is often described as having a welfare system that is “rudimentary” (King, 2001), with its shortfalls being picked up by the voluntary sector and, in particular, by the Church and the family unit. In Famiglie Sole (Families Alone) (Del Boca & Rosina, 2009) the authors argue that the inability of Italian governments to keep up with social change has led to a welfare system which is largely obsolete, leaving the family unit to deal with the task of child and elder care. This is a view shared by Colombo (2003) who points out that when assistance is given by the state, it tends to be in the form of financial aid rather than in the provision of services so that families are then obliged to make their own decisions on how best to acquire paid care. It seems that frequently their preferred choice is to employ a foreign carer, for a variety of reasons.

Even though employing a carer cannot really be considered a cheap option (at least not if it is done legally) and is not affordable by those on low incomes without state assistance, it is a comparatively affordable option for someone who owns or rents an apartment that is large enough to offer live-in accommodation which can offset the total cost. This also means that there is someone available 24 hours a day if needed, which is a considerable advantage. Whilst a live-in post may have its disadvantages for an Italian care worker, possibly with family members of her own to house, it is convenient, at least at first, for a newly-arrived foreign worker who needs to urgently find a place to stay.
However, it is not only the unfavourable living arrangements which seem to be dissuading Italians from choosing care work as a career. The increase in the number of young adults obtaining university degrees has also coincided with a corresponding decrease in the number of Italians who are willing to undertake low-status manual work, including caring (King, 2001). These jobs were once the preserve of rural-based Italians who sought jobs in the larger cities but, by 1999, there were more foreigners working in the domestic sector than Italians and, since then, the gap has widened even more.

Moreover, the availability of work and lack of a strict migration policy mean that more foreign workers are attracted to Italy. In countries such as Italy where existing policies aimed at limiting migration flows are not strictly applied, irregular migration flows become almost “structural” with irregular migrants easily being able to find work (Lodovici et al., 2015). This also means that as more and more foreign women take on these jobs, this trend tends to gather pace as such work is seen as being only "for foreign women" (Catanzaro & Colombo, 2009:20), although this has changed slightly in the latest financial crisis which has seen more Italians coming back to work in this sector.

In sum, an increased demand for carers in Italy due to a range of demographic and social factors has coincided with a greatly increased availability of workers ready and willing to step into the breach. As we shall see in Section 3.6, the existence of a flexible and easily-accessible job market has fuelled the trend, even amongst workers who would otherwise find it difficult to find work due to the lack of proper work papers and/or their lack of language skills. In the next section, I look more closely at who exactly the carers are and where they come from.

### 3.3 Bologna

Bologna is the capital city of the region of Emilia-Romagna and is located in northern Italy. It is generally considered to be a wealthy area of Southern Europe, and has a relatively low-level of unemployment (Zontini, 2010) and, although this
worsened slightly a few years ago due to the current economic crisis, the situation is now improving. At the last census, the total number of people resident in the city itself was 371,337 (ISTAT, 2011).

City statistics (Comune di Bologna, 2016) show that currently 15.2% of the resident population is made up of foreigners; a percentage that has more than doubled in the past ten years. It is also a percentage which is destined to grow, seeing as the average age of the foreign resident is 33.9 years rather than 47 years for the average Italian resident in the city. Moreover, 73.5% of the foreign residents are under 45 years of age, compared to 46.8% of the population as a whole. The younger average age range of foreigners is one contributing factor that explains why the birth rate among foreign residents is 16 per thousand; more than double that of Italian citizens in the city, a statistic which suggests that the overall number of foreigners in the city is likely to increase even if the number of new arrivals does not. It should be remembered that under Italian law, children born to two foreign parents do not automatically acquire Italian citizenship even if they are born on Italian soil, so many of the children categorized here as foreigners have never actually lived anywhere else.

Figure 1 shows the current make up of the foreign population of Bologna. It should be remembered that within each nationality category, there is often a sharp divide between male and female migrants with the care workers coming from a smaller pool of nationalities than we might expect from looking at the graph below as I shall explain in the next section.

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4 Such children can apply for citizenship at the age of 18 if they can demonstrate that they have lived in Italy continuously since birth (see law n. 91/1992 and subsequent amendments for more details).
3.4 Who are the *badanti*?

The actual number of foreign carers currently working in Italy is notoriously difficult to estimate due to the high number of workers who do not have registered contracts (see section 3.6 for a discussion on the various degrees of legality). The fact that this type of work takes place within the home makes it easier for it to go on undetected. Additionally, there is also the problem that some of the official statistics regarding this sector do not differentiate between different types of domestic workers and so there may be some overlap between such job categories as carer, housekeeper and cleaner. However, by using official INPS data on domestic workers, ISTAT data on foreigners resident in Italy, and ISMU data on irregular migrants together with information gathered from charities, trade unions and other associations, a reasonable estimate can be made (Soloterre / IRS, 2015). Pasquinelli and Rusmini (2013:42) estimate the number of carers to be 830,000 with 90% of these being foreigners, and most of them are working without a valid work contract. Evidently, from an economic point of view, care work can no longer be considered as being a minor, relatively unimportant section of the labour market. Catanzaro and Colombo (2009) note...
that there was genuine surprise amongst the public when, in the 2002 amnesty (see section 3.6 below), 350,000 domestic workers out of a total of 650,000 were regularized, underlining how important this sector had become in a relatively short space of time.

Unsurprisingly, people who undertake this type of work are as diverse as any other cross-section of workers in society, coming from a wide variety of different backgrounds, and bringing with them varying educational experiences and previous knowledge of Italy. Some are highly qualified and have years of experience either in care work or in completely unrelated professions. Others have never worked before coming to Italy. Some intend to work here for a few months while others have long term ambitions to settle here permanently. It is impossible to give a simple profile which fits everyone but it is possible to trace some key trends over the last few decades.

As mentioned above, in the past carers were more likely to be Italian women who moved to the cities to undertake care work. However, when foreign women began to enter the marketplace, many of the first arrivals came through ecclesiastical channels established by the Catholic church, hence the preponderance of women among the Cape Verdean, Mauritanian, Eritrean and Philippine communities (predominantly Catholic countries) (Colombo, 2003; De Filippo & Pugliese, 2000). In the 1990 amnesty to regularize illegal foreigners, the prevalent nationalities were Moroccan, Tunisian, Senegalese and Filipino - the latter group being overwhelmingly comprised of female domestic workers. (B. Anderson, 2000). As nationality groups shifted, Southern Americans (especially those from Ecuador and Peru) began to be more numerous and finally Eastern Europeans are now the dominant group. This shift is clear even if we look just at the carers working in the city of Bologna (see Figure 2 below). The Eastern Europeans are, by and large, made up of the Romanians, Moldovans and Ukrainians that we saw in Figure 1.
Figure 2: Area of origin of foreign care workers in Italy. Adapted from Fondazione di ricerca Istituto Carlo Cattaneo, (2014:212)

The reasons behind this are complex but do not generally support the common public opinion that some nationalities are particularly "caring" and thus better suited to this sort of work. Catanzaro and Colombo suggest that it is more likely that the preponderance of a few specific nationalities of workers in this sector is due to the work networks that mean that personal recommendations are used to bring in family members or friends from abroad. An employer prefers to employ a trusted friend or acquaintance rather than going through a lengthy selection procedure with an unknown candidate. In fact, Sciortino claims that this is very common and an example of "opportunity hoarding" as described by Charles Tilly (1998) wherein the first immigrants to arrive help out fellow country(wo)men (who may or may not also be family members) (Catanzaro & Colombo, 2009). Just being a carer can be enough to enable someone to become a "mediator" for the arrival of others. This was also borne out by the interviews that I undertook in Bologna with most women having at least a tenuous link to Italy through someone that they knew in their home country although not all of them were able to use this contact to their advantage once they arrived here.

Some immigrants come from countries which have a culture of emigration. Colombo and Catanzaro also cite the example of the Philippines where overseas contract workers are very well-regarded by the state. Similarly in some Eastern
European countries, especially Ukraine, migration has become part of the national culture.

Eastern Europe also has the geographical advantage of being relatively close for workers to visit with many choosing to travel by coach which is more economical. It is also closer culturally to Italy which is a consideration for many families as it is important that a carer can cook Italian cuisine (or at least something close to it). Similarly, another hypothesis is that there is a preference for women who come from cultures which, at least regarding religion, are as close to Catholic Italy as possible. This would account for the high preponderance of Catholic Albanians working in Italy - from a predominantly Muslim country (Catanzaro & Colombo, 2009).

The prevalence of Eastern European workers has also been fuelled by the entry into the European Union of Romania and Bulgaria. As of 1st January 2016, it is estimated that there are 5,026,153 foreigners resident in Italy (Istat 2016a) and Romanians account for over a million of these (22.6% of all foreigners) followed by Albanians, Moroccans, Chinese and Ukrainians (Caritas e Migrantes, 2015).

Regarding qualifications, there is a wide difference in levels of education but, comparing foreign domestic workers with their Italian counterparts, they are usually better qualified: 6.8% have a university degree compared with only 2.5% of Italian domestic workers (Fatato & Staiano, 2012:12). However, foreign domestic workers are "dequalified" here as their qualifications are frequently not officially recognised (Pojmann, 2006) or their limited language skills mean they are unable to work in their sector of proficiency. Moreover, the identity of "migrant woman", especially for those coming from developing and post-communist countries, tends to eclipse any other professional or educational identity, making the move to a non-domestic career less likely and more problematic (Francesca Degiuli, 2011).
3.5 What does a carer do?

As stated above most foreign carers are “live-in”, that is they work and sleep in the same house as the elderly person they are employed to look after. However, the type of accommodation available can vary considerably. Around 70% of live-in carers have their own bedroom whilst the remaining 30% have to sleep in the living area or share a bedroom with the person they are looking after (Da Roit & Facchini, 2010:106). Their workload can vary greatly depending on the type of person they are assisting and whether that person is seriously incapacitated. They may also have sole charge of the person or share the responsibility with another carer. Typical tasks include washing and dressing the elderly person and helping with toileting or assisting in less personal tasks such as accompanying the person to the local shops, medical appointments or a day centre. Many are required to do the shopping and prepare meals as well as perform general housekeeping tasks. The way in which these tasks are carried out can be contentious as shall be seen later on. The majority of carers are thus expected to be on call 24 hours a day which can be particularly difficult if the elderly person suffers from dementia and/or insomnia. Generally, they are not expected to provide nursing care, but to undertake the traditionally "female" tasks of housekeeping, cooking and caring that can no longer be fulfilled within the family. If more intense nursing is needed, it is likely that the elderly person will be transferred to a nursing home. In the meantime, the carer allows the elderly person the freedom to live in his or her own home as well as providing a more economical care alternative for the family.

3.6 Badanti and the state

In this section I examine the state’s changing relationship to foreign care workers and how at different times in the past they have been singled out from other immigrants in order to meet the needs of the population.

In order for any non-Italian to live and work in Italy legally, there are two issues that need to be addressed. Firstly, the legal right of a person to enter and reside
in the country for the purposes of work and secondly, whether the person is working with a proper contract (and thus paying taxes and social security contributions) rather than being paid \textit{in nero} (cash in hand). Reyneri thus outlines three possible categories of non-EU workers in Italy:

1. Holding a valid permit of residence for working reasons, as well as a registered job: that is, authorised as far as residence is concerned and regular in terms of work.

2. Holding a valid residence permit for working reasons, but working at an undeclared job: that is, authorised as far as residence is concerned, but irregular in terms of work.

3. Not holding a residence permit for working reasons and working at an unregistered job: that is, unauthorised as far as residence is concerned and irregular in terms of work. (Reyneri, 2003:5)

He also adds a fourth category that on first glance would seem illogical: that of the migrant with a valid work contract but without a residence permit. In fact, such cases do exist often due to the failure to renew the residence permit before its expiry or because the holder is no longer entitled to the permit if new legislation has been introduced. I would also add a sub-group to the first category which is particularly relevant to carers: the widespread practice of issuing a legal contract but for fewer declared hours than are actually worked. In this way, only a percentage of the hours worked are subject to taxes and social security contributions. This may or may not be done with the agreement of the carer concerned. In addition, many carers take on extra work such as ironing and babysitting during their limited free time and this is almost always done on a “cash in hand” basis.

Regarding entry into Italy; anyone who is not from a member state of the EU needs a work visa to enter and work in Italy. Relatively few carers now enter Italy completely illegally, although Caponio notes how this was far more common a few decades ago. More commonly now, a tourist visa is overstayed or a study visa is obtained and then work is sought (Caponio, 2009). By and large, entering the country in this way is not considered by the migrants to be completely illegal, rather it is just the way things are done here (Sciortino, 2009). Reyneri also claims that Italy is widely-regarded as being a country where it is possible to live
and work satisfactorily even without proper documentation. This is partly due also to the periodic sanatorie or amnesties (see below) which allow illegal workers to become legal - something which is not allowed in neighbouring France, for example, a country where it is widely-regarded as being more difficult to find work without the proper papers.

Once she has entered Italy legally, a non-EU worker must apply for a permesso di soggiorno - a permit to stay. This important but far from simple bureaucratic hurdle will greatly influence the sort of support networks that the worker will be able to access during her time in the country. Without it she will find it difficult to access anything other than emergency health care (i.e. she will not be able to register with her own doctor) and will not be able to sign a legal work contract. She will be more at risk of exploitation by her employers. On the other hand, not having a registered contract can also be an advantage for some workers - especially those who do not have long-term plans to remain in the country and would be unlikely to take advantage of the pension contributions that would be automatically taken out of their pay with a contract. For them, the higher "tax-free" cash-in-hand may actually be preferable. Reyneri suggests that such a choice should not necessarily be judged negatively but may be seen as an "adaptive response" to the situation even legal immigrants find themselves in; namely the difficulty they have in finding and keeping stable declared jobs and the precariousness of their situation if they are unemployed (without benefits in Italy) with no family network to support them. Moreover, unscrupulous employers may even exploit the need of legally-declared employees to have a valid work contract in order to renew short-term residence permits by forcing them to accept lower pay or worse conditions (Reyneri, 2003). In this scenario it is easy to see how it could seem preferable to remain completely under the radar rather than face the struggle to maintain a residency permit which is dependant on having a work contract. Whilst this holds true for many types of work, the live-in carer is particularly vulnerable to exploitation and not having a permesso di soggiorno was generally seen as a disadvantage by the carers I interviewed. Moreover, most needed a permesso in order to be able to freely travel (without fear of being stopped at the border on re-entry and expelled) between Italy and
their home countries to visit family. The slowness of Italian bureaucracy in issuing this document was mentioned by many as causing particular hardship - a view that was also echoed in a health service study carried out in Bologna in 2005 (Regionale, 2005). In an added twist, it is not unheard of for it to take so long to process the application that by the time it is ready, it is about to expire and the process must be started anew.

As previously mentioned, anyone entering the country and working illegally can apply to legalize their situation (if they are in employment and have an employer willing to sponsor them) through the periodic amnesties. The number of workers who can do this is capped with a limit being placed on different job categories. Catanzaro and Colombo note that since 1996, these amnesties have allowed for higher and higher numbers of foreign carers to be regularized. For example in the 2005 quotas 19% of the total applications were reserved for domestic workers which rose to 38% in 2007 and again to 70% in 2008 (over 100,000 domestic workers) (Catanzaro & Colombo, 2009:28). The government is actively following a policy of recruiting these foreign workers to make up for the shortfall in the welfare services for the elderly. It should be noted however, that the workers targeted by these amnesties are specifically live-in carers. Thus, this policy cannot be interpreted as being an open-door policy to foreign workers, rather it could be interpreted as only offering those posts that are less attractive to Italians (who generally are not looking for live-in jobs) whilst simultaneously dissuading workers from bringing their own families along with them. (Colombo, 2003)

Again, gathering and submitting all the documentation necessary to apply for regularizing one's status is not an easy task and must be done together with a compliant, if not supportive, employer. Several of the women I spoke to said that their employer had regularized their status during an amnesty, often using a third-party agency to deal with the bureaucracy.
3.7 Finding work

As is often the case in Italy, a personal recommendation is preferred for employing someone. Carers often help each other by recommending fellow countrywomen (even if they are not on close terms) or relatives for positions. This is also true if temporary help is sought to cover the periods of annual leave when the carer may return home for a month or so. Generally if you want to employ a carer, you ask someone who already has one and many of the women I spoke to had found subsequent jobs through neighbours or family members of their employers. Sometimes these contacts are made in the carer's country of origin but many seek to become part of nationality networks in Italy especially through going to church services which other carers are known to attend or going to other highly-frequented public areas (such as the Piazza del Plebiscito in Naples mentioned by one of the women I interviewed) in order to make contacts.

Finding the first job which offers accommodation and experience in a relatively short space of time is crucial. Once carers become part of employment networks and can offer references and have employers recommend them to others, it becomes much easier for them to find subsequent jobs (B. Anderson, 1999). Alternatively, for those without any contacts, there are some agencies which place carers with families but the cost of using these agencies and the bureaucracy involved is a disincentive for many.

Another very visible way of advertising for work is to put up a notice on a bus shelter or at the supermarket (see Figure 3 below). Many of the notices advertising services in this way are for male workers, perhaps suggesting that they are less-integrated into alternative social networks that could help them find work through personal contacts.
An example of a typical notice posted on a recycling bin in the street. It reads:

WORK WANTED

Serious, educated and willing person, is looking for work assisting the elderly (day or night), full time. Also good at small electrical jobs, cleaning and painting, clearing out cellars and attics.

Figure 3: Handwritten notice asking for work (photograph, author’s own)

Finally Caritas, a confederate of catholic charities, provides several services for immigrants, including emergency shelter and soup kitchens. They also work to match up the women with families looking for carers although these jobs tend to be amongst the lowest paid and are sometimes considered as an emergency stop-gap for those who have no other contacts to fall back on (B. Anderson, 1999).

3.8 Badanti in the public eye

The portrayal of immigrants and immigration in the Italian media has long been a subject of interest for academics and frequently concentrates on the negative effects of associating immigration with criminality (Sciortino & Colombo, 2004). To understand better how carers are portrayed in the media, it is first necessary to see how their treatment differs from depictions of other immigrant workers in the press and on television.

In their study looking at public discourse on immigration in Italy over a thirty year period, Sciortino and Colombo contested the idea of a criminalization of immigrants through newspaper articles. They claim that although over the last thirty years there has been an increase in stories about immigrants committing crimes, this is in line with the overall increase in immigrant numbers and does not indicate a more sinister attempt to link foreigners to crime. However, the fact remains that a large proportion of print articles and TV reports which talk about
immigration are within the context of crime reporting (including the reporting of the illegal entry of immigrants into the country). The boatloads of refugees who arrive on the southern island of Lampedusa are top news stories and provoke much public debate, although the great majority of illegal immigration comes through the less visible route of overstaying visas. Interestingly however, Sciortino and Colombo also found that there was a marked decrease in newspaper articles dealing with the successful integration of immigrants in the job market; a theme that was prevalent in the 1970s, especially as regards carers. Such stories, rather than focussing on the women themselves, tended to see the arrival of the carers as reflecting badly on the Italian families’ inability to manage care on their own and the lack of provision offered by the state. They also note that the current lack of such articles speaks volumes about the way that Italy regards the large number of foreign workers that it so relies on for the good of the economy. Thus for many readers the immediate connotations of “foreigner” are illegal, clandestine and criminal.

But leaving aside the problem of criminality which is still relatively minor, what exactly is being threatened by the arrival of the immigrants? As has been seen at the beginning of this chapter, many of the immigrants are not directly competing with Italians for jobs as they are taking jobs in sectors (such as domestic service and agriculture) which have long been abandoned by Italian workers. One bone of contention however, is the access to the already severely-underfunded welfare services. Right-wing rhetoric tends to position the immigrant as having precedence over the Italian citizens as regards welfare. A poster which appeared in Bologna as part of the extreme right-wing Northern League’s campaign just before the 2011 mayoral elections depicts a crudely-caricatured queue of immigrants waiting in line for council housing, social services and nurseries. The Italians in the queue (represented by an elderly man and, rather surprisingly, a red-haired boy) are right at the back. The slogans underneath say “Guess who

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5 In fact, non-EU children are proportionately less likely to apply for state nursery places than Italians and leaflets stating this appeared around Bologna streets stating this as a response to the Northern League campaign. It is, however, a hot topic at the moment as in recent years there have typically been around 1000 children in Bologna who have not managed to secure nursery places.
comes last” and “In Bologna, Bolognesi (come) first”), clearly inferring that Italians are losing out to foreign migrants in the waiting lists for council housing. The poster plays on the idea of being “furbo” (smart or sly). This is generally seen as a positive characteristic and letting someone else take all the nursery places or council houses is seen as a slight and needs to be redressed in order not to lose face. Interestingly, as shocking as such a depiction is in a typically left-leaning city such as Bologna, it is actually a toned-down version of the image used in several other cities where the caricature of a middle-eastern man was also carrying a scimitar.

In addition to worries about housing, welfare and health services being overstretched by foreign residents, Italian culture itself is also seen as a being under threat from anyone who hails from very different cultural and religious backgrounds. In an age when overt racism based on physical characteristics is unacceptable, cultural differences have been used as an excuse to create the otherness of (especially non-white) foreigners (Triandafyllidou, 2001). In Italy this process can be seen in the way certain nationality categories are portrayed (and are seen) as having certain immutable character traits. Level of education and religion are also socially “acceptable” discriminating factors and Islam, in particular, most strongly signifies “otherness” (Cappussotti, 2010). In this way Filipino women are seen as being well-educated and suited to domestic work whilst Nigerian women are linked to the sex industry and have more difficulties in finding legitimate work (Pojmann, 2006; Triandafyllidou, 1999a). There has been a shift from what several commentators see as a “facile anti-racism” which viewed foreigners as almost exotic before 1991 (when there was a large increase in Albanian immigrants) to alarm at the prospect that Italian culture itself could be under threat. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the now infamous, ongoing Northern League campaign which exhorts Italians to show pride in their traditions by eating polenta and shunning couscous. Of course, these arguments are usually reserved for economic migrants rather than wealthy foreigners; migration tends to be regarded in a more positive light when the people moving are economically viable and able to benefit their host country (Nic Craith, 2012).
However, the insistence on maintaining an Italian national identity and rejecting the type of “melting pot” approach to integration that many believe is happening in the U.S. can also have a positive impact on immigrants. Many Italians also regard themselves as welcoming and friendly in a Catholic, humanist tradition although there is the fear that this aspect of the nation’s identity is coming under pressure due to the high increase in immigration (Triandafyllidou, 1999a).

Whilst there is a lot of criticism of the right-wing reporting of immigration matters especially their emphasis on criminality and problems of repatriation, the left-wing press is not without its critics. The left-wing dailies have also come under attack for their “vague and empty solidarity” and the Catholic Church (which frequently comments on the subject of immigration) is seen by some as having a rather paternalistic attitude (Cappussotti, 2010:195).

If we look more closely at the language used to report, there has been increasing concern over the use in the press of nominalised adjectives to refer to individuals, thus, the prevalence of such terms as “il rumeno”, “la russa” etc. Hanretty and Hermanin (2008) argue that the use of these terms (rather than the acceptable “una donna rumena”) serve to depersonalise the person in question as, unlike other adjectives referring to occupations or the use of proper names, these adjectives are also used to describe objects and tend to have a dehumanizing effect when applied to people. They also serve to “front-load” the nationality of the protagonist despite the fact that such information may not even be relevant to the article. Whether this choice is due to deliberate xenophobic tendencies or due to a reliance on journalistic clichés as Faloppa (2015) sustains is up for debate.

### 3.9 Badanti – the acceptable face of immigration?

Amongst all the polemics we have one category of foreign workers who are (almost universally) welcomed with open arms; the badanti. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, in their present “incarnation” as mainly Eastern European women they are seen by many as being less of a threat culturally than other foreigners. Van Hooren (2010) points to their depiction in media coverage as being Catholic and hard-working – two characteristics which even the right-
wing cannot object to. Also being predominantly women, they are already distanced from the negative media stereotype of the single, male immigrant without family ties.

Secondly, because they are likely to be living with their employers, carers are less likely to want to bring other family members to Italy with them and are also less likely to move into more privileged positions in the labour market. In short they represent the acceptable face of immigration (Colombo, 2003).

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, they are needed by Italian families. As can be seen from the figures in the first part of this chapter, through the issuing of amnesties, the government has recognised this and has actively encouraged the legalization of this particular sector. There are very few people who do not know anyone who employs the services of a carer or who uses one themselves. For many people, the alternative solution of paying for accommodation in a residential home is not economically viable and employing a carer (although not possible for everyone as it requires a minimum income to do so legally) is not considered to be the preserve of the wealthy, unlike having other paid domestic staff for instance. Moreover, the possibility of caring for the elderly relative in his or her own home is often seen as being more morally and culturally acceptable (Francesca Degiuli, 2010). It could also be argued that in the case of the carers, rather than their presence being seen as a threat to Italian culture, it actually allows some aspects of Italian culture such as homemaking to continue to thrive. This was the case for several families in Naples where according to Näre carers enabled their elderly charges to “hold on to the habits, rhythms and standards of daily home life that are so important to them” (Näre, 2009:9). These habits such as providing a three course home-cooked meal for lunch and washing down the floors every day were important for the elderly Neapolitans, but could not be achieved without the hard work of the carers and domestic workers. Generally therefore, any suggestion by the press or anyone else that they should be sent “home” is usually greeted with howls of protest.

As a result, the carers are often described as “angels” whose patience and dedication help keep the family from having to put their relative into residential
accommodation. Another frequently reoccurring motif is the comparison of the 
*badante* to family members and many researchers have noted how they are 
expected to take on the role of surrogate daughter or daughter-in-law (Francesca 
Degiuli, 2010) whilst also finding a surrogate mother themselves to look after 
children left behind in their home countries (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002). 
One example of this can be seen in the reports of the carers who remained with 
their elderly charges in the emergency shelters at L’Aquila after the 2009 
earthquake. The language used in the newspaper articles emphasises the familial 
ties between the carer and the elderly charges; “How could I leave?” says one 
Romanian woman, “it would be like abandoning my mother”. A Ukrainian carer, 
rather unusually, says “I call her grandma...and she calls me mum” (Porqueddu, 
2009). The intimacy and affection is likened to that of the traditional family but 
the dynamics are not all the same; for example one woman recounts the moment 
the earthquake struck:

> After the first tremor we hugged each other. Then I turned the light on: the wall 
was broken. The Signora fell down and hurt a leg, but we managed to get out⁶. 
(Porqueddu, 2009)

The use of the more formal title “Signora” is in contrast to the intimate tone of 
the rest of the story. It becomes clear that the relationship between the two is not 
a kin one.

There is another, contrasting image of the carer which is also widespread in the 
media: the gold digger. In this light, she is seen as only doing the job in order to 
get her hands on the poor family’s money; either by swindling them out of 
housekeeping or, worse still, marrying her elderly employer with the intention of 
snatching away the inheritance or, as is the case in the following newspaper 
article, getting her hands on the widow’s pension. Here the carer is seen as 
exploitative and manipulating;

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⁶ Original text: “Dopo la prima scossa ci siamo abbracciate. Poi ho acceso la luce: il muro era 
rotto. La signora è caduta e si è fatta male a una gamba, ma siamo riuscite a uscire”.
Mario marries Mioara, he is almost eighty and she is not yet forty. He loves his young wife because she has given him back the role that nobody else in the family allowed him anymore; that of the man of the house. She fell in love with the financial security that an elderly husband could give her: a house, status, citizenship and, one day, a widow’s pension. (Grion, 2011)

The pension itself is fairly small (7,351 euros a year) but there is obviously consternation that a young widow will continue to receive it for considerably longer than a widow of the same generation as the elderly husband. The increase in marriages between elderly men and their much younger foreign carers (according to the same article there are around 3000 a year) are a source of alarm expressed in many press articles. This fear has led to the introduction of the so-called “anti-badanti pension ruling”. Since 2012 if a pensioner is over 70 years old when he dies (and it almost always is a “he”), with a widow more than twenty years younger, she is no longer eligible to receive his full state pension as was previously the case. Unsurprisingly, much less attention is given to younger Italian women who marry older men, including many very high-profile couples in politics and show business where the money at stake is much higher than 7351 euros a year.

Depictions of carers in the media tend toward these two extremes; the angelic saviour of the family who sacrifices herself and her family to care for her charge or, the ruthless interloper who is welcomed into the family home only to end up robbing and deceiving the family or, even worse, a carer who is searching for an elderly husband to marry and exploit. The stereotypes and how they influence the stories told in the interviews are discussed further in Chapter 6. Interestingly, it would seem that the average age of the carer is currently falling (Pasquinelli & Rusmini, 2008) so it may be that this is a stereotype which is unlikely to be abandoned in the near future.

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7 Original text: “Mario sposa Mioara, lui è vicino agli ottant'anni, lei non arriva ai quaranta. Lui ama la giovane moglie perché gli ha ridato un ruolo - quello di uomo - che in famiglia nessuno gli riconosceva più. Lei s’innamora della sicurezza economica che l’anziano marito può assicurarle: casa, status, cittadinanza e un domani la pensione di reversibilità.”
Carers are also becoming more visible as a topic in the arts. For example, in 2009 Cesare Lievi’s play *La Badante* probed the relationship between adult children and their parents and asks how it is affected by the arrival of a stranger in the family. In cinema, the documentary film *Nadea e Sveta* (2012) enjoyed a modest success in Italy and tells the story of two Moldovan women who come to Bologna to work. It traces their movements to and from Italy and focuses on the emotional consequences of their choices, in particular the loneliness they experience.

Finally, the popular Rai Uno series, *Un Medico in Famiglia*, also featured a Polish *badante* (although it later emerged that she was actually Italian) who goes to work for a wealthy Roman family, another example of how *badanti* are slowly making their way into mainstream culture.

### 3.10 Conclusion

With this brief overview, I have given some idea of the current legal and cultural context in Italy in which carers find themselves, as well as an overview of recent immigration history in Italy. Which specific legal hurdles were faced by the women I interviewed depended on when the move to Italy took place and from which country. However, the trials of obtaining work and legal status are recurrent themes in the interviews I have gathered and their impact on the lives of the women ranges from the mildly annoying to the seriously disruptive, with some women being unable to visit their children and families due to not yet receiving their permit to stay.

The themes I have identified in the Italian media are perhaps the most common and it remains to be seen whether they are of any importance to the carers themselves. In Chapter 7, through a close analysis of the transcripts of the interviews I look for parallels between the way the carers see themselves and the way they are viewed by others.
4. Research Design and Methodology

And [people are] unreliable to themselves. Let alone when they’re presenting themselves publicly on Facebook or wherever. They are unreliable because that’s natural, that’s human nature. That’s what, to some extent, that’s what makes people interesting. The way in which they lie to themselves. What are the things they wish to embellish? What are the things they wish to downplay, you know? These are the things that give you a clue as to who these people actually are, what the emotional life of people really is. – Kazuo Ishiguro

From Mark Lawson talks to Kazuo Ishiguro, BBC 4, first shown 8pm, 22nd February 2015

The stories we tell ourselves and each other are at the heart of my research data and closely related to this is the debate around what exactly constitutes a story and how it should be analysed. Should a story be thought of as merely a recapitulation of past events or is it something else? My research involved interviewing women with different career histories, from different cultural backgrounds and first languages, and with varying levels of competency in Italian. Moreover, the topics I was interested in dealt with personal (and sometimes emotional) life choices, touched on aspects of illegality, and so were potentially difficult to recount to a relative stranger. There were several challenges to face regarding the choice of appropriate research methods and tools of analysis as well as language-related obstacles to overcome and ethical dilemmas to consider.

The first part of this chapter deals with the collection and preparation of data whilst the second part explains how this data was analysed. However, the process was not a linear one. When I started planning the research I had several false starts as I read more about the topic, got to know the local situation and understood better how I could best answer my research questions. In section 4.1 I explain my thought processes as I discuss the underlying theoretical basis for my approach and where this study is situated in relation to other relevant research. In section 4.2 I outline my reasons for choosing to use qualitative interviews as my primary data source, describe the data collection process in detail and examine the practical and ethical considerations which became
relevant along the way. I also discuss issues regarding transcription and translation which were particularly important in this multilingual and multicultural project (section 4.2.4).

In the second half of the chapter I explore in greater detail the key concepts which have shaped my approach towards the analysis of the data; namely deciding on a definition of narrative and the choice of an analysis tool (sections 4.3 and 4.4). Finally, in section 4.4.5, I reflect on issues of data reliability and other problems encountered during the analysis.

### 4.1 Theoretical and methodological framework

What we believe constitutes real knowledge and how we can obtain that knowledge are both key to the choice of methods we will use in research. Grix (2004) stresses the importance of first considering the philosophical basis behind the research as this will undoubtedly influence the epistemological and methodological choices made by the researcher or research team. Therefore, before entering into a discussion of the specific analytical approaches and methods I have chosen to use in my research, I will explain the thought process that lead me to the overarching framework on which all the other decisions rested.

From the beginning of my interest in this topic I knew that I wanted to primarily base my analysis on interview data as I felt that, only by talking to the people involved, would I be able to have a clear picture of their lives. However, I had yet to decide what specific approach to adopt regarding that data. Broadly speaking, there seemed to be two main approaches; a naturalist (or realist) approach and a social constructionist approach. This frequently-cited dichotomy (see Elliott 2005) can also be understood as the difference between researchers who see interviews as a resource and those who see the interviews themselves as topics of enquiry. In the former, a naturalist approach “seeks rich descriptions of people as they exist and unfold in their natural habitats” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2013:374); the idea being that it is possible to observe the social world from the
outside to understand it. The interview is seen as a “window on reality” and as such, it is an approach which is underpinned by a positivist world view. Typically with this approach the researcher is interested in the content of the interviews with the questions being asked of the data generally being about “what” the situation is e.g.

- what experiences have people had?
- what is happening?
- what are people doing?
- what does it mean to them?
(Elliott, 2005:19)

This has for many years been the predominant approach in research which uses interview data across a range of disciplines. However, once I started a preliminary examination of the data I was getting from the first few interviews, I realised that this world view did not fit with what I was seeing. The interviews were full of contradictions; sometimes, within the space of a few lines, the interviewee seemed to be saying something completely different. Moreover, despite my initial thoughts that I could and would be an unobtrusive interviewer, I saw that my interjections were inevitably shaping the way the interview progressed. Even when I was silent, the stories that were being told were not appearing in a neutral context. They were constructed with regard to a particular audience; me.

I realised that I needed to take an approach that accepted these “flaws” and uncertainties for what they are: an integral part of the interview context and needed an analytical method which allowed me to better understand the complex social processes that were taking place. The last couple of decades has seen a growth of interest in social constructionism to the extent that it is now regarded as the prevailing paradigm in sociolinguistic research (Coates, 2004; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2011). My research framework draws on work done in linguistics, sociology and psychology and is underpinned by a social constructionist⁸ idea of how knowledge is constructed and maintained through

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⁸ There is some ambiguity in the terms used across different disciplines with some writers using social constructionism (primarily psychologists) and others using social constructivism to describe the same
all types of interaction, but primarily through language. Burr describes social constructionism as necessarily including the following assumptions:

- A critical stance towards taken for granted knowledge
- Historical and cultural specificity
- Knowledge is sustained by social processes
- Knowledge and social action go together

(Burr 2004:4)

Social constructionism invites us to look at the world afresh by questioning everything we think we already know. Even concepts that we may dismiss as “common sense” are understood to be historically and culturally specific as well as subject to continual changes (Gergen, 1973). In other words, the aim of the research is not to discover an ultimate “truth” which lies behind what is said but to examine how people employ certain discursive strategies and linguistic devices to construct identities which are subject to continual changes both on a micro level (during the interview/conversation) and on a macro level (drawing on wider societal discourses). Adopting this approach inevitably has an effect on all other aspects of the research methodology that I use and so I return to this topic in section 4.3 to explain its impact on my understanding of and use of narrative.

### 4.1.1 Deciding on Data

As already discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, there have already been numerous studies undertaken which examine the presence of foreign carers in Italy. Most of these studies have been undertaken in the fields of economics and sociology and typically deal with issues that can be objectively measured such as patterns of employment (Van Hooren, 2010), migration flows (Sciortino, 2009) and (lack concept. However, many researchers differentiate between the two, preferring to use the term social constructivism to refer to the cognitive processes that take place mentally within each individual and social constructionism to refer to the external, interactive social processes of sense making (Young & Collin, 2003). Although I am not a psychologist, my study draws on ideas from the field of psychology and, importantly, has a social rather than an individual focus so I prefer to use the term social constructionism.
of welfare provision (Scrinzi, 2008). Many of these types of study are based primarily on quantitative data or sometimes both qualitative and quantitative methods are used together (for example as seen in the massive study carried out by Da Roit and Facchini (2010) which looked at *badanti* in Lombardy and included 650 interviews). However, with such a large-scale project, it is usually not possible (or advisable) to micro-analyse the interviews in the same way as it is in smaller-scale sociolinguistic studies (and, in fact, Da Roit and Facchini’s interviews were semi-structured and used to provide largely quantitative information for analysis).

Alternatively, from a social constructionist standpoint, research using qualitative data can be used to examine aspects of the lived-experiences of migrants which would be difficult to explore through quantitative data alone. De Fina (2003), for example, argues that “subjective” knowledge, for instance about attitudes towards host countries and problems with adaption, can only be effectively studied through qualitative research methods. Other researchers use qualitative data to focus on relationships within the home/workplace. For example, Colombo (2007) looks at the organization of domestic work and how it fits into family life and Cvajner (2009) examines friendship and emotional ties between women migrants and others. Many of these qualitative studies are undertaken from a feminist perspective, particularly those examining mothering from a distance and transnational care-giving (Andall, 2000; Boccagni, 2012; Pojmann, 2006; Puppa, 2012). Despite their different focuses, the aforementioned studies all use qualitative interviews primarily as a basis for content analysis. They are interested in what is being said rather than how it is said. In other words, there is a difference between regarding the interview as a data resource or as a topic of inquiry in itself (Elliott, 2005).

For my own research, I felt that in order to better understand the nuances of lived-experience, I would take a sociolinguistic-oriented approach (an area which I believe is currently missing from the Italian context) which looks at both content and the interactive, performative aspects of narrative (i.e. “what is being said” and “how it is being said”). These two elements have been fruitfully examined in other contexts such as Mexican migrants in the USA (De Fina & King,
2011) and Andalusian migrants in Denmark (Gómez-Estern, 2011) but are still underrepresented in Italian studies. By providing a closer (micro) analysis of the data in conjunction with an awareness of wider (macro) issues, I hope to add to the debate. Thus, one of my first decisions regarding data was to choose interviews, and the stories within those interviews, as my primary data source. The number of interviews is intentionally low because of the need to analyse each interview in close detail. The intention is not to claim that the carers are somehow representative of all foreign carers in this context, but to give a greater insight into certain aspects of their lives and to build on other research in this area which, although wider in scope, does not provide as much detail on the ways in which identities are constructed and negotiated within discourse.

In addition to the interviews, I use my field notes to provide additional material to help in my analysis. Detailed field notes are a tool which can add to “the credibility and reliability of data collection procedures” (Quimby, 2012:108). These notes were written to record my first impressions shortly after each interview and also help me to better remember elements of the interview which are not present on the audio recording such as people who were present but who did not speak, activities carried out while the interview was being held, body language etc. Field notes are also helpful in the process of reflecting on the research and in supporting the claims made through the analysis both of which are discussed at the end of this chapter.

### 4.2 Data collection

Whatever the focus of the research, there are similarities in the process that narrative researchers (who use recorded interviews) go through when preparing their material. Each will at some stage undertake (or delegate) the following tasks;
• Finding and contacting participants and explaining the aim of the study.
• Meeting with participants to interview and record them. (This can happen just the once or it can be an ongoing, iterative process).
• Listening to (and usually transcribing) the audio material.
• Analysing the material and writing up this analysis.

Initially, I planned to interview both the carers themselves and the people they cared for. However, this soon proved problematic because it was difficult to find elderly people who were willing to be interviewed, or who were willing to be interviewed without the presence of another family member which hindered the interview process considerably. Moreover, it was clear that some of the carers I met with their employers were not really happy to be interviewed but had been asked to be interviewed by their employers. (I did not go ahead with these interviews). Additionally, I met several carers who were keen to be interviewed but who did not want their employers to know they were being interviewed. As a result, I made the decision to contact the carers directly and let them decide where the interview should take place and who should be present. This is the reason why there are more interviews with the carers than with Italians. All of the contacts I made, whether included in the final project or not, were undoubtedly useful for helping me better understand the badante/elder/employer relationship.

The data that I discuss in this thesis comes primarily from audio recordings made with eleven non-Italian women in the city of Bologna. All but three of the women (Eugenia and Dana who live out and Anita who had recently left her job) were working as live-in carers at the time of the interview. The recordings range in length from 12 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes with an overall total of 8 hours and 42 minutes of recordings, almost all of which have been transcribed and analysed. Short sections that were not transcribed (due to audio problems or because it was clear that a close analysis would not be part of the project were nevertheless listened to and summarised). In addition to these core recordings there are also field notes taken shortly after each interview concluded as well as
some additional information from interviews with the elderly Italian employers. The following table summarizes the interviewees (both the carers and Italians interviewed when present). More detailed information regarding only the carers can be found in the table in Section 5.5).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alina</td>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>Peruvian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana</td>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>Moldovan, carer to Angela.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>&gt; 80</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenia</td>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>Romanian, carer to Nino.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nino</td>
<td>&gt; 90</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ioana</td>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucia</td>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>Ukrainian, carer to Annamaria.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annamaria</td>
<td>&gt; 70</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olena</td>
<td>60 – 69</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofiya</td>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>Ukrainian, carer to Lina.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lina</td>
<td>&gt; 80</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vira</td>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yulia</td>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4: Principal interviewees in the study*
4.2.1 Finding participants

I decided to contact potential interviewees through informal networks of friends and acquaintances rather than through agencies. This decision was made primarily because in Italy, only a minority of carers are matched to jobs through agencies, charities or similar (3.5% according to research published by Da Roit and Facchini (2010:92)) whereas the majority of job opportunities are advertised through informal networks of friends and co-national acquaintances (Elrick & Lewandowska, 2008). Once contacted, several of the interviewees introduced me to friends of theirs who were also interested in being interviewed so, in this way, the contacts “snowballed”. This is an approach which has been taken by many researchers in this field (De Fina & King, 2011; Haile & Siegmann, 2014; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2001a) and is especially useful where the fact that migrants have moved illegally means that researcher/interviewee trust is a serious concern (Black, 2003).

Consequently, I asked friends, local café owners and colleagues whether they knew of anyone working as a carer (or who employed a carer) and who would be willing to be interviewed for a research project. I then telephoned the people concerned and explained what I was doing and arranged to meet up wherever they preferred (this was often in their home but some interviews took place in parks, bars or other public places). Although I had originally planned to meet up for a preliminary meeting before returning at a later date to do the interview, most of the respondents preferred to start the interview straightaway as they had very little spare time to fix another appointment.

4.2.2 Practical and ethical considerations

Approximately half of the number of people I contacted subsequently agreed to being interviewed and this was largely due, I believe, to lack of time available to them and understandable worries about confidentiality (many carers still work illegally) and, despite my reassurances that anything said would remain
confidential, it was probably not regarded as a risk worth taking. However, this was not stated to me explicitly but through others.

Before being interviewed all participants were given an oral and a written explanation of the project and assured that pseudonyms would be used to protect the privacy of the participants. They were also assured that they could withdraw from the project at any time and/or ask for the recordings to be erased. Although Bologna is a large city, the many details given in the women's stories along with demographic information such as their age and country of origin could lead to deductive disclosure with individuals possibly being identifiable (Kaiser, 2009). This was naturally a problem for some of the participants who were wary of any possible negative effect on their current employment situation. For this reason, I assigned a pseudonym to each of the participants and also, where necessary, changed names of other people referred to in the narratives. I decided to use pseudonyms rather than a more generic label (such as a number) for two reasons; firstly, I felt that the stories told in the interviews were highly individual and presenting them without a name detracted from this, and secondly, I believe using names helps both the researcher and the reader to remember who told which story and to make connections between them. As far as choosing the pseudonym was concerned, I consulted with acquaintances from the various countries to find common names from the appropriate age group and nationality for each of the women.

4.2.3 The interview context

Narrative data is most commonly generated through interviews yet how these interviews are actually undertaken is not always made explicit. The structure of the interview itself can differ considerably from researcher to researcher. At one end of the scale, a researcher may draw up a detailed list of specific questions to ask beforehand and the interviewer will try not to deviate from this script, reacting minimally to whatever the interviewee says. At the other extreme, interviews can be completely unstructured with the interviewee being invited to
talk about whatever he or she likes with perhaps only an opening question to suggest a general direction.

In the last few years there has been a greater interest shown towards understanding the interview context as a dialogical event in which meaning is created by all those present. In keeping with this viewpoint, it has also been argued that by strictly adhering to standardized questions and attempting to be a neutral presence, the researcher not only fails to eliminate bias but may even miss vital information as “meanings and interpretive frames that go beyond the predetermined structure are left out, with the risk that the researcher cannot understand what actually goes on in the interaction” (Brinkmann, 2013:18). By regarding the interview as a jointly-constructed reality the researcher can counteract the criticisms of the Content-Analysis (CA) proponents who object to the use of artificially generating data specifically for analysis. Indeed, from this perspective the interview context cannot and should not be eliminated from the analysis and should not be treated as being somehow artificial. In this way, “interviews are interesting not as windows into a reality beyond them, but as real interactional events in their own right” and, as such, worthy of study (De Fina and Perrino, 2011). De Fina (2009) also warns against paying lip-service to the concept of interactional analysis and to really look at how the mode of emergence in the interview context impacts on the type of narrative that gets told. This includes being aware of the power relations between those present, including the interviewer. Similarly, Mann (2011) is critical of research that purports to support the idea of meaning being interactionally-produced but which edits out the interviewer in the data analysed and presented. Consistent with this approach, I have not attempted to “eliminate” my own participation in the transcripts, something which I believe is neither necessary nor possible. As I gathered more data I became more aware that everything that I said would necessarily become an integral part of the data to analyse. However, I also did not want to dominate the interview situation with too many questions. In order to put the participants at their ease, I decided to take a semi-structured approach. In each case I started the interview by asking about their initial decision to come to Italy but after this I allowed the conversation to be led as much as possible by
the women themselves, following their cues and coming back to the following questions only when, and if, it seemed appropriate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where are you from originally?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When did you first come to Italy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And to Bologna?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What prompted your decision to come here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you know anyone here before arriving?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you travel here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you find work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you know Italian before coming here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you learn Italian?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you worked as a <em>badante</em> anywhere else?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What career background do you have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you plan on returning permanently?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you plan on changing jobs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that Bologna is your home?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you keep in contact with your family?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 5: Interview opening questions*

Importantly, the questions were not specifically designed for eliciting stories. Many studies based on narrative take their inspiration from Labov’s “danger of death” question where the interviewer was instructed to ask:

> Have you ever been in a situation where you thought you were in serious danger of being killed – where you thought to yourself, “This is it?”

(Labov, 1972:354)

This is followed, where appropriate, by an invitation to recount the story. The technique of asking a yes/no question about a past event before inviting the interviewee to recount the episode was (and continues to be) very effective in committing the speaker to tell the story in order to justify the claim already made by the affirmative answer. In my own study, the decision to look specifically at stories occurring in interviews, was not taken until *after* I recognised the relevance of the stories in the data. As a consequence, the questions asked were not specifically tailored to elicit them.

Returning briefly to the critics who see the interview context as an artificial event, one of their chief criticisms of Labov’s approach is that by deliberately eliciting stories in an interview he is removing any reference to the context in
which they are embedded. Stories do not just appear. They are usually prefaced with several turns of utterances from both (or all) parties which allow the storyteller to signal that they wish to hold the floor for longer than is usual and have something of particular relevance to say (Thornborrow & Coates, 2005a). In the same vein, Schegloff remarks that the interview setting “plays havoc with the motive force of the telling – the action and interactional precipitant of the telling – by making the elicitation itself the invariant occasion for telling the story” (Schegloff, 1997:99-100). However, whilst this may be a consideration for researchers analysing narrative structure per se, for others, myself included, this is not the main focus of the analysis. The perceived loss of spontaneity that occurs when a specific narrative or topic is elicited is necessary in order to find out more about a specific area of interest.

Elicited stories necessarily have different characteristics but an attention to the context is still essential to fully understand the significance of the storytelling event. Although my choice of questions meant that I did not specifically set out to elicit stories in the interviews, this “oversight” also fortuitously lead to a greater attention being paid to the context when they did occur. As a result, I do not regard the stories as being “elicited in the interview” but as “narratives [which happen to occur] in interview” (De Fina & Perrino, 2011), leading me to look closely at the way relationships are negotiated between the interviewer (myself) and the other people present.

In addition, and in a more positive light, narratives which are actively elicited during the research interview can be seen as providing the participants in the study with a valuable opportunity for reflection which they might not otherwise have (see De Fina, 2009). Wortham takes this idea even further when he suggests that interviews can themselves also be a vehicle for psychological development. He posits that it is through reflecting on their experiences and telling stories about them that narrators can reinforce or recreate the sort of person they want to be and how they want to appear to others (Wortham, 2001).
4.2.4 Transcription and translation

Finally in this section, I would like to discuss some of the issues surrounding transcription and translation. I have grouped them together as they both entail a process of interpretation. All the interviews were conducted in Italian which is a second language (L2) for the women and myself too. I am aware that by interviewing in Italian there is possibly a greater risk of misunderstandings or misinterpretations occurring but as I treat the interview as an interactive and collaborative event, I am not looking for historical or grammatical accuracy (a single "narrative truth") in the questions asked and answers which are given. I strive in my analysis to always provide the reader with a clear rationale for my own interpretation of the narratives whilst being aware of the dangers of merely imposing my own subjective understanding of them. Central to this line of reasoning, is the view of narrative as a co-constructed, performative act which is not fixed in time. Each narrative event is different, even when the same event is being recounted and I regard the use of Italian as an L2 as part of that event and I also reflect on the implications this has on my transcription.

Before narrative can be analysed it has to be created. Written narratives such as diaries and letters can be analysed as they stand but the analysis of spoken narratives necessitates a preliminary phase of editing that is an integral part of the creation process and which greatly influences the type of analysis that can subsequently be undertaken. Transcription is a very time-consuming activity and some researchers prefer to have someone else do it. This would seem to be more common in the fields of sociology and economics where the focus is on the content of the interviews. In linguistics and psychology, the transcription process tends to be viewed as an important first step in the analysis and thus it is important that the researcher undertakes it. Riessman specifically warns against leaving transcription to others as the process is in itself "deeply interpretive" (Riessman, 2007:29). Important choices will be made during the transcription stage such as whether to note any silences, aspirations or stuttering, whether to faithfully record any non-standard language features and whether to edit out any material. There is a fine line to be trod between editing a text to make it more accessible to the reader and over-editing it and thereby removing key elements.
that limit or change the possible interpretations. The advent of portable (and indeed unobtrusive) recording devices have opened up a whole new world of material as researchers do not have to just rely on field notes and their memories. Field notes can still be very useful, however, in going some way toward compensating for the lack of contextual knowledge and body language features that are missing from audio-only recordings.

Importantly, although it is possible to work directly from an audio recording, the process of transcription enables others to follow the researcher’s reasoning and evaluate the analysis for themselves. Not providing a data trail can make it more difficult for the researcher to defend her interpretation of the data.

The style of transcription done largely depends on whether it will be subjected to micro or macro analysis. Micro analysis, such as Conversation Analysis (CA), typically uses very detailed methods of transcription which are not immediately easy to read for those not familiar with it. The focus of the analysis is on what happens in the interview context and the transcript will provide details of how speakers overlap, hesitate, stammer etc. This type of transcription is very useful for examining the interaction between different speakers. It also strives to convey the way in which the words are spoken by giving information about volume and/or speed relative to the surrounding discourse. However, anyone without a grounding in conversation analysis is unlikely to find the transcript easily accessible.

At the other end of the scale, we have the type of transcript which is frequently found in the health sciences (but not only here) where the transcript can be read like a play script and is very accessible to any reader. However, it includes none of the hallmarks (backchannelling, false starts and fillers etc.) of authentic recorded speech. In this type of transcription, there is usually no trace left of the interviewer in the written version of the interview.

As for my own study, I had decided to include both elements of micro and macro analysis, I needed to find a transcription style in line with this decision. The
transcription symbols are based on a system developed by Gail Jefferson (2004) which allows for the sequencing of utterances and the way of speaking and silences to be noted down. My aim was to provide a balance between providing a relatively accessible transcript yet still retain interactional information from the interview context and it was driven by my decision to use positioning as an analysis tool. A key to the symbols used can be found in the Appendix in Section 8.4.

Regarding translation, the translation of the transcripts is only intended to facilitate reading for non-Italian speakers but is not an exact rendition of everything in the original Italian transcript, and the symbols denoting phonological features have been omitted from the translation to make them more accessible. The analysis itself was always carried out on the original Italian.

There are a few things to note regarding language competence and transcription. The interviewees had varied levels of competence in Italian and most had learnt their Italian while performing care work. Several of the women (myself included) at times use the wrong verb endings which can lead to confusion in the written text, especially as pronouns are usually omitted in Italian. For example, Natasha says “lavorava con pazienza” (he/she worked patiently) when it was very clear from the context and the audio recording that she meant to say “lavoravo” (I worked). In such cases, I have amended the translation for ease of comprehension. However, where I believe there is ambiguity or that a seeming error is salient, I have referred back to the Italian original in my text.

Temple (2008) warns against treating any translation or interpretation of language in research as “mere technical exercises” and urges the reflexive researcher to take into account the passage from one language to another which is far from simple, either for the speaker or the listener. This is undoubtedly true and I would add that whatever language is used in interviews, even if both interviewer and interviewee are native speakers there is always a gap of

9 For a more comprehensive explanation of the symbols used, see Hove (2007).
knowledge between the listener and the speaker. The narrative accounts produced by interviewees cannot be regarded as a straight-forward channelling of their experiences and it falls to the researcher to bring the reader to a closer understanding of the meaning itself.

Finally on this point, I would argue that although it is undoubtedly preferable to allow interviewees to choose which language to be interviewed in, this was just not possible for a small-scale project involving different nationalities. The fact that all the interviews were carried out in a second language (both for the interviewees and the interviewer) adds another “layer” to the interview context which must be taken into account. However, it should not be seen as necessarily being a disadvantage, at least for the researcher. Crotty maintains that one of the obstacles to convincing critical analysis is the trap of “sedimentation” when layers of meaning are so familiar to the researcher that they are taken for granted and obscure what is really being said (Crotty, 1998:59). Working with a foreign language has, to some extent, forced me to question each interpretation I make much more closely.

4.3 Defining narrative – what makes a story and why study stories?

It is not possible to arrive at a single definition of narrative or story that is agreed upon across all academic disciplines. Even within linguistics there are many dissenting voices with some definitions being more inclusive and others less so. My own definition of what constitutes a story for the purposes of this project is necessarily related to my choice of methodological framework and here I describe how I arrived at it. First, however, it is necessary to look more broadly at how the terms “narrative” and “story” have been used in different fields.

Two common themes emerge in the various discussions regarding the nature of narrative; firstly, narrative is about telling a story (in a myriad of different ways) and secondly, storytelling is common to all human beings, in all contexts:
narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting (think of Carpaccio’s Saint Ursula), stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been, a people without narrative. (Barthes, 1977/1993:79)

In the last few decades interest in narrative has grown in prominence in the social sciences largely due to its fundamental role in our lives (Schiffrin, De Fina, & Nylund, 2010) and it is increasingly being used in qualitative studies within applied linguistics, discourse studies, sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and transnational studies to investigate how people construct and position themselves in relation to each other and wider societal discourses (Pastor & Patiño-Santos, 2015). This “narrative turn”, is often regarded as having begun in the 1980s and to have really taken off in the 1990s (Elliott, 2005). Brett Smith (2007:391) suggests considering narrative inquiry as an "umbrella term for a mosaic of research efforts, with diverse theoretical musings, methods, empirical groundings, and/or significance all revolving around an interest in narrative"). Although it is this ubiquitous nature of storytelling across cultures that undoubtedly adds to the appeal of narrative research this also means that it can be a confusing concept which is rather daunting to engage in as a novice researcher. The form that “narrative” takes does change considerably across different cultures and contexts. Moreover, how we choose to define it depends largely on the area of study that we are working in and the research methodology chosen. For a literature scholar, a narrative could be an entire novel, for a psychologist, the recounting of a life story in the context of a counselling session, for a linguist, a co-authored conversation recounting a past experience through brief but coherent snatches of speech. Diverse topics can be studied through narrative such as an anthropological study into child migration (Adams, 2009), a sociological study looking at the therapeutic power of narrative to help overcome the trauma of abuse (K. M. Anderson & Hiersteiner, 2008) and a linguistic study into pronoun variation in Mexican-descent children’s narratives (Bayley & Pease-
Alvarez, 2009). Even within each field, different researchers apply the terms "narrative" and “story” in varying ways.

4.3.1 “Big” stories

Within linguistics, the study of narrative has often centred on the search to pin down exactly what constitutes a story. How important is it, for example, that a story has a clear chronology? The centrality of chronology has been challenged by scholars who regard it as a hallmark largely of a Western approach to narrative (where most research was initially undertaken) whereas in many other cultures, thematic organization of narratives can be more common. Riessman (2007) warns researchers against unintentionally ignoring episodically-organized narratives, accustomed as they are to listening to chronological or consequential sequencing. Secondly and related to this, there has been a growing realization that, especially in stories of migration (both voluntary migration and also displacement), chronology is, relatively less important, at least to the narrator. In such narratives, more importance is given to the conceptualization of space and movement which are the key elements of the experience (Baynham, 2011a).

Even a story with a clear chronology is not necessarily classed as a narrative. Ochs claims that narratives “depict a temporal transition from one state of affairs to another” (Ochs 1997:189), De Fina that they "include some sort of rupture or disturbance in the normal course of events" (De Fina 2003b:12) and Bruner that “not only must a narrative be about a sequence of events over time, structured comprehensibly in terms of cultural canonicality, it must also contain something that endows it with exceptionality” (Bruner 2001:29). In other words, a sequence of events is not enough. Something must change in order for a story to be told. A story where nothing changes leaves the listener wrong-footed which is what often happens when children first begin telling stories that leave their adult listeners thinking; “so what?” (See Bamberg (1997) for examples of narrative in childhood).
Additionally, we tend to traditionally think of narrative as typically being one person recounting a past event, either orally or in written form such as in a diary or letters. The listener (or reader) is not considered an active participant in the story but a passive receptor. De Fina describes such stories as:

"the prototype of a narrative, both in literary and conversational domains [...] Stories can be described not only as narratives that have a sequential and temporal ordering, but also as texts that include some sort of rupture or disturbance in the normal course of events, some kind of unexpected action that provokes a reaction and/or an adjustment". (De Fina 2003a:12)

Ochs and Capps also describe this "default narrative of personal experience" as typically having most of the following characteristics:

- one active teller,
- highly tellable\textsuperscript{10} account,
- relatively detached from surrounding talk and activity,
- linear temporal and causal organization, and
- certain, constant moral stance.

(Ochs and Capps 2001:20)

Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008:378) refer to this type of story as a “big story” to differentiate from the small stories (see next section) which they feel have been under-analysed.

Undoubtedly the most influential model of personal experience narrative in linguistics is that developed by Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1972) which has been used as a starting point for many narrative analyses. For Labov, a basic narrative can consist of “a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered” (Labov 1972:360). The formal structure of a narrative can be broken down into separate clauses and assigned one of six labels: Abstract (A), Orientation (O), Complicating Action (CA), Result (R), Evaluation (E), and Coda (C). For example; here, from my data, is a story told by Lucia about how she came

\textsuperscript{10} In this context, a story is deemed as "tellable" if it recounts something out of the ordinary, if it has a point - although what exactly counts as a point will differ from culture to culture (Thornborrow & Coates, 2005b)
to her (Christian) faith. In brackets I have added the labels from Labov’s approach.

1. io ho scoperto tardi (A)
2. diciamo ho scoperto sapevo di fede (A)
3. mi hanno sempre mi parlavano mi portavano in chiesa pregava (O)
4. vedeva intorno di me le persone così (O)
5. ma non sapevo io delle cose da avere una relazione diciamo (O)
6. come si sentiva in giro (O)
7. importante da avere la chiesa qua o Dio qua o Gesù Cristo (O)
8. da avere una [..] (O)
9. fino a quando arriva un momento nella mia vita (O)
10. che proprio ho bisogno (CA)
11. sento diciamo questo grande aiuto (CA)
12. perché dopo mi fido molto (R/E)
13. che tutto quello che può succedere nella mia vita (R/E)
14. io chiedo aiuto e di tutte le volte sono stata aiutata (C)
15. e sono uscita più bene di come pensavo ecco (C)

Translation:
1. I discovered it late on (A)
2. I discovered, I knew about faith (A)
3. They’d always, they talked to me, they took me to church, prayed (O)
4. I saw people like that around me (O)
5. but I didn’t know about things, to have a relationship, say (O)
6. like you’d hear about (O)
7. [it’s] important to have the church here or God here or Jesus Christ, to have a [..] (O)
8. until one moment in my life (O)
9. when I really had a need (CA)
10. And I feel, let’s say, this big help (CA)
11. and afterwards I believe (R/E)
12. that everything can happen in my life (R/E)
13. I ask for help and every time I am helped (C)
14. and I come out of it better than I thought (C)

The abstract given is minimal but introduces the topic of the story. As Patterson (2008) points out, when stories are told in interview contexts, the interviewer’s question often functions as an abstract and, unlike in a conversation between friends, there is no need to make a bid for a long speaking turn before launching into a story which has already been elicited.
Typically, the orientation clauses give background information (such as participants, time and location) to situate the story. Here the references given are very vague but we know the story is set in the past. The narrator is going about her everyday life, going to church and praying yet she feels that she is not having the same authentic religious experience that others have. This changes when, in line 10, she reaches a point in her life when she really is in difficulty (she doesn’t explain how exactly) and, for the first time, she feels God’s presence helping her. As a result, she finds a new religious faith. In the coda, which links the narrated event to the present, she tells the listener that she now feels that God is helping her in her everyday life.

The evaluative aspect of the story regards why the story is being told and what the narrator’s main message is. However, unlike the other categories, it does not necessarily have to be limited to a discrete section. Evaluation can be distributed throughout the story in several ways either as free evaluative clauses or embedded within other clauses. In the example given above, it could be argued that “and afterwards I believe that everything can happen in my life” is both a result of the events which happened before and an evaluation of the story, the point of which is that something happened to restore Lucia’s faith in life and in herself. Linde (1993) points out that paralinguistic features such as pitch and tone of voice as well as gestures and body language can also carry an evaluative message as we shall see in more detail in Chapter 6, especially in regard to Alina’s story.

Approaching stories in this way can be useful as a way of identifying key narratives, comparing across data, understanding the perspective of the narrator and focussing on how narratives are elicited (Patterson, 2008). However, Labov’s approach also has several limitations and many researchers have found it too inflexible to deal with the narratives they want to analyse. In particular, it is not a simple process to accurately assign a function to each narrative clause, nor is the chronology of a story always clear-cut (in the example above, for example, Lucia describes a past event using a present tense verb “I feel/Sento”). By removing narratives from the context in which they are produced, important elements may be omitted and, similar to what Riessman found, the majority of
narratives in my data were “embedded narrative segments within an overarching narrative that includes nonnarrative parts” (Riessman 1994:51). In other words they were often constructed over several conversational turns with sometimes lengthy asides which did not seem to easily fit into Labov’s framework which is better suited to a single speaker’s story rather than a co-construction by several participants. In fact, very few of the stories in my data were as self-contained and complete as Lucia’s. Finally, in Labov’s original framework the events themselves are usually regarded as a recapitulation of a past event, a window onto reality, rather than a construction of a past event for the present audience (Patterson 2008:36), a drawback which led me to investigate a second model of narrative; small stories.

4.3.2 “Small” stories

The move towards small stories as a narrative form worthy of study is necessarily tied up with how the concept of identity has shifted over the last few decades moving from an idea of identity as a fixed, absolute self, which can be known through discourse analysis to the post-modern view of identity being fleeting, dynamic and most importantly constituted in discourse (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Thus there has been a gradual shift from considering the stories themselves as a "truth", to be taken as fixed in form and time towards regarding the context and participants of the telling as being instrumental in the construction and negotiation of the narrative identity.

From this standpoint, the chronology of one discrete telling of the story is not considered particularly important. Researchers with an interest in the interactional and performative aspects of narrative (Ochs & Capps, 2001; Schiffrin, 1996) have shown how telling creates experience and that the interpretation of a story should not be regarded as fixed in time. Indeed, each time the same story is told it will differ in some way from any previous tellings. As well as the words used, the context of the telling and the participants present at that moment shape and create a new experience, a new narrative. Thus
interactive narrative is not as clear cut with a clear beginning, middle and end as
the story that we saw outlined by Labov earlier on in this chapter. Interactive
narrative is harder to pin down. Its chronology may be incomplete or not
important, it may be told by multiple narrators, interacting with those present
and with the context they find themselves in at that moment in time. Bearing all
this in mind, Ochs and Caps describe the type of narrative we can expect to find
at the other end of the continuum outlined above. These narratives are not so
immediately open to analysis. They have different characteristics such as the
following:

- multiple, active co-tellers,
- moderately tellable account,
- relatively imbedded in surrounding discourse and activity,
- nonlinear temporal and causal organization, and
- uncertain fluid moral stance

(Ochs and Capps 2001:23)

Such thinking has led to the inclusion as narrative of more fragmented discourse
such as that which Georgakopoulou defines as "small stories" (Georgakopoulou
& Bamberg, 2005; Georgakopoulou, 2006b). Previously disregarded as "real"
narrative, these short, conversationally-embedded fragments have been
described as "low in tellability, linearity, temporality and causality" (Moissinac
2007:230). Tellability here refers to how interesting or important the story is to
the listener(s). Even a rather uninteresting series of events can be rendered
highly tellable when recounted by a proficient story teller whereas a story that is
low in tellability lacks a point or is not effectively or interestingly communicated.

Whereas it was previously assumed that literary narrative could be regarded as
the de facto model and naturally occurring spoken narrative tended to be
analysed and defined in relation to this ideal, many researchers (Bamberg &
Georgakopoulou, 2008; Ochs & Capps, 2001) put forward a case for
conversational narrative being considered as the basic narrative form with
literary narrative the artistic interpretation of this genre. Such subtleties may
seem unimportant, but they mark a significant change in attitude towards the
legitimacy of studying "small stories". 
Identifying small stories allows for the inclusion of stories which may not meet the structural or temporal criteria that we see in the big stories, indeed the focus is not on prototypical textual criteria which define narrative, it is enough that the participants involved in the telling “orient to what is going on as a story” (Michael Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008:382). These stories may include non-linear unfolding of events, deal with seemingly mundane occurrences and be co-constructed between several speakers and listeners (Georgakopoulou, 2015).

The stories which emerged from the interviews told both of the mundane (a shopping trip to buy bread) and the dramatic (the arrival in Italy, the death of a family member). In both cases, close examination of the stories seemed to me to bring new insight to the life experiences of these carers. For this reason I have chosen not to limit my analysis to “big stories”, although there are some examples within the data that would fulfil the criteria outlined above, so I also include the fleeting moments, the brief tellings which appear to be stories within the interview context and which form, as I demonstrate, an integral part of how the participants construct a sense of who they are.

4.4 Narrative Analysis Tools

The way in which narrative is defined necessarily also conditions to some extent the way in which it is analysed, hence the need, in my case, to find a tool which is suited to the examination of narrative in identity construction and within an interactive context. Although I found Labov’s structural approach unsuitable for many of the longer, less succinct stories in my data where it was difficult to unambiguously label clauses, I did use it for some of the stories as a way in to understanding them better. However, I felt that I needed a tool which was better suited to taking into account the interactive nature of the stories’ construction and for this reason I chose Positioning Theory as my primary research method. Here I explain my reasons for choosing it and why I did not choose some of the more commonly used approaches to discourse such as Conversation Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis.
4.4.1 Conversation Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis

Numerous studies which are based on talk-in-interaction use Conversation Analysis (henceforward CA) as a method and so it might appear to be the logical choice for my own project. CA was first developed in the 1960s in the field of sociology in the work of Harvey Sacks and his colleagues Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson and has since been widely adopted by researchers from different disciplines. As CA has its roots in ethnomethodology it is used to investigate everyday life and how we organize and construct our social reality. Key to this approach is the use of recordings (audio but also video if possible to include metalinguistic features) of “naturally-occurring” interactive encounters and very detailed transcription methods (see section 4.2.4) which enable the analyst to consider not only the words used by the speakers but also micro-level features such as hesitations, repetitions, overlaps and even non-linguistic features such as sighs, breaths etc. In CA the analyst’s attention is very much on the text and how identities are made relevant by participants. Analysts should avoid ascribing categories of identity (for example of gender or culture) if they are not invoked by the participants themselves. However, there are commonalities in narratives which circulate in communities which can provide a link between what is happening at a local level and wider social discourses. For example, Georgakopoulou (2006b) found that the ways of telling stories of shared experiences between close female friends were also influenced by larger societal discourses regarding gender whilst De Fina noticed several recurrent narratives in her work with Mexican immigrants (De Fina, 2006).

Within a CA framework some researchers use Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) to examine how participants “label” themselves and others by looking at how certain characteristics become associated with a category. For example, in her article on neighbourhood disputes, “Mothers, Single Women and Sluts” (2003) Stokoe, identified three membership categories as per the title which speakers constructed to do their rhetorical work in constructing their stories during a mediation session. However, in line with CA, these categories
should be locally-occasioned i.e. only referred to if specifically oriented to by the participants during the conversation. As I am also interested in the interaction between locally-produced identities and wider discourses, I felt that using a strict CA approach would unnecessarily limit the scope of my research.

Another popular approach towards analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) takes a socially critical attitude towards discourse analysis and explicitly examines how discourse structures “enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge relations of power and dominance in society” (van Dijk, 2008:352). CDA is a theoretical framework which can be used with a variety of different methods. However, it tends not to be used with the fine-grained attention to small, linguistic detail which is found in CA approaches. For this reason it has been criticized for being too reliant on “top-down” insights and not examining closely enough what is happen at ground level where the discourse is interactionally managed (Korobov, 2010). Moreover, there are already a great number of studies which use CDA to examine migration discourses (see Delanty, Wodak, & Jones, 2008 for an overview) whereas there are far fewer examples of studies that adopt a combination of micro and macro analysis that positioning provides and, particularly within the Italian context, I believe that there is a dearth of close, linguistic analysis of carers’ narratives.

4.4.2 Positioning

‘Positioning theory’ is both a theoretical framework and an analytical tool which has been widely applied in narrative studies across a range of disciplines (see Archakis and Tzanne, 2005; Wortham and Gadsden, 2006; LaPointe, 2010; Baynham, 2011; Blix, Hamran, and Normann, 2015). However, it has undergone a lot of revision and adaptation since it was first posited by Hollway (1984) and then developed for use in interactive narrative contexts in Davies and Harré’s (1990) seminal paper. Here I explain the principal ways in which it has changed over the last couple of decades and also how I understand and use it in this study.
In particular, I explain why I believe it to be particularly suited to examining identity claims in the interview context.

Positioning theory originated in the field of social psychology and can be seen as an attempt to move away from the concept of regarding discourse as "simply a window into (or reflection of) mind and world" (Korobov, 2010:264). Instead, it is very much located within a social constructionist perspective which regards speakers as constructing and maintaining their own identities and those of others in interactional sites (conversations). It is based on the concept that in conversation speakers use narrative to present themselves in a certain way. This is done through individuals taking up stances or "positions" in relation to other people and other discourses. Certain positions are understood to come with certain rights; for example someone positioning himself as a lawyer will have different speaking rights in the context of a court case to someone positioned as a defendant. In another context (for example if the same two people meet in the supermarket) their relationship is very different. Some positions may be fairly stable while others can be fleeting and change frequently over the course of an interactional episode. Thus positions can be seen as "momentary clusters of rights and duties to think, act and speak in certain ways" (Harré, 2010a). In this way, positioning can be regarded as being a more dynamic process than previously-posited similar, but more static, ways of analysis such as the concept of frames or roles (Taylor, Bougie, & Caouette, 2003:204).

Positioning theory was originally theorized as a triangle with three elements of the communicative event (position, speech and storyline) coming together and mutually determining the meaning and interpretation of each other (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003). The "storyline" can be thought of as the local or wider context in which the discourse emerges and it conveys what type of narrative event is taking place. An example of a storyline might be "David and Goliath or Doctor and Patient" (Harré 2003:9). By hypothesising about a storyline we can make tentative and ongoing guesses to understand what is being said and done (the "speech act"). Thus, the speech act is given meaning by the storyline in which it occurs. For example, within the storyline of a doctor’s appointment the speech act, “How are you?” may be interpreted as an invitation to talk at length about
one’s symptoms whereas within the storyline of a brief meeting with a neighbour it may be interpreted as merely a social nicety which requires only a short response. In this way storylines are similar to the “primary frameworks” described by Goffman (1974:21), they give us a context which enables us to make meaning out of what is said. Storylines can be locally-produced or they can draw on wider societal discourses or master narratives (see 4.4.3). This might include the discourses surrounding immigration or what it means to be a good mother or a good worker, for example. They tend to follow established rather than random patterns of development and also condition what people can say and what “positions” are available to them. For example, to return to our patient/doctor consultation, the patient cannot easily position himself as a medical expert especially if this position is contested by the doctor herself.

Whilst this approach takes into account the context of the speech, a serious weakness is its lack of flexibility to cope with the range and also the dynamic aspects of discourse. Slocum-Bradley points out that within any given storyline, the roles of the protagonists may not be clear-cut and might also change within the course of the interaction. For example, within a “migration storyline”, the local inhabitants may be understood to be: “locals”, “natives”, “Americans”, “Whites”, “Protestants”, “hosts” or “human beings” and depending on which of these identities is understood “the episode has very different implications for the rights and duties attributed to each actor and for the social force of the actors’ (speech) acts” (Slocum-Bradley, 2010:90). For this reason, Slocum-Bradley has argued that identities should be introduced as a fourth category in their own right, expanding the positioning “triangle” to a positioning “diamond”.

Similarly, De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2011) object to the use of “storylines” to describe the discourses which are drawn on by speakers as it “suggests a rather mechanical association between identities and sets of beliefs, lines of arguments and roles” (De Fina 2013:41) with subjects seen as having little agency.

Drawing on available societal discourses which, to some extent, constrain what can and cannot be said in any given situation is key to positioning, but determining how much scope this leaves for the speaker to freely construct an
identity has been an ongoing difficulty for positioning analysts. Originally in positioning theory, speakers were regarded as having only partial agency insofar as they were able to take up or reject various positions from pre-existing storylines. In this way, “acts of positioning, although immanent in conversations, are fundamentally the product or expression of an extant societal realm of rules and/or social representations” (Korobov, 2015:215). However, over time this view has been challenged by several critics who favour a discursive positioning approach more in keeping with a social constructionist or ethnomethodological perspective in which identities are actively constructed rather than simply referred to or revealed. In relation to my study therefore, this means that when Olena (and others) says that Ukrainians are hard-working they are not “simply reflecting a pre-existing world...rather, they are also actively constructing it” (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2003:158).

Likewise, Michael Bamberg (2004) argues that we should pay greater attention to how positions themselves can be constructed interactively in talk: his interpretation of positioning further explores the “person-to-world direction of fit” (actively constructing an identity through narrative) rather than just the “world-to-person” fit which sees master narratives influencing the narrative being passively reproduced by the speakers. In his approach, positioning analysis can show how speakers both actively re-produce existing societal narratives which shape the way we relate to each other and perpetuate what we think of as being the norm and also produce novel ways of creating positions which, with use, become part of a new repertoire.

Finally, Bamberg’s model also addresses another key criticism of Harré et al's original definition of positioning, that its treatment of narrative does not make a clear distinction between the storytelling event and the story being told. Consequently, it seems to treat the story as if it were real-life and does not allow for a full examination of either the story or the speech event which have different purposes and different features (Deppermann, 2013). In his influential 1997 article, Bamberg proposed a new approach to positioning to address these issues and incorporate changing ideas regarding narrative and identity and this is the
approach that has been most useful for my own analysis and I now examine it in more detail.

4.4.3 Three levels of Positioning

Michael Bamberg’s refinement of position makes it particularly suited to the analysis of narrative as it treats the narrated event and the storytelling event as two separate spheres. He examines positioning in narrative on three different levels:

1. How are the characters positioned in relation to one another within the reported events?
2. How does the speaker position him- or herself to the audience?
3. How do narrators position themselves to themselves? (M. Bamberg 1997:337)

On the first level we are looking at how the characters relate to each other within the story which is being told. For example, is there one character who appears to position herself a victim of circumstance or an antagonist? Who is the protagonist and how is this conveyed linguistically? On the second level, we are looking at the interaction between all the speakers in the “real world”. Here, we might see a narrator who explicitly tells the listeners what they should think of the story, or this may only be suggested. We might find that the narrator positions herself in a similar way within the story and within the story-telling context – or there may be discrepancies between the two. Thirdly, in the last level, we are looking at how the narrator presents a sense of self-identity in relation to common societal discourses or master narratives (Lyotard, 1984; Mishler, 1999) thus creating a link between what is happening on a local and a global level regarding discourse. This final category merits closer examination as it is key to my own use of positioning theory.

11 Bamberg uses the terms “story world” and “storytelling world” respectively but I prefer these alternatives suggested by Wortham (2001:19) to avoid ambiguity.
Master narratives\textsuperscript{12} can be understood as encompassing the most commonly-accepted views of what is normal in society; the “cultural standards against which community members feel compelled to position their personal experience” (Thorne and McLean, 2003:171). In this context these narratives could be ideas regarding what it means to be a mother, a hard worker, a local or a foreigner. The master narratives are drawn on by speakers and made relevant in their interactions and used to produce a sense of self/identity (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). Although much of the analysis can already be accounted for by levels one and two, De Fina argues that this “extra” level of analysis is necessary to examine how speakers deal with identities which do not emerge directly in the data. It is an approach which “is necessary to deal with how narrators and audiences negotiate less locally produced senses of who they are, i.e. their membership into social identities, moral identities etc.” (Anna De Fina 2013:43).

There is an ongoing debate regarding whether it is correct to include macro societal discourses in our analysis of local acts of positioning. These discourses (for example, regarding gender roles, nationality, age etc.) may be important for the participants but are not necessarily explicitly indexed in the data. Proponents of Conversation Analysis (CA) regard including them as straying too far from the data with the risk that the analysis becomes merely the researcher's personal opinion or a “second guess” which is no longer firmly grounded in the data itself (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). It is also seen as being at odds with the ontological position (espoused by Conversation Analysts) that macro discourses do not determine positions at a local level (Deppermann, 2013) which mean that theoretical assumptions regarding identity and ideology should never be used as a starting point for analysis.

However, there is another school of thought which sees societal discourses as always being present in any conversation: whether we seem to index them or not, speech does not take place in a vacuum and we bring with us knowledge about

\textsuperscript{12} There is some overlap in meaning with similar terms used in different fields, including “Discourse/big D discourse” (Gee, 2008), “dominant discourses” (Gergen, 2001), and “canonical narratives” (Bruner, 1997).
society and our place in it. By espousing this viewpoint, I am aware of the need to
demonstrate that my analysis is robust and I discuss this further in Section 4.4.5.

4.4.4 Positioning strategies

So far I have discussed how positions are taken up in the course of a conversation,
how they can be fleeting and can be accepted or rejected by those present.
However, it is important to explain exactly how this positioning is accomplished.
A common criticism of the use of positioning as a narrative tool is that there is a
lack of transparency when it comes to explaining the precise nature of how
positioning is achieved within the narrative (Vågan, 2011). Therefore, before
beginning my analysis, I wanted to have a clearer idea of specific ways
positioning is accomplished in narrative.

Firstly, one key way of positioning oneself and others is through overtly making
reference to social categories such as nationality, age, gender or occupation. For
example if someone is referred to as a Romanian or as an elderly person we have
pre-conceived ideas regarding these labels and bring them to bear in our
interpretation of what is being said and what we will say in response. The idea of
identity itself is closely related to how we negotiate our relationship to different
social categories either through aligning ourselves with them or rejecting them
or somewhere in between. It can also reveal stereotypes and bring to light certain
opinions or self-truths which group members may believe regarding themselves
and others (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008). Bucholtz and Hall explain that the
way in which these identity categories are used all contribute to the construction
of certain identities:

The circulation of such categories within ongoing discourse, their explicit or
implicit juxtaposition with other categories, and the linguistic elaborations and
qualifications they attract (predicates, modifiers, and so on) all provide
important information about identity construction.
(Bucholtz and Hall, 2005:594).
Although categories may be (and often are) explicitly mentioned (e.g. when Vira talks about “those [people] from Pakistan”) they are also referred to in a less-obvious manner. For example when the woman in Vira’s story (Section 6.4.3) says “they come over here” she is clearly talking about foreigners coming to Italy although this is not stated openly.

The examples given above both demonstrate how identity claims can be made by referring either openly or not to membership categories though language, and in particular through the choice of words and expressions the narrator uses. This is an approach which is frequently taken by non-linguistic researchers who wish to investigate identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). However, an even closer linguistic analysis of discourse also includes elements beyond the narrated content which point to ways in which narrators accomplish positioning.

Indexicality refers to the process by which we understand certain utterances (which can be expressions, words, sounds or even silences) as well as other acts such as body language to indicate extra-linguistic categories and is fundamental to demonstrating the connection between micro and macro frames of analysis in any linguistic speech event (M. Silverstein, 2003). Central to indexicality is the idea that language does not reflect meaning rather it creates meaning according to the context in which it occurs. The ways in which indexicality works are always open to interpretation and are very likely to be different for each participant depending on their own frames of reference, which may be infinite in variety. Moreover, the “micro-shifts” in the indexicality can be subtle and fleeting and take place in a variety of different ways (Maryns & Blommaert, 2001). Consequently, we must remember that what a narrator wants to convey and what others understand can never correspond completely. The layers of context needed to comprehend an utterance mean “it is a creative, cognitive process that speakers do not have complete control over (Hughes, Jessica and Tracy 2015:792). Notwithstanding the difficulties, a number of researchers have attempted to give an account of how different elements of interaction can be seen to be indexing positions, all of which can be seen in my data.
Firstly, many researchers have taken the study of deixis as a starting point for narrative analysis which looks at positioning regarding space and place, noting that narratives regarding migration are particularly interesting to study from the point of view of spatial deixis where “here” and “there” are full of meaning (see Macías Gómez-Estern, 2013).

Secondly, the choice of words to denote character is also relevant. In his study of identity construction in an autobiographical narrative, Stanton Wortham (2000:172-3) identifies several different ways in which the analyst can identify interactional positioning taking place in this way. An example of this would be when Alina describes a former employer as “a mean, old woman” or when Sofiya describes her cousin searching for an “honest” bus driver who can be trusted not to exploit her.

Another indexical feature occurs when narrators voice their characters by speaking words attributed to others. Here several salient aspects of positioning come into play. Firstly, they must choose metapragmatic verbs (D. Silverstein, 1976) to describe the past act of speaking. The verb chosen can, itself, speak volumes about the speaker’s attitude toward the character (someone who “whines” is perceived very differently to someone who “asserts”, for example). Most of the metapragmatic verbs used in my interviews are more neutral (“dire/say” or sometimes “chiedere/ask”), perhaps because of the lower level of language proficiency of the speakers who tend to express attitudes in other ways. In addition the way the speaker uses epistemic modalization through verbs (such as believe, think, suppose) or through discourse markers (presumably, I dunno) may work “to decline commitment to positions, to presuppose that that they are intersubjectively shared, or to index that the speaker does not expect recipients to align with him/her” (Deppermann, 2015:376).

Finally, evaluative indexicals such as adjectives, adverbs or even longer expressions index something regarding the characters’ social positions. These can be tokens of particular registers or social groups so, for example, when Alina says “we are all Christians” she is using Christians to describe a certain sort of person whom we understand from her story to be generally moral and
upstanding (and by extension probably also Western or European) but not necessarily having an active faith as she does. Evaluative indexicals can also be seen in the use of a particular style of speech or even in an accent: indeed all of the women (myself included) speak Italian with a foreign accent which indexes our origins, and by extension other discourses regarding what it means to be Ukrainian, Romanian, British in Italy etc.

4.4.5 Data Reliability and Validity

Some of the earlier criticisms of positioning theory have already been dealt with in the examination of how it has subsequently been developed. However, there is still an ongoing debate in discourse analysis regarding how appropriate it is to combine a “nose-to-data” approach with an examination of larger societal discourses. In other words, is it actually possible to link wider contexts with single communicative events even if they are not explicitly referenced? Certainly, it is important not to come to the data with preconceived notions of what one is expecting to find there. Schegloff suggests researchers pay particular attention to this with the warning that if they do not provide sufficient warrant for a link between the fine-grained observable details of the data and the wider-ranging discourses brought into play there is a risk that “the critical analysis will not bind to the data and risks ending up merely ideological” (Schegloff, 1997b:183).

In order to counteract these types of criticisms, De Fina proposes that analysts look for repeated patterns in the way communities narrate events which point to underlying attitudes to societal discourses (De Fina, Schiffrin, & Bamberg, 2006; De Fina, 2013). In this way, it is easier to understand which wider discourses are likely to be relevant and oriented to either implicitly or explicitly. For De Fina,

the nature and relevance of ideologies and Discourses to local positioning moves may also be established beyond the individual and local level by looking at patterns, i.e. at general tendencies in the way issues are viewed and dealt with by the communities to which individuals belong. (De Fina 2013:45)
In Chapter 6, I identify some of these recurring patterns of discourse which can be found in the interviews some of which seem to be typical of carers, while others are more widely-used. I look at how the speakers draw on them to construct and maintain their own identities, and how they also offer counter narratives through the use of various strategies such as transforming existing dominant narratives or providing personal information which directly contests what we would expect to hear.

However, whilst I think that this is a valid approach, these attitudes are probably more evident when dealing with a group of individuals from the same cultural background. De Fina's subjects are a more cohesive group (i.e. several women of the same nationality) whereas my interviewees come from different social backgrounds, different cultures, speak different languages and are of all different ages. The nature of the work they do and the little free time they have also means that they are often quite isolated from others at work. While they share the identity of “badante”, this one common element does not mean that they regard themselves as a community and I also examine to what extent this reiterative approach to identifying relevant discourses in valid in my case.

Secondly, De Fina also suggests drawing on ethnographic data to strengthen any research and this is something which I have done in a small way, by using field notes from my observations before, during and after the interviews.

4.5 Conclusion

Returning a moment to the Ishiguro quote that opened this chapter, I hope that it is now clear that my own interpretation of narrative and, more especially of stories, is that they are not a window onto the past that we can use to gain an objective understanding of a particular event, rather they are constructed in the here and now for a particular audience and for a particular purpose.

Bearing this in mind, the approach to the analysis must take into account the dynamic nature of interactive narrative and positioning, at least in its more recent adaptations, would seem to do this.
A final comment to be made here is as this is a cross-cultural and multilingual research project, I am well aware that my understanding can only ever be one interpretation of what is being said. In order to understand a narrative as fully as possible then I have to bring my own knowledge to the analysis, to understand the purpose of telling the narrative itself. This is an inferential, or “mediation” process (Wortham, 2001:58) which needs to be carefully monitored and defended if an analysis is to be accepted as valid and not just an unsubstantiated opinion.
PART TWO – DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5. Overview and Themes

In this chapter, I give an overview and first analysis of the material collected for this project. In the first half of the chapter, I provide a brief summary of the demographic information for each participant, including their reasons for choosing Bologna as well as an account of their own family situation. This is immediately followed by my first impressions of each interview which draw on field notes which were written up shortly after each encounter. Here I also provide a brief reflection on what my impressions were at this stage of the analytical process. This “global impression” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998:63) is achieved through re-readings (and relistenings) of the interviews with an open-mind until patterns emerge. Although Lieblich et al’s approach was designed with a view to analysing autobiographical life histories, this step of their holistic-content method gave me a better understanding of various aspects of life as a carer. Similarly, Kohler Riessman (1993:57) also acknowledges the importance of “scrutinizing the rough drafts of transcriptions […] before going to the next level”. This knowledge can then be used to identify and aid interpretation of the individual stories told (see Chapter 6) where familiarity with certain parts of the job (for example of bureaucratic procedures or the process of finding a post) was often assumed. In addition, the field notes were useful for reminding me of parts of the interview which were not necessarily evident in the recordings. These include location, body language, gestures, and other activities taking place during the interview which nonetheless needed to be taken into account during my analysis.

In the second half of the chapter, I examine each of the topics which emerged most prominently in the interviews. Again, the intention here is to provide some of the background knowledge which is necessary for the story analysis that forms the basis of Chapter 6, by building up a more detailed picture of life as a foreign carer. As discussed in Chapter 4, “Level 3” Positioning analysis relies on the researcher accessing ethnographic data from various sources to enable her to
identify “recurring patterns of data from the same community” (De Fina 2013:46). In this way, Positioning theory can be used as a way to “take a further step across the gap between so called “micro” and “macro” concerns” (Deppermann, 2015:384) by showing how interviewees orient towards pre-existing discourses which are present within their communities. In a study with a relatively small number of informants, I believe that looking for reiterative patterns (both within the data collected and in similar research) can help make the research more robust. In other words, although I closely examine specific stories in the next chapter, the reasoning behind my analysis is not limited to each story, but also draws on the entirety of each of the interviews as well as being informed by knowledge gained from other sources (e.g. previous studies undertaken by others and my own familiarization with the local context) as will be made clear where appropriate.

5.1 The participants – the carers

To avoid over complication, in this table I have included only the non-Italian carers who were interviewed. However, in the analysis itself, I take the view that narrative is co-constructed in interaction. Thus, I also draw on the contribution of all those present, including myself. Information about who is present during each interview is given in the individual breakdowns in the next section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Approximate age at time of interview</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Approximate ages of the children when their mothers first moved to Italy for work</th>
<th>Employment situation at time of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alina</td>
<td>40 - 50</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>a son (14), two daughters (11 and 2)</td>
<td>The is the fifth family Alina has worked for since arriving in Bologna and she has been with them for about 6 years, originally to look after the elderly parents but, 15 months in, the elderly husband died and she continued to look after his wife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>30 - 40</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>no children</td>
<td>Anita is currently employed and is looking for another job. She has just finished a nursing course for carers which she hopes will help her in her job search. She has always done live-out caring work as she prefers to live with her relatives in Bologna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>one daughter (at school)</td>
<td>Dana has been looking after Angela for approximately a year and this is her second position since arriving in Bologna. She is not strictly speaking “live-in” as she has her own flat but she spends her afternoons and nights at Angela’s flat, as she needs assistance during the night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenia</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>no children</td>
<td>Eugenia has been working for this family for three years having previously worked in a factory. She does not live-in but spends most of her day either in the flat taking care of Nino or running errands for the family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ioana</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>no children</td>
<td>Ioana has been in Bologna for three years and has worked for two different families. She lives-in with the family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucia</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>two daughters (teenagers)</td>
<td>Lucia has worked for two families in Bologna for a total of 3 ½ years so far. Her present job is a live-in position where she lives with an elderly woman and her daughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>daughter (16), son (13)</td>
<td>Natasha first came to Naples in 2000 to work as a carer. She later moved to Bologna and found her present job. She lives-in but has a separate annexe within the flat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olena</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>daughter (13/14), son (20)</td>
<td>Olena has been in Italy for over 15 years, first near Naples and later on in Bologna. She lives-in with the elderly woman she is looking after.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Family Details</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofiya</td>
<td>40 - 50</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>two sons (16 and 17)</td>
<td>Sofiya spent about 7 years as a carer near Naples before moving to Bologna. She has been in her current position (live-in) for four years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vira</td>
<td>40 - 50</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>daughter (about 18), son (15)</td>
<td>Vira has been living-in with her current employer for 10 years. She spent 2 ½ years in Caserta, near Naples before finding a post in Bologna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yulia</td>
<td>50 - 60</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>two sons (one 20, the other slightly older)</td>
<td>Yulia worked as a carer in Naples before coming to Bologna where she has been working for 15 years. She also performs more of a housekeeping role rather than providing mainly personal care. Her employer is younger (69) than most of the people being cared for in the study but has health problems which necessitate having a live-in carer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Demographic information on the carers in the study.
5.1.1 Alina

Alina is Romanian and has been working in Bologna for approximately six years\(^{13}\) although during this period she has also returned to Romania several times, once for almost a year. Bologna is the only place she has worked in Italy and she chose this city because her sister-in-law was already working here and so she had the opportunity to initially substitute for her for six weeks during which time she looked for and found her own job. Alina is married and says she has a good relationship with her husband who comes to see her twice a year (and she goes back to Romania twice a year). He looks after their three children in Romania (at the time of interview they were 22, 18 and 9 years old). The interview took place, at Alina’s request, at a local park. As well as Alina and I, another carer in the study, Ioana, was present along with the mutual Romanian friend who introduced us, Luciana.

Alina arrives at the interview on her bicycle and immediately starts to talk very rapidly and very animatedly, launching in to an account of everything she has done since arriving in Italy. She gives the impression of having integrated well into Italian life; she speaks fluent Italian and even gained her driving licence here, an achievement that she is very proud of. She knows many people and this rich network of friends and acquaintances means that she has never been without a job for more than a few days at a time. She positions herself very much as an expert in the community (an idea which is supported by the other people present) and is keen to teach me about life as a carer. She immediately takes charge of the interview, steering the conversation in the direction she wishes, and pushing me to ask further questions if I digress. In particular, she stresses that she is undaunted by any Italian language difficulties, and, when she first arrived in Italy, she was willing to speak in Romanian if she lacked the words in Italian (I'll give it a try, if it doesn’t work, it doesn’t work!) Difficult situations (such as an

\(^{13}\) All time scales given here are given from the time of interview, unless otherwise stated.
unsatisfactory job) or leaving behind her young daughter are not dwelt upon and she attributes her attitude and her success to her Christian faith.

5.1.2 Anita

Anita is the only non-European in the group. She is Peruvian and has been in Bologna for almost thirteen years, since she was 24. She left college (where she was studying to become a nursery teacher) to come to Bologna when a relative, living in Bologna invited her over and she decided to stay. She has worked as a carer for several people, but never as a live-in carer, preferring to stay with her family members who are in the city. At the time of the interview she was between jobs. The interview took place, at Anita’s request, at a local park.

Anita sounds very pessimistic throughout this interview. It is clear that she is not happy with her current situation but appears trapped and unable to return to Peru for various reasons; fears about her pension not being transferable, feeling that she no longer has friends in Peru, and serious worries about whether she would find work there seeing as she gave up her studies to come to Bologna. Her reliance on others to interpret Italian law and lack of concrete knowledge of what she is entitled to regarding how her pension will be calculated appear to aggravate her feelings of powerlessness. Despite having invested time and money in obtaining a nursing qualification, she does not seem to identify as a carer of the elderly and says she would prefer to work with children. She finds herself at a disadvantage as a non-European; she laments the fact that Ukrainian carers accept lower wages thus undercutting her which she says they can afford to do, largely because it is not as expensive for them to travel back home.

5.1.3 Dana

Dana is Moldovan and has been in Bologna for three years, two of those years were spent working as a carer for a man who has since died. In her present job, she does not “live-in” as she has her own flat, but she spends the afternoon and
night looking after the elderly woman, Angela, at her flat. She chose Bologna as she had a friend who worked here but she did not have a job or accommodation set up before arrival. Dana has an adult daughter in Moldova but has no plans to return. The interview took place at Angela’s flat and during the first part of the interview, Angela’s daughter-in-law (and my friend), Emma, is present with her young daughter. My young son is also present.

The interview is rather disjointed and is interrupted several times due to a violent hailstorm necessitating the prompt closing of all the windows. Later there is a disturbance at the bar downstairs and the arrival of the police (which is apparently a frequent occurrence). Nevertheless, Dana gives the impression of being a calm and capable person. Despite choosing Italy almost on a whim, she had originally considered Germany but thought the people might be too “cold”, Dana is now settled here and has no plans to leave. She has her own flat which helps her feel that this is her home and her early problems with the language have long since been resolved. She comes across as caring and contented and says that she likes the fact that there are more foreigners (especially badanti) in Bologna now as she enjoys talking to them.

5.1.4 Eugenia

Eugenia is Moldovan and has been in Italy for six years (first in Forlì, about 60km away, and now in Bologna). She originally came to Italy when a friend requested that she accompany her daughter (who was under 18) on the journey. She decided to stay and found a job in a factory, later moving into care work. She does not “live-in” but has her own flat which she shares with her niece. The interview took place in the flat where she looks after the elderly Nino. Magda, one of Nino’s younger relatives, is also present. She lives in the flat upstairs but often pops in and out and it is clear that Magda and Eugenia are comfortable in each other’s company. While the interview takes place, Eugenia, is also trying to prepare lunch but Magda insists that she talk to me instead.
Eugenia does not regard herself as a typical badante and is keen to point out that she did not come to Italy to become a carer but to work in a factory. On the assembly line she was respected, and there were many different nationalities working there. It is difficult for a foreigner to get ahead there because of the language difficulties but she managed it. She is used to studying languages and studied to become a magistrate in Moldova. Living in her own flat (which she shares with her niece) means that she is at a disadvantage economically but it also gives her the independence that she enjoys. Despite not identifying as a badante, and not conforming to the typical carer profile, she says she takes pride in doing her work well under difficult circumstances. “I am responsible and I like to be responsible,” she says (a word she uses often) and she also describes herself as “precisa” (precise, exact, careful in her work). She emphasises that she does not have time for friendships or relationships. Eugenia has a Russian book of spiritual teachings (one a day) that she shows me. Each page is a thought for that day and she says that God always helps her.

5.1.5 Ioana

Ioana is Romanian and, in her early twenties, is the youngest of the carers interviewed. She has been in Bologna for three years, working for two different families. Her aunts and her sister had already moved to Bologna and they suggested she came too and helped her to settle in. This interview took place immediately after Alina’s, at a bar near the park. Alina and Luciana were also present.

In common with the other younger carers (Eugenia and Anita) Ioana does not seem to have had a pressing economic need to move to Italy as she had no dependents to support. She seems to have been motivated by a sense of adventure and the fact that she already had some family members here. She says the job is not hard but that it can be hard psychologically especially for younger carers who are used to going out more and enjoying more freedom. It would seem that she misses the company of people her own age as she spends her work time
looking after the elderly and her (little) free time with other carers, most of whom are at least twenty years older than her.

5.1.6 Lucia

Lucia is Romanian and has been working in Bologna for 3½ years, for two different families. She originally came to Bologna to substitute for a friend of a friend but ended up staying in that first job for almost a year and a half, until the elderly woman had to go into a nursing home. She now looks after another woman and “lives-in” with the woman and her daughter. Since arriving in Bologna, her sister has also found a job here and is shortly to marry an Italian. Lucia’s elder daughter is also now here with her husband while her younger daughter is studying in Romania and her husband is currently working in Cyprus. The interview took place in the sitting room of the flat she shares with the elderly woman and her daughter. We were the only two people present and were briefly interrupted by a phone call from Lucia’s daughter.

Despite the inevitable upheaval of leaving her family behind, Lucia has a positive outlook on life. She describes herself as being lucky to have had the opportunity to work abroad, a dream that she says that she has had since childhood. She attributes her success to her Christian faith and the fact that she never suffers from depression. She says that faith does not give you gold, money, or health but it gives you the strength to get through everything. She is also supported by a small but close network of other Romanian friends including her sister who help her cope with the psychological stresses of working as a badante.

5.1.7 Natasha

Natasha is Ukrainian and has been in Italy for approximately nine years. She first came to Naples where she worked, without a work permit, for three years. Through her sister she then found work in Bologna and managed to finally get
the correct permit. Her husband, an ex-policeman, is still in Ukraine although he is unable to work due to health problems which she attributes to his working in proximity to Chernobyl, shortly after the 1986 disaster. The interview took place in the flat where she lives and works. The elderly woman (Annamaria) whom she looks after was also present, as was Annamaria’s son for part of the interview.

Natasha describes herself as having a strong character which is essential when leaving your family behind and coming to a foreign country. However, her stories of the first few months she spent in Italy reveal how vulnerable and homesick she felt at first. These early negative memories have now been integrated into a survivor narrative (jointly constructed with Annamaria) which describes how she has overcome difficulties where others have often failed. Annamaria is particularly keen to help Natasha construct a successful current identity, downplaying any signs of ambivalence or sadness. Natasha and Annamaria give the impression of having a very close bond.

5.1.8 Olena

Olena is Ukrainian and has been in Italy (with a few periods back home) for fifteen years. Her primary motivation for coming to Italy was to earn enough money to put her children through university and then help them set up home. Although she is still married to her husband, she separated from him when he refused to join her in Italy and now she never sees him. Her first jobs in Italy were near Naples and she subsequently moved to Bologna when she got her work permit. The interview took place in the sitting room of the flat where she lives with the elderly woman she looks after. Although they did not take part in the interview, the elderly woman and her son were in the kitchen just next door. Our conversation was frequently interrupted as she tended to the lunch which she was cooking.

My first impression of Olena was that she was very abrupt and perhaps did not really want to talk to me but she soon put me at ease and I realised that her directness was mainly due to her difficulties with Italian. She is not an easy
person to “read” and frequently contradicts herself. She is very forthright and direct in the way she talks about her life but sometimes seems almost on the verge of tears when talking about strong emotions and then laughing about the situation in the next breath. She portrays herself as someone born to work, who can cope with the long hours and the difficulties better than most and puts this strength down to being Ukrainian. However, she also talks at length about the difficulties inherent in the job and how she manages them. She believes that the people you meet make all the difference to how you cope psychologically with the work and that there are lots of carers who suffer from depression, especially if their employers don’t see them as people who have needs, as people who want to go to the cinema every now and again and who also get sick. She says that the job is not for everyone: her younger sister told her that she would rather eat bread and water than be a *badante* herself.

### 5.1.9 Sofiya

Sofiya is Ukrainian and first came to Nola, near Naples to work where she did not have a work permit. She subsequently moved up to Bologna to substitute a friend and has been in Italy for about twelve years. Before moving to Italy, she worked as a schoolteacher (and also taught the violin) but found that she was not earning enough to put her own two sons through university. She is no longer in contact with her husband. In the first few years that she spent in Italy, she only returned home to Ukraine briefly but in the last few years, she has had problems both with her own health and with her elderly mother and has had to travel back for longer periods. Our conversation took place in the kitchen of the flat that she shares with the elderly woman (Rita) who was also present for the first part of the interview. Later, when a neighbour came to visit Rita, we moved into Sofiya’s immaculate, but impersonal, bedroom which is decorated with photos of Rita’s own grandchildren.

Sofiya has had to find a new identity for herself. In Ukraine she was a music teacher and a respected member of the community. Leaving that behind has
meant to some extent “reinventing” herself. She positions herself as being a very responsible person, unwilling to give up her job in Nola, despite her finding it very difficult, she eventually decided that she must leave for the good of her health. In Bologna, she also recounts another two episodes which illustrate her strong work ethic and sense of responsibility: how she refused to abandon Rita when the rest of her apartment building was evacuated during an earthquake and how she nursed her slowly back to health after a stroke. Despite her own considerable difficulties, she says that she will stay here now until Rita dies. Like Natasha, she says that the first few months in Italy were especially hard. Although things are better now, she seems torn between a desire to be “responsible” and stay and the need to be back with her family. In common with many of the others, she finds the lack of freedom particularly difficult to bear.

5.1.10 Vira

Vira is Ukrainian and has been working in Italy for approximately fourteen years in all. She originally went to Caserta (near Naples) to substitute for her sister in law and worked there on and off for 2 ½ years before going back to Ukraine for a year. She moved to Bologna because her sister, sister-in-law and her two friends had already moved here and she has been with her current employer for ten years. She is married and her husband came to Italy a while ago but he didn’t have a permit to stay. He is now in Germany (and has been for the last 5 years). The interview takes place in the kitchen of the flat that she shares with the elderly woman she looks after (who is also present for the first few minutes of the recording).

Vira is very well dressed. She is very direct, telling me when she does not want to answer a question. She says that the most important thing is to have patience – and to find the right sort of family. The attitude of the family is what pushes her to take pride in her work and do it well. It is clear that she feels happy with her present situation and she contrasts her experiences with those of her sister who also works as a carer. The family that her sister works for do not treat her as one
of the family. Vira works hard and has no time for people who think badanti are just out to steal husbands. She also feels that her Christian faith helps her to face the stresses that the job entails.

### 5.1.11 Yulia

Yulia is Ukrainian and she is the only one of the women interviewed who had worked as a carer prior to coming to Italy. She worked for four months in Greece but was given a deportation order for not having the correct work permit. She decided to try Italy instead and chose Naples as she knew people who had found work there. She found her present job (looking after a 69 year old man with health problems) through a Polish friend in Naples. Yulia’s two sons were already adults when she left Ukraine (her youngest was 20 and her eldest 31). Her husband wanted to come for a while too but she wanted him to stay with their sons. She has been working for almost 15 years now in Bologna. The interview took place at a local café.

Yulia has been in Italy for the longest of all the women interviewed and positions herself as a spokesperson for badanti, especially Ukrainian ones. She frequently uses “we”, and speaks about “our” girls (Ukrainians). On the whole Yulia is happy with her decision to move to Italy but if she were to do it again, she admits she would prefer to find her own flat and a “normal” job. Living in someone else’s flat is a source of stress for her, despite her having more free time than many carers, and she feels that she has lost out on an emotional life. Her children were already adults when she arrived in Italy and now she is a grandmother. She has lost touch with her friends in the Ukraine now. She says “we [badanti] have lost a lot because we haven’t found everything here”. For this reason she doesn’t want to go back and live with her sons. She feels a little more Italian now. She frequently addresses herself in the interview, giving herself encouragement and repeating her reasoning for the decisions she has made.
5.2 Principal Themes

The aim of the second half of this chapter is to look at the main topics which emerged in the interviews (some elicited, some not). Although I have included these under separate headings, it is to be expected that there is some overlap between these areas. The focus here is on the lived experience of migration: how each woman went about moving to Italy, the logistical and emotional challenges that this move entailed, and the day-to-day tasks involved in performing care work in a live-in environment. Here, due to space constraints, I quote from the English translation of the transcripts whereas in the next chapter, which is a close analysis of the stories, I also include the original Italian. The following topic areas appeared in most, if not all, the interviews and help shed light on the in-depth analysis of the next chapter.

5.2.1 Making the initial decision to leave

A number of factors influenced the decision to move to Italy but, as expected, for almost all of the women interviewed the principal, underlying motive was a pressing financial need. The only exceptions were the three women who do not have children (Anita, Eugenia and Ioana) who were less-motivated by immediate necessity and more by the opening up of a career opportunity. For the women who are mothers, the decision to leave was more problematic as it necessitated arranging childcare (especially for those who could not rely on a partner) and, of course, there was the emotional wrench of leaving them behind which should not be underestimated.

Interestingly, the narratives do indicate a number of different factors that influenced the timing of the departure. The definitive decision to move usually occurred with the arrival of an extra “push” factor (examples include; increasing pressures on the family food budget, the need to find extra money to buy Christmas presents, and also older children needing money in order to continue with their studies at college or university). When this “push” factor was combined
with a “pull” factor (typically a friend or relative informing of an opportunity to work in Italy) then the decision to leave was taken, and often quite quickly.

Alina is one of the women who talk about these “push” factors. Her story is typical insofar as she originally came to Bologna with the intention of staying for just a few months to help out a friend who needed to temporarily return home. However, after returning to Romania she recounts how an ongoing difficult situation for the family (her husband’s unemployment) reached crisis point (little food and Christmas coming up) which together lead to the decision to move abroad for a longer period:

“I didn’t have any money for Christmas. I didn’t have any food to put on the table. I had three children. I have three children. [...] And so three children to look after, to support is a lot. A husband without a job and all the rest. [...] I saw that we had nothing to put on the table to eat so my husband says, “Well, what are we going to do?” I say “We are not going to do anything. We’ll save a bit of money and I’ll go to Italy.” (Alina, Romania)

Similarly, Natasha also has children that she leaves behind but in her case, they are older and the “push” factor is that she wants them to be able to afford to continue with their studies:

“Why did I decide? Because at home we are in a bad way. I didn’t have a job, my children had grown up, and I wanted them to study. So I decided to do something. Something to help. Because when you don’t have a job it’s like you don’t have anything because you don’t have a future. You can’t help your children. Eating was not a problem because we live in the countryside so you can [find something to eat]. But for their future, to help in some way, you can’t do anything.” (Natasha, Ukraine)

When there are young or teenage children in the family and no other family members are available then someone has to stay behind to look after them and we might ask; why do the women leave and not the men? In fact, sometimes the men do go especially if they have skills which enable them to find work easily. For example, Lucia’s husband is now working in Cyprus as a builder and Vira’s husband is in Germany. The decision for the woman to go, rather than the man is, in this context, largely due to the nature of the work on offer. Much of the care work in Italy requires the carer to live-in which can, at least at first, be an
economical and logistical advantage for the carer coming from abroad. Especially in Northern Italy where rental costs are relatively high, a live-in carer is more likely to have money available to send home to support a family and some carers send almost all their wages back to their families, especially if they are looking to stay in Italy only short-term (Iori & Russo, 2007). While there has been an increase in the number of men becoming carers in the last few years, the sector is still overwhelmingly dominated by women (Pasquinelli and Rusmini, 2013:43) and will probably continue to be so given that elderly women outnumber elderly men due to a higher life expectancy and this gap continues to widen as their age and likelihood of needing a carer increases (“15° Censimento Generale Della Popolazione E Delle Abitazioni”, 2011:12). Moreover, seeing as the “pull” factor cited in these interviews is frequently a female relative or acquaintance who is looking for someone to substitute for her, the position available is frequently only suitable for another woman.

By interviewing foreign care workers who have already emigrated I am, obviously, only seeing part of the picture. Researchers have ascertained that, to take one example, Ukrainian men do also migrate to search for work, although they are more likely to migrate within the country or to Russia whereas Ukrainian women are more likely to move to Western Europe (see Heyse, Mahieu, and Timmerman (2015) for further discussion of this). Romanian men working in the construction industry make up approximately a third of all Romanian migrant workers in Italy, but it is also a sector which has been hit by the economic crisis to a far greater extent than the domestic service industry (Stanculescu & Stoiciu, 2012).

Another reason behind the decision for the women to leave is that the women who were interviewed were more likely to be unemployed while their husbands sometimes had a job, albeit a fairly low-paying one, that they wanted to keep. For example, Olena says her husband earns €200 a month repairing machinery.

Finally, some women said that their husbands just could not or would not leave the country to find employment; Natasha’s husband, for example, is chronically
sick and unable to work while Olena also says that she wanted her husband to come to Italy but he refused.

For the three women without children, the move to Italy is framed as being motivated more by opportunity; both Ioana and Anita were invited to Italy by other family members and helped to find work. Eugenia was asked to come over as a favour to a friend and saw it as an opportunity to change careers. The move to Italy can be framed as a chance for self-realisation or as an economic opportunity but actually the two are not mutually exclusive: Lucia says that she remembers learning about Italy at school and was keen to finally be able to see it in person. She describes her life here, despite its difficulties, as:

“that dream of a child growing up in the countryside who sees an aeroplane [..] in the sky and says how wonderful! Where is it going? And you find yourself, just like that plane, flying off to a foreign country.” (Lucia, Romania)

Lucia’s positioning of her agentive self as someone who is pursuing a dream is interesting and finds parallels with Aija Lulle’s (2014) research on older Latvian migrant carers in Guernsey who found strength in pursuing their own mobility goals and providing for their families. This is discussed further in Chapter 6, Section 6.4.6.

5.2.2 **Why choose Italy? Why choose Bologna?**

The choice of Italy rather than another country was closely related to the availability of an established network of job contacts along with the (relatively) flexible legal situation in Italy which is discussed in more detail in the sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4 below. In addition, the geographic proximity of Italy to the home country (and thus the lower travel costs) was also cited by some. For example, Sofiya wanted to go to Israel but the flight costs were too great and Olena decided against going to America for the same reason.

As regards the choice of Bologna itself, this was overwhelmingly linked to job opportunities being presented by a network of friends as shall be discussed in the next section.
5.2.3 Finding a job: accessing (or not) compatriot networks

In Chapter 3, I described the various ways in which carers could look for work in Bologna along with the reluctance to use agencies which are seen as being too expensive; among the women I interviewed, only Anita said that she had found work through an agency whilst the others relied on personal contacts or charities. For Alina, Lucia and Vira who came to Italy initially to substitute a friend or family member who needed a break, there was already a first job (and thus accommodation) waiting for them in Italy (although in some cases this was only a very temporary solution). Anita, Eugenia and Ioana came over to join friends or family members and found a job after their arrival but they travelled knowing that there would be accommodation ready for them on arrival. For the remaining women, the situation was rather more challenging. Sofiya, Yulia and Olena all had some sort of support network, albeit sometimes a very recently formed one: Sofiya met a woman while on the journey over on the minibus and at her suggestion went to San Gennaro where “one of our Ukrainians” found her a job. This new acquaintance helped her find a job and accompanied her to job interviews, as she knew no Italian. Yulia chose Naples because she knew of other Ukrainians who had found work there and found work straight away through other co-nationals. Olena also found her job through an acquaintance. Dana and Natasha, however, arrived without a job, contacts or accommodation and both initially stayed at a Caritas hostel before finding work.

Recent research (Roit and Facchini 2010:92) seems to validate the view reflected in these interviews that informal co-national networks are of primary importance to carers looking for work in Italy. “Word of mouth” is the most common way that women, both newly arrived and long-term residents, get to hear about upcoming job opportunities. In their 2010 study, Da Roit and Facchini found that by the far the most common way of getting in contact with an employer was through friends and relatives (55.6% of women interviewed). This was closely followed by contact being made through foreign acquaintances, Italian acquaintances and previous employers. Slightly less popular (11.2%) were religious institutions and charities while only 1.1% of the women interviewed had found their current jobs through an agency. This can be
attributed in part to a general preference in Italy to rely more on personal links and recommendations rather than on certified qualifications and impersonal agencies (Ambrosini, 2015). This also means that when it is necessary to find a temporary replacement (when the carer is on leave, for instance) then it is often the job of the carer herself to find a suitable substitute who can provide continuity of care with as little disruption as possible. This is usually provided by a co-national who will attend the elderly person in tandem with the outgoing carer in order to “learn the ropes”. This is obviously easier for all parties if both the women are from a similar cultural and linguistic background.

It is not just the employers and their families who seem to prefer this personal approach. Several of the women interviewed in this study, also expressed a preference for finding work this way, not only because a lot of jobs are never advertised openly, but because it gave them the possibility of finding out what a job really entailed and what working conditions were like before starting. For example, Sofiya says that she was persuaded to apply for the difficult job of looking after a disabled woman because she knew from the previous carer that, despite the hard work involved, she would be able to spend most of her afternoons outdoors and this relative freedom appealed to her. In addition, agency fees were seen as being prohibitively expensive, especially as regards short-term contracts.

Nevertheless, compatriot networks are not necessarily entirely altruistic: Alina found a job through word-of-mouth but also paid an unofficial “finding fee” of 200 euros for the privilege. She reports that it was worth it though, as she was pleased with the position. However, Näre reports that this sort of illegal brokering also leads to women being exploited with the job “disappearing” once the fee has been paid (Näre, 2011). It is difficult to estimate how common an occurrence this is as many frauds of this type undoubtedly go unreported for fear of legal repercussions on those who are trying to work without a valid working visa.

For the women who are unsuccessful in accessing such networks, another possibility is to find work through a charity or religious institution such as
Caritas, which often also provides low-cost temporary accommodation. Finding a carer this way enables employers to frame employing a foreign worker as, in part, being a humanitarian gesture and is also seen as giving a guarantee of the carer’s “morality and reliability” (Ambrosini, 2015:19). Dana found her first job this way. She spoke very little Italian on arrival but says that the nuns helped her to understand and to be understood by the Italian families who came to the Caritas hostel looking for a carer or babysitter.

Unusually, Anita used an agency to find her first job and says that it is hard to find a job without one if you do not know many people. Tellingly, Anita as a Peruvian, was not able to access such a large network of co-nationals to help her in her job search. Other (sometimes unsuccessful) job searching techniques mentioned in the interviews include putting up notices in the street (Alina) and prayer. Several of the women tell me their faith helped them, if not to actually find a job, then at least to deal with the stresses of the process.

5.2.4 Bureaucracy and the winding path to legality

The details of the procedure for obtaining the correct visa (where needed) along with the correct work permit/permit to stay is explained in Section 3.5 of Chapter 3. Here I look at how the women interviewed dealt with this process and what importance it had for them personally.

One of the main factors behind choosing Italy as a destination was the relative ease with which it is possible in Italy to work even with an “irregular” legal status (see Ghosh, 1998:4) due, to a certain degree, to a failure on the part of the authorities to exercise effective migration control (Culic, 2008:155). Working irregularly in this context means without being in possession of all the correct permits for entering, residing and working in the country. In fact Pasquinelli and Rusmini (2008:15) refer to three categories of foreign carers in Italy as regards legality: with a contract, without a contract (but legally in the country) and completely irregular (without a contract or permit to be in the country). As the legal requirements for working in Italy differ depending on the country of origin
of the migrant worker, I begin by briefly examining the situation for workers coming from each of the countries represented in the study.

All of the Ukrainian women interviewed (Natasha, Olena, Sofiya, Vira and Yulia) originally entered Italy on a tourist visa which was then overstayed. These women also initially all arrived and found work in or near Naples in the Campania region in the south of the country where it is generally easier to live and find work for irregular migrants (Näre, 2011) and where it is often expected that one's first experience of the job market will be illegal or “in nero” (Chicchi, 2001). Although just over 50% of Ukrainians reside in Northern Italy, there is a strong Ukrainian presence (19% out of all the Ukrainians in Italy) in the Campania region (“La Comunità Ucraina in Italia, Rapporto Annuale Sulla Presenza Degli Immigrati - 2013” 2013:7). Throughout the country, Ukrainian immigrants are much more likely to be women (80%) and to be slightly older than other extra-EU migrants (28% are in their fifties)(op. cit). In the interviews I carried out, Sofiya confirms these reports saying that it is easier to start off in Naples, as it is less likely that someone will ask for your permit, whereas in Northern Italy employers are more scrupulous and also demand a better standard of Italian. All the Ukrainian women interviewed were able to gradually legalize their status usually by finding employers willing to help them apply to regularize their position by taking part in the periodic amnesties (sanatorie) or planning quotas (decreti flussi). This often coincided with a move up the country to Central or Northern Italy.

For Peruvians like Anita, Italy, as well as being relatively easy to enter on a tourist visa¹⁴, is perceived as being culturally easier to adapt to than other possible migration destinations such as the USA and Japan (Paerregaard, 2010). Peruvian migration to Italy increased greatly towards the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. This was largely due to a sharp rise in the unemployment rate which coincided with the United States (traditionally a destination for Peruvians) tightening border controls. At the same time Italy passed laws to facilitate the arrival of unskilled domestic workers from abroad (Paerregaard,

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¹⁴ At the time of writing, the EU has agreed to abolish the need for a visa to enter Italy from Peru but has yet to set a date for this to come into force.
2010:100) and by the beginning of 2013 there were 110,000 Peruvians legally in Italy, with the majority (around 60%) of those being women (“La Comunità Peruviana in Italia, Rapporto Annuale Sulla Presenza Degli Immigrati – 2013”, 2013:16). Peruvian immigration patterns are also characterised by family reunification, with many Peruvians in Italy having extended family members both in Italy and in Peru (Skornia, 2014). This is true of Anita who has family here who helped her out initially and was also later joined by her sister. She says that she did not need a visa to enter Italy and one of her first employers assisted her in getting her permesso di soggiorno.

Dana and Eugenia, coming from Moldova which is not in the EU, needed a visa to enter the country. At the beginning of 2013 there were almost 150,000 Moldovans legally present in Italy and the majority of these were women, many of whom work as carers. Unlike the Ukrainians, the majority of Moldovans (77%) live and work in the north of the country, particularly in the Emilia-Romagna and Veneto regions. (La Comunità Moldava in Italia, Rapporto annuale sulla presenza degli immigrati – 2013, 2013).

For the Romanian women (Alina, Ioana and Lucia) an important difference was that from 1st January 2007 Romania and Bulgaria entered the EU. Although initially there were some restrictions placed on Romanian and Bulgarian citizens working in certain sectors in Italy, these did not apply to the domestic worker sector and the numbers of Romanians legally living and working in Italy quickly increased from an estimated 342,000 at the beginning of 2007 to an estimated 640,000 a year later (Trandafoiu 2013:92). Alina and Ioana, having arrived after Romania’s entry into the EU did not have to face any particularly onerous bureaucratic hurdles whereas Lucia arrived prior to 2007 and says that she had problems negotiating the complex procedure for obtaining her permits. She eventually managed to do it with the help of her employer and an agency, which cost her more but was a lot easier than doing it herself.

As previously discussed, it is widely known that Italy is tacitly tolerant of carers entering on a tourist visa. However, I was interested in finding out how the women felt about living and working in this semi-legal limbo and what
consequences, if any, there were for them in their day-to-day lives. As far as legal consequences are concerned, the penalty for overstaying a visa is, in theory, a fine along with a possible expulsion order. However, I did not meet anyone who had been given either, although Yulia had been given a deportation order from Greece for not having a permit some years prior to her arrival in Italy.

Despite this apparent acceptance of semi-illegality, being without permits (or indeed waiting for permits to arrive) was a source of anxiety for some, especially as it was a barrier to being able to move freely between Italy and a home country. The process of applying for a permesso di soggiorno is not easy to navigate. Tuckett describes the circulation of misinformation that results from complicated bureaucratic requirements being interpreted differently by various people at successive stages of the process as leading to great anxiety for those involved (Tuckett, 2015). Vira’s story of waiting in line overnight to file her permesso application forms (see next chapter) is just one example of how the bureaucratic processes impact on everyday life.

Not having the correct permit, at least at first, does not seem to be a barrier to finding work but working in this way can leave women vulnerable to exploitation. An EU report looking at migrants employed in domestic work throughout Europe found that a worker’s illegal status can be used as a reason for not paying the full wage. (“Migrants in an Irregular Situation Employed in Domestic Work” 2015:24). Due to fears of expulsion and lack of bargaining power, many women in this situation prefer to just switch jobs rather than negotiate with difficult employers thus initially there may be frequent moves from post to another until an equilibrium is reached, with both employer and employee satisfied with the work and conditions (Triandafyllidou, 2013b). None of the women I interviewed spoke about having any particular problems due to their illegal status, although this may also be because, for the most part, they had been in Italy for many years and thus the inconveniences of their early years working as carers were not particularly relevant to them now. All of them, albeit sometimes with considerable difficulty, had been through the process of legalizing their immigration status which is a pre-requisite to obtaining a proper work contract.
A legal work contract is the first step to accessing social security payments such as sick pay, holiday pay and, eventually, a pension; the latter being something which is particularly pressing given that many of the women were drawing close to official retirement age (or, like Vira, had already reached retirement age in the Ukraine but could not afford to live on that pension alone). Natasha says that she wants a legal contract so that she will be able to hopefully have some sort of pension after all her years of working here:

“I prefer to be legal because I think that when I am old maybe, maybe they’ll give me a small pension. When I can’t work any longer when I can’t ..anything. Maybe this will be for me – for these years of work. I’ll get something, some help, if not I’ll have, I hope I’ll get some help too.”

(Natasha, Ukraine)

A legal work contract also gives the women the job security they need to be able to go back home on (paid) leave and still have a job to return to. In fact, Marchetti (2013) sees the legal regularization of status and work contract as being a prerequisite of circular migration for many women. She observes that women who can afford to work less (for example four months in Italy alternated with four months in their home country) are only really able to do this successfully when they have the correct permit and work contract as they are able to move back and forth between countries without the hassle and expense of obtaining a new tourist visa (which at between 2 and 3000 euro has become prohibitively expensive)(Vianello, 2009:160). Moreover, in Italy it is now possible to legally issue a “shift” contract which can be shared between two workers and which facilitates this type of arrangement but crucially it is only available for workers with valid permits (Marchetti, 2013).

Paid sick leave is also a welcome advantage to having a legal contract. Caring work is mentally and physically exhausting and several of the women mention that their health has deteriorated since moving to Italy. Sofiya says that as she gets older she needs more frequent breaks back home in order to cope with the psychological burden of the job. Similarly, Lucia says that she needs to go home for a break which is like “having her battery recharged”.

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As far as remuneration is concerned, although a legal contract does not automatically guarantee more money (depending on the salary negotiated, cash in hand may be more profitable in the short term) salaries tend to be higher in Bologna than in the south. (Sofiya says that her employers from Campania tried to tempt her to go back to them by offering to match her higher Bologna salary). However, in order to find a job in Bologna, it is more important to be legal as fewer workers are employed without a contract in Emilia-Romagna compared to Campania (ISTAT, 2010).

As previously discussed in Chapter 3, the process of applying for and obtaining permits is difficult to understand and complete successfully, even for some Italian employers and the problems do not end with the application procedure. Waiting for the application to be processed and for the permit to arrive creates further problems. Several of the women talk about this process as being a source of anxiety. Natasha was applying regularly for permits but each one she was issued with was only valid for a maximum of two years. Given the months spent waiting for the application to be processed and issued, once the actual document had arrived, it was almost time to reapply for the next one:

“It’s like that, this is a thing that with these things...you get anxious. You get anxious because you can’t make any plans. [...] I’m always scared, I think what if something happens at home and I have to go home? What can I do? Do I have to take the plane? Because with the plane they don’t stop you, it’s easier to go but without, when you have ... I have now a thing so that I can go but I can only be sure if I go by plane”. (Natasha, Ukraine)

The problem facing Natasha is that, although she has a receipt (un cedolino) which testifies to the fact that she has applied for her permit, she is not allowed to travel through Schengen countries on her way home until she gets the actual permit itself. For the Ukrainians and Moldovans this necessarily means that they have to take a more expensive direct flight rather than take the bus.\textsuperscript{15} Despite a willingness by both Natasha and her employer to legalize her work situation, she

\textsuperscript{15} This rule has been relaxed at certain times in order to allow migrant workers to more easily return home at Christmas or during the summer holiday period.
is still somewhat restricted in her movements by the slow pace of Italian bureaucracy.

In conclusion, what is undeniable is that legally the situation is complicated but here, as in other contexts, the Italian art of getting by ("l’arte di arrangiarsi") comes to the fore. As Tuckett also found in her research into Italian bureaucratic procedures, there is often a way to bend the rules slightly. Using inside knowledge or ‘il sistema paese’ [the system of the country] (Tuckett, 2015:123) can be more efficient than blindly following the rules. Certainly, having a sympathetic employer who is willing to help navigate the system is a clear advantage. Without co-operation between employer and employee, however, the situation is much more challenging.

Moreover, it is not only the workers who experience problems. Some employers would undoubtedly prefer to legalize but cannot due to the financial burden of paying social security payments (and these may have to be backdated) on top of a wage. On the other hand, there are some foreign carers are in a position to legalize their situation but prefer not to, leaving the employers at risk of being accused of illegally employing a worker; an infraction that can be punished with a fine of several thousand euros and with the addition of a jail sentence of up to three years if the worker concerned is also in the country illegally. Clearly, a successful employer/employee relationship relies on reciprocal trust as, without it, both parties could find themselves exposed to a risk of legal repercussions. The next section looks at how this trust can be built and what happens when it is lacking.

5.2.5 Negotiating a place in the Italian household

A key factor to bear in mind in the analysis of the data gathered for this research project is that the care work carried out by the interviewees takes place almost exclusively within the walls of the elderly family member’s home. Moreover, most of the women interviewed also live with the person that they are caring for and in some cases with additional family members too. In their research into
domestic workers in Singapore, Yeoh and Huang describe global cities, and by extension, homes within the cities, as “contact zones” (Yeoh and Huang, 2010:220) a term which draws on Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of power” (Pratt, 1991:34). These differences in status and culture, not to mention language, can also be observed in the homes in this study where both parties must negotiate significant disparities in order to arrive at a place of mutual understanding and satisfaction. In examining this relationship, we can regard the homes here not merely as a neutral space, but as a place; in other words, “the human or lived experience or sense of presence in a space” (Scollon and Scollon 2003:214) and it is within this inhabited space that “humans make social, cultural, political and historical investments” (Blommaert, 2010:63). As part of my enquiry I was interested in looking at how the women invested in this space; to what extent did they regard themselves as integrated into the family they worked for and what exactly did they consider their role within the family to be?

To this end, one of the questions that I frequently asked during the interviews was whether the interviewee regarded Bologna as her “home”. This could be interpreted in different ways and I let each woman decide how to answer the question. Overwhelmingly, “casa” (in the sense of home) was used to refer to the country of origin; and this was the case even for women, like Alina, who were satisfied with their current job: “This isn’t my home: I am here, I live here, but my home is in Romania” (Alina). As might be expected, feeling at home is closely related to the proximity of family. The two women who seemed to feel most at home in Bologna (Eugenia and Lucia) had in common the fact that they had fewer familial links keeping them tied to their home countries. Eugenia is single and has an elderly mother in Romania whilst Lucia’s parents have died and she now has several family members in Bologna, including her sister and her daughter. Almost all the other women are emotionally and financially tied to their home countries through children and other relatives whom they visit regularly and remittances that they send back to pay for university fees and other living expenses. Furthermore, several of the women have also invested in property in their home
countries since coming to work in Italy, an additional tie which would suggest a future return migration project.

However, “feeling at home” is not only about the presence of family members and financial investments. When asked about whether they felt at home, several of the women brought up the topic of personal freedom expressed both as the freedom to manage their own time and the freedom to manage their own space within the home. For example, Olena laughed and strongly denied feeling at home in Italy. However, interestingly she did say that she felt at home when she went back to the street where she worked for a previous employer in Bologna. There she describes herself as feeling free:

“You don’t think of anything – freedom to sleep if you want. Now you don’t realise, whether I can or not, I must get up at 7am. Headache or neck ache or whatever. I keep going, I keep going without freedom – really hard”. (Olena, Ukraine)

In this context where working hours are long and even “off-duty” moments are spent in close contact with the employer or employer's family, the concept of freedom is particularly relevant. For Olena, this is expressed in her desire not to have to get up when she is not feeling well while Sofiya explains that she agreed to take on a particularly taxing job of looking after a disabled woman, mainly because she wanted the relative freedom of accompanying her to the park every afternoon. Similarly, Yulia chose to stay in her present job despite its many drawbacks because at least she has most afternoons free.

Within the home itself, the importance of freedom is to some degree expressed in the extent to which the women can or cannot personalize their living space. Unlike in some more well-to-do households all the women who lived-in (except for Natasha) only had one bedroom which was their own private space but even then, it is not necessarily expected that this room will be cleared of other family members’ personal belongings even when they have lived there for several years. For example, Sofiya’s room was full of photographs of children; not her own but children and grandchildren of the woman she looked after. Lutz comments on this topic that:
[domestic workers] are expected to share, respect and honour the emotions that the members of the household associate with their belongings, their items and the order of things. In other words, domestic workers have to accept the ‘habitus’ of the household, its genderisms and its hierarchical order. It can be argued therefore, that domestic workers have to be adaptable.

(Lutz 2012:50)

Being able in some way to modify your surroundings is one way of gaining some degree of autonomy in the workplace. Lucia's story of rearranging the ornaments in the house (see 6.4.9) may at first hearing seem inconsequential, yet she specifically cites it as a reason for her liking her current position. She points out that having this freedom to do what she likes has given her the impetus to open up her heart to the family and, as a consequence, communication has improved greatly between all of them.

In looking at how satisfied each carer is with her present position, the key criteria is the relationship she has with the Italian family members. While working conditions can be stressful and hours long, the disadvantages of the job can be somewhat offset if there is a good relationship between employer and employee, whereas a bad relationship can make a hard job unbearable.

The employer/employee relationship in care work is a far from simple one. The current literature has many examples of the challenges that live-in carers face in negotiating close, dependent relationships with their employers (B. Anderson, 2007; F. Degiuli, 2007). The relationship is often “triangular”: whilst the elderly person who is being looked after the carer may officially be the employer, there is usually mediation from another, younger family member (Boccagni & Ambrosini, 2012) who may or may not have formerly done, at least some of the care work, themselves. The decision to take on a paid carer is not straightforward; it may be tied up with notions of filial duty, regret or ambivalence. Moreover, the employer, more often than not, does not have prior experience of being a “manager” and has not been trained to deal with employment dynamics (Triandafyllidou & Marchetti, 2015). Other family members may also wish to intervene and the carer, herself, may not have very clear ideas of what the relationship should be like. It can be hard to manage everyone's expectations as Alina found out when she looked after an elderly
couple (see 6.4.4). Moreover, caring is a line of work where the lines between professional detachment and emotional attachment are frequently blurred and employers often cite the need to hire someone who is emotionally-invested in their work. Indeed, as has been previously discussed, certain nationalities are often sought out as they are regarded as being particularly suited to care work and stereotypically “nurturing, docile, warm and caring” (Doyle and Timonen, 2009:338) or as having a good work ethic (Anderson, Ruhs, Rogaly, & Spencer, 2006). Due to the intimate nature of the work, carers are often expected to take on the role of a quasi-daughter or daughter-in-law, to become in effect, “fictive kin”.

Although “fictive kin” is a term that has somewhat fallen out of use in anthropological research, it has gained a new prominence in studies examining the relationship between carers and the elderly, especially where non-family members take on care duties which go above and beyond what would normally be expected from an employee and take on caring tasks that traditionally would have been carried out by the women in the elderly person’s immediate family. Karner suggests that in this way the elderly person is able to reconstruct the intimate care tasks performed by a non-family member as being appropriate and thus maintain a sense of privacy and intimacy which would otherwise be lacking. At the same time a fictive kin relationship can give the carer a greater sense of meaning in her work (Karner, 1998:72) and it can also serve as a way of distancing oneself from the unwanted label of “servant” (Kordasiewicz, 2014).

Whilst there are undoubtedly many benefits to this type of relationship, the flipside of this approach is that it can be difficult to set clear boundaries when a paid-carer is regarded as being part of the family. We might ask: when does the working day end? How available is the carer expected to be when she is not actively on duty? Where do her loyalties lie? How much does she want to feel as if she is part of the family (if at all)? In this next section, the discussion points to the answers to these questions which were talked about during the interviews and were all part of the enquiry into the position of the women within the Italian families.
Not all of the women interviewed appeared to have a close emotional bond with the person they were caring for. Of those that did, it was common to refer to the elderly person as “nonna” (grandmother) or “nonno” (grandfather). Sofiya repeatedly refers to the woman she looks after as “mia nonna” while Alina and Dana both use it as a direct term of address when recounting a conversation.

In assuming a familial role in the caring relationship, the carer also takes on many of the responsibilities that having a close bond entails. In recalling her experiences of the two jobs she has had in Italy, Sofiya comes across as wanting to impress on me how responsible she is as a person and how much she believes that it is her duty to help, even if that is sometimes at the cost of her own family or her health. For example, she tells me that she missed going to her son’s wedding as Rita was taken into hospital and she did not feel that she could leave her. On another occasion, she recounts how she wanted to evacuate the sixth floor flat where they live when a strong earthquake struck in the middle of the night. However, as the lift was out of action and she could not safely get them both down the stairs, she decided to risk staying inside. The close relationship she has with Rita, whilst helping her emotionally to undertake the care work, seems to also lead to her feeling guilty about taking time off or going back home. Like Vira and Alina, she has also nursed her through a lengthy hospital stay (in her case four months). (In Italian hospitals, family members are expected to be present at meal times to feed (and, if necessary, wash) patients who are unable to care for themselves. This falls again to the *badante* if a family member is not available).

While all the women take on work which was traditionally carried out by female family members, they are not necessarily invited to take part in family activities and events. Vira reflected on the different experiences that she and her sister had had in Italy and she is clear that for her, it is important to feel that she is not just appreciated by the family for her work but also accepted as part of the family. She says that the family she worked for years ago in the south of Italy still come and visit her once a year in Bologna. When there are any important family meals she is always expected to be at the table with the family (whereas her sister is asked to sit in the kitchen at her house).
“I have found two families who love me and that’s important for a foreigner who comes here.” (Vira, Ukraine)

Finally, another way in which the carers are expected to take on familial roles is by taking on household management tasks that would not normally necessarily be part of the carer’s remit. In her ethnographic study of caring in Naples, Näre (2009) illustrates how a traditional (and labour-intensive) Neapolitan way of life can be maintained thanks to a live-in carer who not only "cares" but manages the household, does the shopping and the home-cooking. All of the women in the study, also perform household management tasks in addition to personal care tasks. This can include cooking meals, cleaning and shopping; in other words doing everything that a family member would be expected to do if there were no carer available. However, they may be excluded from other aspects of family life. Yulia is annoyed that, despite being very involved in the family’s lives for years now, no-one ever wishes her a happy birthday. She is also angry that she was never informed that the man she looks after suffers from tuberculosis, despite this having possible consequences for her own health.

5.2.6 Managing family relationships from a distance

In addition to negotiating their place within the Italian family, the carers are also daughters and (sometimes) wives and mothers within their own families back home and these are also relationships which need to be managed, in this case, with the added difficulty of the physical distance that separates family members.

Not all of the women interviewed are mothers: the youngest three (Anita, Ioana and Eugenia) do not have children. All the other women have children of varying ages who had been left in the care of other relatives when they came to Italy (although some have since reached adulthood themselves).

In the interviews that I collected, having children was unsurprisingly regarded as both a primary motivator for coming to Italy (a major reason for making the move was in order to pay for their children’s education and/or set them up for adult life) whilst also being one of the primary factors for making that decision so
difficult. With the exception of Alina’s family, most of the children were teenagers or older when their mothers left for Italy. However, Natasha expresses a commonly-felt sentiment when she says that her children were of an age when they still needed her and she missed them terribly:

“My daughter was sixteen when I left and my son thirteen. But these are the years when you need your mum.” (Natasha, Ukraine)

Alina also says that leaving young children (her daughter was just two) was very hard to do. Yulia’s own sons were already grown up when she left but she tells the story of a friend who left younger children, only to find that her youngest no longer recognised her when she went back. Of course, from an emotional standpoint, leaving behind children is bound to be very difficult but this is further exacerbated by the fact that at the moment of departure it was often not clear how long the women would be away for or, indeed, where exactly they would be going.

The need to pay for education (either college or university) becomes more pressing as children reach their mid-teens. Vira decided to move when her daughter started university and her son was a few years off finishing school. Olena says that in Ukraine, in addition to paying to support her children at university, she has to find the extra money that will have to be paid “under the table” to get them a place on a course. Paying for further education can sometimes be the last straw on an already overstretched family’s budget. However, it is also a financial burden which, at some point of time in the future, will be lifted and will enable the woman to return home permanently. Lucia, for example, says that when her daughter has finished university and has found a job, she will consider returning home. Although this may be the plan, circumstances may arise that make this difficult. Several of the women say that they will only leave Italy following the death of the person they are looking after; a reminder of the emotional attachment and sense of responsibility which is often part and parcel of this occupation. Moreover, although paying for education may have been the initial reason for the move, the family back home may begin to rely on having a regular income coming from Italy. Although Olena’s children have now finished university, she still feels she has obligations. She has recently bought her
daughter a house and she still shows no signs of slowing down, even taking on extra cleaning and babysitting jobs on her limited time off. She says that there is always something else to save for:

“[I am] here just for money! The more you have, the more you need. When you have a nice hat, you need a nice bag. And when you have a nice bag, you need shoes.” (Olena, Ukraine)

Many of the women recount that they found themselves having to emigrate in spite of their own family situations. However, Sofiya goes one step further:

“When the crisis came to Ukraine in 2001. Yesterday you are a school teacher with a good salary and a nice job. Bank accounts frozen. The time has come to do something. A mother who wants her children to study, is obliged, it’s not a choice, there really is no other choice, how can I say it?” (Sofiya, Ukraine)

Her claim that “a mother who wants her children to study is obliged [to emigrate]” frames the decision to leave her children as the only choice a caring, responsible mother can make. However, in their 2007 study Iori and Russo found that even when providing for their families, some women were judged as “irresponsible” or even “immoral” if they stayed abroad for too long (Iori and Russo, 2007:73). Olena, who is no longer in regular contact with her husband, stresses the importance of her work for maintaining her family but is more than aware of the risks to the family unit of living abroad;

“When the woman is away the family is ruined! There are only a few that aren’t ruined”. (Olena, Ukraine)

Once the decision has been made to move abroad, what strategies are adopted in order to maintain the family relationships long-distance? Regular communication is key. As well as the physical distance between the mothers and their children, many of the women talked about the practical difficulties of staying in touch especially as ten to fifteen years ago, the main means of international communication was by using pre-paid calling cards in public payphones which could be difficult to access at convenient times and were prone to technical problems. The advent of the internet (and importantly the decrease in its cost) has undoubtedly made international communication much simpler and cheaper and has, to some extent, facilitated “mothering from a distance” (see
Parreñas, 2001a:361). By using telecommunications software such as Skype, the women are more easily able to play a more active role in day-to-day decision making in their own families. Olena talks about how she “nursed” her daughter back to health after an illness last year by instructing her what to do over Skype calls. Alina, whose daughter, at ten, is the youngest of all the children in the study, admitted that it was very hard at first, but now things are easier both because her children are older and because it is possible to speak to them every day over the internet. Several of the women comment that the practice of mothering from a distance as being less of a problem nowadays thanks to technological innovations:

“Now I don’t really feel the need [to be there] because I have Skype. I see them every day, what they eat and how they are.” (Alina, Romania)

“Now it is ok because last year I got a computer and I can speak and see [my family].” (Olena, Ukraine)

More frequent trips home was also cited as being a very important factor for boosting family morale. Most of the women at the time of the interview were working with a legal contract that gives them a month’s paid holiday per year, although this could be negotiated to allow for more flexibility. Typically, the freedom to negotiate longer periods off work is only available to those women who have obtained legal working status and who have proved themselves to be competent and trusted employees and thus secured their current jobs. Sofiya has got to that stage and she has decided that she needs to spend more than a month at home with her children. She says that when she first decided that she needed to spend more time in Ukraine she considered resigning but her employer asked her to stay and so she now spends several months away from Bologna each year, during which time the same woman, Irina, takes over for her. Irina is normally based in Ukraine and prefers to work for just a few months a year. This type of “circular” work pattern is very common and is confirmed in Marchetti’s study undertaken in Northern Italy which illustrates how, far from representing an undesirable work pattern, these job-sharing arrangements are actively sought out by many women and are seen as being highly desirable; their high status is in
part due to the fact they can only be undertaken by those who clearly no longer need to be earning a full year’s wages (Marchetti, 2013).

However, this sort of flexibility is not generally attainable for newly arrived carers. When they first entered the country, many of the women were obliged to remain in Italy for longer than they would have wished as they were waiting for the opportunity to have their working status legalised. As previously discussed, one of the common routes of entering the country for non-EU citizens is by obtaining a tourist visa, only later converting this to a permesso di soggiorno through one of the periodic amnesties. Only workers physically in Italy at the time of the amnesty have the right to apply so if it is known or suspected that there will be an amnesty in the near future, it is preferable not to leave the country for a while. However, even if the application for a permit to stay is submitted and accepted, changes to the law mean that the processing times for applications are now very long and it is not legally possible to travel through other Schengen area countries whilst waiting for the paper-copy of the permit to arrive. With the prospect of not being allowed to re-enter the country, carers who are waiting for their permits often prefer not to take the risk of leaving. This is exactly what happened to Natasha who decided to stay in Naples when her sister left as she was tantalisingly close to getting her permit.

When talking on the phone or over the internet is not enough and circumstances make it difficult to travel back home, another solution is to bring family members, including children, to visit. Living costs in Italy are prohibitively high, and bringing minors into the country is both difficult and expensive as it would usually necessitate renting accommodation privately which would negate the economic advantages of working as a live-in carer. Nevertheless, for those with older children, there is the additional solution of bringing them to Italy to work, or if not to work, at least to come for an extended visit. Alina’s daughter has been to visit her. Olena’s son came to Naples when he was twenty-one where he stayed and worked for ten months but decided that he wanted to go back to Ukraine to study as he found it too hard to work as a foreigner in Italy. Lucia has a sister and one daughter in Bologna. Her daughter is married to an Italian and she says that if her other daughter decided to join her too then that would be perfect. Natasha
and Vira both have a sister in Bologna. When Natasha’s daughter was seventeen, she decided to come to Italy too in order to be closer to her mother. However, with most employers preferring more mature women to work as carers, it was very difficult for her to find any work. Eventually she found a job as a babysitter for a family who had recently adopted a Ukrainian boy. After a year and a half, much to her mother’s relief, she decided to go back to Ukraine to study. Natasha comments wryly that her experience of working in Naples did more to persuade her daughter to return to her studies than any of her lectures ever did.

In making the decision to leave children behind (usually in the care of husbands or other family members), the women’s narratives run counter to common discourses of mothering circulating in western societies, namely that a mother is the primary carer for her children and, to be successfully undertaken, this role requires geographical as well as emotional closeness (Phoenix & Woollett, 1991). These types of discourses (or master narratives) can be seen as “set[ting] the standards for normative behaviors in relationships” (Mason Bergen, 2010:47) and thus necessitating that any behaviour that falls short or goes against that model be, to some extent, accounted for. The women I interviewed do, in fact, account for their decision by downplaying certain aspects of their lives, which do not conform to the typical mothering narrative such as not attending important family events (Sofiya) and by reframing what it means to be a mother in this situation whether this be by nursing a child back to health over Skype (Olena) or by finding a temporary job in Italy for a daughter (Natasha).

While the mother-child relationship is prominent in the literature of transnational families, until recently other family bonds have not been explored to the same degree. Certainly, despite the best efforts to remain united, inevitably long-distance relationships can and do founder and this is commented on by both Olena and Yulia who says that many families are ruined, with husbands finding other women in their wives’ absence. Olena and Sofiya are both married but no longer have contact with their husbands.
Of course, sometimes it is the carers themselves who decide to end their marriages, sometimes because of finding a new partner in Italy, or just generally growing apart under the strain of only seeing each other once or twice a year.

For those who are still married, being a wife is frequently framed as being secondary in importance to being a mother. Lucia recalls that last year she could not get time off work to coincide with her husband’s leave so she decided that instead of going to see him, she would go back home to visit her daughter who was doing her school exams and whose need was greater (“she was more important than my love life”, she says laughing). It should be noted that not all the husbands are with the children back home; Lucia’s husband is working in Cyprus as a builder and Vira’s husband is in Germany.

Additionally, some of these women have their own responsibilities of care towards elderly relatives at home, which they have to juggle by relying on other friends or family members or by returning home more frequently. It has been argued that the sheer numbers of women coming from these countries to do care work has caused a “care drain” (Hochschild, 2002:17), a shortage of people to do care work, in their countries of origin. However, this view has recently been criticized for not taking into account that many of these women are highly-qualified and may not have chosen to do care work if they had had the choice to remain in their home countries in any case (Dumitru, 2014). In her study looking at a long-distance care given to parents by children living in Australia, Cora Baldock notes that although geographical distance precludes providing day-to-day care, grown up children often provide care for their relatives in other ways such as providing emotional support but rarely giving up their jobs to care full-time (Baldock, 2000). To a certain extent, this is true of the women in this study who are “looking after” elderly relatives. Eugenia calls her 86-year-old mother every day, sometimes calling up to seven times but her sister is on hand to do the physical care work. Sometimes it is necessary for a badante to leave Italy to care for her own relatives. (As noted earlier, Sofiya recently negotiated an extra month of leave so that she could go home to look after her own mother). However, if this is not possible, it can be necessary to give up a job in order to go back to fulfil care duties. In line with the findings reported in Baldock’s study, I found that
sometimes annual leave can be almost entirely taken up with caring for, travelling to and visiting family members; Lucia has to visit her brother when she goes back to Romania and the 800 km train journey takes her all day.

Finally, given that most *badanti* working in Italy tend to be over forty, it is not surprising to hear, as in Vira’s case, that they are also striving to create and maintain meaningful long-distance relationships with grandchildren too.

### 5.2.7 Language learning and language barriers

In this section I discuss the last of the main themes which came out of the interviews: the perceived and real importance of learning Italian both in order to access the job market and also for living and working satisfactorily in Bologna. Connected to this, I also look at the strategies employed to improve language competency and how effective they seem to be.

As a foreigner in Italy who arrived in Italy with limited Italian myself, I was particularly interested in finding out how important learning Italian was perceived to be and to what extent (if at all) not being able to speak Italian was considered a hindrance to finding a satisfactory job. All the women in the study told me that they were comfortable speaking to me in Italian, a language that they used on a daily basis. Of course, as Da Roit and Facchini point out, this is not really surprising as carers with basic language skills are less likely to agree to being interviewed in the first place (B. Da Roit and Facchini, 2010:86). Moreover, all of the women interviewed had been in Italy for over a year, many for much longer than this and their knowledge of Italian at the time of interview was far superior to what it had been on arrival.

Many of the women in the study are multilingual and had already had experience of learning other languages, albeit sometimes many decades ago, although nobody had studied Italian before arrival. This previous language learning experience means that learning Italian was not necessarily viewed as a problem. Dana, who is Moldovan, said that she had studied Romanian at school and so had
not anticipated any particular difficulties in learning Italian thanks to the similarities between the two languages. Eugenia, the most multi-lingual interviewee in the study, said that she already knew Russian, Romanian, Ukrainian and a little Polish in addition to Moldovan and so was not worried about learning Italian. Olena was a little more anxious at the prospect of learning Italian as, despite a good knowledge of Ukrainian and Polish, she had never studied any Romance languages. Although most of the women talked about knowing several languages it must be remembered that many of their language learning experiences dated back to their school days, several decades ago. Yulia, on the other hand, had more recent experience of language learning before coming to Italy as she says that she learnt Greek in four months when she worked there as a carer prior to coming to Italy.

Most of the women interviewed knew no more than a few basic words in Italian before moving to Italy. Lucia is typical in saying that she only knew two phrases on arrival: “Buon appetito e buon giorno!” whilst Olena claims to have only known one word: “grazie”. Despite not knowing more than a smattering of Italian, it does not seem that language competence was a factor taken into consideration when deciding on Italy as a destination. (Anita says that she found Italian easy to understand due to its similarities to her native Spanish but this was not the motive behind her choosing Italy as a destination). For the women who relied on compatriot networks (see section 5.2.3) to find a job, the inability to speak Italian was not regarded as a significant barrier to finding a position as a carer. In contrast, for the women who arrived without support networks (so with no-one to translate or mediate for them) or a pre-arranged job, the need to speak Italian was clearly more urgent. For example, when Dana first arrived from Moldova she stayed in a Caritas hostel and it took her a comparatively long four months to find employment. She attributes this to her lack of language skills and says that despite attending numerous interviews and being told that she would be called, she never was. Once she realised that her lack of Italian was holding her back, she enrolled on a language course and found her first job. Natasha also stayed at a Caritas hostel on her arrival in Italy and, although she managed to find a job fairly
rapidly, her lack of Italian led to her feeling exploited as she was unable to negotiate better terms and conditions for her work:

I felt humiliated because [...] I couldn’t express myself and [say] what I could and couldn’t do. [They] paid me less money because they knew I was a foreigner who didn’t know the language so they took advantage. The whole situation made me feel really bad because I did my best ... I worked really hard but it was really difficult. (Natasha, Romania)

On the other hand, being able to communicate well in Italian, can lead to better job opportunities and protect against exploitative work practices. As Nic Craith observes, language is a form of cultural and linguistic capital which means that those who speak a global or majority language accrue advantages over those who speak one which is “ranked low on the social scale” (Nic Craith 2007:2). Although Italian is not as widely spoken as a first language across the globe, as a Western European language it enjoys a certain level of prestige and a good knowledge of Italian undoubtedly facilitates entry into the Italian job market.

Moreover, not being able to speak Italian well can, unsurprisingly, have an impact on how the carer feels about her situation in general. Living and working in a household where you cannot make yourself understood is stressful in itself. When Lucia was taken on to replace a co-national, her lack of Italian did not prevent her from getting the job. However, she was very anxious about the situation. She recounts that she arrived in Italy on Sunday morning, had one “overlap” day with the outgoing carer to learn the ropes and then accompanied the carer to the bus station on Monday morning. On the taxi journey back to the house, the reality of looking after a virtual stranger without knowing the language hit home:

I was desperate. On the way back I asked myself – how will I manage to talk to this person? (Lucia, Romania)

Bonny Norton describes how the immigrant language learner finds herself in the paradoxical position of needing access to target language speakers in order to be able to practise and improve her language skills. However, she often has “difficulty gaining access to these networks because common language is an a priori condition of entry into them” (Norton, 2013:85). For the women in this
study, there is not only a language barrier hindering their communication with Italians but also the fact that some of the elderly people who are being looked after can no longer speak (due to Alzheimer’s or a stroke) or simply do not want to talk to their carer. Dana recalls that she would rely on the elderly man she looked after to help her learn Italian and understand what she should be doing but he found this exhausting and annoying:

[I would say] What did you say, nonno? What did you say? And I saw that he would get cross as I was always asking him what he had said. So I thought, I’ll let you be, poor thing. [He had] heart problems and asthma so I didn’t bother him anymore. (Dana, Moldova)

In such a context, language learner is undoubtedly harder and any feelings of isolation can also be accentuated.

Outside of the household, opportunities for speaking to Italians tend to be fleeting and limited to transactional conversations but many of the women developed their own strategies to gain language competence. These strategies can be divided into three main categories as outlined in the table below, with more than one approach taken by each individual.

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<th>Formal learning contexts</th>
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<td>• consulting dictionaries/grammar books</td>
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<td>• writing down words and memorizing them</td>
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**Figure 7: Language learning strategies**

As regards formal learning contexts, many councils, charities and trade unions offer basic Italian language classes for newly arrived foreigners. Natasha reports attending classes run by a trade union with some degree of success. However, not everyone has the time available or the means to get to a class. Moreover, there
was some criticism of the courses offered which were not perceived as being suited to the carers’ specific needs and situations. Yulia briefly attended a language course in Naples but said that the teacher expected her to do a lot of homework – something which she really did not have the time to do. Eugenia, whose first job in Italy was on the production line in a factory, also said that she did not have the time to attend a course and that the noise in the factory made it impossible to chat to other workers anyway. Dana attended a class for a while but found the experience unsatisfying as there was a high turnover of students and consequently little continuity in the lessons. Partly as a result of these problems, the women mainly relied on their own efforts to learn Italian.

Due to the nature of the work and the lack of spare time, most of the women studied on their own, relying on resources they were provided with or which they could find around the home. Watching Italian television and reading in Italian are both activities that could be easily integrated into the working day as could looking up specific words or phrases in a dictionary or grammar manual (sometimes provided by the employer). Sofiya says that she managed to study quite a lot in the afternoons when the woman she was looking after took a nap and later helped other co-nationals to learn Italian too:

*When my nonna went to bed in the afternoon, I wrote down everything, everything. I made up exams for myself. I had my own special system which afterwards I taught to many of my Ukrainians [friends].* (Sofiya, Ukraine)

Lucia also opted to write down key words and memorize them and asked the woman she was looking after to translate for her:

*I would say “what’s this called?” and write down what it sounded like on a piece of paper. In two days I had learnt all the words for things in the kitchen, what they were called and then I moved on to short phrases – “what a lovely day” – to maybe start the morning with a little conversation.* (Lucia, Romania)

In each of these examples, the women themselves identified what it was they needed to know according to their own situations and then devised a way to acquire the necessary language. Sofiya reports that at one of her earlier jobs, conversation was not required and she managed to get by with a very limited vocabulary. However, when she started looking after an elderly diabetic woman,
she found that she was expected to have a greater grasp of the language and, in particular, she had to be very precise as regards medication doses and blood sugar readings:

A nurse came round to give her insulin injections and check her blood. In the morning her sister would call me [to find out the results]. At night I studied all the numbers from one to a hundred and by the morning I knew them all, [I knew] how to reply to the sister. (Sofiya, Ukraine)

However, not all the efforts that went into language learning were successful. Yulia laughs when she says that she found that the vocabulary that she had painstakingly learned from the dictionary did not correspond to the words actually used by her Neapolitan-dialect speaking family.

One of the main tasks asked of many of the carers is to do the weekly shopping and cook the meals. As one of the few parts of their job that regularly took the women out of the home, this activity afforded another opportunity for language learning as in many small, local shops items have to be asked for by name and the words for referring to different types of bread, for example, can change from region to region. Alina explains that she was asked to go and buy some bread but when she got there, she realised that she did not know the word for that particular type of loaf:

“It wasn’t in the dictionary but it was a type of bread. I know the word “bread” but everything is bread! [...] I didn’t know what it was called, now I do, but then I didn’t. I went to go and get the bread and said, “I want…” “What do you want?” So I say, “That one there!” but actually I didn’t even know how to say that [laughs]. It was right at the beginning, the first few days. I just used sign language – I had no choice! Sometimes I just spoke Rumanian [...] the words are similar. I thought, why not? I’ll try and if it doesn’t work, it doesn’t work. (Alina, Romania)

As well as learning vocabulary in this way, several of the women report learning how to cook Italian dishes from their local butchers and greengrocers. The ability to cook Italian meals is often a pre-requisite for a job, at least as important, if not more so, than knowledge of the language.
5.3 Conclusion

The main goal of this chapter was to introduce the reader to the women who took part in the research project. The biographical information given in the table and the brief sketches of each participant are a point of reference I frequently return to as I move on to the more detailed analysis of the next chapter. Similarly, the themes discussed in the second part of this chapter are intended to help the reader to locate the individual stories in Chapter 6 within a framework of current and past experiences of carers in Bologna.

Despite the many differences between the participants, each of the themes discussed in this chapter play (or have played) an important role in their lives. The participants, on the whole, had similar motives for choosing to leave their home countries and come to Italy, but as far as the choice of Bologna was concerned, they followed different paths which eventually brought them here; some arriving directly and some after several years in different parts of the country. Their experiences of settling in to an Italian household, learning the language and navigating the bureaucratic procedures, whilst not the same, also shared many common elements. Experiences of managing family relationships back home were rather more varied as would be expected from a diverse cohort of interviewees, some of whom had young children and some not. This is a small-scale study and the aim of this research is not to draw any wide-ranging conclusions about the demographics of carers in Bologna (as discussed in Chapter 3 there is already a lot of data gathered regarding this). Instead, the interviews discussed here, as well as providing useful insight in their own right, are used as an aid to better understand the reality of the carers’ day-to-day lives through the analysis of the specific stories they tell. Thus, these thematic summaries provide the necessary background knowledge to aid the selection and interpretation of those stories.

A much debated question is whether it is possible to link a detailed analysis of a small number of subjects to macro social processes in a robust and justifiable way (see Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, (2008)). As discussed at length in Chapter 4, De Fina (2008; 2015) suggests that a positioning analysis approach can be
enriched and strengthened by using ethnographic data to draw links between locally-occurring events and wider social discourses. Accordingly, in the next chapter I identify specific stories told during the course of the interviews. In my analysis of these stories, I also draw on data gleaned from all of the interviews, from my field notes and general knowledge of the area, not just the transcripts themselves.
6. Story Analysis

The previous chapter examined the general themes which emerged from the open-ended interviews. The aim of the chapter was to give an overview of the main topics from the data and compare and contrast them with similar studies undertaken in this field and, importantly to serve as a useful tool for contextualising the more detailed approach to the narratives examined here. Whereas in Chapter 5, the material under consideration came from the entirety of each interview, the focus of this chapter is more narrow. Here I look more closely at specific stories taken from the interviews. This approach leads to a discussion in Chapter 7 about what this type of close analysis of stories adds to our overall understanding of this context.

Referring back to the discussion in Chapter 4, my definition of story for this analysis includes “small stories” which are embedded within the conversation and may have multiple tellers. In fact, the interaction between the various participants is an integral part of the construction of these stories. By treating these stories as events constructed through interaction rather than taking the content-based thematic approach which is often prioritized especially in the sociological studies regarding Italy, I demonstrate how we can gain a better understanding of how identities can be co-constructed in an interview context and from there a more detailed insight into carers’ lives in general. Having said that, some of the stories do remain close in format to a more formal structural interpretation of narrative, and where this is the case, I have begun the analysis with reference to Labov’s framework and discuss how this approach has added to my interpretation of the story.

Another key focus in this chapter is the connection between the way the stories are told and the wider discourses on immigration and gendered roles circulating in Italian society. Examining this relationship answers one of my original research questions: “How do the narrators manage their identities in relation to societal discourses (such as those regarding motherhood and immigration)?” In order to do this, I look at the positioning which takes place on three separate
levels (see Chapter 4) to explain how identities emerge locally (i.e. within the interaction) as well as how they relate to wider societal discourses.

6.1 **Badanti narratives: making sense of caring**

Throughout the interviews, all of the participants implicitly draw on dominant cultural discourses when positioning themselves and others, including many widely-circulating ideas regarding, for example, gender, age and nationality. These discourses (also referred to as master narratives) and the ways in which they are used to construct identity, have already been discussed in Chapter 4. However, in this section I am particularly interested in the discourses which relate to being a foreign carer in Italy, which I call *badanti* narratives. I view these as “general tendencies in the way issues are viewed and dealt with by the communities to which individuals belong” (De Fina, 2013:45). In other words, they incorporate what people say about carers and what carers say about themselves, and make up what Bamberg refers to as the “cultural background of sense-making” (Bamberg, 2004a:226) that can be drawn upon in any communicative event. Each one regards commonly circulating ideas about foreign carers which are referred to by several of the women and either adopted or contested within the stories they tell. The “*badanti* narratives” are discursive prototypes which are made relevant in different ways in the interviews. They can be regarded as being similar to, but more limited in scope than the “master narratives”, which I prefer to use to describe the more overarching ideas which regard society as a whole. The “*badanti* narratives” can be found in the media but also in the day-to-day conversations which one hears in public places such as in the bars, in local shops etc. These are also not the only ways in which identity is constructed and maintained within the stories; being a carer is only one part of each of the women’s lives and I also examine other discourses, which are not strictly related to being a carer, as and when they occur.

6.2 **Agency and identity construction**

In Section 2.4 I discussed agency in migrant narratives. Here, I will briefly explain how I interpret agency in relation to the prototypes and master narratives
outlined below. The extent to which individuals are able to freely construct their own identities is a key issue in identity research and particularly relevant in positioning analysis. A Foucauldian interpretation of discourse (Foucault, 1969) regards subjects’ positions as existing prior to discourse and then being “made available to individuals through dominant discourses” (De Fina, 2014a:273). However, this is incompatible with a social-constructionist view of discourse which ascribes a more agentive role to individuals although this is not to say that there are no limits to how we construct our identities. Clearly, the structure of the society we live in, including its myriad discourses, impact people in different ways and not everyone has the same liberty to act and speak in the same way. In other words, “individuals have different abilities to strategically use the available rules and resources that constrain and enable their actions. Thus, agency is always structured agency” (Varien & Potter, 2008:9).

I argue that the speakers are neither determined by societal discourses (including these prototypes) nor do they have “free rein” to construct identities entirely without recourse to them, rather they can “resist, negotiate, modify or refuse positions, thus preserving individual agency in identity construction” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006:43). Some prototypes are used fleetingly, while others are expanded on and taken up as a position for the length of the speaking turn or of the story itself. They are also interrelated and more than one can be used in each story. To be clear, I am not claiming that the women are themselves representative of any of these prototypes; rather each prototype can be seen as a cultural resource which is used by the participants to make a particular point.

Here I firstly briefly outline five badanti narratives and then I demonstrate how each one is used within the stories. Although, for clarity, I present each one separately, it should be remembered that they are not totally distinct and are frequently used together (sometimes in conflicting ways) within the same story. The first four prototypes were alluded to throughout the interviews and were also often brought up in informal conversations I had with Italians regarding carers. However, as we shall see, they did not necessarily go uncontested. Discourses, both seemingly positive and negative in meaning can be resisted in a number of ways and thus counter narratives can emerge as a discursive process. Counter narratives do not exist completely separately from the master narratives
which they relate to, and indeed we may only begin to question master narratives when we realise they no longer seem to fit our own experiences. I believe the same is true of these *badanti* narratives. In labelling a narrative as “counter”, I am not necessarily referring to the content of what is said, rather I am interested in how the participants themselves orient toward the narrative (Jones, 2004). When elements of these prototypes are contested, new commonalities come to light, which appear to emerge as ways of constructing alternative identities. Speakers may position themselves as being initially on the margins of a social group but they do not believe their stories to be unique (Andrews, 2004). One such emergent discourse is that regarding the entrepreneur or expert. I argue that it is an example of an emergent discourse which seeks to resist the more established ways of regarding foreign carers. Although not as widespread as the more established narratives, in time emergent discourses may become more commonplace and change or even replace the previously dominant ones.

### 6.3  *Badanti* narratives

Here, I outline the most commonly drawn upon prototypes which regard foreign carers in Italy.

#### 6.3.1  “The schemer”

Perhaps the most significant discursive prototype which was referred to explicitly or implicitly in the interviews was what I have termed “the schemer”. To a greater or lesser extent all foreigners tend to be aware of anti-foreigner or racist discourses circulating in society. For other social or ethnic groups which are more obviously marked as “different” these discourses may articulate a link being made between nationality and crime, anti-social behaviour or certain sectors of the job market. For carers, largely confined to the domestic sphere, the discourses tend to relate to their status in the family and their trustworthiness (or lack of it) ranging from small misdemeanours to large-scale usurping of the family wealth. So at one extreme we have the stereotypical story of the “husband-stealer” who ingratiates herself with her elderly charge (or indeed a younger family member) in order to get her hands on the family (or state’s) money. Such is the worry regarding this eventuality that a law was passed to prevent
significantly younger wives from fully accessing their husband’s pension after his death (see Chapter 3 for more details). At the other end of the scale I found that dishonesty in general was a preoccupation for many employers. During my initial research in the local community I was told stories by several Italians of carers buying inferior cuts of meat and keeping the housekeeping money for themselves or of carers hoarding food in their rooms. Sometimes a bad experience with someone of a particular nationality can lead to a search for a carer from a different country which is regarded more favourably.

These negative discourses are particularly important because they were contested in several ways by the women interviewed, often by drawing on the alternative and contrasting discourses. For example, some of the women position themselves as leading very quiet lives, socializing only with a few close friends or relatives at the local bar (where everyone keeps an eye on them) or at church (seeing as Sunday is often their only free day). This strategy also distances them from the idea of the carer as “predator”, on the lookout for a rich husband. In Italian the expression “tutta casa e chiesa” is used to refer (sometimes ironically) to a young, innocent girl who is either at home or at church and so does not give her parents any cause to worry but it could also be used to describe the lifestyle that some of the carers portray for themselves. These women are limited in their ability to socialise due to their unsocial working hours but by positioning themselves in this way they also signal that they are serious in their work and are not here to socialize and/or marry money. However, these limited possibilities for going out, while reassuring and useful for the employer, can also be a source of conflict for some of the women, especially as the lack of freedom that this job affords is something many of these women have not experienced since their own teenage years several decades ago.

6.3.2 “The grafter”

Another discursive prototype that frequently came up was that of the “grafter”; the worker who has a particularly strong work ethic and is not afraid to roll up her sleeves and to work long hours. I argue that narratives regarding hard work are not merely incidental or personal to each woman but draw on discourses
which associate particular nationalities as being better able to stand the long working hours than Italians. Sometimes these ideas are expressed explicitly, for example when Olena talks about what it means to be Ukrainian, but often they are referred to in a less direct way, such as when Yulia compares her (superior) cleaning technique to the way her (Italian) predecessor cleaned the flat.

Although we might interpret the ability to work hard as a positive characteristic, it is also problematic, not least because positioning someone as an exceptionally hard worker because of her nationality can leave her open to exploitation, as she is not seen as needing the same rest and time off that an Italian would need (and demand). However, many of the women position themselves as hard-working and serious in their work which could also be seen as a way of counteracting the “schemer” storyline outlined above. Eugenia, for example, says several times that she is precise and responsible in her work, and Sofiya and Natasha also talk about being responsible. Paradoxically, this idea can also be used to support the view that foreigners are “stealing” jobs that Italians want to do themselves but are not able to due to the unrealistic expectations created by foreigners willing to work all hours. This is not only a problem in relation to Italians: Anita, who is Peruvian, remarks that hard-working Ukrainians are undercutting her and making it harder for her to find work. Clearly, the advantages of constructing an identity as a hard-working, responsible worker have to be balanced against the disadvantages of being exploited or overworked as a consequence of being labelled as “other”.

### 6.3.3 “The almost-daughter”

Not only are these carers expected to be hard workers, but they are also sometimes expected to take on the role of the daughter in the family, a type of “fictive kin” relationship (see Section 5.2.5). By this I mean that they are not expected to just carry out their job competently, but also to do it with the same emotional attachment that a close family member would have. Again, the blurred line between caring as a vocation and caring as a profession can have both positive and negative consequences. Having someone come and live in your home and carry out personal care tasks can be more acceptable for the elderly person.
if that carer is also regarded as a family member and, in some cases, it can also be fulfilling for the women themselves. Vira, for example, reiterates how important it is for her to feel that she is one of the family.

As with the “grafter” prototype, it can also be used as an excuse for exploitation as it is easier to expect a family member to do more than an employee would do in the same situation, especially when, as is often the case, up until the arrival of the carer, the same work was being undertaken by an unpaid family member. However, it can also be used by the carers themselves as a way to index responsibility and loyalty; Sofiya draws on this discourse when she describes how she decided not to leave the flat during an earthquake, preferring to stay with “her grandmother”, to illustrate how she felt as responsible as a family member would. Conversely, it is not unusual to hear someone describe their carer as being “like a daughter”.

It is not only carers and domestic workers who are caught up in this type of discourse, is also perpetuated by the many dating agencies which rely on national stereotypes to promote, for example, Moldovan women as being particularly gentle, sweet and suited to matrimony, presumably suggesting that they would be easily persuaded to fit in with the husband and his family's needs.

### 6.3.4 “The innocent abroad”

Nowadays, many families in Bologna either have experience of employing a carer or know someone who has. As a result there is a better understanding regarding the situation than there was twenty years ago or more. Consequently, there is also more awareness that many carers can themselves be innocent victims of “schemers”. For example, a carer who arrives with little linguistic or local knowledge is at risk from unscrupulous employers, agencies and authorities (or indeed co-nationals who have a better knowledge of the context). Under this heading, I include the stories told about negotiating Italian bureaucracy, as both Italians and carers share a knowledge of the problems it can cause and refer to it in their stories.
However, the flipside of this awareness is that employers can sometimes regard the carers as victims of circumstance or as in need of charity, indeed several of the women, such as Alina and Eugenia, emphatically reject this positioning of carers being vulnerable and disadvantaged, preferring to position themselves as experts (see next section).

Related to this is the (often erroneous) idea that caring is undertaken by unskilled workers who are unable to move into other sections of the job market and therefore with little opportunity for career development. This may happen because employers equate lack of linguistic competence with generally low levels of skills or education (as can be seen in section 6.4.2 where Natasha talks about how her lack of language skills led to her being exploited in her first jobs).

### 6.3.5 “The entrepreneur/expert”

With this final prototype I propose an emergent discourse which appears not to be as widespread as the previous ones. Positioning oneself as an entrepreneur or an expert can be seen as a counter-narrative which seeks to resist some of the negative discourses outlined above. In this prototype, rather than being seen as a move forced by circumstances, the decision to become a carer is presented as an agentive career decision. Additionally, whereas in the dominant public discourse, caring is often regarded as a job which can be undertaken without any formal qualifications and where there is little incentive or opportunity for career advancement, here long-term carers position themselves as informal experts in the field of caring (or in other career sectors) and construct an identity based on this. This agentivity can be seen in the way that Sofiya prefers to construct an identity more closely related to her previous job as a teacher and a musician and also in the way that Lucia rejects the view that her decision to move to Italy was outside of her control. It can also be seen in talk about gaining professional qualifications and Anita is the only interviewee who talked about having undertaken continued professional development courses in caring skills. All of these are examples of identity construction which move away from the negative idea of the unskilled carer who is obliged to move to Italy or who is only suited to low-skilled work. In the absence of official recognition of skills learnt on the job, references to work experience gained and also to possibilities for career
development (both in the past and future plans) go some way toward breaking away from the negative framework and facilitating an alternative approach to identity construction. In sections 6.4.5 and 6.4.6 I discuss two stories in which this prototype is used and question whether it is widespread enough to be considered an established discourse rather than an emergent one.

6.4 The stories

The first two stories both recount episodes which happened earlier on during the carers’ time in Italy and are both examples of unpleasant events in which lack of linguistic and local knowledge impacted on the two women and as such the women position themselves as being to some extent powerless. Unsurprisingly, this lack of agency is a common theme in the narratives dealing with early experiences where lack of local and linguistic knowledge were particularly strongly felt. However, the ways in which the women tell their stories are very different.

The first, “It’s like a cruel game” in section 6.4.1 is told by Vira and recounts her experience of applying for a permit through the periodical amnesties (sanatorie) which are held to enable certain categories of workers to regularize their illegal status. Here we learn more about how she positions herself in relation to Italians and also the Italian authorities. She constructs an identity of someone who is at a disadvantage because of the authorities and this is accepted and supported by my comments. However, she is also strong; determined to stand her ground, despite her fear of being outside all night.

The second, “The truth is I didn’t think I could stand it” (6.4.2), is Natasha’s story of her traumatic experience of arriving in Naples without a job and finding herself living in a hostel. Here, Natasha positions herself as being vulnerable and weak, overcome with the emotion of the situation. Natasha wants to tell me this story but Annamaria (the elderly woman she looks after) finds it upsetting and contests it, preferring to talk about the present (happier) situation.
6.4.1 “It’s like a cruel game”

The first story I examine comes from Vira and recounts two separate attempts at getting a work permit which will enable her to work legally in Italy and, crucially, to apply for a permesso di soggiorno to enter and exit the country without fear of it being discovered that she has overstayed her visa. This lengthy process, which is described in more detail in Chapter 3, is not easy to navigate especially with limited Italian and several respondents commented on their difficulties.

Towards the beginning of the interview Vira tells me that she made the decision to come to Italy (initially to Caserta, near Naples) very quickly as her sister-in-law, who was working there, urgently wanted someone she could trust to substitute her as she needed to go home. Vira succeeded in getting her passport and visa ready in just four days. When I express surprise at the speed, she tells me that she entered (as is common) on an easily obtainable tourist visa which leads to her account of how, after her move to Bologna, she finally managed to get the correct permit (her nulla osta) which would allow her to stay in Italy for work. She first briefly recounts her unsuccessful attempt at obtaining it:

Extract 1a

1. V: si ma io venuta qui a Bologna come tur•ista
2. INT: mm (.)e dopo è riuscita con la::
3. V: [è rimasta
4. INT: [con la sanatoria a mettersi in regola?
5. V: si due volte ho fatto domanda
6. prima volta non è riuscita proprio
7. perché come noi andati er di là Via Marconi
8. già sapeva questi di Pakistan di di questi na- nazionalità questi paesi ↑eh
9. già sapeva, aveva pronte buste
10. dove io andata solo per chiedere che documenti dove loro già mandato
11. avevano solo due giorni per consegnare finito
12. INT: hmm
13. V: e io non riuscita ho ↑fatto domanda ma niente
14. INT: mm

Translation:
1. V: Yes but I came here to Bologna as a tourist
2. INT: mm and afterwards you managed to
3. V: [and I stayed
4. INT: ]
5. V: yes, I applied twice.
6. First time it didn't work at all
7. because we went over there to Via Marconi
8. those from Pakistan already knew, from those nationalities, eh?
9. already knew, already had the folder ready.
10. When I went to ask for the forms they had already sent them off.
11. They only had two days to do it then it was over
12. INT: hmm
13. V: and I didn't manage it. I applied but nothing happened.
14. INT: mm

In line 2 my interjection positions Vira as someone who is now legally in Italy, although she has not yet told me this herself. My remark prompts her to tell me the story of this legalization process. Vira’s first attempt at getting a permit (lines 6 – 13) was unsuccessful as she did not know how the system worked. In fact, she arrived at the post office on the given day to collect the relevant application forms whereas others, she gives the example of the Pakistanis, knew that it was necessary to arrive with the forms already completed and send them off immediately. She later says that only those forms which were handed in within the first half hour of the post office opening were successful, and this is confirmed by newspaper reports of the time (Bonzi, 2005). So, despite her good intentions, her lack of knowledge leads to failure.

However, the disappointment of this first attempt (which also serves as a sort of orientation to the main story) meant that she was better prepared the next time. This is the main topic of the story beginning in line 15:

Extract 1b
15. V: dopo un'altra volta ho fatto tre notte turni
16. dov'è la posta
17. INT: mm
18. V: dove stato quest'anno è stato freddo gelato neve
19. e io con noi tanti perché faceva dopo er controllo
gira lista (.) e faceva chiamare come non c’è cancellare

INT: mm

V: andava dietro perché ha detto che i primi consegnano alla posta la busta

INT: quindi bisognava stare ↑ lì

V: e lei stava solo qui

lei sta a letto e andavo la notte con paura qui via artigiano

INT: ma eravate in ↑ tanti

V: e veniva il suocero di Giulia a farmi cambio

per mattina presto verso cinque per farmi cambio perché si gelava

da ACLI da questo portavano il tè gente troppo carini

INT: mm

V: portava pizze portava tè e caffè con grande termo per scaldare
troppo carini di là dove posta dove visto che no

INT: sì, ma quanti eravate ad aspettare?

V: (2.0) tanti (2.0) tanti°°

INT: e quella volta l’ha, er, l’ha ricevuta?

V: sì perché dopo non è vero che fine prima:::
er prima non so quanti minuti ha detto che entri com’è:::
consiglia prima mezz’oretta trenta minuti per tutta Italia

INT: mm

V: ma non è vero perché dopo ma questa mia sorella ha fatto domanda

ha portato dopo prima di mezzogiorno

INT: mm

V: che passate ore:: apriva alle nove

INT: er, beh allora @

V: sì:: dopo anche questi che già passato:: un altro giorno

che consigliato posta non voleva prendere

perché ha detto che non è vero (.) anche ↑ loro entrati

INT: sono riusciti lo stesso

V: sì, sì perché dopo dato di più

INT: sì più possibilità

V: permesso possibilità avere, è così↓

ma dopo tornando lì
e bloccato me per cinque ↑ mesi ambasciata Italiana

INT: sì

V: perché dovevo aspettare

perché noi fatto qui domanda

ma dovevo tornare
59. perché il governo italiano ha fatto che datore di lavoro
60. mi chiama da Ucraina
61. INT: quindi doveva tornare in Ucraina [...]
62. V: [Ucraina perché lei mi chiama
63. INT: [oh che casino!
64. V: [ma come può chiamare lei come non ha visto me
65. INT: mm
66. V: è proprio fatto gioco
67. INT: mm
68. V: è proprio fatto è brutto gioco

Translation:

15. V: Afterwards, another time I waited for three nights
16. where the post office is.
17. INT: mm
18. V: This year it was cold, icy, snow
19. and I was there along with many others because they would check.
20. A list went round and names called, anyone not there is crossed out
21. INT: mm
22. V: [only] the first ones could hand in the application at the post office
23. INT: so you needed to stay there?
24. V: and she had to stay on her own here
25. she stays in bed, scared, I went to Via Artigiano at night.
26. INT: But there were lots of people?
27. V: Giulia's father-in-law came to keep my place,
28. early around 5am when it was really cold
29. people from ACLI came with tea, really nice people
30. INT: mm
31. V: [ACLI] brought pizzas, tea, coffee in a big thermos to keep it warm,
32. very kind there at the post office.
34. INT: yes, yes, how many people were waiting?
35. V: Lots, lots
36. INT: and that time did you, er, did you get it?
37. V: yes, yes because in the end it wasn’t true that it ran out early
38. only the first ones [got a place] I don’t know how many minutes
39. in the first half hour, thirty minutes for the whole of Italy
40. INT: mm
but it’s not true because my sister applied
and she brought her application afterwards, before midday.

“Hours had passed, they opened at nine
er, well then @
yes: and after these another day went by
they advised that the post office wouldn’t accept any more
but it wasn’t true, even they got in.
They managed to do it anyway.
Yes, yes, because they gave more
yes more availability
permit availability, like that
but afterwards going back there
the Italian Embassy blocked my permit for five months
yes
because I had to wait
because we had applied here
but I had to go back
because the Italian government decreed that the employer
had to summon me directly from Ukraine
so you had to go back to Ukraine [...]
[so that she could call me
[oh what a mess!
[but how could she request me if she hadn’t seen me?
mm
it’s like a game
mm
it’s like a cruel game

As has been discussed in Chapter 4, many of the stories told by the interviewees
do not have the canonical narrative structure described by Labov and Waletsky
(1967) but this one is very close to it and analysing its structure in this way gives
an alternative way of accessing the story’s purpose. The abstract can be found in
lines 15 and 16 (“afterwards, another time I waited for three nights / where the
post office is”). For Vira, this is the crux of the story; the experience of queueing
up outside the post office over three cold winter nights. As well as “the post office”
she then gives more information about where and when this took place, and who
else was there in lines 18 and 19 (“this year it was cold, icy, snow / and I was there along with many others”) which is the orientation. The complicating action recapitulates a series of events which happened while she was waiting in the queue: in order to avoid queue jumpers, someone (presumably another person waiting in the queue) sent a list around where everyone signed their names and this was periodically read out. At any given time, if someone did not answer the register, they were cancelled from the list and not allowed to retake their place. (An example of this can be seen in the short documentary film *La Grande Corsa* (Pavone & Monzani, 2006) which was filmed in Bologna). Volunteers from ACLI16 came to bring hot drinks and pizza to those waiting. Vira was able to take a rest when her employer came to take her place for a while. The resolution comes in line 37 in answer to my question “did you get it?” However, there is a surprise: the permit is obtained but it turns out that it was not necessary to wait overnight after all as even people who applied later were successful this time. In the last part of the story Vira reveals that she had to then leave Italy and go back to Ukraine to pick up her permit from the embassy there. This could be interpreted as a coda as it serves to “bridge the gap between the moment of time at the end of the narrative proper and the present” (Georgakopoulou, 1997:10) by telling us how Vira managed to obtain her current legal working status.

Let us turn our attention now to the evaluation aspect of the story. Labov’s (1972) revised view of narrative structure argued that evaluation, which is how the narrator reveals his or her attitude towards the narrated events, may be concentrated in one section but can occur at different points and in various forms throughout the narrative (see Labov, 1972:369 for further discussion of this). Indeed Vira’s evaluation of the events is marked at several points throughout the story and is often embedded in the narrative itself i.e. she tells us what she was thinking without suspending the narrative flow (Georgakopoulou, 1997). For example, she uses intensifiers such as phonological changes to make her point; her tone of voice in line 18 is emphatic, stressing the words, “cold”, “icy” and “snow” to convey a sense of the difficulties she faced. This was a traumatic experience for her and she says she was frightened to be outside all night. In line

16 A.C.L.I. = Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani, a lay Catholic social and political association.
35, in response to my question asking how many people were there waiting, she takes a long pause before repeating “lots” and again before repeating it more quietly. The change in tempo and volume of her speech here conveys a sense of remembering a troubling event which has remained impressed on her mind and is in stark contrast to her upbeat tone throughout most of the interview. At the end of the story, she makes an external evaluative comment, that is she steps out of the narrative itself, to comment on its meaning to her and again, the repetition serves to reiterate the importance of this point, “it’s like a game...it’s like a cruel game” (lines 66/68).

If we look at this same story using Bamberg’s three levels of positioning, the first level examines the narrated event (and how the characters relate to one another within the story), the second level of analysis refers to the story-telling event (the context in which the story is told and the interaction between participants) and finally, the third level looks at how the participants position themselves in relation to master narratives. Here in the narrated event we have our main character; Vira who is clearly the protagonist and this is a story about her experience. Secondary characters include the son of the woman she is caring for (referred to as Giulia’s father-in-law), the people in the queue and the volunteers from ACLI. However, we could also posit the existence of another protagonist in this story; the “System”. Vira is fighting against an anonymous bureaucratic system that she does not fully understand: first of all she was unaware of the necessity of completing the documents in advance. Then she tries again but has to queue overnight to be sure of a place: we do not know who told her that this was necessary. She points out that it was not just her that was disadvantaged by this situation: all the time that she was queueing, her signora was left on her own back at the flat when she should have been looking after her; thus she positions herself as a responsible worker who is a victim of this ridiculous situation. Throughout this section, Vira uses impersonal phrases such as “faceva dopo controllo” (line 19) and “ha detto che i primi consegnano alla posta la busta” (line 22), which adds to the feeling of faceless bureaucracy along with the confusion surrounding the procedure; someone says something, another person checks – but we don’t know exactly what these people’s role is or whether the information they give is accurate.
In contrast, the ACLI volunteers who bring tea, coffee and pizza to help those who were queueing and the son of the signora who comes to take her place in the queue for a while around 5am when it was particularly cold are described as “troppo carini” (too kind). The Italian authorities are positioned as not understanding the needs of the badanti (and by extension of the elderly population who need their badanti at home to look after them, not queueing up in the dark) and this is further underlined when Vira recounts that she had to leave Italy in order to re-enter legally, once again leaving her signora alone. In line 64 Vira asks the rhetorical question: “how could she request me if she hadn’t seen me?” reminding us that this is not a “normal” employer/employee relationship. Unlike, for example, farm workers, who can be requested from abroad without the need for an interview in person, carers are largely taken on through personal contacts and this bureaucratic procedure serves to underline how the state has failed to understand the dynamics of this working relationship. This is a common theme throughout the interviews; the Italian authorities are anonymous, unfeeling and difficult to understand whereas individual Italians are approachable and willing to help out. For example, in other stories, Natasha talks about her life being ruled by her permesso di soggiorno. Although she is here legally, it takes a long time for her permesso to come through and so she has to plan her trips back home taking that into account and she is angry that as a hard-working individual, her life is made even more difficult in this way. Yulia also had problems travelling before she managed to legalize her status through an amnesty.

Examining the story at the second level, it seems that Vira tells this story in order to invite me to share this view. The story was occasioned by my asking whether she managed to get her permit through one of the amnesties and she could have just answered in the affirmative but decides at this point to tell the story of both attempts and so the story also serves to educate me as to an aspect of life as a badante that many people are ignorant of if they have not been through it personally (or helped an employee to go through it). Having said that, she takes for granted that we share some cultural knowledge of how the system works; especially as regards the improvised register and the calling out of names, which is a common practice in other queueing situations. My interjections (“mmm”, “what a mess!”) serve to demonstrate that I understand her point of view; even
though I have not had to go through the same experience, I can see that it is unfair. With another interviewee, Eugenia, we compared notes on obtaining our permesso from the police station and contrasted our treatment, which also served this purpose.

Finally, we come to an examination of the Level 3 positioning. Bamberg suggest that this is a way of looking at how language is "employed to make claims that the narrator holds to be true and relevant above and beyond the local conversational situation" (Bamberg, 1997:337). One way of interpreting this is looking at whether participants orient themselves to wider discourses that circulate in society (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008). One such discourse here is that of the faceless bureaucrat quashing the hopes of the individual by instigating a Kafkaesque system that cannot be easily understood. In fact, in response to widespread criticism of the chaotic system for previous amnesties, the government had opened up more available places, but Vira is not aware of this. Rather than blaming herself, she blames the system and portrays herself as resisting. The first time she gets knocked back as she does not know what the others “already knew” (lines 8 & 9) but that does not deter her and she is willing to put up with the discomfort of queuing for days to get what is hers. Her persistence seems to pay off but there is a catch, or rather two. Firstly, she has to leave the country (at her own expense) to re-enter legally and secondly, she discovers that her ordeal has been in vain; others obtained the same result without going through it. She gives the impression that despite her best efforts, she really is a pawn in “a cruel game”.

6.4.2 "The truth is, I didn’t think I could stand it”.

As in Vira’s story, Natasha talks about an earlier period in her life when she was feeling very vulnerable. However, as the story begins, she is explaining that, unlike some carers, she did not have anyone waiting in Italy to ease the transition to the new country. She did not know anything about Italy or Naples, where she first arrived, and could not speak Italian. As soon as she arrived, she set about looking for a job and for the first few weeks she was sleeping and eating at a hostel run by a Catholic association, Caritas. This shift from a “normal” family and
working life to relying on a charity in a foreign country was very traumatic for her. Her story recounts her experience of the first time she ate at the hostel and, subsequently, her feelings while working at her first job\textsuperscript{17}. As well as myself and Natasha, Annamaria, the elderly woman she looks after, was also present during this interview but only Natasha is speaking in this extract.

**Extract 2a**

1. mi ricordo primo mio pranzo che andata a mangiare a Caritas
2. non riuscivo a mangiare niente (0.1) perché mi mi tutto qui {indicates chest}
3. stavo che tutti((...)) perché prima di mangiare
4. si alzava tutti [faceva] una preghiera
5. e io quando seduta a tavola visto che preparato pane
6. e tutto tutto tutto che ti danno, ti danno
7. e una una suor..una signora che fa preghiera
8. e tutti er ripetono ma io nemmeno potevo ripetere
9. perché non lo sapeva però mi sono
10. però quando mi sono alzata a piedi mi venuti lacrime così grandi
11. che io non riuscito poi né mangiare né ingoiare nemmeno saliva
12. perché mi stava tutto lì () e basta {indicates chest}
13. e poi non è che non voleva mangiare >sì volevo mangiare<
14. ma non mi venivo mangiare a Caritas

Translation:

1. I remember my first ever lunch that I ate at Caritas
2. I couldn’t eat anything because it was all {indicates chest}
3. I was all- because before eating
4. everyone stood up [to say] a prayer
5. and sitting at the table when I saw the bread
6. and all the things laid out
7. and a nu..a woman saying prayers
8. and everyone repeating it but I couldn’t even repeat it
9. because I didn’t know it but

\textsuperscript{17} In between these two sections Natasha talks about how difficult it was for her to express herself in Italian and that she was expected just to be quiet and get on with the job. She also talks about missing her children.

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10. but when I stood up big tears came to my eyes
11. and I couldn’t eat or swallow not even saliva
12. because it was all there {indicates chest}
13. not because I didn’t want to eat, yes I wanted to eat
14. but I couldn’t eat at Caritas

In the narrated event we see Natasha as being completely alone. The other characters in the story (the women at the hostel) are anonymous. Her repetition of “tutti” (everyone) makes her seem even more isolated; everyone else knows when to stand up or say the prayer whereas her ignorance of the situation isolates her. Her storytelling style is very emphatic and she uses repetition and physical gestures to get her message across. She taps herself on the chest twice to show how she physically could not eat what she was given because of the emotion she was experiencing. In lines 8-12 she powerfully describes the physical effects of her emotional turmoil; she cannot speak (not knowing the right words) and she cannot swallow (being overcome with emotion). She can only stand and cry in frustration at her enforced passive role. This emotional response is explored further in the second part of the same story:

Extract 2b

16. AM:  ci vuole un bel coraggio ↑eh
17. N:  si ma la verità io pensavo che non ce la faccio
18. AM:  ma però ti sei sempre trovata bene, vero Natasha?
19. N:  odiio (...) si prime prima si mi voleva ↑tanto bene
20. perché io:: mettevo tutta
21. metteva tutta forza tutta tutta dolcezza tutta
22. che devi fare aiutare
23. AM:  [tu non dicevi mai no
24. N:  [io mettevo tutta
25. faceva tutti quando puliva puliva tutto per ↑bene
26. quando dovevo fare qualcosa facevo tutto per ↑bene
27. eh per questo mi trovavo bene
28. se no non è mica ti vogliono quando non fai bene
29. io questo capivo ↑però è stato duro
30. perché non riusciva a aprir – a parlare
31. non capivo tante cose
32. come una stupidaku come una chi sa.
33. INT:  c’erano tante problemi di comunicazioni?
34. N: sì molto prima (.) molto questi problemi e poi err poi anche (.)
35. non è che mi umiliavi no solo che mi sentivo umiliata
36. perché perché non si trovava subito non si trovava
37. non riusciva a esprimermi cosa magari io posso fare cosa no
38. magari (.) voleva qualcosa: per esempio
39. mi pagava pochi soldi perché capiva che io
40. straniera che non so lingua
41. allora approfittava un po’
42. allora io a me questa faceva male
43. perché io metteva tutta mi metteva tutto
44. facevo cose molto bene però a prima è stata dura sì

Translation:

16. AM: it takes a lot of courage eh
17. N: yes but the truth is, I didn’t think I could stand it
18. AM: but you were always alright, weren’t you Natasha?
19. N: oh God (…) yes at first yes, they liked me
20. because I worked really hard
21. I put all of my strength, all all of my kindness all of it
22. N: that you have to help
23. AM: [you never said no
24. N: [I gave it everything
25. I did everything. When I cleaned, I cleaned well.
26. When I had to do a job, I did it well.
27. eh that’s why I was alright
28. If not – well, they don’t want you if you don’t work well
29. I understood this but it was hard
30. because I couldn’t open up, speak
31. there were many things I didn’t understand,
32. like a fool, like who knows…. 
33. INT: were there lots of communication problems?
34. N: yes a lot before a lot, these problems and er also (.)
35. it wasn’t that they humiliated me just that I felt humiliated
36. because because at first it wasn’t possible
37. I couldn’t express myself - what I could do and what I couldn’t
38. maybe they wanted something for example
I wasn’t paid much because she understood I was a
foreigner who doesn’t know the language
and so she took advantage a bit
this really hurt me
because I gave it my all, gave it my all
I worked really hard but it was difficult at first

Here we are returned abruptly to the storytelling event when Annamaria comments on the story in lines 16 and 18: “it takes a lot of courage” and “but you were always alright, weren’t you Natasha?”. Annamaria (who has a very close relationship with Natasha) is keen to tell me how brave she was and it would seem that she wants to direct the story in a certain way, perhaps hoping it becomes a more typical narrative of hard work and courage overcoming hardship. However, Natasha’s reply: “the truth is, I didn’t think I could stand it” opens up a more ambiguous storyline. In fact, Natasha says during the interview that she often considered giving up and going back home and that she found the whole process very upsetting and very difficult to cope with.

In line 23 Annamaria continues to help co-construct the identity of Natasha as a hard-working individual (“you never said no”) despite the fact that they did not know each other when the events in this story actually took place. Again Natasha uses rising intonation and repetition in lines 25 and 26 to emphasise her actions and we learn that although she worked hard and understood what was asked of her, there were lots of things that she did not understand yet and her lack of language skills made her feel stupid. In line 33, I encourage her to continue on this theme by asking for more information about the communication problems and again, the theme of shame, which was first hinted at in her embarrassment during the lunch at Caritas, is overtly indexed here. Natasha says that she was humiliated that her lack of language skills meant that she was paid less despite working really hard. Rather than blame her employer for this situation, she blames herself and her own shortcomings, drawing again on the discursive prototype of the innocent abroad.

Looking at level three positioning we can see that although both Vira and Natasha’s stories draw on discourses of powerlessness through fear and misunderstanding (Vira) and despair and inability to communicate (Natasha),
the reason for telling the story is different. In the storytelling event of Level 2, Vira invites me to share her experience. Although I am not a carer, as a foreigner resident in Italy she invites (and expects) me to sympathise and understand her bureaucratic difficulties and to espouse her attitude of “us” against “them”. The problems she experiences in her story are not of her own making. Natasha, however, is all alone in her story, which she wants me to hear and empathise with but does not expect me to fully understand. In her story she lacks the agency to deal successfully with the problems she had to face when she first arrived and blames herself for not having coped better. The words she uses here to describe herself and her work are very telling; forza (strength), dolcezza (kindness), stupida (stupid), umiliata (humiliated). Despite her strong work ethic and sweet nature, she is taken advantage of and feels ashamed. Her story points to the injustice of the situation but in a less direct way than Vira’s does, and she is very careful to point out that she was grateful to have the (badly-paid) job and lucky to be fed in the hostel. In this way she manages to head off any negative feedback to her story, in which it might be felt that she was ungrateful for what she did receive. It is difficult to say to what extent her identity construction here is conditioned by Annamaria’s (or my) presence and how different it might be if told in a different context.

6.4.3 "Italians don’t want to do this”.

The following two stories illustrate two ways in which negative badanti discourses are contested. In “Italians don’t want to do this” another story told by Vira rejects the notion of carers as exploitative women who are here to steal work and husbands from Italians. She constructs an alternative, and frequently used identity of the hard-worker who is performing a type of work that Italians are not able or willing to do themselves. Following on from this, Alina’s story, “If she doesn’t come back what shall we do?” is jointly-constructed with several speakers and serves a similar purpose.

Vira’s first story illustrates how ideas of national character can be drawn on to construct an identity as a grafter, a recurring theme throughout the interview, in order to counteract the prevalent stereotype of the foreigner who has come here
to steal jobs, break up families, and generally be a nuisance to society (the “schemer”). However a downside to this is that drawing on notions of almost superhuman endurance allows unscrupulous employers to see these women as not needing the same treatment that an Italian would require/demand in the same position, such as reasonable rest days and the possibility to go out in the evenings. In this way, imposing longer working hours is in part justified by this discourse of the hardworking Moldovan/Ukrainian etc. as well as by drawing on ideas of filial duty, as we shall see in this section. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that many of the women, at least when they first arrived in Italy, were unaware of their rights, did not have work permits and were not competent enough in the language to argue for better treatment.

The excerpt below is taken from another story that Vira tells about defending herself against a woman’s anti-foreigner remarks but, whereas in the previous story (“It’s like a cruel game”) she had very little agency and could not do much in the face of bureaucracy, here she is in control of the situation. The woman she meets at the bus stop is complaining that foreigners are stealing jobs and forcing Italians to move abroad to look for work. In the part of the interview immediately preceding her story Vira talks about her relationship with her husband and how often she manages to see him over the course of a year. From talking about her husband visiting her in Bologna, Vira changes the subject abruptly and starts talking about people openly criticizing foreigners in Bologna. The connection between the two is not immediately obvious but one explanation could be that she feels more visible as a foreigner when her husband is here; she says that the “signora” does not mind him staying but she, herself, finds the situation difficult. It could also be possible that talking about her husband triggers the idea of “badanti coming to steal husbands” (which she mentions in line 28) and that this memory prompts her to tell this story.

Extract 3a

1. INT: suo marito è rimasto in Ucraine?
2. V: sì lui adesso è a Germania
3. INT: anche lui lavora fuori allora
4. V: sì da cinque anni come
5. lui è venuto qui ma:: tanto tempo fa ma non poteva::
6. perché non aveva documenti
7. INT: mm
8. V: non aveva documenti e è andato di là, di là, di là sotto documenti falsi, sì
9. INT: quindi vi vedete poco, una volta all’anno praticamente?
10. V: si lui prima veniva qui perché:: aveva un altro documenti
11. e quattro anni veniva per natale per l’ultimo dell’anno, d’estate
12. veniva stare qui quattro giorni tre quattro giorni
13. INT: mm
14. V: lei diceva niente signora
15. INT: mm (...) 
16. V: solo per me:: è brutto () anche adesso come sento una parola straniere
17. per me come si muove tutto dentro {indicates stomach}
18. proprio si sento bassa per queste parole proprio::
19. INT: c’è – se qualcuno dice straniero?
20. V: si no come sento che dicono qualcosa parlano male
21. INT: parlano male-
22. V: - di stranieri si
23. eh si sente proprio (...) 
24. INT: a Bologna sente che c’è questo sentimento? o che io non ho sentito molto
25. Bologna la gente che parla male di [stranieri
26. V: come sento c’è a volta:: su una fermata o in autobus
27. qualcosa di là e sento () o parlano che vengono rubare mariti qui
28. ma chi ti ruba marito?
29. INT: [@
30. V: [...] se marito vuole stare con moglie lui sta
31. ma come marito c’è cervello un po’ di là eh sì!
32. lui () significa che che tutti uguali in tutto il mondo c’è
33. INT: sì
34. V: dappertutto
35. INT: sì
36. V: c’è bene c’è male, no?
37. INT: mm
38. V: o sono oh dicono o venuti qui a lavorare oh prendono
39. oh una settimana fa () aspettavo perché andavo alla Co-op
40. c’è signora e dice oh vengono qui, ma io non parlavo
41. io stavo così aspettando
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1. INT: Did your husband stay in Ukraine?
2. V: Yes, he’s now in Germany
3. INT: He works away as well?
4. V: Yes, for the last five years.
He came here with me a long time ago but he couldn’t [work ]
because he didn’t have the permits.

V: He didn’t have permits so he went there, with false papers.

So you don’t see each other much, once a year?

Yes, he used to come here because he had a different permit.

For four years he came for Christmas, New Year’s, in the summer
he would come and stay four days, three or four days.

The signora didn’t say anything

but it wasn’t good for me (.) even today when I hear the word foreigner
it churns me up {indicates stomach}
these words make me feel small.

What – if someone says foreigner?

Yes, no, if I hear that they are bad-mouthing
bad-mouthing-
- foreigners, yes
it makes you feel (…)

Do you hear this a lot in Bologna? I haven’t heard
people in Bologna speaking badly of [foreigners

[no, just like
sometimes at the bus stop or on the bus
I hear something or they talk about them coming here to steal husbands
who wants to steal your husband?

[@
[ [...]a husband will stay if he wants to
but when a husband loses his head, well!
he, it just means all the world over, it’s the same

yes
everywhere
yes
there’s good and bad, no?

mm
they are or they say oh, they come here to work and take
a week ago I was waiting to go to the Co-op
and a woman said "oh they come here" but I wasn’t saying anything
I was just waiting
“oh they come here, they all come here wanting to work
and we have to go to Germany, over here or there”

INT: mm

V: and we don’t have enough money. I say, signora, “how is that
you have a sick mother, right?

Why did you employ a badante? Why?”

INT: Because she needs one.

V: Because she gets a pension and she lives here

INT: mm

V: and I know her by sight.

You have a pension, your husband has a pension
and you have to pay the badante 1000 euro plus food
[why don’t] you both look after your mother and then
the government isn’t working and this isn’t working.

INT: mm [yes [...]

V: [if you do the work we won’t come if there is no work
but don’t start saying you don’t have money.

Look at yourself and your mother has a badante

INT: mm [ [...] 

V: [take your mother into your own home- why have a badante?

with a sick relative you have to get up five times a night

I reckon, though mine is better.

I get up twice to accompany her to the bathroom

but she is fairly well at the moment

a friend of mine is called on every twenty minutes

as soon as she gets back and falls asleep she is called for again.

INT: mm

V: They don’t want to do this.

The excerpt starts with Vira explaining that her husband originally stayed behind in Ukraine before later going to Germany to find work, where he still is. She then talks about how her signora (the elderly lady she looks after) had no objections to her husband coming here to visit her but she, herself, found it hard because she hated to hear the word “foreigner”. At this point, it is not entirely clear what she is referring to. In searching for clarification, I remark that I was unaware of
people talking badly of foreigners in Bologna and this is the trigger for a narrative which illustrates her point.

First of all she gives an example of the sort of behaviour she is talking about (lines 27 – 29); people on the bus or at the bus stop who talk about foreigners coming over to steal their husbands. This “schemer” prototype is also frequently referred to in the press (see Chapter 3). It can be regarded as one of many negative discourses that circulate regarding migrant workers. Vira dismisses this view as being based on prejudice; she insists that there is good and bad all over the world and if a husband wants to cheat on his wife, then he will (regardless of whether there is a foreign carer in the proximity or not). She asks me at this point whether I agree with her and perhaps my non-committal “mmm” pushes her to go on to give a specific example of this sort of behaviour in the form of a story. The function of telling a story here can be seen as strengthening her previously given opinion (that I questioned) that people openly disparage foreigners in Bologna. Giving contextual detail is a common device for constructing fact, and thus enhancing the verisimilitude of a story (see Horton-Salway, 2001). This part of the story can be interpreted, according to Labov’s narrative framework, as a typical orientation clause; it gives a time and place for the action (a week ago, at the bus stop waiting to go to the Co-op). The mundane nature of the details also serves to give credence to the story and heightens the listener’s expectations that something interesting is about to happen.

At this point we are in the narrated event, and so we can examine the Level 1 Positioning (‘Who are the characters and how are they relationally positioned?’) (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008:385). The characters here are Vira and an anonymous Italian woman, whom Vira knows by sight. Vira positions herself as passively minding her own business (“I wasn’t saying anything, I was just waiting”) and so doing nothing to invite the “attack”. It is not clear from the narrative whether the remarks are directed at Vira personally or whether the protagonist was unaware that Vira was a foreigner (I tend to veer towards the former as it is probable that the woman recognised Vira just as Vira recognised her and in general, it is not hard to identify non-Italian carers entirely from visual clues as they tend to dress differently and have different hairstyles to Italians. Of
course, if they speak then accent and syntax are further confirmation that they are not Italian).

Quoted speech in narrative is frequently marked with a change in pitch, tempo and/or volume (Wennerstrom, 2001:63), which is the case here where, with a change in pitch in line 41, Vira dramatizes the woman's speech (“oh vengono qui”/“they come here”). The impersonal use of “they” as a subject (which is omitted in a pro-drop language such as Italian) is typical of the sort of xenophobic phrase heard here where the woman is complaining about generic foreigners stealing jobs and forcing “us Italians” to go abroad, to Germany, to find work. It later transpires that the woman is a pensioner, so this situation does not affect her directly, yet in Vira's narrative she takes on the role of speaking on behalf of Italians. In line 43 she expands on this topic by saying they all come over here, again picking up on a common trope of being “overrun” by immigrants. Of course, we have no way of knowing exactly how close to the original words spoken by the woman this dialogue is. This is Vira's telling of the story and so far she has positioned herself as minding her own business and doing nothing to deserve such an attack. However, in the next few lines she has a shift in stance and positions herself, not as a passive bystander, but as someone who stands up for herself, and by extension, other foreign carers who are in the same position. She does this through a series of direct questions, asking the woman, why, if she is so short of money, does she employ a badante to look after her own elderly mother when she could save money and do it herself. Despite some grammatical difficulties, the message is clear and she answers her own questions by drawing on her experience as a carer. The reason why this woman does not look after her mother is because the work is too hard; it can involve getting up five times a night to tend to the elderly person's needs. Here she introduces the figure of a friend into the story, who is aligned with Vira and thus corroborates her claims: the friend is continually called throughout the night and rarely manages to sleep for more than twenty minutes at a stretch.

By giving examples of her own experiences, Vira positions the woman as being hypocritical in criticizing foreigners for stealing jobs when she herself employs a (presumably foreign) carer and this kind of work is not something that Italians want to do. In finishing her story, Vira also makes a generalization which
ironically mirrors the generalization that the woman made in line 43. Vira says: “non vogliono stare” / “they don’t want [to do] this” (line 70), referring to Italians. In this way, she conveys a negative positioning of Italians who use carers to do a job they would not do themselves and a positive positioning of herself and other carers, who are prepared to work under difficult conditions.

Moving a step away from the narrated event, however, and looking at how this story is embedded into the rest of the interview, brings us to our Level 2 Positioning, which looks at how the story came about and why it was told. It is important to note that positioning is dynamic in nature, and the “content of positions is local and may even be momentary and ephemeral” (Harré, 2010:53). Vira positions herself as a carer and draws on her knowledge and expertise in that role, and through this demolishes the woman's unfounded criticism of foreign care workers. Immediately following the story, however, we find these lines:

Extract 3b

70. V: eh:: non vogliono stare
71. INT: @@
72. V: ma io non vado perché io non vado in parco
73. dove mangiano nostre ragazze nostre donne
74. e me per me questo (..)
75. INT: evita?
76. V: proprio [...] passo andare di là
77. io vado vado {claps hands} in ↑bar prendere il ↑caffè
78. parlare con mia ↑sorella ↑amica
79. così loro vengono ↑qui {claps hands}

Translation:

70. V: They don't want to do this
71. INT: @@
72. V: but I don't go I don't go to the park
73. where our girls where our women eat
74. for me this I (..)
75. INT: avoid?
76. V: yes [...] going there
77. I go, I go {claps hands} to the bar to get a coffee,
Although the Vira in the story positions herself as speaking on behalf of other *badanti*, in the part of the interview which immediately follows this story (lines 70-78), she tells me that she is unlike her co-nationals ("our women") as she does not hang around picnicking in parks on her day off (a common sight on Sundays). She prefers to entertain friends at home or to go and get a coffee with her sister. This is a common theme in the interviews I gathered. In fact, I am not surprised to hear this story and complete her sentence for her when she pauses for a word – although my interjection “evita” in line 75 does not really fit into the sentence she has started, Vira accepts it and moves on. This one of many examples of co-construction of narrative in the interviews and underlines how the interviewer also a key role in shaping the stories told. She also claps her hands twice, slipping the palms diagonally off each other, which suggests something like “and that’s all” or “it’s simple”, in Italy.

It would seem that networking in public places is more common among the carers who have recently arrived, whereas not having to do this (and indeed having the “luxury” of being able to invite friends back to the house or being able to meet somewhere else) is in a small way a sign of having established a more stable life here. For example, Natasha contrasts her position now (stable contract and self-contained annexe within her employer’s apartment, which means she can stay “at home” but also be off-duty on a Sunday) with her lack of privacy and autonomy when she first arrived (staying in a hostel and spending her time in the piazza trying to network with other Ukrainians).

In the bus stop story, Vira positions Italians negatively as not wanting to take on care work whereas at other points in the interview she is keen to point out that she is grateful for the welcome she has received from Italy and the opportunities it has given her. Needless to say, one story can only give us a partial interpretation of a situation and in telling a story regarding a dramatic episode perhaps it is more likely that a clearer, more extreme stance will be taken and nuances of meaning may be lost. Interestingly, we don’t know how, or even whether, the woman responded to Vira’s questions. In the story she, and her criticisms, are silenced.
As Vira answers back to the woman, questioning her as to why she has employed a carer for her mother, it is not always clear whether Vira’s remarks are directed at the woman (in the narrated event) or at myself (in the storytelling event). In other words, whilst it is clear from the pitch and the words that Vira did answer back to the woman at the bus stop, it is difficult to say how far her response went. For example, is the last remark about her friend not sleeping directed at the woman, or only to me? I think probably the latter as it follows on from her saying that “her signora” only gets up to go the bathroom twice a night – this more private information is more likely to be a clarification for my benefit rather than being shouted out during a public row. However, such doubts are fairly common in the process of analysing narratives and it is not always clear where the border lies between the different positioning levels. In my view, this further strengthens the argument for always taking into consideration the interaction (and even just the presence) of the interviewer in the data. Almost all the narratives identified for this study were embedded in a context where it was clear that multiple participants were responsible for the way that each particular story had been told at that particular moment in time and it is impossible (and not even useful) to isolate these stories from the context in which they occur.

As far as level 3 positioning is concerned, there are certainly two competing discourses which are used overtly in this story; firstly that foreign carers steal jobs (and husbands) and secondly that foreign carers (particularly Eastern Europeans) are responsible, hard-working women, who work under conditions that most people would not put up with. Although only Vira talked overtly about badanti being regarded in a negative light, many of the women I interviewed (Eugenia, Natasha, Olena, Sofiya, Vira) were very insistent on describing themselves as being serious, responsible workers (and so quite different from the opposite idea of a conniving foreigner who is only after the elderly person’s money). This was sometimes an identity which was actively co-constructed with the other people present. For example, Eugenia demonstrated that she was serious in her work by refusing to sit down and talk to me despite the fact that her employer asked her to, and she continued cooking throughout the interview, as did Olena. Olena also drew repeatedly on national stereotypes to explain how, as a Ukrainian, her work ethic was particularly strong (“I was born to work!” she says, later adding that Ukrainians are renowned for being good workers, even as
far away as Canada). Sofiya tells me that when she left her last job, the family changed carers twenty seven times in the following year and were unable to find someone who matched her ability and staying power. Yulia compares her standard of work with the work of her (Italian) predecessor, which she finds lacking. Natasha makes it clear that she sets high standards for herself and that if a thing is worth doing it is worth doing well.

The general defensive attitude of the badanti in describing their work ethic in their stories suggests at least a tacit knowledge of negative attitudes of workers coming into the country in a period where there is a lot of media coverage of young people having to go abroad to find work. However, this “brain drain” is usually a term used to refer to graduates and well-qualified Italians emigrating and as such, does not normally clash with the notion of older women coming to Italy to undertake unskilled work. I would argue though that the insistence on positioning themselves as diligent workers who go above and beyond what would normally be accepted from an employer is, in fact, one way of reacting against the negative stereotype that circulates of foreigners coming over to take jobs. In collaborating in the co-construction of this identity of the “hard-working Ukrainian or Moldovan”, the Italians are also in part justifying their own decisions to employ a foreigner rather than an Italian; an Italian just would not be able to perform the task to such a high standard. Talking about being hard-working and responsible is not merely something that comes up in conversation (after all, I am not offering them a job) but is, at least partially, a way of constructing a professional identity that distances them from more prevalent negative discourses of foreigners working in Italy.

18 Of course, as we have seen in Chapter 3, many of the women who undertake this work are not at all unskilled but have bureaucratic and economic reasons for choosing care work over what are traditionally considered graduate-level positions.
6.4.4  “If she doesn’t come back, what will we do?”

After several short-term jobs, Alina found her current position where she has been working for the past six years. Initially, she was looking after a married couple, but when the husband died, she remained to look after his wife.

Throughout the interview, she speaks very quickly and her stories are lively with a lot of voicing of other participants. This extract is from a long “chronicle”, in which she talks about why she is in Bologna and recounts how she came to be at her present job. In some ways this extract is typical of stories that I was told regarding work conflict. (Frequently it is seen as preferable to leave a job rather than deal with difficult issues, such as disputes over working conditions, attitudes, pay etc., especially when language difficulties lead to an unequal dynamic in negotiations – see also Natasha’s stories of working near Naples in Extract 2b). In the same interview, Alina also relates other stories, prior to this, where she has left an unsatisfactory job. However, the way Alina positions herself in this story is particularly interesting.

Extract 4

1. A: e poi sono stata per- in questo tempo mi chiama un’altra ragazza
2. che stavo proprio da questa persona
3. diceva guarda Alina:: vieni che abbiamo un appuntamento
4. che ho trovato un lavoro per te
5. proprio qui dove sono adesso
6. parlo di cinque cinque sei anni fa ↑ eh
7. INT: hmm
8. A: va beh allora dice va beh
9. quando sono venuta qui va bene Alina ti accetto
dice ti accetto
10. ↓ ho detto il mio nome va beh
11. INT: dopo l’elimino non c’è problema
12. A: va bene non voglio mai che io mi trovo benissimo
13. loro come sono da la loro famiglia
14. ↑ va beh sono sono venuta hanno accettato
15. mi trovavo con loro male all’inizio male
16. INT: mm perché?
17. A: perché lui no perché era anche marito e moglie
18.
era una coppia

INT: mm quindi molto lavoro?

A: no no lavoro no la casa è grande

ma non è:: questo

era duro era un testone gli piaceva solo fare le case da lui

non mi dava retta mai

faceva delle cose che non doveva fare

delle cose che che io non accettavo proprio

ma è (.) con chi litigavo con lui

l'attrazione era ′più (.) più profonda

e una volta dice:: guarda:: io voglio dico io

io voglio andare per natale a casa

>†no, no, no, no va beh<

poisonoandata a casa in Romania

mi ha pagato anche i soldi

mi ha pagato i prestiti in anticipo anche con le ferie

tredicesima

INT: si

A: eh:: poi sono tornata

ma prima diceva la figlia

ah se non torna:: allora cosa facciamo?

ma lui dice ′ah se non vengo

vado dopo di lei e me lo me la prendo con il bastone [mimes action of hooking her back with a walking stick]

INT: @@@

A: per tornare indietro

va beh sono tornata a lui

poi piano piano

INT: e adesso sono sei anni che sei qui?

A: ′si sono quasi sei anni in aprile faccio sei anni eh

e con il contratto di lavoro tutto

INT: mm

A: con tutto compreso

poi niente lui dopo un anno e tre mesi è andato via

è morto in ospedale::

io: mi trovo benissimo vado due volte all'anno a casa

INT: hmm mm

A: un mese sono pagata uno no
56. uno lo prendo senza
57. INT: mm
58. A: senza pagare niente

Translation:

1. A: and during this time another girl called me
2. while I was with this person.
3. She said "look, Alina, come with me, we have an appointment
4. I've found a job for you"
5. just here where I am now
6. I'm talking about six years ago now
7. INT: hmm
8. A: "ok" I say "ok"
9. when I came here "ok Alina I accept you
10. I accept you"
11. I said my name, oh dear
12. INT: I'll take it out afterwards, no problem
13. A: I wouldn't want, I like this place
14. they are like family
15. I came, they accepted [me]
16. at the beginning it was bad, bad
17. INT: why?
18. A: because he- because it was a husband and wife
19. it was a couple
20. INT: mm so a lot of work?
21. A: no no not work, the house is big
22. but it wasn't that
23. he was difficult, he was stubborn he liked things done his way
24. he never approved of what I did
25. he did things that he shouldn't
26. things which I didn't approve of
27. but it's with whoever argued with him
28. he was more drawn to them
29. and once he said "look I want
30. I want to go home for Christmas"
31. "no, no, no, no ok"
32. so I went home to Romania
he even paid me the money
he lent me the money in advance and even gave me
the holiday pay, the thirteenth month
INT: yes
A: eh, then I came back
but first his daughter said
“ah if she doesn't come back what will we do?”
but he said “ah if I don't come back
I'll go after her and get her with my walking stick” [mimes this action]
INT: @@@
A: make her come back
so I came back to him
and slowly but surely
INT: and now you've been here for six years?
A: yes, almost six years, in April six years eh
and with a contract, everything
INT: mm
A: with everything included
and well then after a year and three months he passed on
he died in hospital
I really like it here I go back home twice a year
INT: hmm mm
A: one month is paid leave the other not
I take one month without pay
INT: mm
A: without pay

This extract is actually part of a longer narrative made up of several stories told in reply to my initial question “How did you end up in Bologna?”. Alina answers by saying “OK, I'll start at the beginning”, which signals that she is about to start a long turn and this is exactly what she does. Throughout the interview Alina positions herself as being in charge, both of herself and the interview context. At several points that it is her turn to speak and directs the interview to a greater extent than the other interviewees, telling me to ask her more questions.

The orientation to this story is very long, over lines 1 to 14 and then in lines 15 to 28, giving further details of the initially difficult relationship between Alina
and the elderly man. This all serves to put into context the complicating action which comes in lines 29 and 30, where she uses direct speech to underline how she stands up for herself at last. Lines 29 and 30 are very emphatic, using “io” (I) three times in the space of two lines. She also uses the form “io voglio” (I want) rather than a more tentative conditional form that we might expect from an employee. This is the dramatic climax of the narrative. After her declaration, she voices the man’s reply “no, no, no, no” and we wonder what is going to happen next. The resolution comes with the news that she is allowed to go to Romania. Not only that, she receives her pay in advance and the elderly man jokes that if she does not come back he will come to Romania and make her come back. The coda brings us back to the present time and is provided by the interviewer in line 46 which is then picked up and elaborated on by Alina in the following lines, when she tells us that the happy resolution to the story is that she not only went to Romania for Christmas but she still works for the family and with a proper work contract.

The evaluation of the story is provided in various ways through humour, repetition, body language and gestures. Her evaluation encourages us to view her in a positive light. Although the story is basically about conflict, the conflict between an employer and employee, the way in which it is told gives us more of an insight into its purpose. Looking at the basic story here, it would be entirely possible to view Alina’s actions as bordering on the bullying: she goes to work for a family, she doesn’t get on with the elderly man and they frequently argue, she asserts her will by going back to Romania for Christmas. However, her telling of the story is humorous. For example, she mimes the action of the old man coming to Romania and using his walking stick to haul her back. The way in which she tells the story, her very quick pace and emphatic tone also tell us about how she wants to appear in this story. In fact, if we take into account the setting and the participants in the storytelling event we can see that this is very much a performance for a specific audience.

As well as myself and Alina, this story was overheard by three other people: Luciana, a Romanian friend of mine who introduced us, Ioana and a mutual acquaintance of all three of them who happened to be passing. (This interview was recorded in a local park at Alina’s request). For this reason it is particularly
suited to analysis using Bamberg’s more interactional approach to positioning (Bamberg, 1997b) as Labov’s model does not allow for the presence of the other non-speaking participants. By looking more closely at how she constructs her identity, both in the narrated event and the storytelling event, we get a clearer view of the purpose of this story.

Alina frequently switches between the narrated event (level 1) and the storytelling event (level 2) as she tells her story. For example, she interrupts the narrative flow in lines 5 and 6 to add some background information and then again in line 11 because she inadvertently uses her own name and wanted my assurance that it would not be included in the transcript. It is clear from line 13 that the reason she wants to remain anonymous is because she does not want to cause trouble with the family, as she feels part of it. This leads the listener to expect that she is about to tell us something negative about them, which she does. She also steps out of the narrated event in order to clarify certain points, such as when in line 20 I wrongly believe she found the work hard because there was too much work for her; she tells me that although the house is big, it was not the amount of work which caused her problems (an example of the grafter discourse being employed in the storytelling event).

In the narrated event, she portrays herself as suffering because of the difficult working conditions she is experiencing, although it is not made explicit exactly what these conditions are. There is a recurrent theme in these stories of the elderly person not behaving in the expected way, i.e. not allowing the carer to take charge of the situation and care in the way that she wants to, thus making the caring work more difficult. Sometimes this might mean not accepting physical limitations or contesting the carer’s way of working but more seriously it can also mean being molested (something which Eugenia stoically put up with in the past). Here the elderly man is described as being “stubborn” and it is clear that there was some sort of power struggle playing out and she clearly expects me to share the view that in the carer/elder relationship the person being cared for should behave in a certain way, to accept being cared for rather than being stubborn and arguing back. However, she is also accepted by the family and she emphasizes the words “ti accetto” (I accept you) – a rather strange, almost
ritualistic, turn of phrase but the repetition leaves us in no doubt that the family wanted her.

In the storytelling event she constructs an identity as someone who loves the family she works for, who sees them as a second family and whose strength of character and work ethic has justly rewarded her with a proper work contract.

She also positions herself and is positioned by others as an “expert”; in this way she could be seen as constructing an emergent identity. It should be remembered that there are several people present at this interview. She is older than Ioana, who is also there, and has also had a greater variety of work experience than her. Luciana jokingly refers to her as the “signora”, in deference to her wide knowledge of being a carer and the stories she tells all point to her being well-regarded and sought after in her field. The story above is one of several that demonstrate to me and to the others that she has achieved a certain status, even managing to have two months holiday each year rather than the contractual one.

As regards the third level of positioning, we can find a number of generally recognized cultural narratives as well as several relating to carers in particular. Firstly, Alina undoubtedly draws on a common narrative of the heroine finding her voice and standing up for herself and thus obtaining a just reward. Her story is one of resilience and overcoming adversity. In a caring context, the adversity is often framed as being internal (as in the loneliness, depression and feeling of being lost recounted by Natasha). However, the obstacle can also come from others as it does here (in the conflict with her employer), or in the problems caused by the authorities, (as it does in Vira’s story). In recounting this narrative she also uses the “grafters” discourse when she explains how the problem she encountered was not because she was work-shy. The “almost-daughter” discourse is present in the way she says that her employers are like family to her, as well as more subtly in the way she feels comfortable about recounting a potentially negative situation in such a light-hearted, familiar way. She positions herself as having progressed in her career by moving from short, informal contracts to her present position, which is relatively difficult to reach and is only available once a relationship of trust has been established.
6.4.5 “Stravinsky wrote it”

In the next two stories I examine how two of the women, Sofiya and Lucia, construct alternative identities that could be seen as emergent identities; that is they are in clear contrast to the dominant stereotypes circulating regarding them (De Fina, 2014b) and go beyond simply contesting the existing discourses. Sofiya contests the idea of carers being low-skilled, by drawing on our common experiences of being teachers. Lucia contests the idea that carers have little or no choice in the decision to emigrate.

Turning first to Sofiya, throughout the interview she constructs her identity as a responsible, hard-working woman and she does this in two main ways. Firstly, drawing on the almost-daughter discourses she often refers to the woman she is looking after as “mia nonna” (my grandmother) especially when she talks about the responsibility that she feels towards her in relation to her own family. She states explicitly that she will stay with her until her death, despite the difficulties she is experiencing trying to balance her life in Italy with her own family commitments back home. Secondly, she continually relies on the discursive prototype of being a hard worker (a grafter) and to do this she draws on our common experiences of being teachers (a clear indication that my presence in the interview shapes the way she tells the story) and, in her case, of being a music teacher.

Before coming to Italy Sofiya was a music teacher in a school and she talks at length about what a shock it was for her to give up her secure, well-loved job to move to Italy. Several of her stories relate to teaching and music and are used to illustrate her own work ethic. For example she talks about the effort which is required to learn a musical instrument properly and how this cannot be done successfully unless the child is fully committed to putting in the work. She uses this as an illustration of how she believes that if a job is worth doing then it is worth doing well.

In the following story, the first part illustrates how a simple comment regarding an everyday task (cooking) can lead on to a more detailed development of personal identity, both in the storytelling event and in the narrated event. As with Lucia’s story about arranging the flowers which will be examined in Section 6.4.9,
this seemingly banal event becomes a means of constructing an alternative, more nuanced identity and has a positive effect on her subsequent relationship with her employer’s family.

Following Labov’s categorization, there is no clear abstract to this story. Instead, it follows on from several brief anecdotes and discussions regarding music and teaching. The story told immediately before this one regards the family in Naples finding out that Sofiya is an accomplished violinist and inviting her to teach the family’s children to play. As a result, her status within the family changes somewhat; she is no longer “just” a carer but a cultured, educated woman who has other skills to offer the family. By incorporating her own passion for music into her work life, she refuses to let her status as “foreign carer” define her identity. Although she continues to work as a carer for the family, it would seem that she feels that she regains some of her previous status as a musician following this event. The first part of the following story recounts another episode, with a similar theme, which happened after she moved to Bologna. In this extract Sofiya voices the words of the adult son of the elderly person she is looking after.

Extract 5a

1.  S: quando è venuto famiglia loro (.) quando una volta (.) er
2.  quando è stato periodo sos- sostituire Ox?ana
3.  •hh è venuto sue figli a trovare sua mamma
4.  io stavo tagliando prezzemolo
5.  prezzemolo ho detto na.. prezzemolo
6.  lui ha detto ↑ah che profumo buono!
7.  ho detto sì petrushka
8.  lui sta guardando me – ↑petrushka
9.  petrushka! c’è:: anche opera petrushka
10. ho detto sì ha scritto Stravinski
11. INT: mm
12. S: come tu lo sai so- chi ha scritto?
13. INT: ma per- perché?
14. S: petrushka?
15. INT: perché si chiama petrushka?
16. S: petrushka si chiama in nostra parola↑ucraina
17. INT: ah
18. S: ↑petrushka
19. INT: ah prezzemolo non so che petrushka [...]
20. S: [petrushka si questo è prezzemolo
21. e così piano piano comunichiamo
22. invece sua moglie insegnava piano forte
23. e lui molto bravissimo in erro suonava fisarmonica bravo e così [...]
24. dopo io ho detto si invece io insegnavo violino
25. e quando qualche volta vado su che mi serviva qualcosa
26. per prendere o firmare qualche carta dei documenti qualcosa mi firma
27. lui sempre ascolta musica classica
28. quando io arrivo su lui mi accende subito musica
29. cosa c’è? (...) ah questo Dvořák
30. eh, va bene! Questo cosa c’è? @@@
31. INT: @@@@@
32. S: lui fammi, fammi esami sì sì sì
33. • hh ecco si comunic-
34. musica musica aiuta e anche il ricordo mi ha aiutato tanto tanto
35. è stato periodo sì perché lavoro è stato bellissimo
36. sempre tu [...] sempre concerti sempre
37. preparazione esami è stato bellissimo bellissimo

Translation:

1. S: when their family came, when once er
2. when I was covering for Oxana
3. hh her children came to visit their mum
4. I was cutting parsley
5. parsley I said. parsley
6. he said “ah what a lovely smell!”
7. I said, “yes, petrushka”
8. he looks at me – “petrushka?”
9. “petrushka!” “there is also a piece of music called petrushka”
10. I said, “yes. Stravinsky wrote it”.
11. INT: mm
12. S: “how do you know who- who wrote it?”
13. INT: but why?
14. S: petrushka?
15. INT: why is it called petrushka?
16. S: petrushka is our Ukrainian word
INT: ah
S: petrushka↑
INT: ah parsley, I didn’t know that petrushka [...]
S: [petrushka yes it's parsley
so bit by bit we communicate
and his wife taught piano↑
and he was very good, he played the accordion well and so [...] afterwards I said that I taught the violin
and when sometimes I went upstairs because I needed something
signed or some document that he signed
he always listens to classical music
when I go up he puts on the music straightaway
"what is it?" (...) "ah this is Dvořák"
“eh, good! What’s this one?" @@@
INT: @@@@@
S: he tests me yes yes yes yes
so we communic-
music music helps and even the memory has helped me
it was a time yes because the work was wonderful
you are always [...] always concerts
preparing exams, wonderful, wonderful

The first three lines of the story are an orientation, telling us when and where this event took place. She is engaged in a domestic task of preparing the meal and cutting up parsley. Sofiya’s use of the Ukrainian word for parsley opens up a whole new discussion about Stravinsky and classical music. By demonstrating her knowledge of classical music, Sofiya is transported from the realm of “carer” and allowed to construct her identity as a knowledgeable musician, much to the surprise of the son (“how do you know who- who wrote it?”). From that point onwards they have an interest in common and every time they meet, he tests her on her musical knowledge. Sofiya tells the story to illustrate how music has been an important resource for her, allowing her to be more than her present job offers and creating connections with other musicians and music lovers. However, it could be argued that it also positions her employer’s son in a negative way; his surprise at her knowing the name of the composer hints at her annoyance at being pigeon-holed as an uncultured carer. My question in lines 13 and 15 also gives her another opportunity to display her knowledge in the storytelling event.
although here the knowledge is linguistic (whilst I had heard of Petrushka, I didn’t know that it meant parsley). Thus Sofiya is able to position herself both in the narrated event and the storytelling event as an expert here.

However, although Sofiya presents this story as a positive episode (laughing in line 30 which I join in with on the next line), there are several ways in which on closer examination we can see that this is not exactly the case. Although this event allows Sofiya to position herself as a musician, she is not really on an equal footing to the man. When she meets him again he tests her on her musical knowledge, assuming the role of music teacher, which, by rights, should be hers to take on. The resolution to the story “so we communic-” [ate] is cut short and preceded by an intake of breath which sounds like a sigh, signifying that this is not entirely a happy story. The coda which returns us to the present moment (“music music helps and even the memory has helped me”) is also ambiguous and also seems to be in contrast to what comes a little later in the same interview when it seems that being reminded of her past music ability is a source of upset for her. By only looking at the first part of the story, we miss some crucial elements which are developed by Sofiya as she adds another episode to what has gone before. Later on in the same section we find the following:

**Extract 5b**

38. S: e adesso quando mi chiedono †no.. vai, porta il violino così
39. ho detto ragazzi (.) solo posso capire persona che suonava (.)
40. perché quando (.) dopo parlo di violino
41. perché violino è strumento molto particolare
42. perché pianoforte anche tu non c’è orecchio buono
43. tu prendi do viene do
44. INT: […]
45. S: †invece violino quando tu metti …devo sentire con l’orecchio
46. invece così o così piccolo movimento viene do diverso
47. viene o do do diesis o si bemolle per dire capito†
48. e anche quando tu molto tempo non suona (.) violino [-]
49. quando non suoni prima [inaudible]
50. INT: mmm
51: S: è una vergogna per me personale
52: personale cose che io suonavo benissimo

182
sono stata bravissima sono stata questo diciamo

peak di suo lavoro e di sua passione

che me piacevano tantissimo

e adesso quando io arrivo a casa

suono solo quando non c’è nessuno @@

INT: [@@]

S: [da sola a casa
detto, questo sì per me adesso meglio solo ascoltare

 perché voglio fare lavoro bene

Translation:

38. S: and now when they ask me "no..go on, bring the violin"
39. I said "guys only someone who plays can understand"
40. because when, and I am talking about the violin
41. because the violin is a particular type of instrument
42. because with a piano, even if you don't have a good ear
43. when you play a C, you get a C
44. INT: [...]
45. S: [whereas with a violin ...I have to listen
46. instead of this or this, a little movement, a different C
47. you get a C or a C sharp or a B flat, you see?
48. and when you haven’t played the violin for a long time
49. when you don’t play before [inaudible]
50. INT: mmm
51. S: for me it’s a personal shame
52. things that I played really well before
53. I was brilliant I was, let's say
54. at the peak of work and passion
55. and I loved it
56. and now when I go home
57. I only play when no-one is around @@
58. INT: [@@
59. S: [at home alone
60. yes for me it’s better just to listen now
61. because I want to do a job well
Reading the rest of the story we learn that for Sofiya music is also a source of sadness. It is precisely because she was so accomplished at playing the violin that she now refuses to accept less than perfection - a common theme throughout her interview is summed up in line 61, “because I want to do a job well”. Her refusal to play at a lower standard means that, although music is recurrent in her stories, it is always in the past. Although the “Petrushka” incident allows her to construct an alternative identity as a musician, it does little to actually change her status; she is still the carer and, as such, has to do her job. A few lines further on she comments that she never goes to concerts in Bologna as:

Extract 6

1. S: alla sette devo già dare la cena alla mia nonna (.)
2. non c'è niente da fare er perciò:: mi dispiace tanto no
3. purtroppo un po': un po'
4. vediamo dopo (.) forse non lo so quando
5. no (.) senza forse vediamo dopo

Translation:

1. S: at seven o'clock I have to give my grandmother her dinner
2. there’s no solution so unfortunately no
3. unfortunately a bit a bit
4. we’ll see afterwards, perhaps I don’t know when
5. no, not perhaps, we’ll see afterwards

Once again, duty is more important than pleasure. Her stark declaration that “there’s no solution” sums up the feeling of being trapped that comes across throughout the interview. She contrasts her situation in her previous stable job as a music teacher in Ukraine with her present work as a carer in Italy and explains that she refuses to think much about the future as we cannot predict what fate has in store for us. To illustrate this she tells a “small story” (see Georgakopoulou, 2007; 2006) which does not correspond to what we normally consider a fully-fledged narrative. In this story she imagines a hypothetical conversation with a friend when she was still working as a teacher. The friend tells her that in five years’ time she would be working in Italy as a carer. She says that she would never have believed that such a change could happen to her, and
back in the story-telling world, she tells me that this is why she prefers not to make too many future plans but just to take each day as it comes, praying that she will get through the day. This shows the complicated approach that Sofiya takes in negotiating her pre-carer identity as a musician and a teacher and relating that to her current work situation, a dilemma which causes her anguish. Despite her declaration that "music helps" it seems that often it does not.

The last two lines though offer a different, less bleak, outlook. Throughout the interview she gives the impression of trying to balance any negativity with a more positive approach. Here she looks forward to a future in which she will once again get the chance to go to concerts and reassume her identity as a musician.

6.4.6 “The dream of that girl growing up in the countryside”

Lucia is happy with her decision to come to Italy and has built a good life for herself here and managed to bring over several family members who obviously contribute to her feeling more settled than those carers who have most of their family in another country. However, she is clear to point out that she was always keen to come and work abroad and it was in fact a dream of hers dating back to childhood. She rejects being positioned as being forced by economic circumstances to move to Italy. Whilst the decision to move was undoubtedly taken for economic reasons, she frames it as an opportunity rather than as a trial. Just prior to the start of this story, I ask her rather leading questions to find out whether she has always been happy with her decision to emigrate. (Here, for brevity, I reproduce only the English translation).

Extract 7

1. INT: Have you ever had any cultural difficulties
2. L: with the people you work [ for?
3. L: [no
4. INT: misunderstandings or?
5. L: no no no

Her quick fire denial of any conflict in her work relationships is followed up by a story which explains in more detail her feelings regarding the move to Italy:
1. L: eh no…ti voglio dire che non è stato pesante per me
2. perché prima avevo un grande desiderio da uscire da questa cosa
3. non posso più arrivare la fine del mese
4. INT: mm
5. L: diciamo questo grande er ho pensato come un passo avanti
6. dico lo faccio o non lo faccio allora dipende tutto di me
7. perché in quel momento e come uno ti ti dà la possibilità
8. da avere un altro tipo di vita
9. poi la grande curiosità perché di piccola avevo questo
10. mi piaceva da andare in un <paese straniero>
11. con noi tante persone aveva il lavoro con un contratto
12. anche sotto Ceausescu si poteva uscire
13. con un contratto di lavoro in altri paesi
14. allora qualcuno diceva ma io sai che mio babbo è in Algeria diciamo
15. INT: mm
16. L: eh mo, che bello:: @@ hai capito
17. era una cosa che era un sogno eh allora il sogno
18. dopo molti anni diventa realtà per me
19. quel sogno di bambina cresciuta in campagna
20. che poi vede vede un aereo
21. che da noi si vede così piccolo
22. con una @@striscia di fumo sul cielo molto
23. eh dici ma che bello dove va quell’aereo
24. che ti trovi che proprio tu voli come aereo
25. fai un volo per un aereo per un paese straniero
26. INT: è bello
27. L: si per me tutto insieme è stato come una un sogno hai capito
28. dove mi sveglio e dico oh, guarda te che sono qua
29. e sono passato sono passati quattro anni

Translation
1. L: eh no...I want to tell you that it wasn't hard for me
2. because before I really wanted to leave the country
3. I can't get through the month
At first glance it seems that this is not a canonical story: there is no clear temporal ordering of past events. Yet on closer examination we see the “story” can be summarized in just a few lines:

“I really wanted to leave the country”

“will I do it or not?”

“so the dream after many years became reality for me”

The evaluative aspect of the story and thus its meaning comes from the extra information we are given. In line 6, we learn that she is the one who decides
whether to stay or leave and throughout the story Lucia positions herself as having an agentive sense of self. This is very different to many of the stories I was told about feeling obliged to move to Italy and being vulnerable and helpless on arrival. Lucia is very much in charge of her decision to move to Italy and she underlines this by telling me that she had dreamt about it all her life. She emphasises this further by the use of the expression “I want to tell you” (line 1) which clearly marks that her story is different to other stories I have heard. She wants to make it clear that she has not had a negative experience and then goes on to explain why.

Her story begins a long time ago. She remembers hearing a friend talking about her father working abroad. She imagines herself as a child looking up at an aeroplane and hoping that one day she too will fly away. The key words used here: curiosità (curiosity), bello (beautiful), un passo avanti (a step forward) and sogno (dream) are all indexing a romantic ideal of travel as carefree and fun in stark contrast to the narratives which talk about being obliged to move to put food on the table. Here the information in line 3, that she did not have enough money to last until the end of the month, is quickly glossed over.

This is a counter narrative as Lucia actively rejects the idea of the unprepared, “innocent abroad” by citing her own positive personal experience. Like Sofiya in the previous story, Lucia tells a story about scarcely being able to believe how she ended up here. However, whilst for Sofiya it is an illustration of what fate can unfortunately have in store for us, for Lucia this is framed as being the realization of a childhood dream.

6.4.7 “In via Saffi eating hot doughnuts!”

Another “small story”, this time told by Eugenia, similarly gives an alternative view of life as a carer. Eugenia, however, also distances herself from the idea of a passive carer who has moved to Italy out of economic necessity but she does this in a different way. Eugenia is a live-out carer who lives with her niece. She is highly qualified and did not come to Italy for pressing economic reasons and originally found work in a factory. Although she is always keen to insist how professional she is in her work, here she invites me to see her in a different light to other carers. She tells the following story about what she did at the weekend.
Listening (and contributing) along with me is Magda, the daughter-in-law of Nino, the man she looks after:

Extract 9

1. E: c'è mia nipote e poi::: venerdì sera siamo andati a ballare (.)
2. siamo andati in in discoteca (.) tutti da lavoro (.) tutte amiche tutte ragazze
3. M ebbè sì perché sua nipote lavora in [Villa Laura in casa di cura
4. E: in Villa Laura
5. E: e come::: tutti moldave:::, ru- italiane:::
6. siamo andati tutti venerdì sera
7. siamo stati fino alle cinque (.) di mattina
8. I: che forza!
9. E: poi sono venuta a lavorare (.) e tu non †hai visto
10. † non hai saputo eh?
11. †ho lavorato tutto in forma che mia nipote dice
12. zia (.) io non so come tu tu fai
13. eh la zia è una […]
14. M: [inaudible] acqua
15. E: [sì, sì, sì
16. M: [acqua]
17. E: e noi alle cinque di mattina eravamo, alle quattro e mezza
18. eravamo in Via San Felice
19. in via Saffi a mangiare i bomboloni caldi

Translation:

1. E: there's my niece and so Friday evening we went dancing
2. we went to a club, all straight from work, all friends, all girls
3. M Well yes, because her niece works at [Villa Laura at the nursing home
4. E: [Villa Laura
5. E: and so all Moldovans, Ro- Italians
6. together we went out Friday night
7. we were out until five in the morning!
8. I: what stamina!
9. E: and then I came into work and you didn't see,
10. you didn’t know eh?
11. I was fine at work and my niece said
12. aunty I don’t know how you do it
13. “ah aunty is [...]”
14. M: [inaudible] water
15. E: [yes, yes, yes
16. M: [water]
17. E: and at 5am, at half past four
18. we were all in Via San Felice
19. in via Saffi eating hot doughnuts

Just before telling this story, Eugenia tells me that she does not go out much and prefers to read or watch television and she also tells me that she does not have very many Moldovan friends, apart from her niece. Perhaps to counteract that story and show me that she is still a relatively young sociable woman, she tells me of the last time she went dancing with her niece and some friends. Here, Magda interjects to provide some extra information about where Eugenia’s niece works. First of all she calls it Villa Monica, and then for my benefit, explains that this is a nursing home, in this way she positions me as someone who does not have the same familiarity with the local area as she does and this is a common theme throughout the interview, with Magda often taking on the role of guide and explaining to both of us certain aspects of Italian culture that we might not be aware of due to our nationalities and also age. Eugenia then resumes her story. She went to a disco with a group of friends (including Italian friends) on a Friday night. Already she has positioned herself as being integrated into the community and not a typical carer: she has Italian friends, she goes dancing at night and in a disco (as opposed to going ballroom dancing at a community centre in the afternoon as Olena does which is a more typical venue for more mature carers). Of course, as a live-out carer who only works during the day, she has the opportunity to go out at night whereas most of the women I interviewed do not.

Moreover, she stayed out until five o’clock in the morning. Here I interject by saying “che forza!” (what stamina!) indexing a discourse that at our age (Eugenia and I are approximately the same age) going out until 5am is tiring. However,
Eugenia is not your typical young person who can go out on Friday night and then sleep in on Saturday morning to recuperate, she has to be back at work on Saturday morning. The topic of the story though is not so much that she stayed up late dancing, but the fact that she was able to work as normal the next day. Here, in examining the two different levels of positioning we can see better the point of this story. On the first level, the narrated event, the story is simply that Eugenia went out dancing until late with friends and went into work the next morning having had little sleep. Her employer did not notice her lack of sleep. On the face of it, this could suggest that she is irresponsible, but the impression we get from looking at the storytelling event is more nuanced. In line 8, Eugenia moves from the narrated to the storytelling event when she addresses Magda directly: “You didn’t see. You didn’t know”. This is said at a higher pitch and, in other circumstances, could be seen as a disrespectful way to challenge or taunt her employer. However, here it indexes the easy relationship she has with her. She is sure enough in this relationship to be able to talk in this way; she knows she will not be reprimanded for coming to work straight after a long, night work because Magda is very satisfied with the way she works and says so several times. Indeed, far from positioning her as irresponsible, this is another opportunity for her to demonstrate what she says several times directly in the interview: that she is a careful and responsible worker, so much so that her work does not suffer and she is professional at all times. However, as well as indexing responsibility, Eugenia is also able to construct an identity for herself as a sociable young woman who is not too old to kick up her heels and have fun. She does this in part by resisting the prototype of the innocent abroad or the almost-daughter. She does not have to rely on these discourses to justify her place in the family; this is partly because she does not live-in with the family which enables her to both physically and mentally leave the dynamics of family life behind and treat her work as a job, rather than a vocation, but also due to the good relationship she has with her employer which is clearly communicated in this story. This is a very different relationship to the one which comes across in the story told by Olena below.
6.4.8 “I keep going, I keep going”

The transcript here starts at a point where I have just asked Olena if she feels that Bologna is her home. Laughing, she says, “no, no, no” but then goes on to tell me about how she did used to feel at home – in the place where she worked just prior to starting her present job. Although this brief recollection, is not really a complete story and it has no real complicating action or resolution, I include it as a “small story”, a brief snippet of a hypothetical, repeated event: she walks down the street where she used to live and she feels a little bit at home.

Extract 10

1. O: quando entro questa via
2. mi sembra che io: ( ) proprio
3. ↑c’è qualche cosa come mio è così
4. INT: ma cos’è la differenza allora, perché si sente a casa lì?
5. OL: Lì eh, er a casa sua↑
6. Non pensi niente libertà dormi quello che vuoi
7. non sai adesso riesco non riesco devo alzarmi alle 7
8. fa male testa, cervicale una cosa o l’altra ( ) sforzo
9. io vado avanti vado avanti senza libertà ↓pesantissimo

Translation:

1. O: when I go down this road
2. it seems that I really
3. there is something which is mine
4. INT: but what’s the difference, why do you feel at home there?
5. OL: there, er, at her house?
6. You don’t think of anything – freedom to sleep if you want
7. now, you don’t realise, whether I can or not I must get up at 7am
8. headache, neck ache or something, I make an effort
9. I keep going, I keep going without freedom, [it’s] very hard

Whilst Eugenia’s stories are told in collaboration with her employer, Olena’s stories are told for me only, her voice sometimes dropping to a whisper when she
wants to be sure she is not overheard by the people in the next room. Olena’s
interview is problematic in several ways. Out of all the women I interviewed, I
found her the most difficult to understand, partly due to her comparatively lower
level of competence in Italian but also because of the many inconsistencies and
contradictions in what she said and, indeed, how she said it, sometimes laughing
and sometimes seemingly on the verge of tears in the space of a few seconds.

What came over very clearly from the interview was that she works incredibly
hard and takes pride in her work and throughout the interview she is never still
as she is also preparing lunch for the woman she looks after. She tells me that for
many years she has sent back money to the Ukraine towards buying houses for
her children and she remarks “my life is not for having fun, just buying walls”
19. She does not trust banks, having known too many people who have lost
everything in their bank accounts. Throughout our conversation she positions
herself as a grafter however, in her case, this is strongly related to being
Ukrainian and she frequently cites her nationality as the reason for her hard-
working ethic.

The small story above is really just a brief glimpse of an alternative reality. For a
moment she imagines how she feels back where she used to live and work. I press
her as to why there is this difference between the former house and where she is
now (when geographically they are quite close to each other). The difference lies
in the freedom she felt there. She did not have such strict working hours there
and she felt free. Now, whether she has a headache or neck ache, she has to get
up at seven regardless. This relentless routine is echoed in her repeated phrase
in line 9, “I keep going, I keep going […] [it’s] very hard”. This story is a reminder
that not all jobs are equal. Even when employers respect an agreed contract, the
nature of the job means that some are a lot easier to accept than others. In her
previous post, Olena tells me that she was able to put the elderly woman into bed
and then go out for the evening, whereas now she has to be at home at all times.
She also has to get up earlier and does not have such an easy relationship with
her employer (in her previous post her employer was a woman whom she

19 “solo mia vita è fatta non da divertirsi solo comprare muri!”
describes in a friendly way and says that she was very attached to the woman she looked after. Throughout all the interviews it is clear that small details can make the difference between a job being stressful and being acceptable. If the elderly person is unable to leave the house then the carer is also restricted in her movements, whereas if the elderly person wants to go to the park each afternoon then this can also be an opportunity for the carer to socialize too. (Sofiya accepted a job precisely for this reason). Thus the desirability or not of a position can be made up of lots of small elements that together make the difference: a real or perceived lack of freedom can be the tipping point that makes a job too stressful, but this can be mitigated by an understanding employer. On the other hand, a less than optimal employer/employee relationship can be acceptable if the working conditions are more favourable than usual (and Yulia is in this position). Of course the ideal is to have both a favourable employer/employee relationship and good work conditions, and this seems to be the case for several women I interviewed. Small acts of kindness and understanding are of particular significance in this work dynamic and indeed, can sometimes make the difference between a successful and a failed work relationship as can be seen in the final story.

6.4.9 “This helped me open my heart”

Whereas in Olena’s story, we see how a lack of freedom (in the sense of autonomy over her free time) contributes to a feeling of dissatisfaction, in the final story we have the opposite. Lucia’s story illustrates how a comparatively small act, that of allowing her autonomy in arranging the house, improves her job satisfaction and her relationship with the family. Lucia recounts here how the simple act of choosing a flower arrangement to put on the kitchen table led to better communication with the family and also a close friendship with the daughter.

Extract 11

1. I: e ti trovi bene qui?
2. L: mi trovo molto bene sì (.) prima perché come sono venuta
3. mi ha dato una libertà da (.) non libertà da essere padrone di
dittatore della casa sua, no, una libertà da fare

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5. ti piace metter in un modo
diciamo le cose in casa mettile come vuoi tu
pensa che questa è anche casa tua
6. INT: mm
7. L: Allora io quando comincio fare un po' in cucina
8. INT: mm
9. metto una cosa sopra il tavolo un mazzo di fiori in centro delle cose
10. lei è venuta e è rimasta meravigliata anche mi ha ringraziato
11. io mi aspettavo vedrà adesso che dice
12. ma non mi piace il colore dei fiori @@
13. non mi piace il vaso altre cose normalmente può succedere
14. INT: mm
15. L: invece, mm, sempre questa mi ha dato tutta la spinta
da avere un cuore aperto
e da essere molto aperta con loro comunicazione
tutto entra noi un legame, diciamo

Translation:

1. I: And do you feel at home, here?
2. L: I feel very at home here because when I arrived
3. she gave me the freedom, not to be the boss
4. a dictator in her home, no, the freedom to do things
5. “do you like things in a certain way?
6. Arrange the house how you like.
7. Think of this as being your house too”.
8. INT: mm
9. L: So I start in the kitchen.
10. I put something on the table and flowers in the middle.
11. She came in and was surprised and thanked me.
12. I expected her to say
13. “well, I don’t like the colour of those flowers @@
14. I don’t like the vase” or something else, which is normal.
15. INT: mm
16. L: Instead, mm, this gave me the push
to open my heart
and to communicate openly with them,
a bond with them, let’s say.
Just before this extract Lucia recounts how in her previous job, the woman she was assisting had Alzheimer’s disease and could no longer recognize her own home. Lucia became to all intents and purposes, the head of the household and also a “gatekeeper” who decided when neighbours were to be allowed in to visit. This gives us an additional clue to understanding this story which is about the importance of being autonomous in the household. It should be remembered that most of the women were already married and looked after their own households before coming to Italy and giving this autonomy up is another difficulty they have to face.

It is telling that the story Lucia chooses to recount is given in response to my question about whether she likes it in her present position. Her affirmative response is strengthened by the use of “molto” (very) and, although we might expect her to talk about the fact that her family are close by or that she has a good contract, she immediately mentions freedom as the primary reason for her opinion.

In the storytelling event, she prefaxes her story by pointing out to me that she does not mean that she wants to rule over the household, like a “dictator” thus reminding us of the diplomatic balancing act that is necessary to live harmoniously in your employer’s home and also positioning herself as someone who is mindful of others’ feelings. For her, what is important is that she is told to regard the house as her home (line 9) and as such she can (within reason) do what she likes.

Again, it could be argued that this story is not really a story. At first glance it has no complicating event, it has no real drama. However, the complicating event is the placing of the flowers on the table. This seemingly banal act, in the context of the story, could lead to a very different conclusion. In fact, Lucia voices alternative responses from her employer’s daughter Alessia; (“I don’t like the colour of the flowers, I don’t like the vase”). She is aware that her actions could be interpreted as an interference, as overstepping a boundary, particularly as she shares the house, not only with the elderly lady she is caring for but also Alessia. However, the way in which she tells the story allows her to position herself as someone who is aware of the complex dynamics of fitting into this multi-generational household. One of the ways in which she does this can be seen in
line 16 where she uses a construction with herself as the direct object (‘gave me the push’) which has the effect of making her seem more passive and less confrontational. Another way is that the only direct speech in this story is spoken by Alessia. Lucia waits for permission to move around the ornaments but she does not insist on anything or justify her actions. This is very different in tone to Alina’s story which is confrontational with repetition of direct demands (“I want”). Lucia is quiet here. She says nothing in the narrated event but she gets what she wants.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on the analysis of nine stories which each aim to provide a more detailed insight into the lives of carers in Bologna. In using this approach I was interested in finding out what this micro-analysis could bring to the project. In particular I was interested in whether there is evidence for carers using culturally available discourses to construct a collective identity as a foreign carer. All the stories told in the interviews are told by individuals, coming from different cultural (and sometimes linguistic) backgrounds and who have had different experiences in Italy. Therefore it would be impossible to say that my conclusions could be replicated for all foreign carers in Italy. Having said that, looking at the data here it appears that some discourses do seem to be particularly prevalent and taking these discourses into account can give a better insight into the way carers construct, maintain and refute identities in relation to culturally dominant storylines.

Identifying commonly occurring discursive prototypes is one way of better understanding the stances that speakers in a particular community take. Looking at how they are employed can reveal more about how a speaker wishes to be understood. When prevalent discourses are negative then it is unsurprising that they will be somewhat resisted in the stories which are told. Crafting a positive identity as an expert or an entrepreneur is one way in which the women move away from the negative discourses discussed earlier in the chapter and also go some way toward changing what it means to be a carer.
Presenting a cohesive identity within the interview context also presents problems for the interviewees when the constructed identity clashes with what is socially acceptable or advisable to tell. Certainly, most of the women I interviewed spoke largely in positive terms about their current posts, although past experiences may have been more problematic. However, it should be remembered that, although I was not a future employer, I was also not a trusted friend and for this reason, I believe that the stories I was told were different to those that would probably be told to close friends and family members without fear of criticism. That is not to say that they were not valid stories in their own right. Rather, each story can be understood as being constructed specifically for that particular audience and at that particular moment and that has been taken into account in my analysis.
7. Conclusion

In the previous two chapters, I considered the interviews undertaken with the eleven women in the study, first of all by looking across the data at the reoccurring themes, and then by analysing a number of stories (both 'big' and 'small') which were recounted. In the conclusion to this thesis, I have three main areas of focus. First of all, I return to my initial research questions and consider the extent to which my analysis has provided answers. Secondly, I reflect on the research process as a whole and assess the efficacy of my analytical approach as well as the other key elements of the project, and finally, I discuss directions for future research in this area.

7.1 Summary of findings

The overall aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the migration experience of female foreign care workers currently in Bologna. My initial research question: “What is it like to be a carer in Bologna?” opened up my interest in what was and continues to be a very relevant and debated topic in modern Italy, namely the large-scale reliance on foreign migrant workers to perform essential elder-care work. However, the challenge I set myself with this project was to examine both the nature of the migration experience and also how it is articulated by the women themselves. Therefore, I narrowed down my focus of interest and revised my research questions to ask:

1. “What are the stories behind the decision to migrate to Italy as a care worker?”

2. “What can the ways in which these stories are narrated tell us about the experience of being a care worker in Bologna nowadays?”

3. “How do the narrators manage and construct their identities in relation to wider narratives which circulate in our society?”

I also added a fourth research question in order to reflect on the methods chosen:
4. “How successful is Positioning as an analytical tool for analysing narrative in interviews?”

In order to answer these questions I sought to critically engage with the stories told by the women in an interview context and to do this through using a closely-analytical approach, which could take into account the interactional nature of the storytelling event. In this way, I believe that my research fits into the existing body of literature regarding migration in Italy but also contributes something new to this debate, both in terms of providing new knowledge in the way of more up-to-date findings in a field, which is in constant flux, and also in terms of increasing our understanding of the migration experience by taking this particular analytical approach to my focus on stories.

With regard to the first of these research questions, the interview data gathered was largely in line with other studies carried out in the context of northern Italy. As regards the choice of Italy as a destination and the move itself, the reasons given for migrating were predominantly economic, especially for the carers who had children who needed to study or who needed financial help as they sought to leave home and embark on their adult lives. This reinforces Facchini's study (2010), which found that around 90% of carers coming from within Europe cited the search for higher wages or the need to leave behind high unemployment rates in their country of origin as their primary reason for the move.

The reasons for coming to Bologna were more diverse. Several of the women came directly to Bologna due to having family members or contacts already there to facilitate the process of moving and finding a job. Others moved to Bologna sometime after having already worked in another part of the country (most commonly further south in the Campania region). Again, this move was often undertaken at the behest of a family member or friend who needed someone to temporarily substitute for them when they returned home for a break. A secondary motive for moving to Bologna for some included the perception that it is easier to gain the necessary permits to “legalize” one's working status in the north (because more employers are willing to provide proper contracts) and also that having a legal contract would lead to other benefits such as sick leave and pension provision. Finally, another important reason for the move was to obtain higher wages, which is again a view which is supported by others' research on
this topic which continues to reveal that wages in the north of the country outstrip wages in the south, partly due to the higher cost of living in the north which necessitates higher wages, but also because more employers adhere to the level of pay for a carer as set out in a legal contract. A decade ago, indications (Antonini & Lombardi, 2005) pointed to a 200 euro shortfall in wages between carers’ pay in the south compared to the north of Italy and it seems as though there is an even greater difference between the two areas now. A survey conducted on behalf of A CLI Col f e Patronato A CLI (IREF, 2014:2) interviewed 837 care workers and found that the average monthly wage was 900 euros in the North and just 540 euros in the South, with carers living in rural areas being the worst off.

The women in my study were also fairly typical as regards their approach to finding jobs with personal recommendations and word-of-mouth being overwhelmingly the most popular options. When this was not possible, it seems that using an agency to help with the job search was still not regarded as an attractive alternative, largely due to the costs involved. Another unifying element among the women was their approach to language learning, which was on the whole self-led, with long working hours making language course attendance difficult to arrange.

To recap, so far the findings from my small-scale study were very much in line with other wider studies regarding carers in Italy. However, I believe that a more complete picture emerges when we take into account the close analysis of the stories and it is here that I answered the second and third of my research questions. The focus on small stories helped me to answer my second research question: each small recounted incident shed some light on different aspects of the job which, together with the thematic analysis in Chapter 5, provided a comprehensive picture of what being a carer in Bologna entails.

My second and third research question were also answered in part by my use of the badanti narratives. I identified discursive prototypes which circulate regarding carers in Italy as well as other master narratives which regard macro themes such as motherhood and immigration. This enabled me to see how the narratives were used as discursive resources by the women and to what extent
they found them relevant in their own identity construction. This was especially clear in their resistance of negative discourses regarding *badanti*.

### 7.2 Evaluating the research approach

As far as the theoretical basis of this project is concerned, this thesis contributes to narrative research as it combines an interest in the “how” of talk, not only the “what”. In other words, the interview context here is “active” and the focus is on both the content and the “interactional, narrative procedures of knowledge production” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). This is why I decided that it was also important to assess the efficacy of the methods chosen and so here I discuss the answer to my fourth research question.

Using positioning as an analytical tool enabled me to examine different levels of storytelling. In particular, by separating out what was told in the narrated event and the storytelling event we obtain a more nuanced view of these very individual experiences. As Deppermann comments, “the understanding of ‘positioning’ has become increasingly empirical, situated and interactive” (Deppermann, 2013:6) making it ideally suited to this sort of approach. By using positioning analysis, I saw how my own presence in the interview context could and did influence the process. Far from being an “invisible” bystander, my contributions to the conversation became part of the reciprocal identity and story construction process.

Moreover, including “small stories” in the analysis greatly opened up the analytical possibilities. After deliberating over my definition of narrative analysis and what constitutes a story, I realised how important small stories were for my data. While the stories told in my data may not seem particularly dramatic, even seemingly banal events such as the placing of a vase on a table (see section 6.4.9) can be seen as the catalyst for improving a relationship, just as going out dancing with friends (section 6.4.7) can be the starting point for constructing an identity which contrasts with what we generally perceive a *badante* to be like.

Taking everything into account, I consider this approach to be useful for a better understanding of the lived-experiences of foreign care workers as it highlights aspects of carers’ lives which do not easily fit into the categories which are often
the focus of larger-scale, thematic studies. However, there are also some limitations in the methods I chose which I will now discuss.

### 7.3 Limitations of the approach

The first aspect concerns data collection. By using “snowball” sampling, I was able to get in contact with people who were interested in the study and also who, I believe, felt they could trust me to a certain extent because we had a friend (or an employer or an acquaintance) in common. However, this also meant that almost all of the women I spoke to (except Ioana) had been in Italy for a number of years and were relatively settled, legal and so were talking about experiences which had happened some years ago. Moreover, my interviewees came from a relatively small number of countries (mostly European, one South American and no Africans at all) and were all female, whereas I know that there are also male care workers (albeit in much smaller numbers) working in the city. Thus, I am aware that my sample is not representative of all the carers working in Bologna. I felt that the importance of building trust with potential interviewees for the types of interviews I wanted to carry out outweighed the need to try to gather a more random sample of participants, which could have been done possibly by advertising for interested parties through agencies or at local churches, for example. This may also be something to bear in mind for future research.

The second aspect concerns the methodological approach. Part of this entailed the identification of *badanti* narratives which I believe are drawn upon in the interviews. However, I am aware that my interpretation of what constitutes such a narrative is subjective; especially with a small sample of interviewees. Furthermore, it is not always easy to decide on a definition of a prototype or, indeed, to understand whether it is a widely-accepted discourse or a counter narrative. For example, in Lucia’s story of dreaming of travelling as a young girl (section 6.4.6), I identify her story as a counter narrative precisely because of the context in which it occurs. (It follows my presumption that she must have experienced difficulties in her migration experience). However, that is not to say that all such a narratives will always belong in this category. In the last few years several researchers have pointed to the emergence of new narratives regarding
both a different positioning of the women who leave their home countries to come to work in Italy and of the women who employ them. For example, in a 2011 newspaper article (Garofano, 2011) which reported on a study looking into how carers and employers perceive each other, Caterina Arcidiacono, a psychology professor, reported that whilst female Italian employers tended to consider the carers they employed as victims of circumstance who needed their help, the carers described themselves as having strong characters, being brave and knowingly and willingly having left their homes in order to feed their children and help their families. This alternative construction of the migration story is also echoed in Amistà’s interviews with a Ukrainian and a Burkinabe woman in Italy and Lulle’s research into Latvian carers in Guernsey (Amistà, 2010; Lulle, 2014). Although the contexts are very different, both researchers point to the possibility of care work being reframed as an opportunity, and perhaps a way of escaping from unwelcome traditional family roles. Giving the high level of exploitation and cash-in-hand work which is undertaken in the care sector, the development of this kind of narrative is particularly important as it could encourage care work to be regarded as a profession and be remunerated accordingly. This could also be an interesting direction for further research.

Thirdly, as outlined above, the ability of positioning analysis to facilitate a differentiation between the narrated event and the storytelling event was a definite advantage for taking into account all the speakers present and their role in the story construction process. However, it was not always easy to differentiate between the levels and, at certain moments, the addition of the third level seemed redundant. De Fina suggests using the third level to examine identities which are not explicitly referenced in the data but “negotiate less locally produced senses of who they are, i.e. their membership into social identities, moral identities etc.” (De Fina, 2013:43). In most cases, the wider discourses which were referenced were explicitly present in the data at either

\[20\]

«Da parte delle donne italiane prevale una visione ‘caritatevole’, una tendenza a considerarle donne sfortunate, vittime spesso costrette a subire angherie da parte dei propri mariti. Donne costrette ad abbandonare il proprio Paese di origine per costruirsi un’altra vita altrove. Le badanti, al contrario, si considerano donne forti, coraggiose, che hanno saputo e voluto lasciare la propria casa, che, con il proprio sacrificio, riescono a dar da mangiare ai propri figli, a far vivere più serenamente le proprie famiglie» (Garofano, 2011)
Level 1 or 2, although I accept that this may not always be the case. De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2011) also concede that the link between master discourses and fine-grained analysis of the story is not necessarily clear, asking, “How does level 3 differ from previous accounts of positioning that have been criticized as static and operating a priori of actual storytelling data?” (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2011:164). This is a problem that I grappled with and which I sought to solve by bringing my knowledge of the local context to my analysis of the data. However, I feel that there is a fine line between identifying master discourses which are effectively present in the interview data or in other sources (e.g. the media) and falling into the trap of imposing pre-conceived ideas on to the data. Although I believe it is possible to successfully employ Level 3 positioning, I am also aware that such an approach may be regarded as not being robust enough unless it is successfully supported by evidence external to the analyst and that the close analysis should be supported by ethnographic knowledge rather than being shaped by it (Deppermann, 2015).

Fourthly, in planning this project I was aware that one possible drawback would be that for all the carers interviewed and myself Italian is a second language. Narrative analysis always entails a degree of interpretation on the part of the analyst but it could be argued that this use of a second language added an additional layer of interpretation, which could have been avoided. Certainly, I know that there were moments of misunderstanding during the interviews and I also believe that certain cultural references were not fully understood as they are not part of my own repertoire. For example, Olena’s continued reference to a Ukrainian (and Soviet) culture of hard work, whilst understandable to me, was also outside my sphere of reference. This is not unexpected; Deppermann (2015:383) warns that “there may be participant displays that speak only to those who possess relevant ethnographic background knowledge”. On the other hand, I believe that coming to the interview as a non-native speaker myself also had some positive outcomes. It enabled the women to speak more openly without being inhibited about their own language skills, indeed in some places we discussed the meanings of the words in Italian and helped each other be understood. It also meant that I was in a better position to understand some speakers who made errors as I am both used to hearing the same errors from my own students and making them myself. It is never possible (or indeed desirable)
for a researcher to start off from a position in which she believes she is completely able to interpret exactly what each speaker means. There is always a degree of interpretation and I do not believe the language “barrier” hindered the project and its analysis. Having said that, it is clear that each of the stories is very much anchored in the time and the space in which it was told; another context and another language, even if dealing with the same topics, would yield very different stories.

7.4 Possible further research directions

In addition to some of the suggestions already given above, there are several areas of research which I think merit further investigation but which were beyond the scope of this current research project. Firstly, although I interviewed carers of different ages, I do not have a large enough sample of participants to enable me to investigate how much the stories told by younger carers differ to those told by their older colleagues. Whilst it is clear that the younger carers had different experiences to their older colleagues, it would be interesting to see in more detail the ways in which they differed. For example: are younger carers as aware of the badanti narratives? Do they feel they apply to them as well or do they not identify as badanti? Do they recognise the entrepreneur/expert narrative as part of their migration decision?

As far as the methodology is concerned, I would be interested in investigating whether modifying the approach to positioning (for example, using a method which does not regard Level 3 as a separate entity) would still produce similar results. An alternative model developed by Lucius-Hoene and Depermann (2004) posits a more detailed, dual-level approach to positioning based on Bamberg’s first two levels. In this way, any reference to wider societal discourses is regarded as being referenced only at a local level.

I also believe that positioning as a theory is currently underused in the analysis of stories elicited in interview contexts where there is still an underlying tendency to treat the interview as a monologic speech event. Indeed, when I first started interviewing participants, I attempted to encourage my interviewees to speak without myself “interfering” too much in the process. I tried to become a
silent presence, to write myself out of the interview altogether. Re-listening to
the recordings, I quickly found that not only was I not silent (I contributed
extensively giving my own experiences, talking about my opinions on Bologna
and living in Italy, and even when I was trying not to speak I could not help giving
interjections of encouragement (e.g. *mm, sì*) without which I felt my attitude was
too cold and uninterested) but my presence (and the presence of other people)
in the interview context could not realistically be ignored. Consequently, I began
to look at forms of narrative analysis which would embrace the interactive aspect
of the interviews. As Bamberg points out “interviews, just like any other talk-in-
interaction, are no innocent windows into participants’ interiors” (Bamberg,
2004:365) and as such, they are particular moments in time and place which
cannot be divorced from the context in which they occurred. Positioning theory
is frequently used to analyse so-called naturally occurring data but is underused
in the interview context. However, in areas where it is difficult to gather data in
other ways, such as in the present study, it can be fruitfully employed. Positioning
allows the researcher to take into account all of the participants and all of the
influences on the stories that are told, which is also a necessary step in
understanding the role of the interviewer in shaping the data. Presser comments,

*The researcher’s goal is not to emancipate the authentic story of the narrator – none exists – but rather to expose as much as she can of the relations that influence the construction of the story that is told* (Presser, 2005:2087).

Finally, there are some topic areas which were only briefly mentioned in the
interviews but which merit further investigation in their own right. One of these
regards the mental health of foreign carers. Several of the women talked about
how hard care work is mentally and how this can lead to depression or indeed a
complete breakdown. There is now a growing recognition of the psychological
stress that carers face, especially when isolated geographically and linguistically.
This has led to the coining of a new phrase, “la sindrome Italia” or the Italy
syndrome. As well as facing problems at work, carers risk falling into depression
when they return home and experience problems re-integrating into family life.
Although this topic and the need to care for the carers is now being discussed to
some extent in the media\textsuperscript{21}, it is an area which is still under researched and which merits further academic interest.

\textsuperscript{21}For example, on 29 July 2014 Pope Francis recognised the valuable work that carers do in Italian society with the following tweet: "Apprezziamo di più il lavoro dei collaboratori domestici e dei badanti: è un servizio prezioso" (Let’s all appreciate more the work done by domestic workers and carers: it is a valuable service).
8. Appendices

8.1 Participant information sheet

Progetto di ricerca – Le esperienze di badanti ed anziani a Bologna

Lei è stata invitata a partecipare ad un progetto di ricerca. Prima di decidere se vuole partecipare, Le chiedo di leggere questo foglio informativo e di chiedermi se ha delle domande. Grazie!

Vorrei presentarmi. Mi chiamo Catherine Blundell e sono dipendente dell’Università di Bologna dove insegno inglese ma attualmente sto svolgendo un dottorato di ricerca in linguistica presso il Dipartimento di Lingue dell’Università di Southampton, Gran Bretagna.

Obiettivo e descrizione della ricerca
La mia ricerca, di carattere linguistico, riguarda la vita di badanti a Bologna. Avrei bisogno di intervistare badanti per capire meglio la loro scelta di venire a Bologna e come si trovano a vivere in città.

Durata e modalità della ricerca
E’ previsto che questa fase di raccolta dati durerà fino alla fine di 2013. Durante questo periodo vorrei intervistare ogni partecipante almeno una volta. Con il suo consenso, è possibile che Le richieda un secondo incontro. Il progetto consiste nell’intervistare dei partecipanti e ogni intervista sarà registrata (con il consenso dell’interlocutore). Tutto ciò che viene registrato è strettamente confidenziale (questo impegno fa parte del protocollo scientifico dell’Università di Southampton). Il materiale ottenuto sarà utilizzato per la mia tesi di dottorato ma i partecipanti rimarranno anonimi (così come tutti i riferimenti alle persone coinvolte).

Partecipazione volontaria e riservatezza
La partecipazione personale è del tutto volontaria. C’è sempre la possibilità di ritirarsi in qualsiasi momento dallo studio. In caso di ritiro dallo studio conserverò le informazioni raccolte fino a quel momento almeno che non mi è stato richiesto di distruggerla. L’anagrafica personale non comparirà in nessuna pubblicazione o relazione riguardante la ricerca.

Per contattarmi:
c.i.blundell@soton.ac.uk
cell: xxx xxxxxx
Per eventuali domande o problemi è anche possibile contattare:
Prof. Patrick Stevenson     Dott.ssa Martina Prude
School of Humanities        Research Governance Corporate Services
University of Southampton   Bldg 37, Level 4, Rm 405
Highfield, Southampton      University of Southampton
SO17 1BF Inghilterra         SO17 1BJ Inghilterra
Email: prs1@soton.ac.uk     Email: rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk

In allegato: trova il modulo di consenso alla partecipazione che va firmato da Lei.
8.2 Participant consent form

Titolo della tesi: Le esperienze di badanti a Bologna
Nome della ricercatrice: Catherine Blundell
Numero assegnato al partecipante per questo progetto: 

(barrare la casella)

1. Confermo di aver letto e capito tutte le informazioni indicate nel foglio datato .......... (versione........) per la ricerca sovraindicata e di avere potuto chiedere chiarimenti sul progetto stesso.

2. Confermo che la mia partecipazione è volontaria e che posso ritirarmi dal progetto in qualsiasi momento, senza dovere alcuna spiegazione.

3. Accetto di prendere parte al progetto di ricerca.

4. Accetto la registrazione audio dell'intervista.

.......................................................... ..........................................................
Nome del partecipante Data Firma

.......................................................... ..........................................................
Ricercatrice Data Firma
## 8.3 Table of transcript extracts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extract</th>
<th>Principal speaker</th>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Location on audio recording</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Vira</td>
<td>1-14</td>
<td>00:02:08 – 00:02:47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Vira</td>
<td>15-68</td>
<td>00:02:47 – 00:05:32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>1-15</td>
<td>00:08:00 – 00:09:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>16-44</td>
<td>00:10:23 – 00:12:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Vira</td>
<td>1-70</td>
<td>00:13:58 – 00:18:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Vira</td>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>00:18:18 – 00:18:41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Alina</td>
<td>1-58</td>
<td>00:07:32 – 00:09:57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>Sofiya</td>
<td>1-37</td>
<td>01:01:23 – 01:03:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>Sofiya</td>
<td>38-61</td>
<td>01:03:12 - 01:04:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sofiya</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>01:04:50 - 01:05:05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lucia</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>00:39:11 – 00:39:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lucia</td>
<td>1-28</td>
<td>00:42:24 – 00:44:03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Eugenia</td>
<td>1-19</td>
<td>00:33:27 – 00:34:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Olena</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>00:23:35 – 00:24:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Lucia</td>
<td>1-18</td>
<td>00:11:59 – 00:13:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.4 Transcription conventions

(.) indicates a tiny gap between utterances
(2.0) indicates, in seconds, the length of the gap between utterances
[ ] indicates the onset of overlap (between two or more speakers)
] indicates the end of the overlap
:: indicates that the previous sound was elongated
? indicates question with rising pitch
↑↓ indicate shifts into higher or lower pitch
○○ indicates a much quieter utterance
normalità indicates a louder or emphatic utterance
{} indicates non-lexical phenomena
@ indicates laughter
[...] indicates utterance that cannot be heard
[not] indicates my guess at an utterance that cannot clearly be heard
• indicates an audible inhalation or exhalation
> < left/right angle brackets in this direction indicate that a section of speech is at a faster pace
<> left/right angle brackets in this direction indicate that a section of speech is at a slower pace
9. Bibliography


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