

“THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME”: FEMALE EU MIGRANTS IN BELGRADE

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ABSTRACT

“There’s No Place Like Home”: Female EU Migrants in Belgrade

The subject of this paper is the anthropological analysis of narratives of female migrants from the EU who are living in Belgrade. The analysis uses the approaches of “transnationalism from below” and home studies. The paper addresses the question of what is home for EU citizens living outside the EU. The aim is to cast increased light on middle-class migrations from more developed countries to a less developed country. The main results show that the notion of home is intricately linked with the interviewees’ understanding of their transmigrant position and their “bifocal lives”. The study draws attention to educated and skilled EU migrants as a compelling research topic.

KEYWORDS: transnationalism from below, female EU transmigrants, home, bifocal lives, Belgrade

IZVLEČEK

»Dom je samo eden«: Ženske priseljenke iz EU v Beogradu

Tema članka je antropološka analiza pričevanj ženskih priseljenk iz EU, ki živijo v Beogradu. Analiza uporablja dva pristopa – »transnacionalizem od spodaj« in študije pojmovanja doma. Članek odgovarja na vprašanje, kaj državljanke Evropske unije, ki živijo zunaj nje, pomeni dom. Njegov namen je osvetliti migracije srednjega razreda, torej iz bolj razvitih v manj razvite države. Rezultati analize kažejo, da je pojem doma na zapleten način povezan z intervjuvankino percepcijo njenega transmigrantskega statusa in »bifokalnega življenja«. Članek opozarja, da je tudi življenje šolanih in strokovno usposobljenih priseljenk iz držav EU zelo zanimiva raziskovalna tematika.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: transnacionalizem od spodaj, transmigracije žensk iz EU, dom, bifokalna življenja, Beograd

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INTRODUCTION

Migrations, short or long term, internal or external, are becoming part of the life experience of more and more people in the world. As a result, “who is a migrant” is still an open question, while this term has various meanings for a wide variety of people (Koser 2007: 16). Conversely, it is also hard to decide in which cases a person stops being a migrant. Koser mentions that returning home or becoming a citizen of a new country can serve this purpose (2007: 16).

Most migration studies focus on poor and uneducated migrants living in affluent countries. The transnationalism approach was developed and has been used for describing migration from so-called, third world countries to first world countries; such as immigrants in the USA or economic immigrants and guest workers in Western Europe and the EU (Basch et al. 1994; Simsek Çağlar 1994; Portes et al. 1999; Waldinger 2008; Boccagni 2010; Waldinger 2011). Using the example of female migrants in Serbia and their perception of home, I challenge the concept of transmigration. Can the life experiences of affluent migrants in less developed countries be interpreted likewise as transnational? I have based this research on the research of “transnationalism from below” (Guarnizo, Smith 1998) or “micro-levels of transnationalism”; as such, the activities of people in everyday life and their lived experiences, their motivations, and participation in transnational social spaces (Povrzanović Frykman 2008: 151).

Furthermore, I use “home” as an analytical concept. Thus, “home” is defined and interpreted as a residence, “a spatial metaphor for relationships to a variety of places”, and a way of being in the world (Manzo 2003: 56). Several studies (Ahmed et al. 2003; Golob 2009; Al-Ali, Koser 2011: 4; Kostić 2014) answer what is a home for (transnational) migrants, students, and transnational communities living, working, or studying in, or outside, Europe. Generally, however, the focus is on transnational, international, or irregular migrants living in a more developed country. In this respect, I investigate a less researched strand of the anthropology of migration, that of middle-class migration from highly or more developed countries, such as EU countries, to a less developed country, such as Serbia.

While there is a growing interest among domestic anthropologists in researching the Serbian Diaspora (Lukić Krstanović 2014), EU migrants in Serbia are rarely studied (Blagojević 2014; Brujić 2016; 2018). Furthermore, as far as my knowledge goes, scholarly research focusing on middle-class migration, especially in and to Southeast Europe, international skilled and professional migrations in Europe, migrations of EU citizens outside the EU, and skilled female EU migrants, is scarce (see Bönisch Brednich 2002; Ahmed et al. 2003; Favell et al. 2009: 7; Golob 2009; Kofman, Raghuram 2009: 1–2; Kofman 2012; Kostić 2014; Kožar Rosulnik et al. 2016; Čapo, Kelemen 2017: 20–21).

During February and March 2018, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with eight female citizens from the EU who are living in Belgrade about their lives in Serbia. The main aim of this paper is to cast more light on middle-class,

female, skilled migration, and migrations from well-off countries to a less developed country. Contrary to the theoretical foundations of the transnational approach, these results show that the affluent EU interviewees have rich transnational experiences and use transnational strategies in their lives.

THE MAIN CONCEPTS: TRANSMIGRANTS AND THEIR NOTION OF "HOME"

Within the transnational migration approach, the term "transmigrant" is often discussed and frequently used to describe migrants with transnational experiences. Simply put, transmigrants preserve transnational connections and participate in transnational activities. They "live their lives across national borders", have multiple networks with the country of residence and country of birth through different family, religious and cultural ties, and economic, social, and political activities (Glick Schiller et al. 1995: 48–54). Their "here and there" or "bifocal" lives reveal their "ongoing sense of double belonging" (Vertovec 2004: 974, 975). As a social phenomenon, migrant transnationalism may include two levels (Boccagni 2012: 297):

Identitarian-attitudinal level ("bifocal" identities): economic domain (consumption of home-country goods); political domain (patriotism, long-term nationalism, birth country's citizenship and attachment to political parties in the country of origin, institutions, and news); and socio-cultural domain (long-term nostalgia, social identification with co-nationals abroad or in the motherland, self-identification with the culture, art, folklore of the birth country, "myth of return").

Relational-behavioral level: social domain (relationships and practices which connect both societies); economic domain (sending remittances, money, and gifts or investing in the country of origin, circular international labor migration); political domain (political activism and voting for the birth country, dual citizenship) and socio-cultural domain (visits and regular communication from a distance with family or friends in the home country, participation or support to the motherland or diaspora organizations).

Migrants, especially members of transnational communities, have multiple homes, while they can "feel 'at home' in two or more places (or not feel at home anywhere)" (King 2002: 102). Thus, Brah (1996) emphasizes "the double, triple, or multi-placedness of 'home'" for migrants. Hence, in an attempt to define a home, new approaches to home and migration studies emphasize several aspects. Firstly, there has been a shift from defining "home" as a house. As a socio- and psycho-spatial entity, home engenders social, psychological, and emotive meanings for its owners (Easthope 2004: 134).

Using the example of Latinos in the USA, Waldinger explains the importance of home for transmigrants. The majority of them have a strong, but symbolic and subjective attachment to their respective homelands and their ethnic group. The surveyed people stressed that national ties are important to them, but they rarely plan to move back home (Waldinger 2008: 10–21). “[H]ome’ has commonly been linked to ‘family’, ‘community’ or ‘homeland/nation’” (Al-Ali, Koser 2011: 6). On the other hand, over time, the meaning of home can change or be attached to other places. Waldinger (2008: 24–25) notices that the majority of respondents plan to stay in the USA and that, after several years, fewer people connect their countries of birth with the notion of “‘real homeland.’” It is similar for their offspring, especially bilingual children, who likewise do not plan to move back nor think of their countries of origin or their parents’ origin as their “real home” (Waldinger 2008: 22). Therefore, in the following sections, I analyze the narratives of women living in Belgrade, focusing on their understanding of themselves as migrants and where they feel at home.

FEMALE CITIZENS FROM THE EU IN BELGRADE: RESEARCH RESULTS

I acknowledge the importance of studying migration from the perspective of focusing on everyday life and peoples’ experiences through the analysis of migrants’ narratives (Bönisch Brednich 2002: 64; Kožar Rosulnik 2016: 31). I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with eight women originating from Austria, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Germany, Slovenia, and the UK, aged between 34 and 67 years at the time of the interviews.¹ Six of them are married to Serbs, one is divorced from a Serb, and one is in a relationship with a Serb. Although the majority mentioned “family and/or love reasons” for their moving or coming to Belgrade, two came mainly for economic reasons and later met their future Serbian husbands. In other words, “love, economic, and lifestyle migrations” are intertwined. All interlocutors speak Serbian fluently, and socialize and spend their free time mainly with their Serbian friends. Except for one informant, all the women are highly educated.

Simone is a German living in Belgrade since 1999. She lived in Germany, England, and Hungary before coming to Serbia to work. Simone is now working primarily as a German teacher. She travels a lot with her husband and very often visits her family and friends in Germany. Simone feels like a visitor and an observer in both Serbia and Germany.

Of course, I’m a foreigner. Of course, I’m not a Serb. I was brought up in the German way, and I notice abroad and now in Serbia, how German I am. Despite that, I learn every day, and I believe that my German upbringing more and more fits the Serbian

1 Pen names were used in this paper. Except for two interviews, which were held in German (with Simone) and English (with Florence), the others were in Serbian.

circumstances. [...] I like this observing position. Here, I feel like I do in Germany, not foreign, but distanced and observant.

In one of our usual conversations, Simone once explained to me her self-identification: "I used to say that I'm a migrant from the EU [laughs]."

Florence is a British pensioner who settled in 2002 in Serbia. During the 1980s, she worked for a Yugoslav firm in London and visited and worked in Yugoslavia. Although she is now officially retired, she occasionally works as an English teacher. Florence sees herself neither as a migrant in Serbia nor as a Serbian citizen. "I just feel like I'm somebody who lives here, but who doesn't have a voice here. So, perhaps I should shut up, you know [laughs]."

Although she does not have Serbian citizenship, she does not feel like a British citizen either. Florence thinks that British immigration policies and politics are devaluing British citizenship, and she eventually started to dislike living in the UK. "I feel British citizens are treated by their own country as very second class."

Klaudia is an Austrian lawyer who moved with her family to Belgrade in 2002 due to her husband's job. Currently, Klaudia does not have a permanent job but works on several international projects. She feels like a foreigner in Serbia, and likewise, like a foreigner in Austria. However, it is perhaps a different mode of "being foreign"; she feels like an Austrian who does not belong to Austria anymore. She is the only interviewee to have attained Serbian citizenship. However, it does not make her Serbian. Citizenship facilitates her residence in Serbia, allows her to vote in Serbia, "to do at least something [for improving the political situation in Serbia]" and to travel to Russia without a visa. "I still feel like a foreigner here because being a foreigner here is not a bad thing. (...) Nobody has problems with me being here [in Serbia], they [the Serbs] even like foreigners."

In Austria, she notices many things which she did not see when she was living there. For instance, she criticizes the practice of showing off and buying expensive goods in her hometown.

When I go for a visit, then I notice that everyone has the most expensive coffee machine; everyone has a pool [...] and then you are under stress that you have to earn that money [to pay for them]. I mean, you have debts because you thought that your neighbors needed to see that you have all that. [...] of course, that's stupid, but you probably notice that only when you're out of the system.

She finds her observing position and the opportunity to see both sides as advantageous and a "possibility to have the best of both sides".

Alex is French and works in Belgrade as a dance instructor. In 2003, she and her family moved to Serbia because of her husband's job. As a child, Alex lived in France, Venezuela, Senegal, and Morocco. As she explains, she is accustomed to moving and is not nostalgic towards places. For her, family and friends are the only important

factor. When asked about her perception of her status, Alex explained that she feels like “[...] a welcomed extraterrestrial, here and there. [...] I like to observe, I always observe. So, I never feel like I am 100% involved, enough, of course, to have friends and so, I’m more engaged in individual relationships than in society as such.”

Anita is a Finnish woman, who, in 2002, because of her husband’s job moved to Budapest and after that to Belgrade where she dedicated her time to raising her children. As she recently divorced and is having problems finding a financially sustainable job in Serbia, she plans to go back to her hometown in Finland. Like other informants, Anita likes Serbian friendliness and communicativeness. As she explains, it is uncommon for Finnish people who do not know each other to start a conversation in the market, shops, etc. However, she always felt like she did not entirely belong in Serbia. “I even liked that, since the political situation here is not the best. I was always thinking ‘all right, this is not my country’, but it is of my children. Somehow, I never applied to be a Serb; I wanted to remain only Finnish. I felt I wasn’t, let my children be both, but for me, it is enough to be only Finnish [laughs].”

Anneli is an Estonian musician in a relationship with a Serb. At the end of 2016, during her first tourist visit to Belgrade, she unintentionally found a temporary professional engagement in Belgrade. Before coming to Belgrade, she had either studied or worked in Tallinn, Saint Petersburg, Modena, Manchester, and lastly, London. She explains: “I came for work, stayed because of myself. There is a great chance that I will return to Estonia because of my roots!”

Anneli feels neither like a migrant nor a foreigner but “[...] really good. Until now, this is the country [other than her own] that has accepted me the best”.

Maja is a Slovenian photographer who has traveled throughout the world. At the end of 2015, she quit her well-paid job in Ljubljana and came to Belgrade to be in a relationship with a Serb whom she briefly knew from before. Currently, she is unemployed, although she occasionally works as a photographer. Maja’s foreign status does not influence her well-being. When asked whether she feels like a migrant or a foreigner, Maja promptly replied: “I feel more or less a local here. Perhaps sometimes, because of the language, someone notices [that I’m not from here]. I have an accent; I can’t hide it!”

Maria is a Greek who runs an NGO in Belgrade. In 2004, she married a Serb, and they spent the following year in England during her graduate studies. Afterward, they came back to live in Serbia, but they visit Greece frequently and work during the summer season in Majorca. Maria, likewise, does not define her status or identity within the scope of migrants’ or foreigners’ experiences. “I feel here at home; I don’t feel anything special. [...] I feel that people here respect me because I come from Greece and I feel comfortable here, I like to live here.”

Although Anneli, Klaudia, and Alex followed their husbands by migrating to Serbia, they first agreed together to see if they would like it there. After her divorce, Anita decided to return, taking her younger sons with her to finish their education in Finland. Maja came to Serbia because she did not want to separate her future

husband from his child (from a first marriage). Their migration paths are connected with their family and decisions on mutual life or work. All the women have family and friends in their countries of origin with whom they are in contact and whom they visit. On the other hand, the intensity and scope of relationships and connections vary significantly and change over time among the interlocutors. For instance, when Simone came to Serbia at the end of the last century, she received her salary on her German bank account. However, in that period, there were no ATMs in Serbia, so occasionally she had to fly back to Germany to withdraw her money. Alex did not own any real estate in France but has recently bought a plot of land upon which it is currently illegal to build anything. This lot connects her to France because she must invest both time and energy to obtain the necessary permits and legal documents to enable possible construction. Maja rents out her apartment in Slovenia, and Klaudia owns an apartment in Austria. Florence receives her British pension. Anita is an active member of the Finnish-Serbian Society, and Maja obtained her first job in Serbia thanks to the Slovenian Society in Belgrade. The four women who were pregnant in Serbia wanted to deliver their babies in their countries of birth because, according to them, the health system functions better, and they felt more secure there.

In the following pages, I will suggest that the life experiences of female EU citizens living in Belgrade can be interpreted in the light of the transmigration phenomenon.

FEMALE EU MIGRANTS AS TRANSMIGRANTS

There is a broad assumption that transmigrants and migrants, in general, are from poorer countries moving to wealthier countries (see Chambers 1994). The middle-class, educated women from the EU countries living in Serbia do not fit into this traditional model of transmigrants. All interlocutors acknowledge that in Serbia, they have personal and family lives of a higher quality than they either had or would have in the EU countries (Brujić 2018). This perception is even true for women who have smaller personal incomes in Serbia than they had in the EU, as is the case for Maja or Anneli. Only Anita must return to Finland, as she no longer has a stable source of income. However, she admits that "it is not at all easy to leave this country. This is a very emotional country [...], all my friends who have come to visit have been thrilled." Secondly, apart from family and friendship ties, my interviewees do not sustain regular institutional, religious, political, or cultural ties with their countries of origin or with Serbia. They do not participate in economic transactions such as sending remittances, gifts, etc. Only due to her friend's plea, Klaudia recently became a member of a small theatre in Austria and paid an annual fee to help this theatre survive. Nonetheless, she will not be involved in its activities because she lives in Serbia. Her children were members of a mountain club in Austria in order to attend its summer camp. These and similar cross-border activities of my interlocutors and their family members lack the regularity and routine involvement which

are crucial for describing someone as a transmigrant (Portes et al. 1999: 225). King et al. (2017 [2013]: 4–5) observe that transmigrants influence the economic, social, cultural, and human rights spheres of their countries of origin. On the other hand, unlike transmigrants from poorer countries living in highly developed ones, these women do not influence development in their countries of birth or their local communities, nor does their emigration trigger new movements to Serbia. In other words, they do not closely build their personal and national identities upon transnational or translocal social ties.² They emphasize the connections with their partners, friends (and children) in Serbia, but have transnational contacts with friends and family abroad as well.

THE NOTIONS OF HOME AMONG FEMALE EU TRANSMIGRANTS IN BELGRADE

Mallett (2004), Golob (2009: 67, 71, 73) and Al-Ali, Koser (2011: 6) sum up the most relevant socio-cultural notions of home, stressing its multidimensional, mobile, pluri- or translocal, and deterritorialized nature: home as a (childhood or family) house; homeland, home city or town; a family; haven or refuge; expression of self or identity; a constellation of relationships; a signifier of gender and as an experience of journeying or experience of being-at-home. Furthermore, movement is acknowledged as one of the essential elements for making and re-making individual identity and understanding socio-cultural reality. Therefore, as Rapport and Dawson sum up, “one can be at home in movement”, but they also stress that “movement can be one’s very home” (1998: 27). My research supports the view that home is not just a house. For example, Alex relates the notion of “home” with both France and Serbia. However, “home” for her is not a fixed place. It is not a place at all.

Home is where my beloved people are. Like for gypsies, home is in movement. [...] Everywhere I feel at home, and everywhere *en passant*. It is a strange feeling. I don't feel that I belong, but I feel OK, I'm good everywhere. [...] When I'm going to N. [hometown in France], I'm like a tourist. Or I go to a friend's or take Airbnb or something. I cannot go to my mom; nobody has enough space for us all.

In her case, “home” can be understood as journeying. As Mallett (2004: 78) explains: “Journeys away from home, for no matter how trivial or routine a purpose, are thought to constitute both home and traveler.”

2 In his research on Ecuadorians in Italy, Boccagni (2010: 186) defines this type of ties as “any social relationship and practice ‘at distance’ (along with the identity orientations they build on) that allows immigrants to exert relevant influence on the social lives of those left behind and, vice versa, that allows the latter to impact the life course of the former in significant ways”.

Maria likes her, as she calls it, "nomadic life" because she has been traveling since her early 20s. This lifestyle denotes her perception of home. "Everywhere can be my home. I don't know. At this moment, here is my home [Belgrade], but specifically in A. [the name of the hostel they own in Belgrade], because we have moved there and live there now. It's so beautiful and ours."

This thinking is in line with the conclusion of Ahmed et al. (2003: 1 – italic in original) that "*[b]eing grounded is not necessarily about being fixed; being mobile is not necessarily about being detached.*" "Home" does not necessarily have to have one meaning. For Maria, home is also constituted in a journey. Moreover, she sees the dwelling itself (their hostel) as her home. In many cases, as such is this, a "physically and territorially bounded place in a certain location, where daily routines and family relations are embedded in a fixed environment" conceives a home (Golob 2009: 66–67).

Florence is well aware of the importance of migration for her family and her family history but emphasizes that "you don't have to live in your home country to feel at home". For her, home means "where I live and getting it to my liking" by arranging things. In that sense, a home as "a state of being" and Florence's lived experience of "being-at-home (in the world)" is meaningful (Mallett 2004: 79).

I feel as much at home here, usually, as I do in the UK. I feel somewhat at home in Holland [where she has relatives as well]. Umm, I haven't spent long periods in other parts of the world to be able to judge. But, you see, I take into consideration the fact that all my father's family came from the Russian Empire and, except for my grandfather and my grandmother, most of them re-emigrated, so, consequently, how can I feel at home anywhere? I'm used to this idea of movement. [...] I only feel at home in my own home, so in other words, wherever I happen to be living, I've made it how I wanted it.

Contrary to Waldinger's example of Latinos in the USA (2008), Klaudia and Alex accept the fact that they might be moving back to their countries of origin once their children enroll in universities there. At the moment, Klaudia perceives home as being more in Belgrade. On the other hand, when her children finish school and when she gets older, she would like to go back to her hometown in Austria, where she still has family and friends, to where her heartstrings are pulling her.

Anita and Anneli plan to return to Finland and Estonia, respectively. Anita cannot find a suitable job in Belgrade since her divorce, and Anneli does not have a permanent job in Belgrade. Perhaps these are some of the reasons why, out of all the interlocutors, these two are the most attached to their "homes" in their birth countries.

Anita feels at home in Serbia, too, and is attached to various places in Serbia. Nonetheless, currently for her, "home" represents a house in her Finnish hometown where her 95-year-old grandfather lives and where she plans to return. Because of

her current circumstances, her future re-migration can be interpreted as “an act of empowerment, taking control over one’s life” (Kožar Rosulnik 2016: 39).

When Anneli moved to Belgrade from London, she stopped thinking about where her home lie. For several months, she was living between Serbia and England, and this was too confusing for her. However, she distinguishes “two” homes – home as a place where she currently lives, and home in Estonia where her mother lives and to where she will probably return sometime.

It was always “Here is my home. No, no, no. My home is here.” And there was always a problem, “I don’t have a home, do I? Here is good,” and then you move again. “All right, am I leaving or returning?” [...] and when the people asked me, “Where do you live?” “I live in a suitcase.” [...] For me, it was the only objective truth, but I realized that I make a victim of myself “Oh, poor me, I live in a suitcase,” a woman without a house. But I do have a house in Estonia. [...] We have built a house there, that is my land, my mother, my house, I can return there whenever I want. So, I have a house, but I also have it somewhere else than where I currently live.

King (2002: 102) observes that the ideas of “‘home, ‘away’ and ‘abroad’” are blurred. He considers that for many migrants, “a home” is a place set in the past. For instance, for Klaudia, Anneli, and Anita, home is related to their homelands, hometowns, and their birth families. As Mallett (2004: 74) explains, home can refer to the family house of childhood.

Maja believes that home is where your heart is, and her heart is now in Belgrade. “For me, home means some nice flowers in the apartment, some fresh tulips or now mimosa, some small things. [...] I like to decorate so that I can feel comfortable [...], I want to feel some good energy [in the apartment].”

Her vision of home is in line with popular ideas, often criticized in the literature as simplistic, of home as a feminine, private and familial space, a haven for a woman (Mallett 2004: 71, 74–77).

Generally, many migrants miss food from home and, thus, often, food likewise migrates to new settlements. In this respect, food from home in a new environment has a vital role in enacting the “stability of home through the very mobility of food” (Petridou 2001: 102). Some interlocutors even bring certain specific foods from their countries of origin which they cannot find here, such as Baltic bread; food that in Serbia they perceive to be of poorer quality or is too expensive, such as cheese from Slovenia, Finland, and Austria, breakfast cereals from Finland or Germany, and olive oil from Greece. Maja, for instance, feels nostalgic for Slovenia, although she does not plan to move back. For her, Slovenian food evokes homesickness and childhood memories, especially towards the place where she grew up. “Here, for example, you cannot buy bouillon cubes. In Slovenia, I almost never ate them, but now [I ask people to] bring me some.”

On the other hand, Florence does not miss food from Britain, and she has adapted her needs to Serbian conditions.

Okay, you can't find jelly or Bird's custard, but I can live without it, quite easily. [...] Umm, every week, there's something new arriving in the supermarkets. So, no, maybe not Christmas pudding, if I wanted to make it myself. But there's always somebody who's going to and fro who'd bring you, if you're really in need, some tea bags or something. No, but I don't feel I've got to go back to England to buy them [laughs].

All of the interlocutors successfully combine aspects of identitarian-attitudinal and relational-behavioral levels (Boccagni 2012), such as consumption of home-country goods, possession of birth citizenship, Serbian language competency, as well as regular visits and communication from a distance, which allow them to participate in long-term transmigration. Moreover, these possibilities enable them to enjoy the easy-going Serbian perspective on life (having more free time for friends and family), and be adapted to various Serbian conditions (working on the black, having personal connections in order to get something done in the public sphere (Srb. *imati vezu*), living near a businessman with a dubious background) (Brujić 2018). However, a certain distance from both societies exists, as sometimes they have the option to pay for private services if they are dissatisfied with the quality of Serbian state ones or leave Serbia and use their home country services instead (e.g., giving birth, private or state education); although the ability to use state services may also depend on the country of origin.

Concerning their transmigrant experiences, researchers of guest workers' transnational practices in Europe point out that some of them describe themselves as "people without a state" (Čapo Žmegač 2007: 286). As Simsek Çaglar (1994: 90–98) explains, using the example of Turks living and working in Germany, their "double bindness" makes them "betwixt and between" and "out of place" both in Germany and Turkey. Finally, Grillo (2007: 201), in a similar vein, notes that transmigrants' liminal experiences may be depicted as a state of "in-betweenness". More importantly, he warns that transmigrants are not a homogenous group. Transmigrants, according to Grillo, could be, for example, differentiated, according to their class, generation, and gender (2007: 212–213). Grillo explains that not only less educated third-world country nationals are part of the transmigration matrix.

However, equipped with definitions, it is easy to forget that migrants change plans (or are forced to change them, the same as Anita), try not to make plans (as Alex), or lean on their children's plans (like Klaudia, for instance). Thus, definitions and labels can either freeze a person's migration experience or exclude someone who does not fit into it.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, I have demonstrated that some traits of transnational lives and practices characterize some female EU migrants in Belgrade. The most important ones are their bifocal lives and the “in-between” state, dual citizenship, and, most importantly, social relations with both societies. However, in some cases, it would be more precise to say that their transnational lives are “neither here, nor there”. As Salih (2011: 52) notes, transnational experiences may create “belonging to ‘neither’ place”.

Not only are transmigrants international migrants, but international migrants are in the majority of cases transmigrants (see Waldinger 2008: 1–7; 2011: 4–10); and such is the case of educated women from EU countries living in Serbia who should be recognized as part of transmigration processes as well. As King (2002: 89–90) points out, not all migrants in Europe are poor, desperate, uneducated, uprooted, marginal, and coming from the so-called third world countries. Nevertheless, they are more frequently observed and researched in academia.

Moreover, I have shown that the meaning of home is intricately linked with women’s understanding of their migrant position because it correlates with the notion of “bifocal lives”. Recent migration studies emphasize that for many transmigrants, home is not a place set in one or the other country, but includes several homes (Ahmed et al. 2003: 4; Golob 2009; Al-Ali, Koser 2011). Home can reflect national, cultural, and social belongings or one’s sense of self and form part of self-identification (Al-Ali, Koser 2011: 7).

This paper represents a preliminary notion of the meaning of home among affluent female migrants in Serbia and is part of a wider research study. In some other article(s) it would be essential to give answers to several other issues, such as memory, identity, and the perception of home among female EU migrants,³ EU citizenship and their vision of the EU as a common “European home”; elaboration of female migrations and the inclusion of the perspective of male migrants as well.

In addition, home is not only a place in space, but a place in time as examples of these women’s narrative show: in the past (in memories of family and family home for Anita and Anneli); in the future (in planning to return to their home countries for Klau-dia, Anneli, and Anita); and in the present, in Serbia (for all the interlocutors), where they feel they belong at the moment. As a contested site, home is “multi-located” (Armbruster 2011: 32). Moreover, it is also multi-temporal as, according to my interlocutors’ experiences, *there’s no place like home*.

3 This topic is discussed in a still unpublished manuscript “Domestic objects and the sense of home among EU women in Belgrade”.

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POVZETEK

»DOM JE SAMO EDEN«: ŽENSKÉ PRISELJENKE IZ EU V BEOGRADU Marija BRUJIĆ

Članek, ki temelji na »transnacionalizmu od spodaj«, študijah pojma doma in poglobljenih polstrukturiranih intervjujih z državljkami Evropske unije, živečimi v Beogradu, raziskuje pojmovanje doma pri (transnacionalnih) migrantkah. Analizira pričevanja žensk iz Avstrije, Estonije, Finske, Francije, Slovenije, Grčije, Nemčije in Združenega kraljestva, ki so se v Srbijo (Beograd) preselile predvsem iz »družinskih oziroma ljubezenskih razlogov«. Poudarek je na njihovi samoidentifikaciji in samo-percepciji njihovega migrantskega statusa v Srbiji, ki jo zaznamuje visoka stopnja »bega možganov« v države EU. Namen članka je večplasten: opozoriti na pomen raziskav življenja državljanov EU zunaj EU, podrobneje raziskati migrantke – strokovno usposobljene pripadnice srednjega razreda, kakor tudi migracije iz bolj razvitih v manj razvite države, navsezadnje pa tudi osvetliti pojem doma za državljanke EU, ki živijo zunaj nje. Avtorica dokazuje, da imajo tudi te ženske nekatere značilnosti transnacionalnih življenj in praks, predvsem »bifokalna življenja«, »vmesno stanje«, dvojno državljanstvo in, kar je še najpomembnejše, socialne stike z obema državama. V tem smislu je dom pojmovan kot multidimenzionalen, gibljiv, pluri- ali translokalen in deteritorializiran prostor. Sodeč po pričevanjih dom ni prostor v prostoru, pač pa prostor v času: v preteklosti (v spominih na družino in družinski dom), v prihodnosti (v načrtovanju vrnitve v rodno državo) in v sedanosti (Srbija), kamor po svojih občutkih intervjuvanke trenutno sodijo.