



INAPP

PUBLIC POLICY INNOVATION

Antonello SCIALDONE

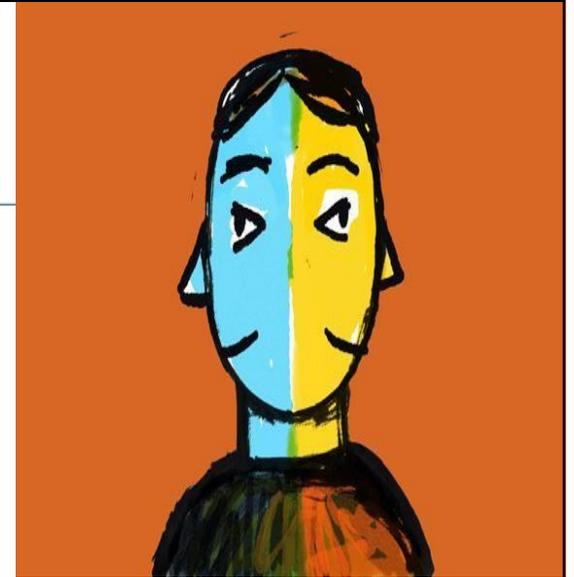
**REASONS AND SOCIAL COSTS
OF AN UNDERESTIMATED DIASPORA**
The case of Ukraine

draft version

IGU/AGel International Seminar 'HEALTH, ETHICS, MIGRATION'

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WHAT'S IN A NAME



Ukraine as Europe's *terra malecognita*, geographically at the center of the continent, in the middle between Ural and Atlantic. A buffer state, a bridge between East and West... a land of extreme conditions and paradoxes:

- Europe's second largest country
- male population with lowest life-expectancy in Europe (gap with continental average grown up to 11 years)
- main supplier of migrant labour to Europe, and major sending country of irregular migrant workers
- the largest number of victims of human trafficking in the world.

The toponym comes from ancient Slavic root *kraj* that means *limit/edge*: U. literally sounds as **Borderland**. Another source refers to *kraity* (*to cut*): by this way translation of the name could be "**a piece that is cut**".

An ambivalence illustrative of the equivocal nature of U. identity (Szmagalska-Follis 2008).

A LIMBO OF UNFINISHED TRANSITION

A mosaic, a limbo, a divided nation (sharply polarised), whose reality is one of *blending and mixing*.

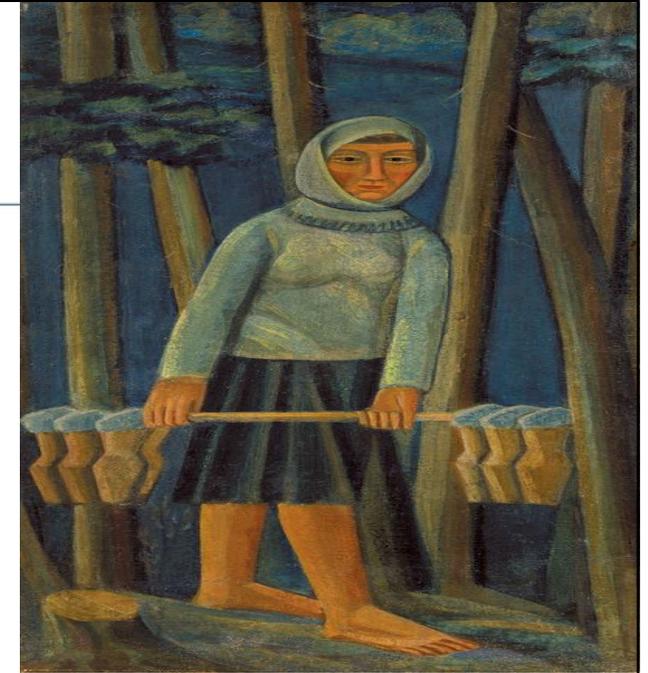
Centuries of borderland existence contributed to the fuzziness and fragmentation of U. identity (Plokyh 2007). U. belongs to several nested geographies (Hrytsak 2004) with a lot of regional differences: cultural polymorphism historically allowed the country to play a relevant mediating role between Slavic world and West (Pachlovska 2004).

Reforms of recent years lack consistency and post-Soviet transition is exceptionally distressing. Not only ethnic divisions, but a general lack of social trust. The dominant type of national identity across the country is the atomized (Sotiriou 2016), that points to the inefficiency of institutions towards carrying out a nation-building process.

Many U. prefer to be described as ***Tuteshni*** (from ***Tut*** = here): people whose primary identification is with their locality rather than with the State.



UNFULLILLED EXPECTATIONS



An important support for independence on 1991 was played by the representation of U. as the breadbasket of Europe: depicted as a rich country which suffered from *colonial exploitation* by Russia.

Imperatives of institution building subordinated to personal interests of accumulation and endemic corruption produced decline of social infrastructures and depreciation of long-term savings of citizens.

GDP =1/3 of Poland, lower than any european country except Albania and Moldova. Collapse in first half of 90s; new fall after 2008... National currency in last 2 years has lost more than 60% of its value. Shadow economy estimated near 50%! Diffusion of subsistence farming (*dacha economy*). Significant regional divides (coming from Soviet times) have even grown. But no in-land mobility... Widening inequalities: 7 out of 10 stay below poverty line according to Koshulko 2015. Poverty risk associated with presence of children in household: «*Children have become a luxury*» (Wanner-Dudwick 2003).

A TALE OF ECONOMIC HARDSHIP



In 2015 *average salary* = 130 USD per month; *minimum wage* = 51 USD, substantially lower than needed for survival. Employment can't provide a solid pathway out of material deprivation.

1/3 of total population in U. have experienced migration (Tolstokorova 2015). The main sending areas are rural *oblast* with dramatic surplus of labour-force and weak economy, like Lvivska, Volynia, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankyvska and especially Zakarpat, where almost 70% households have some family members which has gone abroad.

Demographic crisis remains more severe in rural areas. Not only low birth rates and fertility decline, but also decrease of living standards and worsening of health conditions. **U. has lost 11% of population in first 15 years after independence: 52 mln in 1990; 45,9 mln in 2010 - Projection to 2040: 38 mln.**

In this scenario current migration works selectively: people who leave the country are mostly active and well-skilled. Average age of U. migrants = 36,2 years.

ANOTHER WAVE OF THE DIASPORA

Diaspora started at the end of 19th century: over 12 mlns moved in previous waves (including deportation to less populated region of USSR). Last decades' mobility regards approx. 6,5mlns of people, but analyses are limited because *70% of flows aren't registered* (Lapshyna 2012)

In early 90s half population showed aspiration of leaving the country (political and ethnic motivation behind 650.000 people gone to Russia). In 1998 42% of workers became unemployed, non standard mechanism -like unpaid leaves or reduction in hours of work- became widespread, and labour migration became a **mass phenomenon**.

Main destinations after Russia are Poland, Italy, Czech Republic, Spain. Every year almost 1mln of U. are granted short-term visas to Schengen countries, but majority of flows is illegal.

According to an IOM report, "*emigration has become the main type of occupation and way of life*". Ukraine as '**Europe's Mexico**' (Duvell 2006)?



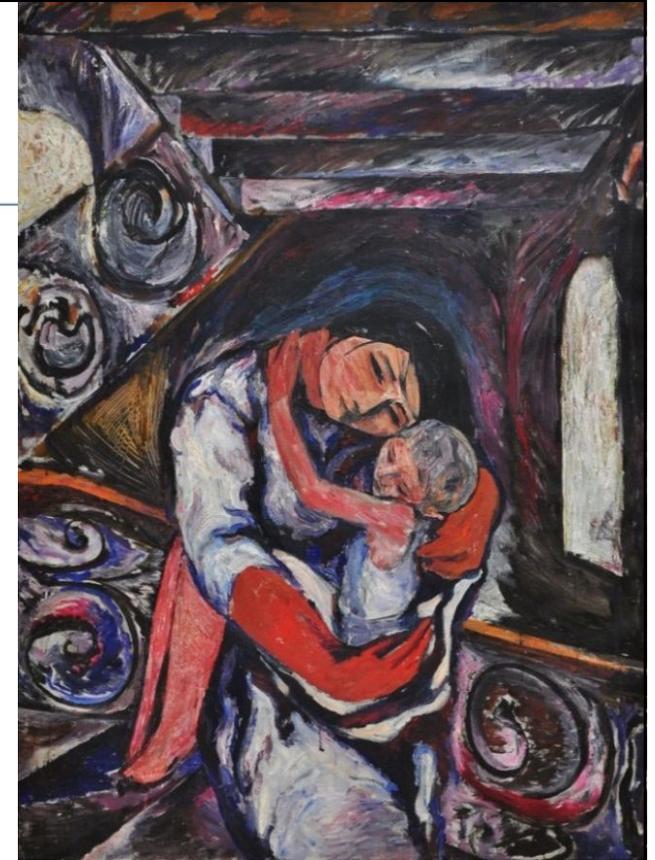
A STRATEGY FOR SURVIVAL

Migration decision is to be considered as a household maintenance strategy. The main reason to go abroad is *getting a job* paid enough: a survey in 2008 showed that a 600 USD salary would keep people in homeland.

Even now migration aspirations are particularly related to *negative perception of Quality of Life* in U. (Van Mol et al. 2016). Another driver is endemic *corruption*.

Moving from one place to another (and from one employer to another) requires special adaptation capabilities. It implies facing demoralization and risks of exploitation. Psychological distress is normal: coping with loneliness is hard. The repertoire of *working with the self* (Psimmenos 2011) is endless.

Bogdan (2010) reports evidences of deteriorating health as a result of labour migration for 42% of U. respondents.



SIDE EFFECTS OF MIGRATION

Women have a prominent role in flows to Southern Europe. But U. migrant women have been stigmatized for their choice to leave: the argument is that their *absence disrupts the unity of the family (and the Nation)*. Mobility in case of female migration tends to be connected to trasgression of moral codes, and transnational arrangements are considered dangerous and deviant.



Family disintegration may be the most painful side effect of migration.

Problem of ***social or Euro-orphans***: while migrants suffer from precarious employment abroad, children enjoy a middle-class lifestyle at home, thanks to economic remittances.

Commodification of relationship with parents and risks of bad behaviour (dropping out of school, alcohol, drugs abuse). On the other side, children can develop a sense of guilty for sacrifice made by their mothers.

MEN IN DISTRESS

Transnationalism can result in both gain and losses for people left behind. When husbands migrate, wives are usually able to play both roles. But if the parent who leaves is the mother, her spouse often stands aside from child-rearing, that usually becomes grandma's responsibility.

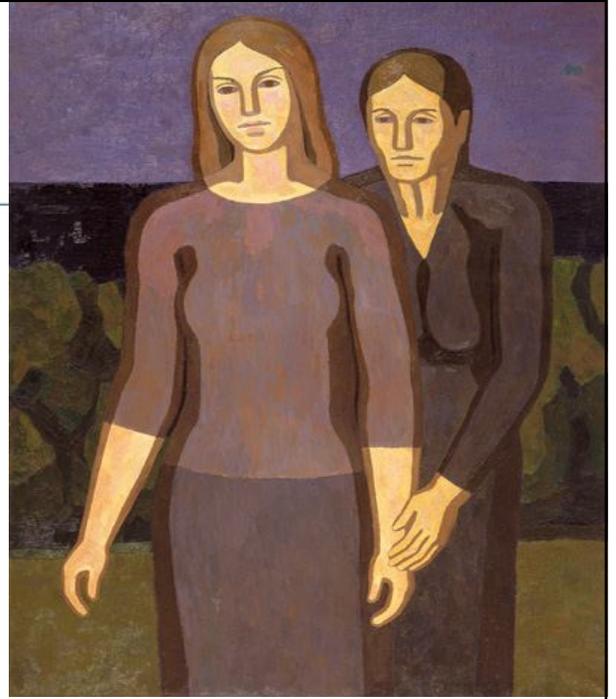
Father's traditional role is perceived as undermined.
In U. inability of earn a good wage threatens masculinity.

Social passivity of men:

- Male suicides out number female by 5 to 1
- Chronic disease due to unhealthy styles
- 20% alcohol abuse
- High rates of HIV and TBC
- High death rates of males (especially in working age).



A SILENCED ISSUE



Post-Soviet U. is being *constituted transnationally*. But the issue is absent from public agenda. No regular or positive coverage of migratory themes: U. media save room only when sensational events occur. New *folklore made of horror stories* of incidents abroad (Shostak 2004).

Who's gonna provide help for transnational families? There's no designated public institutions that could offer support, even in return perspective.

Absence of a comprehensive migration policy due to lack of interest and long-standing institutional crisis. In 2008 Parliament developed a draft law to allow temporary guardianship of left-behind children, but the proposal was rejected.

Draft Act on External Labour Migration started in 2013 but was stopped.

Scholars have enlightened high expectations for welfare in U. but also the lowest assessment of utility of social policies and lowest trust in public institutions (Kutsenko-Gorbachyk 2015).

Transnational parenting remains a private affair.

REMITTANCES' PLACE

9,3 Billions USD: first amount in 2013 Europe according to World Bank. Only 1/3 of money transferred through bank or formal channels. Last year value of official remittances was three times the total of FDI (Petro 2016).

In 2000 Ukrainians abroad transferred a sum that was 6-times bigger than the State Budget. According to National Bank of U. this important source of income increased 46-fold between 2001-11: big jump in 2006-07 and new growth after 2009 in terms of value and in % of GDP. Greatest sums come proportionally from Spain and Italy (Coupè-Vakhitova 2013). Money is used for housing (acquisition, maintenance) and investments in education. Sending money means that geographical mobility is accompanied by successful class mobility: migrants as *victims of narrative of upward mobility* (Amelina 2009).

Indulgences for leaving home (Ambrosetti et al. 2013)?

Freezing effect: remittances replace missing social policy and prevent a complete fall to the bottom.



FEED THE NATION!

Post-Soviet *hybridity* (Portnov 2015): U. as a complex society which requires nuanced inquiry, not to be based (only) on ethnic issues but also on social dimensions like gender. *Mutual constitution of migration and nation* that isn't yet recognized.

Hybrid war with Putin can obviously exasperate the scenario of U. deprivation: it has already implied loss of markets for domestic products, damage of infrastructures, breakdown of foreign investments, closure of main companies, fall of tourist flows, *growth of IDP...* Which will be next scenario: bailout, normalization of relations with Russia, or continuing decline (with new flows to EU)? Expert in any case forecast ***new big exodus*** when the current conflict ends.

Difficult to say what the future of U. split-households will look like.

There's a huge need to improve conditions by social supports, development of credit facilities, establishment of family business...and also to acknowledge added value and social relevance of migrants' sacrifices.



THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION



a.scialdone@inapp.org

INAPP - Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche
Corso d'Italia, 33 - 00198 Roma - tel. +39.06.85447.1 - www.inapp.org