Tension, Affection, and Illusion: Experiences of Professional Employees in Two Public Cultural Institutions in Post-Soviet Ukraine

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Abstract

The research focuses on working conditions and lived experiences of professional employees at two public cultural institutions in Kyiv. It examines the formal structures and informal arrangements practiced at the workplace, and the ways they shape and accommodate employees' experiences; it inquires into the employees' attitudes toward the job, their, largely value-oriented, goals as well as the caring relationships some of them develop toward the art collections and the institutional buildings; it specifically focuses on the tension, which, as argued, is essential to understanding the employees' experiences of the job. This tension occurs between the employees' dominant interest in the rewards other than money and their (sometimes critical) lack of economic capital. By inquiring into the respective sides of the tension, the research identifies the employees' socioeconomic conditions and gender roles as the two main premises of the illusion of their economic disinterestedness and of their ability to "afford" to work at the institutions in the first place. By doing that, the thesis contributes to the scarce body of social research in the field of arts and culture in Ukraine. In particular, being based on participant observation and in-depth interviews, the research addresses the absence of ethnographic studies on working conditions in public cultural institutions and their professional employees. Although many of the features discussed in the thesis—such as the informality, caring, and subsidy "from below"—are more salient at public cultural institutions, they are not confined to them but are inherent to many underfunded public institutions and whole sectors in the post-Soviet states. This, in turn, calls for alternative ways to approach those features, as discussed in the conclusions.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

> There is a legend that the museum does not let people go, and they return. You see, you also came back.
> —an employee of the National Art Museum of Ukraine

Just as there is the Red List of threatened biological species, there should probably also be a list of endangered social arrangements that, being hunted by the neoliberal reforms, might soon reach an extinction point; and stable, secure, long-term forms of employment are among them. Despite the major structural transformations in the post-Soviet East-European countries during the last 30 years, public institutions, such as museums, are among the remaining custodians of the jobs that still provide social security, some stability, a "shelter" from the pressures of the market toward the "entrepreneurial self," yet very little financial rewards. However, as there has been disproportionate attention in the literature to "the brave new world of work" with its insecure, intermittent, more precarious forms of employment, experiences of the employees occupying "old," more protected, long-term or even life-long jobs have been overlooked, as well as the ways certain features of the new forms of employment start infiltrating the "old" ones. Therefore, by inquiring into the working conditions and lived experiences of the professional employees in two public cultural institutions in Kyiv, this research focuses on the traditional forms of employment in the field of arts and culture, while—in the light of the neoliberal reforms—they still exist and before they possibly pass into oblivion.

In the context of Ukraine, besides the general lack of social research in the field of arts and culture (for recent examples, which are rather exceptions, see British Council 2018; SCI 2019), there has been hardly any qualitative and no ethnographic studies focusing on working conditions in either of both forms of employment, new and more precarious or old and relatively more protected ones, designating two respective research gaps. Even recent

attempts in museum sociology (Karpov ed. 2015; Karpov 2018) addressing institutional issues, museum marketing, and visitors, provide its reader with some quantitative analysis of the composition of museum personnel but with no insight into what it actually means to work at public cultural institutions. By attending to their "human" side and still rather traditional forms of employment, the thesis aims to fill one of the two gaps.

At the focus of the research are the professional employees at two of the biggest[1] public cultural institutions in Kyiv: the National Art Museum of Ukraine and "Mystetskyi Arsenal" National Art and Culture Museum Complex. If the former represents a traditional museum with a more than 120-year history, which functioning revolves, first of all, around its art collection, the latter is a 15-year old cultural institution where museum development constitutes one of its structural components, but its primary activities are concerned with art and education projects following each other with short breaks in between. By professional public employees, I refer to the employees who work at the institutions' core departments responsible for research, exhibition work, education, restoration, design, and other key activities that might vary depending on the institutional structure. Another defining feature of the professional employees is their professional education in art research, history and art history, cultural studies, art restoration, and art management.

The thesis starts with a detailed account of the working conditions and regimes of production of the two public cultural institutions under study and continues by inquiring into the ways employees' experiences are shaped and accommodated by the interplay between, on the one hand, formal structures (constituted by the legal and bureaucratic regulations) and, on the other, informality and flexibility practiced at the workplace. However, as it will be shown,

[1] They are arguably two of the biggest and "central" public cultural institutions as the National Art Museum has the biggest collection of Ukrainian art in the world, while "Mystetskyi Arsenal" is one of the biggest museum complexes in terms of its premises and number of visitors, not least due to the International Book Arsenal Festival which it organizes annually, and which, during the five days of the festival, attracts more than 50 000 visitors; also, both of the institutions have a national status and relatively numerous personnel.

the major concerns experienced by the employees are to a lesser degree of a legal or bureaucratic character but rather of an economic nature, that is, arising from the low wages. As the significance of this issue to the employees' professional and private lives is often disguised by their value-oriented motivations and seeming economic disinterestedness, a tension occurs, which, I argue, is essential to understanding the employees' experiences of the job: the tension between the employees' dominant interest in the rewards other than money and their (sometimes critical) lack of economic capital. Therefore, the last two chapters explore the respective sides of this tension. The second chapter inquires into the employees' value-oriented goals and motivations as well as the affective and caring relationships some of them develop toward the museum collections and buildings. While the third chapter focuses on the employees' socioeconomic conditions and gender roles as the two main premises of the illusion of economic disinterestedness and of the employees' ability to "afford" to work at the institutions in the first place.

Thus, the main questions addressed in the course of the thesis include: To what extent the employees' experiences are accommodated by the formal structures and informal arrangements at the workplace, and in what ways? What aspects of the job are the primary reasons for the employees' concerns and the major source of their vulnerability, as professionals and as human beings? What are the meanings the employees invest in their job, and how do they make sense of its worthiness, despite the low wages and sometimes poor working conditions? What are the socioeconomic premises for the employees' pursuit of the value-oriented goals and their ability to continue working at the institutions in spite of the low wages? How can we interpret the underpaid labor of the employees as well as the various contributions they make (in the form of time, care, or some material goods) in relation to the field of cultural production and the state in general?

What is essential to the research is the fact that at both institutions, women constitute more than 80% of the professional employees which—for reasons that will be partly discussed in the last chapter but which also deserve a separate, more comprehensive inquiry—reflects the feminization of public cultural institutions, especially museums (Karpov 2018; Tsymbaliuk and Hrinchenko 2015). In general, "in Ukraine, women's employment traditionally prevails in fields with a low level of average salaries—such as social security, education, health care, household services, and culture—where women make up more than 70% of all employees" (Razumkov Centre 2016, 70). The same trend persists within the field of arts and culture: as was shown in a recent study in four post-Soviet countries, including Ukraine, there is a visible "representation difference" between the two sub-sectors of culture: on the one hand, business-related sub-sector or so-called "creative industries" (including design, architecture, IT, TV, commercial filmmaking) which is dominated by men, and, on the other, culture-related sub-sector or "cultural industries" (consisting of museums, galleries, libraries, documentary photo/video, and publishing) dominated by women (British Council 2018, 74).

While in the latter case, the distinction between the sub-sectors reveals the underrepresentation of women in profit-related industries, in general, in the literature on cultural and creative industries, the use of the notions ("cultural industries" and "creative industries") is a matter of debates, as they might be used to address the same domains, or to designate a shift in the policy (Garnham 2005), or to highlight the growth of certain industries, or—the changing character of work as such in advanced capitalism (Gill and Pratt 2008; for a comprehensive overview of the issue, see Hesmondhalgh 2008). In fact, when compared to the ethnographic research conducted in the Anglo-American and Western European context on experiences of workers in newer and more precarious forms of employment in such seemingly distant from museum work creative and cultural industries as

new media, fashion, television, and university, there are still features they share with the professional public employees who are at the focus of this research: low pay, long hours, blurring boundaries between work and life (Gill and Pratt 2008, 18), existential goals and self-actualization associated with the job (Ursell 2000), self-exploitation (McRobbie 2002) meshing with exploitation (Ursell 2000). However, stable, normally full-time, long-term or permanent employment and social insurance available to the professional employees at the two institutions under study undoubtedly protect them from the amount of pressure and anxiety experienced, for example, by academics employed on short-term contracts (Gill 2010), from the need to take risks specific to the work of fashion models or new media workers (Neff et al. 2005), or from the unpredictability and competitiveness associated with project-based work (Christopherson 2002; Gill 2002). Outside of the Anglo-American and Western European context, to the best of my knowledge, the closest research to the present work has been done by Kuleva on cultural workers in public and non-governmental cultural institutions in St. Petersburg (Kuleva 2018). However, despite the similarities and observations shared by the studies, there are considerable differences as a result of the differing political and cultural contexts.

At the same time, when compared to the newer and more precarious forms of employment, the relative stability, security, and comfort available to the professional employees under study should not be overestimated. It does provide certain social security and long-term or permanent contracts. Also, the slowly changing and persistent structures of public institutions, in particular public museums, do shelter the employees from some of the changes and hazards brought by the market relations after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. As was shown by Ryabchuk, during the "'transitory' stage, in which a set of former dispositions does not correspond to new realities" (Ryabchuk 2012, 285), public workers might find it difficult to "harmonize" the new structural conditions brought by the market

relations and their habituses; which, in turn, "results in positional suffering of these workers" (Ryabchuk 2012, 277, 280). From this perspective, stable employment at the two institutions, to a large degree, does protect the employees from the pressure to conform to the normative "ideal of the flexible, self-sustained and active 'entrepreneurial self'" (Caraher and Reuter 2017, 484). However, the low wages and often poor working conditions considerably impinge on their wellbeing, making the socioeconomic situation of museum employees not very different from other public employees in Ukraine, who often find themselves materially "on the lowest positions in society" (Ryabchuk 2012, 284). Unlike in the US, where "until the 1950s, museums were elitist," and "were run by the monied and cultured for the monied and cultured" (Friedman 1994, 122), here, the break with the elitist past of the museums (founded at the end of the 19th century by hereditary aristocrats, wealthy manufacturers, and intelligentsia (Borys 2015)) occurred earlier and was more radical as a result of the establishment of the socialist regime. Today, the professional employees working at the two institutions come from various socioeconomic backgrounds: some of them—from Kyiv, from the former Soviet intelligentsia and artistic families, others—from working-class families in different towns or villages. Therefore, as will be shown, the low wages constitute one of the central issues for the majority of the employees, but they still imply very different things and levels of (dis)comfort.

Last but not least, it should be noted that even though the research probably most heavily relies upon Bourdieu's theory of social fields, it does not have a single, overarching theoretical framework. The first chapter explores the role of informality and its interplay with formal bureaucratic and legal structures by referring to a neo-Weberian perspective. In the second chapter, I draw upon the feminist literature on care work while interpreting the meanings the employees invest in their job and the affective relationships they develop with it. Finally, the third chapter explores to what extent Bourdieu's analysis of the field of

cultural production is applicable to the case under study, and what conclusions can be reached with its help. However, the use and justification of the theoretical frameworks will be discussed in detail in each chapter.

Methodology

The thesis is based on a comparative study of two public cultural institutions in Kyiv: the National Art Museum of Ukraine (hereinafter NAMU) and "Mystetskyi Arsenal" National Art and Culture Museum Complex (hereinafter MA). The data for the research was gathered in 2019 between September 15 and December 26 through ethnographic participant observation at the institutions and 21 in-depth semi-structured interviews with their professional employees. At NAMU, I carried out four weeks of participant observation and conducted interviews with nine female and two male employees of different levels of management (5—from low-level and 6—from high-level positions), age (between 23 and 59), length of service at NAMU (from 2 to 33 years), and place of origin (just under half of them were originally from Kyiv). In the research, by "high-level," I define positions held by the heads of the departments and the top-management (such as directors and deputy directors), while by "low-level," I refer to all the positions below the level of the heads of departments. I also conducted three in-depth semi-structured interviews with the museum attendants (aged between 59 and 64), who are not considered "professional" museum employees as they normally possess education and work experience in other spheres, and most of them started working at the museum around the retirement age in order to have "a supplement to the pension" as they call their low wages (which are at least twice as low as wages of the professional employees). As the research focuses on professional employees, I do not quote museum attendants directly; however, they greatly contributed to my understanding of the functioning of the museum, its hierarchies, and workplace relationships.

At MA, I carried out three-week participant observation and interviews with one male and nine female professional employees: 5 occupying low-level and 5—high-level positions, aged from 23 to 52 years, with the length of service at MA between 1.5 and 11 years; about half of the interviewees were originally from Kyiv. Two of my informants at MA previously had worked at NAMU, so they were able to share and compare their experience of work at both institutions.

The interviews lasted from 1.5 to 4.5 hours; with the permission of the informants, all of them were audio-recorded; all but one interview were conducted at the workplaces. The names of the employees are fictional; also, in most of the cases, when quoting the interviewees, I do not indicate their gender in order to preserve the privacy of the male informants (as there are only few male professional employees working at the institutions so disclosing their gender would directly point to the person). However, when it comes to more detailed accounts of individual stories of my female informants, I do indicate their gender, which should not affect their privacy as women constitute the majority of the professional employees.

During the participant observations, I spent two or three full working days at every (with one exception) department where the professional employees work (that is, excluding such departments as human relations, informational technology, visitor services, facilities, operation, and maintenance, lawyers, and accountants) taking part in their activities. The participation ranged from observation to full engagement in the work of the departments, such as participating in education services for visitors, editing texts for audio guides and future exhibitions, producing some content for social media, composing a questionnaire for one of the events, and the like. Although during the participant observation, I spent a lot of time in informal conversations with the employees, with the permission of my interlocutors, I especially rely on two of the conversations, of which I subsequently took detailed notes, and

which I quote in the thesis (in addition to the interviews). Also, during the fieldwork, I collected documentation such as the collective agreements, examples of employees' agreements and service instructions, institutions' statutes as well as other documentation on the principles and regulations of institutional operations.

Of course, as in any other research, the choices made regarding the focus, scope, place, and duration of fieldwork, in one way or another, predetermine or limit the results. On the one hand, the decision to focus on the particular institutions serves to highlight and contrast some features of the two different regimes of cultural production: of a rather traditional museum and of a newer cultural institution. On the other, the results of this research are limited by the fact that the institutions, in many ways, find themselves in a privileged position: being located in the capital and having a national status, their resources and the wages of their employees, despite being low, are still, sometimes considerably, higher than in the majority of public cultural institutions without a national status, not to mention those located in towns or villages. Also, they receive bigger attention from the state than smaller museums, which, however, is not always convertible into economic capital and might have its drawbacks. In addition to the higher wages, employment at these institutions certainly provides higher symbolic capital than smaller public cultural institutions, which hold less "central" positions in the field of arts and culture. Considering these remarks, the results and observations of this research are not representative in terms of the privileged positions of the institutions and consequently are only partly transferable to other settings and smaller institutions, with which NAMU and MA share some features but not others.

Another limitation—which, at the same time, can be considered an advantage—is my acquaintance with some of the professional employees at both institutions prior to the fieldwork. Thus, I became acquainted with some of MA's employees during 2015-2018, when I was working in the field of cultural production as a curator and cultural manager.

Also, in 2015-2016, I worked for over a year at NAMU as a research associate at the Education Department, and although some of the employees had left since then, many of them still knew and remembered me. Without a doubt, this experience has shaped my positionality as a researcher and my interest in the field of arts and culture as such. I still remember the excitement of holding visitors' attention while telling them about art or the feeling of doubting the quality of my work when receiving a monthly wage (although I was aware of the fact that there was no direct connection between the employees' performance and the rewards). However, I believe there are ways the research benefited from my own experience of working at NAMU and in the field of arts and culture in general. As will be discussed later, due to their role of "guardians of heritage," there is certain hermeticity present in museums' attitude toward the outer world and strangers, which means that, as a result of my past work experience, I might have had an advantage when receiving permission to do the research but also when establishing trust with the employees. However, undergoing modernization, some of the public museums do make attempts to stay "open," which makes me assume that other researchers would not have had significant issues when accessing the institutions as sites of their fieldwork.

Chapter 1 – Formal Structures and Informal Arrangements in Two Public Cultural Institutions

Two Regimes of Cultural Production and Their Double Agents

NAMU was founded at the end of the 19th century; it operated under different political regimes and now finds itself under the administration of the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy. The museum holds the biggest collection of Ukrainian art in the world (all together, its collection, produced by both artists of Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian origin, consists of around 40 000 items). It is situated in the neoclassical building created specifically for the museum. However, both the collection and museum personnel have outgrown the premises and, for decades, have been in drastic need of expansion, as, for example, the current space is suitable for a permanent exhibition of less than 1 percent of the whole collection. Also, as the collection storage areas are too small, one can see paintings along the walls and sculptures standing in the corridor corners in the semi-basement under the museum, where the employees' offices are situated. The latter is also reflected in employees' mind map: what they call "the upstairs" designates the two-story space containing the permanent and temporary exhibitions, the space associated with visitors and services—everything that, in Goffman's terms, is associated with the "frontstage." While "the downstairs" indicates the semi-basement containing the collection storage areas, archive, library, three restoration workshops, and offices—all hidden from the public eye, as the museum "backstage" (Goffman 1956, 67-69).

The museum is not only starved of space but, similar to many public institutions in post-socialist countries in Eastern Europe, also of finance. NAMU is funded by the state; however, this applies only to the "protected expenses" such as wages, utilities, and security services, where the latter two are not fully covered. Some profit can come from entrance tickets, activities such as filming on the premises, art appraisal, consultation services, and

organization of events; however, it is usually insignificant and spent on some operational needs, so it does not reflect upon the employees' wages. Art projects and maintenance of the building, which is in decrepit condition and is slowly undergoing restoration at this moment, are supported by sponsors and patrons or so-called "friends of the museum." The bottom line is that, as a public institution, NAMU can exist without making a profit, but then, as one of my informants said, the employees "will be sitting here without telephone connection and stationary." Indeed, what the "backstage" conceals is the museum working conditions: small offices containing from three to seven employees with no air conditioning and sometimes no opportunity to properly open a window without risking to catch a cold (as a result of the unfortunate shape of the rooms not appropriate for a workplace); as the offices are barely heated during winter, some of the employees bring their own heaters or buy them specifically for the office; they also keep extra warm clothes in the wardrobes or on the backs of their chairs; absence of lunchrooms (let alone kitchens) means that the employees either bring food in lunchboxes and eat behind their desks—sometimes there is a separate table for lunch in the office—or eat out, which is not affordable to some of them, especially at the end of the month so one can hear a joke, "I've just got paid, let's go for lunch." As there is no drinking water provided in the offices, the employees usually order water delivery, sharing the costs among themselves. Unlike "upstairs," in the visitor bathrooms, there is no soap or toilet paper in the bathrooms for the employees, so they are bought and brought by the employees themselves and kept in the office cupboard, so one has to bring them to the bathroom every time needed. Not all the furniture is old, but still, there is the general feeling of discomfort as it is clear that many pieces of equipment and other things were either not purchased for the particular space but, for example, "inherited" from other employees or reused and re-adjusted to the purposes different from the ones they were made for. These practices might be seen as vestiges of "repair society," the characteristic Gerasimova and Chuikina gave to Soviet society, as a

result of its "scarcity of resources and the poor production equipment and organization" (Gerasimova and Chuikina 2009, 70). "Repair" here is understood as "a set of techniques that prolong the life of objects by restoring to them their pragmatic or symbolic function. Broadly speaking, this can include fixing the item, adapting it to secondary use, using it as material from which to make something else, redefining its symbolic status, changing the context in which it is utilized, and the like" (Gerasimova and Chuikina 2009, 61). Similarly, as the museum is underfunded, the employees sometimes engage with such creative practices in order to improve their working environment. Having specific conditions is particularly critical for the museum art restorers as the absence of proper lighting when working on small details or absence of an air extraction system when working with chemicals or cleaning artworks from mold might potentially affect their health. As gloomy as it might sound, as was noted by many of my informants, "comparing to other Kyiv museums, we are certainly not in the worst place," which is true: having a national status, NAMU's both conditions and wages are better than in museums without one, not to mention museums in other regions and small towns, where the salary can be half the size or even smaller.

NAMU is distinctly collection-centered; that is, most of its activities, including exhibition projects and education programs, are organized around and in relation to its collection, its research, preservation, restoration, exhibition, and popularization. As was noted by one of NAMU's high-level employees, "the museum is, first of all, the collection, and then—perhaps its team and those processes, those research products it produces." This view might vary among the employees, but I would argue that collection-centeredness still remains an indicative feature of NAMU reflected by both its operations and working relationships.

The museum personnel, including maintenance and technical staff, consists of about 112 employees, 54 of whom fall under the category of professional employees of this research: they are specialists in the fields of art history, art management, museum studies,

cultural studies, and art restoration, and work at the museum research departments[2] and Public Relations Department. Among the professional employees, 50 (92.6%) are women. As well as MA, NAMU is run by a female director, and both institutions show no patterns of vertical segregation, that is in the leadership positions occupied by the few men there.

Activities of the research departments revolve around research and authentication of the old and incoming works of art, systematizing the collection, studying its history, for example, by revealing what items were lost during the Second World War; restoration and conservation of the collection items; taking care of the permanent exhibition as well as curating temporary exhibition projects; preparing guided tours, lecture courses, and educational workshops for children and adults, as well as popularization of the collection outside the museum. Apart from the creative and intellectual work, the employees are also responsible for many mundane bureaucratic tasks (answering requests and emails, keeping documentation, preparing reports, and other types of paperwork), which might be seen by them as secondary and distracting but, being inevitable, sometimes occupy the majority of their time.

"Mystetskyi Arsenal" National Art and Culture Museum Complex, as the informants noted, is not a classic museum. It is a young cultural institution that combines different types of activities concerned with contemporary art, literature and publishing, music, theater, education, and museum development. Founded in 2005, MA is still in its developmental stage both institutionally and in terms of the premises. MA's total area encompasses 9.8 hectares in the old part of the city; it is dominated by the "Old Arsenal" building, erected in 1784-1801 as a workshop for the manufacture, repair, and storage of ammunition and cannons, which is

[2] Research departments include the Ancient Art Department, Department of the 19th - the beginning of the 20th century, Department of the 20th - the beginning of the 21st century, Graphics Department, Exhibition Department, Education Department, Holdings Department, and Conservation department.

now used for exhibitions and public events. As until the early 21st century, the huge 56 000 square meter building continued to be utilized for military and industrial purposes, today, its architectural reconstruction and transformation into a properly equipped exhibition space still continues, simultaneously with the functioning of the institution.

Being subordinated to the State Management of Affairs,[3] it would not be an exaggeration to say that MA finds itself in a, to some extent, unusual (as normally cultural institutions are overseen by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy) and ambivalent position: on the one hand, this makes the institutions more susceptible to the political changes and whims (for example arbitrary budget cuts), while, on the other, MA is occasionally used as a venue for presidential meetings and events, and hence receives a certain degree of attention from the state which may be not available to other cultural institutions. As a state-owned enterprise, MA is partly backed by public funding; however, it also has to earn income, mainly by selling tickets and providing conference services, in order to cover the remaining expenses, not covered by the state, and to pay back a big debt,[4] with which the institution was left not long after it was founded.

MA has a relatively small collection, which comprises 2529 items and consists of an archeological (items found during the excavations on its premises) and art components. However, unlike the collection-centered character of NAMU, the museum is not the only area of MA's institutional activity; its main focus is on the organization of art and cultural projects—exhibitions, festivals, and education programs. In MA, there is a division between the "program" or "content departments" (these include Museum Department, Contemporary Art Programs Department, Education Department, Literary and Book Department, and

[3] A state body responsible for material, technical, social, and medical support for the activities of the Ukrainian President, Parliament, Government, the National Security and Defense Council, other top state bodies, and senior officials of foreign countries. By providing its services and selling products, MA, together with the other more than 60 public enterprises and organizations managed by the State Management of Affairs, ensures fulfillment of the tasks assigned to the latter.

[4] The debt is owed to two other state-owned enterprises as a result of the initial renovations of the "Old Arsenal" building and as a result of the preparations for UEFA Euro 2012.

Department of Design and Exhibition Work) and the departments of "enabling and development" (including lawyers, accountants, departments of Facilities and Operation, IT, PR, HR, and Visitor Services). Thus, the professional employees, who are at the focus of this research, are those working at the "content departments" as well as in administration, and together comprise 22 female (81.5%) and five male employees, out of all 76 employees working at MA. Among the professional MA's employees, there are art and history researchers, cultural managers, curators, designers, but most of them, due to the specifics of the institutional functioning, perceive of themselves rather as cultural or art managers as the managerial or bureaucratic component of their job equals or even, during some periods, outweighs creative and intellectual part.

Unlike at NAMU, where Goffman's frontstage and backstage are in the distinctively hierarchical relationships as one is positioned above the other, at MA, those spaces are independent of each other, as the frontstage is represented by the immense "Old Arsenal" building where temporary exhibitions take place, while the backstage encompasses two smaller buildings containing offices, collection, and another, much smaller, exhibition space. Light, mostly spacious, relatively newly renovated, furnished, and modernized office rooms host from two to six employees. The kitchens are equipped with refrigerators, microwaves, paper towels, drinking water, coffee machines, and one of them—with a cooktop. Even though most of the employees still eat out during lunch, the kitchens are the areas of active socialization, especially in the morning, before the start of the working day, when the employees line up at the coffee machine. As for the latter, the employees like telling the story behind it: that is, MA (unlike NAMU) has a workplace trade union organization, which used to give the employees grocery baskets or other presents a couple of times a year as gifts for holidays; however, the trade union's members decided to change the tradition, which many of

them considered outdated, abolish the grocery baskets and buy two coffee machines for the office kitchens instead as well as fill them with coffee on a regular basis.[5]

In general, due to the better working conditions and presence of such departments as Information Technology and Facilities and Operation, the functioning of MA is more rationalized in the strict sense of the word than at NAMU as the employees do not need to take care of basic comfort like buying soap, toilet paper, or drinking water or "fixing" things themselves. Therefore, they are less distracted from their primary duties than at NAMU where, as a result of the lack of technical staff, the employees, especially but not exclusively the men, are sometimes also "expected to step into lower status roles" (Simpson 2004, 358) and, for example, move heavy paintings and boxes. Besides, MA has not only generally better working conditions, but it also has higher wages. If before 2017 wages at MA were relatively the same or just slightly higher than at NAMU, the rise of MA's public funding in 2017-2019 led to a substantial increase in wages. To give an example, at NAMU, in 2019, after taxes and without bonuses, monthly wages of low-level employees were 5,071-8,629 UAH (185-314 EUR[6]), of the heads of the departments—9,927 UAH (361 EUR). The employees' cumulative monthly bonuses for the academic rank, years of service, and duration of scientific work ranged from 10% to (in rare cases) 50%. While at MA, after taxes and without bonuses, a monthly wage of a low-level employee was about 9,187 UAH (335 EUR), of a head of a department—about 11,347 UAH (413 EUR). However, their monthly bonuses were considerably higher and sometimes amounted almost as much as their wage (that is, at MA, after taxes and with bonuses, the monthly pay was approximately about 15,000-16,000

[5] NAMU used to have a trade union many years ago; also, later there were attempts to create a new one. However, the employees eventually abandoned the idea, and now, when asked, do not seem enthusiastic about it, which is overall in line with the fact that the employees rarely raise the question of wages, except in small circles. At the same time, at MA, despite the presence of the trade union, to my knowledge, it has never been involved in any negotiations, and its activities mostly concern taking care of the holidays, presents, the coffee machines, and the like.

[6] According to the exchange rate on October 15, 2019.

UAH (546-583 EUR) for low-level employees and 18,000-20,000 UAH (655-728 EUR) or a bit more for the heads of the departments). In comparison, at that time, an average monthly wage in Kyiv after taxes was 12,769 UAH (465 EUR)[7]. Also, monthly rent for a one-room apartment in Kyiv started from 6,900 UAH (251 EUR);[8] while the average monthly households expenditures in Kyiv region, on housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels were 2,074 UAH (75.5 EUR), on food and non-alcoholic beverages—5508 UAH (200 EUR).[9] In addition, the living wage in December 2018 amounted to 15,777 UAH (497 EUR)[10] (according to Dutchak and Oksiutovych 2018). And even though, as a result of the inflation between December 2018 and the time of the research, the living wage is not as telling as it could have been, it still points to the reason why the low wages were an issue for most of NAMU employees and for low-level employees at MA (especially those of them who had to pay rent). However, this will be discussed later.

Overall, NAMU and MA represent two distinct regimes of cultural production: while the former is an example of a traditional museum that now undergoes attempts at modernization, MA exemplifies rather a new type of cultural institution. This is also reflected by the temporalities of both their day-to-day functioning and the employees' imaginary regarding the institutions and the way their own life trajectories relate to them. NAMU, mostly centered around its collection, with a few temporary exhibitions per year, represents a more steady mode of functioning characterized by the aura of timelessness, which was expressed by one of its employees:

[7] In October 2019. "Average salary of full-time employees by economic activity in 2019," The Main Statistical Office in Kyiv, accessed May 25, 2020, http://kyiv.ukrstat.gov.ua/p.php3?c=3730&lang=1 .

[8] In 2019. According to the Ministry of Finances of Ukraine in cooperation with OLX Real Estate, see: "Price swings: the results of the real estate market in 2019," accessed May 30, 2020, https://new.minfin.com.ua/ua/olx-itogi-rynka-nedvijimosti-2019 .

[9] "Expenditures and resources of households in Ukraine in the IV quarter of 2019," State Statistics Service of Ukraine, accessed May 30, 2020, http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/ .

[10] According to the exchange rate on December 15, 2018.

> …we will no longer be there—there will be others, but the collection will remain as a matter of principle. Of course, it grows every year, but the collection will always be there. We will no longer be there, but the collection will (NAMU, low-level employee).

Even though the employees do not necessarily think about the museum as a place of employment for life, many of them remain there for decades. At MA, on the contrary, most of the employees come for a shorter period of time and, when asked, some of them might be already considering what they would do next, in a couple of years. MA's regime of operation is structured according to a succession of projects and implies heavy workload with short periods of release in between. The need to multitask and move from one project to another, for some of the employees, invokes associations with superficiality as they do not have an opportunity to focus on more long-lasting research projects but have to play a role of what some of them called "multipurpose soldiers."

In this need to combine different types of work, the professional employees of NAMU and MA are similar to those whom Pierre Bourdieu called "double personages" (Bourdieu 1995, 216) or "equivocal figures" (Bourdieu 1993, 39) in the field of cultural production, as their job is also of the two-fold nature. On the one hand, in a broad sense, the professional employees of both institutions play the role of cultural producers as they produce exhibitions, research, books, festivals, education programs, and associated products (such as design work), which presupposes creative component of the job. On the other, they are also involved in bureaucratic and, more broadly, managerial operations. This puts the employees into the position that requires them to combine "contradictory dispositions" (Bourdieu 1995, 216) and roles, which manifest themselves in their accounts of their job, and, especially in case of MA, can be seen as a need to be "creative bureaucrats" or, as was just mentioned, "multipurpose soldiers." However, before we touch upon the ethos of the employees' work as double agents in the field of cultural production, the remaining part of the chapter will inquire into the very basic and formal aspects of the job.

Soft Structures and Blurring Boundaries:
Legal Rationality vs. Rationality of "Job as a Way of Life"

Law "makes grids—ways of organizing what through its epistemic filters it considers to be facts," notes Tim Murphy (Murphy 2004, 122). As those grids become compulsory, they exercise immense power over human lives. In his analysis of the juridical field, Bourdieu writes: "law is the quintessential form of the symbolic power of naming that creates the things named, and creates social groups in particular. It confers upon the reality which arises from its classificatory operations the maximum permanence" (Bourdieu 1987, 838), or, to put it more bluntly, law "creates the social world" as well as plays a "determinant role [. . .] in social reproduction" (Bourdieu 1987, 839, 850). Law also contributes to the selective character of the latter: as a result of the multiple legal classifications of "deservingness" and "undeservingness," coupled with different economic, political, or moral hierarchies of priorities, eventually, it is a particular spectrum of experiences that got reproduced as they meet some kind of interests and needs, such as ones of the state, of the market, or of production. Writing about the universalization and normalization effects of the law, Bourdieu notes: "The juridical institution promotes an ontological glorification. [. . .] In this way the juridical institution contributes universally to the imposition of a representation of normalcy according to which different practices tend to appear deviant, anomalous, indeed abnormal, and pathological (particularly when medical institutions intervene to sustain the legal ones)" (Bourdieu 1987, 846-847). This means that, not being granted "ontological glorification," certain experiences become marginalized, if not remain "non-facts" of social life. However, "there is constant tension between the available juridical norms, which appear universal, at least in their form, and the necessarily diverse, even conflicting and contradictory, social demand" (Bourdieu 1987, 841). Because what constitutes the "social demand" is a variety of "orders of life" guided by different, context-specific forms of rationality, which not necessarily coincide with the rationality of law.

In that, I follow those authors who see Max Weber's work not as "the tracing of a uniform, unilinear, and monolithic process of rationalization" (Du Gay 2013, 278) but who recognize that "there are in principle a plurality of competing rationalizations, each of which is dependent upon a different value position, and these value positions are, in their turn, in constant conflict with one another" (Mommsen 1987, 44; Hennis 1988). Or as Du Gay puts it, "Weber's work points to the ways in which different 'orders of life' [. . .] exhibit their own distinctive and non-reducible forms of 'organized rationality'" that are "to be described and understood in their own terms" (Du Gay 2013, 278). Besides the law, when it comes to administration of organizations, another—and, according to Weber, the greatest—form of rationalization is bureaucracy, "the means of transforming social action into rationally organized action" (Weber 1922, 987).

In this light, one of the aims of this research is to inquire into the tension between, on the one hand, the grids created by the intersection of legal and bureaucratic rationalities that regulate the operation of the two institutions under study and, on the other, the actual experiences and "orders of life" of their professional employees. More precisely, in what follows, the chapter seeks to answer the part of the research question concerned with the formal and informal structures and conditions available to the employees at the museums. It is dedicated to the everyday worldliness, mundane matters, and experiences of the employees, and the way those are governed by the legal and workplace regulations; this, in turn, will serve to discern what kinds of experiences are recognized and accommodated by the formal and informal arrangements and what is left out as a matter of private realm.

However, against what might be expected from big over-bureaucratized and over-formalized public organizations by such authors as Bauman, who argues that "dehumanization is inextricably related to the most essential, rationalizing tendency of modern bureaucracy" (Bauman 1989, 103), in fact, there is a lot of informality and flexibility

practiced by both NAMU and MA. This requires a short explanation of what I understand by informality. As a concept, the latter used to be exclusively associated with economic practices, especially as a negative side of the formal-informal dualism: an informal sector, separated from the formal one; a "shadow" economy, opposed to the transparency of formal structures. This is particularly evident in the post-Soviet and post-socialist context, where informality is typically seen as a "transition" phenomenon, a barrier to "'normal' development towards market capitalism and democratic governance," and not as "a version of modernity" (Morris and Polese 2014, 6-7). However, a more recent approach to informality sees it as being deeply entwined with formality and therefore incorporating "all activities [. . .] that are not part of the 'formal' economy but which are variously parasitic, symbiotic with, or 'embedded' within formal economic, state and global, frames of relations" (Morris and Polese 2014, 8). In my research, I follow the authors who take this approach even further and understand informality as a "generic concept," "not being limited to economic for-profit activity of the population, but extending into various other aspects of day-to-day social and inter-personal interaction" (Aliyev 2015, 52). Such approach is not only useful for understanding the practices deployed at the institutions, but it also does justice to the context of the post-Soviet countries, where "over the decades of Soviet rule, informal practices became an integral part of both inter-personal associations and institutional behavior" (Aliyev 2015, 52).

Thus, formality and informality are closely intertwined in the day-to-day practices of both institutions and manifest themselves in various aspects of work. If NAMU's working day officially starts at 9.30, which is 30 minutes later than traditional working hours in public institutions, and which already makes a noticeable difference to the working mothers there, there is an informal agreement at MA that program departments start their day at 10 a.m., which for example, allows some of the employees to do sports in the morning. And when the

employees come to work even later, it is hardly ever met by anything else than a joke and, in reply, a promise to be on time tomorrow. In fact, many issues regarding the schedule, such as the need to come late or leave earlier for personal reasons, are quite easily negotiated with the heads of the departments, especially for those employees who have small children. At the same time, some of the informants noted that even when their private issues interfere with working hours, they have the feeling of the "inner honesty" or "inner calculator," so they would compensate it later by either staying late at the office or working at home. This individual feeling is echoed at the collective level by a pretty strong work ethic and the unspoken feeling of "trust" among the employees in that others do not abuse the flexibility available to them.

The form of employment is sometimes also susceptible to flexibility. What usually is not possible at MA as a result of its intensive workload, but is actively practiced at NAMU is working part-time, that is 75%, 50% or even 25% of a normal workweek. In some cases, such arrangements are a result of a choice made by the working mothers who are not willing to work full-time after coming back from maternity leave to be able to devote more time to the family; sometimes this is a result of the employees combining two jobs (for reasons that might be related to both the need to earn more and the professional ambitions that go beyond the museum work) or combining work and study; for some, this is an opportunity "to preserve some freedom," not least from the institutional discipline; and in remaining cases, the reason is that some of the employees simply cannot work full-time, even when they want or need to, because all the positions are filled. Although the ubiquitous part-time arrangements sometimes encumber the work of the departments as it might be difficult to coordinate the schedules, they accommodate the needs of those employees who otherwise might not be able to work at the museum.

According to the collective agreements at both institutions, the employees are entitled to financial aid (susceptible to availability of institutional funds) when facing serious illness, death of relatives, natural disaster, or in case of giving birth to a child, getting married or on some other occasions. However, at NAMU, there is also an informal practice of raising funds among the employees to assist co-workers facing hardship. There are two possible reasons for the fact that this kind of informal mutual assistance can only be found at NAMU: the first is of historical origin as it was a widespread practice during the Soviet times and was obviously abandoned at young institutions, such as MA; while the second marks the difference in socioeconomic status and wage rates between the employees at NAMU and MA, where wages are generally higher.

As for sick leave, in general, those employees who wanted to access it reported having no obstacles on the side of the institutions. On the contrary, one of MA's low-level employees, recounting that during the last year, she had six surgeries, noted that it would not have been possible in a private organization as she would have been already fired. However, even though there are employees who officially take sick leave (which involves visiting a doctor and receiving a medical certificate), there are also two trends shared by the employees at both institutions that lead to its avoidance.

The first is conditioned by the specificities of the institutional regimes of operation as well as informal arrangements, while the second is concerned with the employees' job and health attitudes. The first trend of avoiding sick leave is related to the fact that many of the employees take compensatory leave instead. The specificity of operation of both institutions implies that often, the employees work late hours or come to work on weekends as a result of exhibition openings and events held by the museums or, in the case of MA, as a result of the workload. Consequently, with time, they accumulate compensatory days off which they can later use for multiple personal purposes, such as health issues, spending time with family,

attending training or language courses, working on projects outside the museum, and other reasons for which they otherwise might not have been entitled to time off. In general, studies of absenteeism point to the potential usefulness of such a practice as, for example, only 35% of unscheduled absences take place because of employees' health problems, while the rest 65% are accounted for other reasons: family issues (24%), personal needs (18%), stress (12%), and entitlement mentality (11%).[11] At the two institutions, compensatory leave serves to mitigate such situations and cover those cases where the employees are not formally entitled to a day off. As an example, this is what one of MA's high-level employees said about different formal and informal arrangements:

> Well, there were health [issues], I broke my leg and couldn't go to work, but this was—sick leave, illness. There were times when it was related to the health issues of my relatives when I didn't go to work either. There were situations when I simply didn't want to go to work, and, fortunately, Arsenal provides you with such an opportunity that you can call the supervisors and say, you know, I have a headache or toothache. Usually, it happens due to feeling unwell. The relationships at Arsenal, fortunately, despite all their formalization, are as such that I can call and say: I am home office today. And honestly, I can tell you that in terms of creativity, when it comes to some formulations, texts, concepts, it's much more effective than working from the office, because it's very difficult to focus here.

This comment highlights three things. The first is that there is an understanding on both sides (the administration and the employees) that a certain degree of flexibility and informality is actually beneficial for the working process, especially in terms of its creative component. Other interviews also confirm this impression, regardless of the fact that the administrations of both institutions attempt to strengthen the loosening discipline from time to time, thereby reminding about the limits of flexibility. Second, it shows that at MA—as well as at NAMU—compensatory leave provides space and time for those unpredictable

[11] "CCH Survey Finds Unscheduled Absenteeism Up in U.S. Workplaces," CCH® Human Resources Management, 2006; accessed May 30, 2020, http://hr.cch.com/press/releases/absenteeism/102506a.asp. No representative survey has been found that would specify the reasons for absence and the respective percentage, for example, in Europe, in post-Soviet countries or in Ukraine in particular.

situations and vulnerabilities of life that cannot be formalized. Third, it also points to another informal practice—working from home when sick, to which I will return in a moment.

Another range of situations where compensatory leave proves useful is when a disjuncture between, on the one hand, health protocols and bureaucratic procedures, and, on the other, actual human experiences, comes into play. For example, when an employee's child is sick but the temperature does not reach over 37°C, he or she is usually not entitled to sick leave (as the temperature is one of the conditions for it) and, as a result, his or her mother who works at the museum, does not have a legally proven reason to stay at home with the child. In a similar way, when it concerns a mild cold, some of the employees doubted the convenience of the practice of going to a doctor in order to get a medical certificate to be able to stay at home. In addition to such cases occurring as a result of the "disjuncture," there are other financial, residential, or workplace circumstances that prevent the employees from taking sick leave. For example, until the recent reform, being from another town and not having a residency registration in Kyiv meant that one was not entitled to free health services, so receiving a medical certificate, according to the employees, might have been not only difficult but also associated with the feeling of psychological discomfort. Also, as the amount of compensation of sick days depends on the duration of service at the institution, some of NAMU's employees might be unwilling to take sick leave as it would affect their monthly pay, that is, basically, not being able to afford it. Another, more common at MA, reason for avoiding sick leave is the workload. As some of the employees argue, it is not convenient since minimal sick leave lasts five working days while they usually would need only two or three days to get better. Consequently, they take compensatory leave, or a couple of days from the annual leave, or—which is widespread at MA but not possible at NAMU as a result of the differences in operation—work from home.

The practice of working from home and especially going to work when sick brings us to the second trend regarding sick leave avoidance, the one that is concerned with employees' job and health attitudes. Although I will analyze the employees' attitudes and affections toward the job in the next chapter, it is important to note here that the majority of them treat this job rather as a vocation, or, in their own words, as "more than just a job," as "a way of life" or "a lifestyle." This, in many cases, leads to the heightened sense of responsibility, workaholism, self-exploitation, and presenteeism even when one is entitled to time off:

> …our people, only when they fall, then they stay at home. If they just, I don't know, cough, if there is no [high] temperature, they come creeping here. It's not normal, but what can you do. [It has to do] with hyper-responsibility. [. . .] I would say people who work here are workaholics (MA, high-level employee).

As double agents of cultural production, the employees often engage in creative and intellectual work, which according to them, "does not end when you close the office door and go home." The way they choose to spend their free time is very often, in one way or another, related to work: the books they read, the entertainment they choose (such as visiting exhibitions or lectures), the training courses they attend; many of them also spend weekends catching up with something they did not finish at work. Therefore, on many occasions, this "job as a way of life" attitude, sometimes along with pressing workload, and negligent attitude to health, leads to the employees prioritizing their job over health. This also encourages informal arrangements, including working from home:

> The good thing about official sick leave is that you are able not to work at all, be actually fully sick, devote yourself to being sick, which is probably good too. But basically, if you have some work to do, [working from home] seems to me to be the most natural way. [. . .] The way I would do it if it was my own company, I would probably do exactly this. I wouldn't choose between 100% working and 100% being sick (MA, low-level employee).

Some of the employees see it as "choosing duty over health," some criticize it as a sacrifice, and some justify it as their own choice, but the fact is that this results in two things. The first is the range of informal practices that are, at the same time, closely intertwined with the

formal ones. While the second is the radical shift, or a complete collapse, of the divide between the professional and private life. Even though most of my informants noted that one of the things they value about the working conditions in the public sector is social insurance, and many of them do make use of it by, for example, taking three-year maternity leave or a month-long vacation, there were those who avoid it as a result of their passion, sense of duty or workload:

> It wasn't maternity leave; it was an annual leave, I didn't take any maternity leave at all. According to the law, there is an option: you may or may not take it; also, a grandma can take maternity leave instead. But it's my choice. [. . .] Well, maybe, you know, for me, the museum is also a child, from which I also can't tear myself away (NAMU, high-level employee).

> My whole life is continuous work, and a break in this work is for a maximum of a month per year. And I never took [leave] at my own expense. Now, at this moment, I have three full unused annual leaves left from the past years (NAMU, high-level employee).

One more thing should be noted concerning those employees who, for some reason, do not take the whole annual leave they are entitled to. According to the law of Ukraine "at the request of the employee, the annual leave can be divided into parts of any duration, provided that its main part lasts at least 14 calendar days."[12] At the same time, many categories of public employees, including those working at museums, are entitled to annual so-called "financial aid for health improvement" which amounts to a monthly wage and which can be paid only when employees leave for a vacation[13] (which, according to the aforementioned law, should last at least 14 days). The rationality behind these arrangements aims at protecting workers and ensuring they have an annual leave lasting at least 14 days, which is also "additionally encouraged" by the financial aid that they cannot receive without going on

[12]Article 12 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vacations," https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/504/96-%D0%B2%D1%80 .

[13] Paragraph 4 of the Resolution "On the implementation of certain provisions of the second part of the Article 28 of the Law of Ukraine 'On Museums and Museum Affairs,'" https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/82-2005-%D0%BF .

vacation. However, what happens is that sometimes, when the employees do not want to or cannot, as a result of the heavy workload, take annual leave long enough, the financial aid functions as the only reason they actually take a vacation. Moreover, in cases of exceptional workload, they might officially take the aid and annual leave while informally continue working or at least coming to office from time to time.

Based on the interviews and what I could observe while doing the ethnography, I argue that there is no single perspective on this kind of practices as they cannot be simply seen as a type of exploitation by the institutions; rather the institutional needs and expectations merge together with the employees' self-exploitative attitudes. It is true that in some cases, one of the sides (institutional exploitative or individual self-exploitative) might be more pronounced or decisive, but overall, it is hard to discern individual and collective motivations driving such practices, as they often merge in almost hegemonic modus operandi. For example, on the one hand, it is in the interests of the institutions to give the employees compensatory days instead of paying them for working after hours or on weekends, as the institutions are drastically underfunded. On the other hand, having a compensatory leave is in the interests of those employees who are reluctant to visit a doctor when sick or who need a day off for private reasons. This situation might be seen as a trade-off between the institutional and individual needs; however, I argue it rather represents a kind of symbiotic relationship between an institution and an individual, between formal and informal practices.

One of the main reasons the arrangements discussed above should not be seen as simply structurally conditioned is the fact that many of my informants stated that if they had wanted a more "formal justice" or to draw a more clear divide between the professional and private life, they could have achieved it, but, according to many of them, it is their "own choice" not to do so, such as it is their "right not to take sick leave" or maternity leave and go to work. On the one hand, in this form of claiming agency, the latter might seem to dissolve

into the structural conditions that encourage self-exploitation. On the other, it is simply hard to discern contours of agency when it is immersed in what I would call "soft structures" or what one of my informants called "plastic environment," which plasticity arises from the aforementioned informality, flexibility, and peculiarity of creative and intellectual work.

Conclusion and Further Discussion

This flexibility and informality have many origins. The first is the two-fold nature of the employees as double agents in the field of cultural production: the creative and intellectual side of their job—engaged with spiritual, educational, and cultural goals and, as a result, hard to measure in economic terms—in many ways escape formalization. The second is the employees' attitudes toward the job involving affection, passion, sense of duty, and often resultant self-exploitation. The third is concerned with the regimes of cultural production of the particular institutions: if NAMU's, in many cases, less intensive, more steady regime of functioning "allows" flexibility, MA's strained, demanding multitasking workload "requires" some degree of flexibility for the operation to keep going. Fourth, it seems that, especially at NAMU, and at least on the employees' side, there is an understanding that one cannot impose or expect very strict discipline while paying such low salaries. In this light, from the perspective of the theory of compensating differentials, flexibility might also be seen as a nonpecuniary compensation for the low-paid job (England 2006).

Two main conclusions can be drawn from the discussed so far. First, although many of those informal practices might seem insignificant, some—outdated (such as raising funds among the co-workers), and some even exploitative, I argue that this informality and flexibility mold the legal and bureaucratic "grids" and more comprehensively accommodate different kinds of employees' needs, experiences, and vulnerabilities related to their physical and mental health, families, and other aspects of private life than if the working conditions were organized exclusively according to formal arrangements. Not least, the flexibility and

informality accommodate and serve the needs of the very institutions, which otherwise, being underfunded, would have a hard time solving them. Second—even though, on the one hand, bureaucratic formality presupposes "the separation of the public and the private sphere fully and in principle" (Weber 1922, 998) and, on the other, rationality behind the law implies certain protection of workers' rights as well as the separation between office and home by setting working hours and days, duration of sick and annual leave and the like—the actual arrangements lead to blurring or complete collapse (which is often seen as desirable and deliberate) of the divide between the professional and private life of the employees, between their office and home. This shows how the rationality of "job as a way of life" redefines the boundaries constituted by the rationality of law and aiming at the protection of workers, and shifts them deep into the interior of the private realm, thereby, leaving the employees more exposed, and in some cases more vulnerable, than it was probably meant to be.

However, although a considerable spectrum of employees' needs is indeed accommodated by the "soft structures" and "plastic environment," when it comes to the employees' experiences, what stands out as a much more pronounced source of vulnerability and overshadows all the other issues (which might be not solved with either formal or informal arrangements) is the issue of low wages. The latter—especially but not exclusively at NAMU where wages are lower—results in multiple professional and private vulnerabilities: not being able to afford additional professional training or trips abroad to visit other museums and exhibitions (which would, again, serve professional competence), not being able to fully provide for their children or pay for their own accommodation, not being able to afford psychotherapy, new clothes, books, eating out, buying coffee every morning on their way to work, and many other things, including sometimes not being able to take sick leave as it would affect the monthly payment. Being true for many NAMU employees, the issue of wages is less salient in MA's case in general; nevertheless, it is no less relevant for

MA's low-level employees, especially those who are originally not from Kyiv and have to pay rent. Therefore, it can be argued that the main reason for the employees' vulnerable position is not a result of rigid, cold legal and bureaucratic grids but is of economic, and to some degree—political, nature.[14]

Significance of the issue of wages to the employees is especially remarkable if put next to the predominantly non-material reasons, goals, and values they associate with the job. This tension that emerged during the research between, on the one hand, non-material or value-oriented motivations of the employees for choosing the job and, on the other, the pressing issue of the financial need will be closely examined in the next two chapters to provide some insight into how, despite the low wages and, in case of NAMU—unsatisfactory working conditions, such a state of affairs still seems worthy and justified to many of the employees and, in some cases, worthy of sacrifices in order to continue doing the job. Thus, the second chapter will engage with the employees' attitudes toward the job: reasons for choosing it, goals, and values associated with it, affections, sentiments, or attachments felt toward it. The third chapter will put the working conditions of the employees into a broader perspective of

[14]A couple of words should be said about the wage formation to do justice to the issue. In Ukraine, wages are determined by the subsistence minimum, which, according to the Law of Ukraine "On the Subsistence Minimum," is defined as "the value sufficient to ensure the normal functioning of the human body, preserving its health, and of a set of food, as well as a minimum set of other goods, and a minimum set of services necessary to meet the basic social and cultural needs of a person." However, since the beginning of the crisis in 2014, "the subsistence minimum has been frozen, and it has been "manually" kept at a low level. In other words, the actual prices have not been reflected by the subsistence minimum for the last more than five years," (Dutchak 2019) and in the second part of 2019, when the fieldwork was conducted, the legislative subsistence minimum (for an able-bodied people—2 102 UAH) was only slightly more than half the actual subsistence minimum evaluated by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, which was 4 733 UAH (MSPU 2019). Two things should be noted here. The first is the fact that, as can be seen from these numbers, "the size of the subsistence minimum is determined based on the financial capabilities of the state budget, and not calculated on the basis of real consumer prices" (Tyschenko et al. 2018, 539). Second, even the subsistence minimum evaluated by the Ministry of Social Policy is far from the living wage that in December 2018 amounted to 19 599 UAH before taxes (according to Dutchak and Oksiutovych 2018). Thus, even this brief overview shows that the issue of low wages arises as a result of economic and political circumstances, but not failures of legislative norms and principles to do justice to human experiences. On the contrary, it is the failure to implement the formal principles of law that puts the employees into a vulnerable position. From what could be observed during the fieldwork, generally, the employees feel powerless over the issue of low wages: even those of them who question or express dissatisfaction with them, rarely act upon it or engage in activism.

the relations between the different types of capital—economic and specific capitals—in the field of cultural production and inquire into the socioeconomic premises enabling one to work in the public cultural institutions.

After Conclusion: The Dark Side of Informality

By focusing on the low wages as one of the reasons that put the employees into a vulnerable position, I do not mean to dismiss the other issues that might be no less critical for some of them. First, if the issue of low wages is the most pressing for NAMU's employees and MA's low-level employees, what affects MA's employees of all levels is the intensive workload that often leads to experiences of constant tiredness, exhaustion, and even burnout. The workload organized around a succession of projects, parallel engagement in several projects, and multitasking, are definitely some of the main reasons affecting the employees' emotional, mental, and physical state. Nevertheless, as it was already shown, it is not always possible to disentangle the effects of the pressing exigencies of production and demanding workload from the effects of the employees' attitudes to the job leading to self-exploitation and work ethic encouraging workaholism. Origins of the latter can be partly attributed to the discussed above specificities of the creative and intellectual work; at the same time, they are hardly isolated from the peculiarities of modern capitalism and its effects on mental and emotional health (for example, Neckel et al. 2017; Hun 2015; Sennett 1998). However, a comprehensive account of this issue and its contextualization in the global socioeconomic processes would require separate research.

Second, another potential reason for the vulnerability of the employees, especially salient in NAMU's case, is interpersonal relationships at the workplace. It is closely related to the informality, as the latter leaves the employees exposed and unprotected in the situations where working relationships, not being formally regulated, might be susceptible to individuals' own will and alternative hierarchies based on symbolic and cultural capital (such

as education, age, and pedigree), and occasionally resulting in bullying or ageism. This partly stems from the informality or rather lack of formalization, which is helpful in ameliorating and accommodating employees' needs but also might have significant drawbacks. As was noted by Renee Friedman, "because a museum worker's performance is very difficult to measure, rewards are separated from performance. [. . .] Judgments for performance tend to be subjective. [. . .] The absence of quantitative and definable measures for performance leads museums to reward and punish, to promote and discharge, on the basis of seniority and external training" (Friedman 1994, 125). Another origin of the problem is what Weber, writing about politics as a vocation, called "lack of distance," that is, when "the passionate commitment to a 'cause'" (Weber 1994, 353) together with the disposition of museum employees toward utmost individualism (Friedman 1994, 126) override the judgment and affect the interpersonal relationships at the workplace. However, considering the significant effect this sometimes has on the employees' wellbeing, the issue also deserves to be the topic of separate research.

Chapter 2 – Non-Material Motivations and Compensations: Some Affinities between Museum Work and Care Work

When it becomes clear that it is not the formal and rigid nature of law and bureaucratic regulations that affects the employees at the two institutions the most but the issue of low wages, which overshadows most of the other disadvantages and inconveniences of the job, there arises a tension, which was mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, and which, from my perspective, is essential to understanding the employees' experiences of the job. This tension occurs between, on the one hand, seeming economic disinterest or, more precisely, the dominant interest of the employees in the properties of the job other than money, and, on the other hand, their lack of economic capital. That is, when asked about the reasons for choosing and staying in the job for years or even decades, the answer is typically about having a meaningful and interesting job, following a passion and affection, and pursuing certain non-material goals and values (which quite often echo institutional mission and values); but when it comes to their concerns, for most of the employees at NAMU and the low-level employees at MA, what stands out as the reason for multiple private and professional insecurities is the issues of low wages. As the latter side of the tension will be addressed in the next chapter, here, I will inquire into its former side: what are the values and non-material properties the employees see in the job that make it meaningful and justify its worthiness? What kind of affective relationships do they develop with the collection and its items, with the museum buildings and premises that, in turn, might prevent them from changing the job despite the low pay? And does feminist literature on care work can help shed some light on the peculiarities of museum work?

Meaningful Work: From "Doing Something Bigger than your Life" to Self-Realization

"I love my job," was probably one of the most frequent comments given by the interviewees. Sometimes it was said in a sober, considerate way, sometimes—with passion and affection,

and in some cases, it indicated one side of the "love-hate" relationship the person had with the job. What this comment suggested could be understood not only from the further elaboration of those who actually gave it but also from the answers of those few who were hesitant about their feelings toward the job: the comment implied that they saw their job, or some of its aspects, to be meaningful; and those for whom, as a result of changing priorities, burnout or other reasons, it stopped being so, reported lack of satisfaction. However, this sense of meaningfulness was not homogeneous but derived from a whole spectrum of features associated with the job, where one extreme was about self-realization and self-development in general and, more specifically, about such worldly reasons as attaining new knowledge and skills; while the other extreme, transcending individual benefits, was about aiming at greater good or purpose—"doing something bigger than your life," "changing the world for the better"—and revolved around values such as the provision of education, maintenance of tradition, preservation of material and intangible cultural heritage. Between those two poles, there were multiple features of the job that provided the employees with a sense of meaningfulness, and hence significance. Thus, many of them reported having a distinct feeling of responsibility and doing something important, which was even stronger for high-level employees, who described it as a sense of duty, in some cases, with sacred overtones or of a military character:

> [What I feel toward the job is] a sense of duty. It's like a duty to the homeland. [. . .] In general, it's a feeling of such, you know, probably a soldier, when he goes to war, he has this sense of duty to the homeland: you have to, you can, you will. It is the same feeling here (NAMU, high-level female employee).

This sense of having or being part of a mission permeated many of the employees' accounts ranging from a more personalized "missions" that some of them set for themselves because they felt otherwise no one else might take care of what they were doing, to a broader

institutional mission, which involved responsibility before the state and the people, and which was shared by many of the employees:

> This is what we are working on in our department: we disclose the potential of this collection, which serves to unlock the individual potential, of every person (NAMU, high-level employee).

What the latter quote also indicates is helping others—in this case, to develop their potential through engagement with art, in other cases, by being a professional and providing high-quality expertise or cultural product—which is another value-oriented feature of the job, associated by the employees with a feeling of satisfaction, significance, and "being needed." The feeling of being needed or becoming significant by serving a greater good, in fact, suggests that the distance between the extremes (self-realization and broader purpose[15]) is not as big as it might appear. As even when one is serving a broader purpose, it altogether elevates the person through her involvement into "something bigger than your life" and contributes to her sense of self-realization, which is especially salient when it comes to historical or cultural processes:

> To be frank, I think what's really important is the involvement in the creation of some, I don't know, it sounds pretentious, socially important things, projects, in a global sense. I mean, roughly speaking, I understand that I'm doing something that will leave its mark in history, which would be seen by many people. And it is an involvement that is present, I think, in the cultural sphere [. . .] understanding of such, you know, engagement in some process of importance (MA, low-level employee).

And vice versa: even for those who report pursuing self-realization, the latter usually comes through and as a result of the involvement with the particular institution and its broader goals. That is, even self-oriented goals of the individuals are not always completely

[15] Here, the interpretation of the "extremes" is based on the interviews and my own observations, which were later backed by the ideas from: Martela, Frank, and Anne B. Pessi. "Significant work is about self-realization and broader purpose: defining the key dimensions of meaningful work." *Frontiers in psychology* 9 (2018), 363.

discernible from the broader good. For example, this is how one of the employees expressed the connection between one's success and success of the museum in general:

> For me, success in the museum is to make small changes… not so much to present yourself, what an intelligent researcher I am, as to change the museum, its life, its status in society, society's interest in it. If you don't live and breathe it, you have nothing to do in the museum—this is my deep conviction. [. . .] Therefore, the main qualities that a museum employee should have is a desire, love for what one is doing, a desire to change something for the better in it (NAMU, high-level employee).

The quote points to two things. First, it shows how the individual goals and values associated with the job sometimes merge with the institutional ones to the point where it becomes hard to discern: whether the employee internalized the institutional values or, as a result of the years of service and reaching a higher position, the employee started implementing her or his vision on the institutional level. In fact, I would argue that both are correct and that it gives an example of how mutually constitutive are the relationships between the structures and agents. Second, the quote shows how the personal commitment or passion becomes projected in the form of expectations on others and contributes to the maintenance of certain work ethic, according to which, the "just a job" attitude is seen as marginal. Or, as one of MA's high-level employees noted, "if a person does not have this feeling [of serving something bigger], if it is just a job [for her], then this causes a terrible frustration on the part of everyone else." Therefore, even though the employees' individual goals are far from being homogenous, sometimes they merge with the institutional goals, values, and mission in, to some degree, hegemonic agreement, which might make the people, who do not seem enthusiastic enough or have an alternative vision, seem not very well suited for the job.

However, besides the discussed above goals, values, and, attitudes that contribute to the employees' feeling of meaningfulness of the job, its worthiness, by bringing them non-pecuniary compensations, there is one more dimension to the relationship the employees have

with their job, this time, particularly characteristic of the employees who are directly involved with the museum collection: that is, most of NAMU's employees and MA's employees from the Museum Department. This dimension is about the peculiar attachment to and care for the collection objects and, more broadly, for the institutional building and premises, which might be not only strong and distinctive but also might keep the employees from changing the workplace.

Looking at Museum Work Through the Perspective of Care Work

> It turns out that men fight, as if in some ancient society or something like that… and women look after children and engage in culture.
>
> —NAMU, high-level employee

In the remaining part of the chapter, I will primarily focus on NAMU's employees, and MA's employees from the Museum Department, and the specific attachment they exhibit toward the collections, their items, and, more generally, toward the institutional buildings and premises. For example, some of them claimed that it is the access to the collection, "the contact with real art objects, not least this building, this place where it is located" that is the most important to them in the job. The presence of "object itself, physically," the "internal need" to be "surrounded by art" and work with its objects was, for some of the employees, a crucial element when choosing the job against jobs in other institutions. Sometimes, despite the low pay, it is also the reason for remaining in the job or postponing its change until they take care of some objects they care about. Thus, Sophia, who is an MA's employee, noted:

> I am now considering whether this job satisfies me and what to do next. But in essence, I love this job. I have this very important subjective factor that I was involved in here at the beginning of the creation [of the institution]. I really love [the building] as a historical monument; it is dear to my heart. I love showing it to my friends, telling them stories [about it], conducting excursions. So when there are some troubles here [at work], love compensates them. This is what supports me here very much. This is cool. In short, I have a kind of inner mission. [. . .] My mission is connected to this archaeological collection. The mission, in a sense that… Sometimes, now, I probably already consider it possible that I would

> change my job one day, but I want to complete the work on the ceramics collection first. Because it's a very specific work that I think few people want to engage with. And I know for sure that I will be staying here for another year until I finish working with the ceramics (MA, Sophia).

The affection for the building and its space, which is expressed in the quote, is shared by the majority of MA's employees. The same is the case at NAMU, where the attachment to the building often takes the form of genuine concern for its decrepit condition.

One way to explain this kind of relationship the museum employees have with the objects is by what one of them called the "specific nature of museums" as a workplace. This specificity, first of all, implies the collection-centeredness of art museums: albeit to a different extent, depending on the structure and operation of each museum, they are organized around preservation, research, exposition, and popularization of objects of art. Consequently, this might lead to such a peculiar feature of museum work as hermeticity or exclusivity. As was noted by one of NAMU's employees:

> Museums are inherently hermetic because they have something that is stored, and that should not be for everyone. One way or another, this hermeticity, it will always be there, in everything, no matter how hard we try to be open. Because, on the one hand, it [the museum] is just a depository, in which not everyone should be allowed to enter. With all the desire to show everything to everyone, it is impossible. Therefore, the hermeticity will be there, and it puts its imprint on everything (NAMU, high-level employee).

This hermeticity, as well as resistance or suspicion to change, might also be related to what another informant called "the historical trauma inherent to the profession." That is, museums, including NAMU, were directly affected by the turbulent events of the 20th century: evacuation of its collection during the Second World War, repression against museum employees in the 1930s, from the late 1930s and onward—secret preservation of works of the artists many of whom, charged with "formalism" or "bourgeois nationalism," were repressed or executed by the Soviet regime as "enemies of the people." Even in the 21st century: in winter 2013-2014, during Euromaidan, NAMU was geographically at the heart of

the events, so, when the street riots and clashes with the police started, some of the employees had to spend nights at the museum to ensure safety of the building and collection. Most probably, all this fostered the protective attitude and attachment of the museum employees to the objects of art. What else contributes to the latter in case of NAMU is the fact that, unlike in other museums where there are normally separate positions for museum guardians, here, the employees combine this role with their research positions. Being a guardian of some part of the collection is a status held by many of NAMU's high-level employees: it comes with the responsibilities toward the collection items—such as periodic inventory, monitoring of the state of conservation, controlling temperature and humidity of storage facilities as well as financial responsibility in case of an item's loss—but with no rise in wages. As a result, one can notice how this responsibility for and proximity to the collection is also reflected by the degree of attachment exhibited by the employees: the more they are involved in taking care of the objects (as guardians or restorers), the more they care about them.

This, in turn, makes it hard to resist the comparison between this kind of affection and the sentiment or attachment care workers often develop toward their clients, coworkers, and employers (England and Folbre 2003, 73; Stone 2000). Especially when one hears how the employees sometimes personify the objects or the premises when referring to them: such as NAMU's restorers who, after the months some of the artworks spend on their tables, start addressing them (for example, sculptures) as their "patients," or "chronic patients" if they require repeating restoration, years after years; or such as high-level employees at both NAMU and MA who see their institutional buildings as a "living organism" which, they claim, as a colleague, "must be respected in all its aspects."

Of course, in the literature on care work, most of the definitions of care, caring, and care work (both paid and unpaid) imply the presence of a human care recipient and

reciprocity or, as Waerness notes, "caring is about relations between (at least two) people" (Waerness 1987, 210). For example, Cancian and Oliker define caring as "feelings of affection and responsibility combined with actions that provide responsively for an individual's personal needs or well-being, in a face-to-face relationship" (Cancian and Oliker 2000, 2). Similarly, Budig, England, and Folbre use "the term 'care work' (or caring labor) to refer to occupations in which workers are supposed to provide a face-to-face service that develops the human capabilities of the recipient," where "human capabilities" mean "health, skills, or proclivities that are useful to oneself or others" (Budig et al. 2002, 455). The reciprocal nature of caring is particularly salient when it is put in terms of "care contracts," where the latter, being implicit or explicit, designate "agreements or understandings between two or more parties concerning mutual expectations or obligations" and "imply binding commitments over a period of time" (England and Folbre 2003, 66).

However, there are also broader, more inclusive approaches to care that are "based on an all-encompassing care ethic" (Leira and Saraceno 2006, 8). The one I am going to rely upon to address the relationships the employees develop with the museum collection and premises belongs to the authors of the so-called "second generation" of care theorists (according to the classification proposed by Hanvinsky 2004, 11). In particular, Joan Tronto and Berenice Fisher suggest that "caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our "world" so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web" (Fisher and Tronto 2003, 34). As noted by the authors, this definition of caring as an "effort to keep life going" does not "assume universal standards concerning what is needed to maintain and repair our world" as human needs change with context (Fisher and Tronto 2003, 34). Even more importantly, this understanding is "not restricted to human interaction with others" (Tronto 1993, 103) but

recognizes that "the caring process [. . .] may be directed toward things and other living beings as well as toward people" (Fisher and Tronto 2003, 34).

Even though being criticized as too broad (Held 2006, 31-32), Fisher and Tronto's approach to caring is important for the case under study as it points to the particular perspective from which, I argue, many of the employees view the care they take of the objects and premises: not as the preservation of isolated items but as part of the reproduction and "repair" of the "world," where the cultural heritage, the tradition it keeps alive, the knowledge it provides about history are seen as integral parts of this world, that is, as parts of social reproduction as such. As one of the employees noted:

> Here, I feel the continuity of times, through the artworks, through the museum rooms. Continuity of times is such an interesting thing; it is difficult to explain. That is, you understand that there is some tradition that lasts despite everything that may have happened. And if it continues, it means that the world exists and goes in the right direction. And we need this. Because we have a difficult history, especially museum history as part of the general history—it is very representative, it is tragic both for the employees, and for the collection, and for the future, which we cannot imagine now (NAMU, high-level employee).

In this context, some of NAMU's employees pointed out that they see the museum as a place of "eternity" or evoked sacred or mystical associations during the interviews. For the employees, their affection and care start with the art objects of the past, continue in the collection they constitute, flow through the history the collection could tell and the culture it keeps alive, eventually contribute to the reproduction of the world and ensure the future:

> [. . .] knowing what happened, [. . .] [a museum employee] can see the future—this is what important. Not just knowledge, the past. The more you understand all these processes, the way all this developed in the past, [the better] you can understand what is needed now and in the future (NAMU, high-level employee).

And just as reproductive labor itself, the reproduction of culture (as part of social reproduction) is highly gendered work, which sometimes puts the female employees, who

constitute the majority of professional employees in both institutions, in the position where they have to choose what to take care of first.

The Need to Choose What to Take Care of: Individual and Institutional Choices

What Sophia was describing in the quote earlier in this chapter was about the need to make a choice. Being not originally from Kyiv, and playing in her partnership the role of "the partner who provides financial stability," she spends almost two-thirds of her monthly wage on accommodation and, as a result, has debts to pay. Her love for the collection, the premises, and the job as such functions as a compensation for the lack of financial reward; however, considering the financial issue, for her, it is rather a temporary situation that will last until she completes her ceramics-related "mission" and as long as her needs remain the same. As for the latter, for example, Sophia assumes that if she had a child, she would not have "as many opportunities" as she has now, meaning that she would probably not be able to afford this job.

This gives an example of how the motivation to take care of all the things one cares about (or according to the aforementioned definition of caring, all the things that constitute the social world one wants to reproduce) might find itself in conflict with the lack of resources. As a result, some of the employees are confronted with a choice aptly described by Fisher and Tronto: "caring about involves selection. Limitations in time, knowledge, skills, and resources impinge on our caring about, forcing us to make choices. There are often more things to care about than we can comprehend, and we often care about more than that to which we can respond. Perhaps this accounts for the Old Saxon root of the word *care,* which is *sorrow*" (Fisher and Tronto 2003, 36).

This sorrow could be heard in Yana's voice—an art restorer I had met during her last days at the museum, before she, her husband, and their two-year daughter moved abroad to try starting a new life—when she was telling me that if it had not been for the lack of money, she would have never left the museum:

> [. . .] because I love my work so much. I can say more: even orders from private clients [. . .], yes, they bring money, but museum restoration is a bit different, it's history, it's some kind of depth. It's, you know, when you do it for the museum, you don't do it for money but to preserve it [an item] as best as possible (NAMU, Yana).

She recounted that before the baby was born, the lack of money had been manageable as she had had time to take orders from private clients; but with the baby, she does not have time for that anymore, their expenses have risen, and they barely earn enough to cover the basic needs. For a long time, Yana did not want to agree to move abroad, not least because she wanted to restore the items that were falling apart, especially at her second job (also in a public institution), which she combined with the job at NAMU. However, she said that eventually, she realized that "you are one, and they are many," and "you aren't enough for everything," meaning that not being able to take care of all the items she wanted to restore as a result of the lack of resources, she chose care of her child over the favorite job, not being able to afford it anymore.

Unlike Sophia, for whom the choice to continue working at MA constitutes rather a temporary situation, for Marta, another NAMU employee, it is a permanent trade-off, where she, in her own words, "agrees to be so unequal," that is, where she perceives the non-pecuniary rewards (the fact that it is her favorite job and that she has access to the collection) to be enough to "compensate" for the low pay and other sacrifices she has made to be able to remain at the museum for many years:

> [. . .] with the onset of a market economy, maybe the emphasis a bit changed. Indeed, there is another life around, and if you are receiving the minimum wage, you are already getting out of time. Before that, [during the Soviet times] everyone was equal, at least more or less, and now everyone is very unequal, and you find yourself in a situation where you [need to choose] if you agree to be so unequal. [. . .] This is the situation in Ukraine. If a person agrees to this role: I do what I love, well, let's say I earn little... [Then] my favorite job will be a compensation for the fact that I earn little. I am ready to earn little so that I feel comfortable in life because I do what I want (NAMU, Marta).

These three stories exemplify the life choices the employees at both institutions had to make considering the lack of financial resources. In particular, they show that, despite the low wages and often poor working conditions, the attachment to the museum collection, premises and the job as such might discourage the employees from looking for better-paid options, at least until their needs change (for example, with the birth of a child) and the job's "compensating" effect exhausts itself, such as in Yana's case. The bond of duty and affection—reinforced by the uniqueness of the collection—puts the employees in the position similar to what feminist authors, writing about care work, call "prisoners of love," a position where an "emotional 'hostage effect' comes into play," preventing workers from demanding better working conditions or higher wages (England and Folbre 2003, 73).

As a side note, it should also be mentioned that the lack of resources that confronts the employees with the need to make difficult choices regarding the things they can "afford" taking care of plays out at the institutional level too. For example, considering the lack of space as well as financial and human resources, for a while, there has been a lengthy discussion among NAMU's employees on the museum's priorities: while some of them insisted that the future museum of contemporary art should be created as a part of NAMU, others argued that this would drain already scarce resources and that "preserving the heritage" should be institution's priority. That is, roughly speaking, the institution was also faced with a choice about what to take care of first: "old" or contemporary art.

Conclusion

Most of the literature on care work focuses on the occupations where it is understood as service provided directly to its receivers: "child care, all levels of teaching (from preschool through university professors), and health care workers of all types (nurses aides, nurses, doctors, physical and psychological therapists)" (England 2005, 383). By using the notion of care work in relation to the museum employees and their attachment directed toward

collection objects and museum premises, that is, not human "receivers," my aim was not to blur the conceptual apparatus developed in the literature on care work to the point where it becomes overly extensive and loses its analytical validity but to enrich our understanding of peculiarities of museum work. Indeed, showing that there are certain affinities between care work and museum work does not disregard differences between them but enables one to give an account of care outside of (traditionally understood) care work.

For one thing, feminist writings on care work, in particular, the Fisher and Tronto's approach to caring, help to highlight certain meanings behind the employees' caring motives by relating them not only to the preservation of collection objects but to the reproduction of social world as such. For another, its relevance for the case under study stems from the fact that feminist authors in general, and especially those writing on care work, have done a lot to deconstruct the Western dichotomy between reason and emotion as well as the neoclassical economic view that sees agents as rational and "separative" (England 2003). Thus, the literature on care work not only does not take for granted but also most vividly illustrates the blurring boundaries between economic and other types of rationality, between the private and the public, the formal and the informal. This makes it particularly perceptive to the peculiarities of museum work—which, as was shown in the first chapter, in many ways transcends those boundaries—and helpful for understanding the dilemmas and reasoning behind some of the choices made by the museum employees.

Finally, to conclude this chapter, I want to return to Paula England's discussion about the "prisoners of love" perspective on care work: she notes that "feminist writings on care contain [. . .] a concern for the negative consequences for society if we lose truly caring motivations for care work" (England 2005, 389). In this light, and considering the low-paid jobs and often poor working conditions in public cultural institutions, maybe there should also be a concern about what would happen to the field of arts and culture if the affection,

care, and value-oriented motivations of the employees disappear, leaving only instrumental reasons for the job.

Chapter 3 – Dependent Stability: Tension, Illusion, and Subsidy in the Field of Cultural Production

The Illusion of Economic Disinterestedness in the Field of Cultural Production

> We all live subsidized lives.
>
> —Martha Albertson Fineman,
> *Cracking the Foundational Myths*

> No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.
>
> —John Donne,
> *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, Meditation XVII

> Another issue with the museum is [. . .] that people perceive the museum like a music box: that is, you open it, the ballerina danced, you saw everything there was, and this is it. I mean people never really think about the fact that to have something inside the museum, to make this ballerina dance, roughly speaking, there have to be a huge amount of tiny ants that are running about and trying to do something.
>
> —NAMU, low-level employee

In *The Rules of Art* and *The Field of Cultural Production*, Pierre Bourdieu showed that the economic disinterestedness of the field of cultural production, the "presumed adherence to the disinterested values which constitute the specific law of the field" (Bourdieu 1993, 39) is, in fact, an illusion that conceals an inverted economic logic of the field and the "interest in disinterestedness" of its agents. The field of cultural production as "the economic world reversed" occurs as a result of the peculiar relationships between economic capital and specific capital of the field that are at the core of two different principles of hierarchization: the heterogeneous principle concerned with economic success and large-scale or mass production; and the autonomous principle pursuing "art for art's sake," that is, where production happens for the close circle of other producers (Bourdieu 1993, 39-40).

Even though Bourdieu was writing first and foremost about writers or artists, the tension that emerged during the research—and which, I argue, is essential to understanding

the experiences of the professional employees in the two institutions under study—appears to have a similar illusion at its core. This tension occurs between, on the one hand, the dominant non-material or value-oriented motives of the employees for choosing the job and, on the other, the low wages as one of the biggest issues they face as a result of pursuing those motives while lacking economic capital. While the former side of the tension creates an illusion that the employees have little interest in the economic rewards of the job, the latter side proves otherwise. Therefore, in this chapter, I will inquire into what kind of insights about the origins of this illusion can be gained by engaging with Bourdieu's ideas on the seeming economic disinterestedness of the agents in the field of cultural production.

Apart from the more obvious multiple limitations to the use of Bourdieu's theory arising from the differences between the historical, economic, political, and cultural context of Bourdieu's analysis and the context of this research, a crucial conceptual limitation stems from the difference in their main "characters." That is, while Bourdieu primarily focused on artists' or writers' points of view, this research is dedicated to those who, according to Bourdieu, can be called "double personages" or "equivocal figures," and to whom I will refer as double agents of the field of cultural production. As was briefly noted in the first chapter, the "double" character of the professional employees at the two institutions arises from the two-fold nature of their job: on the one hand, as cultural producers who (like artists) engage into creative and intellectual work, while on the other, as public servants and managers involved into bureaucratic operations. Consequently, what distinguishes the employees from artists is the need to integrate "contradictory dispositions" and roles.

This ensures their different position in the field. Being stably employed by the institutions that provide them with social insurance and some economic stability, the employees are normally not engaged in the risky investments, which are, according to Bourdieu, pursued by some artists. At the same time, unlike with artists, this affiliation with

the institutions might impinge upon the "creative side" of the employees' job as it grants the institutions the capacity to—to a different extent—appropriate their authorship and turn it into a part of the "faceless" (or with one or two distinctive curatorial faces) collective work. For one thing, the affiliation with the institutions results in the difference between the nature of the employees' authorship (which is often hidden behind the name of the institution) and the authorship of independent artists. For another, however, it points to the fact that similar on the surface economic disinterestedness of the artists in Bourdieu's case, and the professional employees at the two institutions is premised on different economic conditions and logics.

Indeed, in Bourdieu's analysis, the illusion of the artists' disinterestedness in financial rewards relies on the "charismatic economy" where the orientedness "toward the most risky positions" (Bourdieu 1995, 216) and accumulation of symbolic capital during the initial phase is followed by "a phase of exploitation of this capital, which ensures temporal profits and, through them, a transformation of lifestyles" (Bourdieu 1995, 255). However, such a charismatic economy does not apply to the professional employees at MA and NAMU. The first reason, especially relevant for NAMU's employees, is that their specialization and professional goals might be closely tied to the particular collection and institution: for example, there are few attractive options for art restorers in Kyiv, and NAMU is one of them; similarly, there are few alternatives for the art researchers if their research interests are connected to a particular historical period of Ukrainian art represented by NAMU's collection. And even gaining a higher position at the same institution does not promise the "social miracle" on which the charismatic economy is premised:

> For some reason, I live with the idea that I can earn enough to afford decent living: everyday expenses, utilities, some recreation, healthcare for my child. [. . .] I am not sure this can be accomplished at the museum. I do not see… I don't see a point in holding a position higher than I have now. That is, being the head of the department is a huge financial responsibility [. . .] and it is actually very difficult. [. . .] And the salary is not much higher (NAMU, low-level employee).

Second, which is more the case for MA, even if the employees are not restricted by such a thematic or professional connection to the institution, there are still not that many other options in Kyiv, especially considering the competitive salary offered by MA, as compared to other public and private cultural institutions. Therefore, despite the similarity of the seeming economic disinterestedness expressed by both the artists in Bourdieu's analysis and the employees at the institutions, the illusion in the latter case relies on different economic conditions and logic. In particular, I want to distinguish three "pillars" of the seeming economic disinterestedness of the professional employees: the public status of their institutions, the peculiarity of the field of cultural production, and the socioeconomic conditions of the employees as combined with and reinforced by the traditional gender roles.

Two Pillars of the Illusion: Public Sector and Value-Orientedness

What, first of all, provides the employees with some freedom from profit-driven concerns is the public status of NAMU and MA, that is, their dependence on government funding and donations, which ensures relative autonomy of the institutions from the market. In fact, there are ways for them to have some profit. For NAMU, it can come from entrance tickets, provision of services such as art appraisal, consultations, organization of events, as well as filming on the museum premises; however, as it is mostly spent on operational needs, the profit does not reflect much on the wages of the employees. While MA, as a state-owned enterprise, does have profit from multiple activities; and although most of its wages are paid from the public funding, the employees can receive (sometimes considerable) bonuses as a result of especially profitable enterprises. However, even at MA, there is no immediate relation between the work done by individual employees and the premiums they receive as the latter are distributed among all the personnel. Therefore, at both institutions, the employees, having fixed wages, are not directly motivated by profit-making concerns. Also, there is an understanding among them that, as a result of the public status, both MA and

NAMU are susceptible to the whims of politics so the budget, as was noted by one of the employees, "is a political circumstance, not a financial one," and the wages, to a great extent, depend on the directors' ability to "fight for the coefficient" with the higher authorities (the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy—in case of NAMU, the State Management of Affairs—for MA) when the budget is being made.

Second, more specific freedom from economic evaluation of activities comes from the peculiarity of the field of cultural production itself in conjuncture with the public sector. One way to approach this peculiarity is by adopting Weber's notions of economic and value rationality, as was done by Michele Lamont in her research on the culture of the French and the American upper-middle class. When she divides her interlocutors into, on the one hand, "social and cultural specialists" and, on the other, "for-profit workers," she explains that the divide goes not only along the public/private sectors of the economy but also along the "relationship that people have with economic rationality through their work—i.e., whether their work is oriented toward profit maximization" or, in case of social and cultural specialists, toward "attaining cultural, spiritual, or humanitarian goals," in which case the "professional achievements cannot be measured primarily in economic terms" (Lamont 1992, 152). While Lamont classifies her respondents into four occupational categories "depending on their sector of activity and the contribution of their work to the realization of profit" (Lamont 1992, 153), the employees in the case under study belong to the pole where, in Weber's terms, people have the strongest relationship with value rationality through their work. Indeed, as was shown in the previous chapter, the dominant non-material and value-oriented motives can be not only decisive for choosing the job but also for staying in it, despite the financial constraints. At the same time, the understanding that their value-oriented goals cannot be pursued in the same way in the private sector becomes evident every time the employees, when asked about their job, contrast it with their past profit-driven activities:

> I had one job in my life that I hated. It was deeply uncomfortable for me. I worked—this was the only time in my life when I worked in the commercial sector—in a fully, 100% commercial sector, and it was connected to a sense of emptiness: you cannot explain yourself the meaning of this work. I mean, you understand that the best effect of your high-quality work would be a better profit for an organization or a person X. It doesn't inspire you a bit. And you cannot answer the question, "why should I waste my life on this?" You feel that you burn your life, you throw it away. All my other jobs have always been associated with a sense of some mission and value (MA, high-level employee).

Such "value-loaded" discourse—especially when expressed by those who occupy the dominant position both in the institutional hierarchy and "by virtue of their specific capital" (Bourdieu 1995, 206)—together with the expectations to maintain the illusion of economic disinterestedness might make some of the employees feel ashamed to raise the issue of low wages, which was the case at NAMU. As one of its employees explained: except in small circles, the issue "is not discussed" at the museum; to say that such pay is unworthy is considered "somehow mercantile or rather unethical"; she also remembered that once, when one of the high-level employees had tried to raise the issue of low wages, no one had joined or supported her.

Sometimes, this disavowal of economic capital is directed not only inwards but also outwards by taking the form of the imagined difference in the worldview between those who work in the museum and those who are outside:

> Of course, it affects you. You are sitting here stoned, and then you go out into the world, and you don't know how to interact with people there. Because here you are surrounded by art, and there are—material values. And you don't understand how to exist there. [. . .] There is a world out there, material values; no one needs art (NAMU, low-level employee).

The Third Pillar: Minimal Financial Security and Traditional Gender Roles, or Subsidizing the Field of Cultural Production

> Working at the museum is a luxury.
> —NAMU, low-level employee

The third "pillar" of the illusion is the socioeconomic conditions "for the indifference to economy" (Bourdieu 1993, 40), that is, the socioeconomic conditions that enable the professional employees to work at the two institutions despite the relatively low (especially at NAMU) wages and facing financial insecurity. Just like the charismatic economy of the artists in Bourdieu's case does not apply to them, nor does their gender position: while Bourdieu's characters are predominantly male, the majority of the professional employees at both institutions—92.6% at NAMU and 81.5% at MA—are women.

When asked about the possible reasons for the fact that women usually comprise the majority of professional employees in museums, explanations the most often identified by the informants include, first, describing the field of arts and culture as "traditionally more women's sphere," not least because of its low-paid jobs but also because it does not challenge women's femininity and traditional gender role; second, being usually "breadwinners" for their families, men cannot afford such low salaries, they are more ambitions, and therefore strive for higher status and pay; also, it was noted a couple of times that as MA expects its employees to be highly qualified, with the same skills and education, men can probably quite easily find a better-paid job outside the field of cultural production. Of course, these accounts cannot provide a comprehensive explanation of the gender imbalance in the public cultural institutions, not least because these are assumptions that not always apply to the informants themselves and to their own gender roles. However, they do give some insight into the dominant gendered imaginary, according to which women are not expected to play the role of the main breadwinner, and their dependent status is normalized.

This dependence is reflected by a joke widespread among MA's employees that one can afford to work in the field of cultural production as long as "she has a couch in Kyiv or a husband who works in IT." The joke has a lot to do with the actual situation: almost all my female informants had some kind of economic support coming from a husband who earns more or parents who support them; from the fact that they are originally from Kyiv and do not need to pay rent; from their second jobs elsewhere or from additional workload taken at the same institution to earn more; or a combination of those. As for the male employees, among the reasons they are able to live for the low wage are having "low needs" as a result of their lifestyle, absence of children or other dependents; having their own accommodation; taking second jobs from time to time or having some profit from their past business initiatives. That is, overall, among the professional employees, hardly anyone lives exclusively on the wage provided by the institutions and earns enough to cover all the expenses and needs (including accommodation) on their own, without any additional financial support. This means that to be able to afford to work at one of the institutions, one has to have minimal financial security in the first place; on which two other implications can be drawn.

First, the underpaid—insofar as it requires other financial resources—work of the professional employees can be considered a subsidy[16] received by the field of cultural production and generally—by the state. Feminist writers have done a lot both theoretically (for example, Fineman 2000) and empirically (for instance, Parks 2003) to acknowledge different forms of subsidy provided by the citizens to other citizens and by that—to the state, and to make it visible, especially when it comes to paid and unpaid care work. However, while the "hidden" character of the subsidy provided by home care work (Parks 2003, 43) is, to a large degree, the result of the fact that it is performed far away from the public eye, the

[16] I am grateful to Alina-Sandra Cucu for drawing my attention to this perspective.

invisibility of the subsidy provided by the employees at the two institutions has its own premises. First, unless the additional financial resources come from the extra workload taken by the employees at the same institutions or from their second jobs, they also, to a great extent, belong to the private and familial realm. Second, the peculiarity of the functioning of the institutions is similar to what one of the informants called a "music box," that is, it implies the division into the frontstage and backstage, and the employees' work (except for the short moments of their "performance") and working conditions are normally not visible to the general public. Third, and most importantly, the (discussed above) illusion of economic disinterestedness is another veil that covers the subsidy.

The second implication is that the need to have minimal financial security, combined with and reinforced by the traditional gender roles, shapes the socioeconomic and gender composition of those who can "afford" having such a job: that is, mostly women with some kind of financial security (husbands, parents, their own apartments, second jobs, and the like). This, in turn, results for some of them in the "double dependence," explained by one of my informants:

> [. . .] this is a story about a threat, I don't know, about some kind of vulnerability. [. . .] In general, since it is a female sphere, it is somehow, for the most part, a female kingdom, it falls on the shoulders of the men we live with, on the fathers, husbands, boyfriends, and so on. And this moment, it's very... It seems to me that it affects even more so that... people are so... it's a vicious circle. Because you are sort of doubly dependent: on the one hand, you are dependent on your work, which you love and for which you sacrifice yourself, and, on the other, you start being dependent on your partners who simply help you survive (NAMU, high-level employee).

That is, some of the employees, as a result of the discussed in the second chapter "hostage effect" arising from their attachment to the job, find themselves in the situation of double dependence: on the one hand, they are dependent on their job as a source of satisfaction, self-realization, empowerment and also—certain economic stability, while on the other, they depend on the minimal financial security that enables them to pursue the non-material goals

and preserve seeming indifference to economic capital in the first place. However, the yet constrained economic conditions as well as changing gender roles (where women are more and more seen as equal earners) put the female employees in the situation where, even pursuing jobs oriented toward rewards other than money, they are still not free from the economic concerns. This results in the financial pressure, more critical to some of them and less or even not pressing at all to the others, depending on the amount of financial security they have and on the seniority of their positions.

As the socioeconomic conditions and needs of the employees at both NAMU and MA are not homogeneous, the low wages might imply for them a variety of things: for example, some of them think twice before buying coffee in the morning or decide to make instant coffee at the office instead; some cannot afford new clothes and therefore buy secondhand ones; some find it hard to provide for their children and their own accommodation; others earn more or less enough to cover everyday expenses but feel anxious about possible contingencies, especially related to their or their relatives' health; some of the employees feel professionally inferior as they cannot afford visiting museums and exhibitions abroad to enhance their professional competence; others might lead relatively comfortable lives but still have the feeling of inferiority toward their better-earning friends in fields other than the field of cultural production. Of course, those things belong to different categories of needs, and their comparison against each other might have little value; however, what unites them is the fact that they, in one way or the other, lead to vulnerabilities experienced by the employees, as professionals and as human beings. And although the things the employees cannot afford or feel anxious about might seem random, in fact, they are all the results of the structural vulnerabilities enabled by the institutionalized dependence.

Conclusion

The underpaid work, financial insecurity, and (women's) institutionalized dependence are not unique to this case but, in different configurations, can be found in all the social fields, and should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Here, I discussed them considering their relation to the illusion of economic disinterestedness peculiar to the professional public employees in the field of cultural production in order to understand what implications this could have for them as well as for the field as such.

As for the employees, many of them noted that one of the reasons for which they value their job is its relative stability: unlike in the private sector, they are provided with full social security and are not susceptible to the whims of the market or the owner. However, despite its positive features such as self-realization, meaningfulness, satisfaction, empowerment, for some of them, the other side of stability and social protection constitutes dependence on both the job (economically, professionally, emotionally) and the other resources that provide them with minimal financial security, which enables the employees to pursue the job in the first place.

As for the field of cultural production and more generally—for the state, the underpaid work of the professional employees underpinned by their private resources, which ensure the minimal financial security, constitutes a subsidy. That is, the state manages to spend less on the field of arts and culture by hiring the professionals who already have minimal financial security, the majority of whom, as a result of the changing but still persistent traditional gender order, are women. By this subsidy, those employees, as well as their families, make their second investment into the state as the first one is paid in the form of their taxes. And if the latter is obligatory and apparent, the former is rather invisible and framed as voluntary and self-imposed, which conceals its critical character to some of the employees, and the multiple vulnerabilities it might induce.

In Place of a Conclusion

The "Report on Museums Around the World in the Face of COVID-19" released by UNESCO on May 27 states that as "the private museum sector fears numerous bankruptcies in the coming months," "according to the International Council of Museums (ICOM), more than one in ten museums may never reopen (UNESCO Report 2020, 5); also, considering "the shutdown of cultural tourism," "the main players affected by this loss are museum professionals, especially the self-employed, three out of five of whom have lost their jobs and are in urgent need of support**"** (UNESCO Report 2020, 18). Of course, in this light, the position of employees at public museums is a bit more secure than of those working in private museums or of the self-employed. Nevertheless, this relative security is, in fact, quite insecure as, on April 13, the Ukrainian Parliament approved changes to the budget for 2020, and, in order to address the COVID-19 pandemic, reduced budget for different ministries, including the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy (which oversees NAMU), although not as much as had been expected by many. Unlike NAMU, MA is in a more slippery situation: as a state-owned enterprise, it is dependent on the need to prove its profitability and to avoid bankruptcy. However, as the situation is still unfolding, and Ukraine is easing quarantine restrictions, the consequences of COVID-19 for the public cultural institutions remain to be seen.

Another thing noted in the report was that "resilience is one of the fundamental characteristics of museums and this has become even more evident since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis" (UNESCO Report 2020, 18). From this standpoint, what this thesis does is an inquiry into the "human" premises and costs of the museums' resilience. However, instead of iterating the conclusions reached in the chapters, in the light of the global health and economic crisis, it might be worth looking at the conclusions from a different perspective,[17]

[17] I thank Prof. Prem Kumar Rajaram for pointing to this perspective.

which might not be coherent or fully developed but maybe in times when already "shaky structures start to wobble,"[18] a bit of theoretical "mess" might be beneficial, as it can potentially point to the ways in which to build new, more reliable and equal structures.

Another way to look at such things as informality, caring, and subsidy provided by the employees (in the form of their underpaid labor and things they buy for the workplace such as drinking water, soap or toilet paper, in the form of their (over)time spent by doing the job, or in the form of caring) is through the social-provisioning approach. The latter does not consider "economic activity [being limited] to the monetary sector" but suggests that social provisioning encompasses "the various activities, both paid and unpaid, that people engage in to produce and reproduce human material life" (Power 2015, 332). This definition is in fact very close to Fisher and Tronto's understanding of caring (discussed in the second chapter), but here, caring is "incorporated as [one of the] central economic processes from the beginning of the analysis" (Power 2015, 336) and not seen as being outside, inferior or just a fraction of economy. This is not to neglect the analysis and conclusions reached in the chapters but to point to the fact that there is a need for a framework that would allow us to think of the informality, caring, and subsidy not as something extraneous to the economic processes and institutional operations (and therefore, secondary or insignificant) but as equally important and essential to it, that is, visible and acknowledged, financially and symbolically. Because, although many of the features discussed in the thesis might be more salient at public cultural institutions, they are not confined to them but are inherent and—in the face of the shortage of the state—vital part of the underfunded institutions and whole sectors in the post-Soviet realm. Now, many of those features are normalized as/through the employees' individual choices (such as choices to work when sick, not to take maternity

[18] A situation aptly described in the title of the article "A shaky system starts to wobble: Mexico and coronavirus" by Dawid Danilo Bartelt, accessed June 4, 2020, https://eu.boell.org/en/2020/05/22/shaky-system-starts-wobble-mexico-and-coronavirus.

leave, to make certain sacrifices in order to continue working at the institution) or character traits (such as when the employees blame their personal traits for taking too much workload, for the inability to draw the line between work and home, or for certain vulnerabilities they experience). Acknowledging the role of those choices in social provisioning, might serve to de-normalize their individual character, to some degree, de-responsibilize the individuals, and maybe potentially lead to more equal ways to share those responsibilities.

Thus, looking back to the observations made in the chapters, it is worth noting that it is one thing to say that the boundaries between the private and the public, between work and home are collapsed or shifted as a result of the employees' attitude toward the job "as a way of life." However, this mainly confines the understanding of the collapse to being a consequence of an individual choice and conceals the role such choices play in maintaining the existence of the underfunded institutions or whole sectors. Therefore, it is another thing to say that, from the social-provisioning approach's point of view, the notions of the public and the private should be radically re-examined in order to give an account of the various ways people contribute to "the production and reproduction of human life."

It is one thing to say that many formal regulations and rules are breached in favor of informal arrangements that are actively practiced at both institutions. However, by defining certain practices as informal we still (even if only at the discursive level and not in practice) consider them to be secondary in relation to formal ones. Even more, by that, we still approach them as occasional and situational, such as taking an hour off (if the head of one's department is understanding enough to allow it) when feeling that one is a footstep away from a nervous breakdown. Despite being situational and "particular," such vulnerabilities should not be seen as features of certain groups or people but as "universal," that is, inherent to the human condition (Fineman 2008). This, in turn, would allow one not to count on the understanding of the head of the department but the society to "mediate, compensate, and

lessen our vulnerability through programs, institutions, and structures" (Fineman 2008, 10). Therefore, it is another thing to state that we need different conceptualizations of both formality and informality, in order to do justice to the ways they both sustain functioning of the institutions, and in order to better address human vulnerability which is no less part of the social provisioning than an entrance fee.

It is one thing to look at the affective relationships developed by the employees toward the collection items through the perspective of care work thereby trying to give an account of care outside of (traditionally understood) care work. However, this still confines caring to the specific institutions or spheres, where care work is "traditionally understood." Therefore, a different thing to do is to deem caring, from the beginning of the analysis, "a fundamental economic activity" (Power 2004), which would consider "interdependent and interconnected human actors [. . .] rather than the isolated individual" (Power 2004, 4).

Similarly, it is one thing to show that most of the employees are dependent on other resources for minimal financial security and that the self-sustained "entrepreneurial self" is an unachievable ideal (Caraher and Reuter 2017). And it is another thing to consider, from the beginning, "the ways people organize themselves to get a living" as having inherently "interdependent and socially structured nature" (Power 2015, 332; on dependency as an inevitable "human condition," see also Fineman 2008).

It is one thing to think of all the contributions made by the employees (underpaid labor, time, caring, different goods) as a subsidy (which they definitely are). However, conceptualizing those things as a subsidy pictures them as additional, as supportive, as exogenous, as an "exoskeleton" in relation to the body,[19] that is, to economy. Therefore, what is needed is a framework which would not diminish but acknowledge their role in

[19]As an allusion to Gramsci's metaphorical analogy between economy and skeleton. Gramsci, Antonio. *The Gramsci reader: selected writings, 1916-1935*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.P. 197.

maintaining the existence of the institutions, of the field of arts and culture, and their role in social provisioning as such.

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