Writing a book is a unique labor of love. The labor for this book project has extended well over a decade, so the list of those to whom I am indebted is quite long and diverse. The project would never have come into being without the inspiring entrepreneurial spirit of central Siberian women I met in the early 1990s, who were traveling across borders to supply their communities with clothing. Likewise, my research benefited immensely from the generosity of numerous women involved in the shuttle trade or working as labor migrants from Russia, southern Moldova, Ukraine, and Belarus. I owe a special thanks to those identified here as Kara, Bella, Zina, Maria, Eva, and Nelli for introducing me to their circles, as well as for providing me with something equally precious, their friendship. Maria’s, Zina’s, and Nelli’s families warmly welcomed me and my family in Istanbul, Moscow, and Moldova as this project extended through the years.

A number of sources of funding supported research and writing. The Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) fund at the University of British Columbia (UBC), the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at UBC, and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) provided support early on (2001–2003). The Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada provided generous funding between 2002 and 2006, making it possible to conduct research spanning three countries, including by covering expenses to have my infant daughter accompany me. The UBC Killam Faculty Research Fellowship supported my sabbatical leave in Turkey (2007), and the UBC Arts Undergraduate Research Award (AURA) supported several undergraduate students to do library research. Finally, in 2016 I was fortunate to receive the UBC Dean of Arts Faculty Research Award, a form of support that could not have come at a better time; the award enabled me to set aside teaching and administrative duties for one term and focus on completing the manuscript.

Acknowledgements are due for portions of the book that have appeared previously, and for permissions granted for several images appearing in the book. Portions of chapter 2 were previously published in “Emotion Work, Shame, and Post-Soviet Women Entrepreneurs: Negotiating Ideals of Gender and Labor in a Global Economy,” Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power 18(4), and a version of chapter 6 was published as “‘Other Mothers,’ Migration, and a Transnational Nurturing Nexus,” Signs: Journal of Women in Society and Culture 43(1).
I wish to acknowledge the Yapi Kredi Historical Archives in Istanbul for granting me permission to use an image from the Selahattin Giz Collection. Finally, I wish to thank Jared Bloch for allowing me to use three of his photographs, including for the book’s cover.

I have benefited immeasurably from opportunities to try out ideas with a wide number of colleagues, and I especially wish to thank the following: the School for American Research and Carole Vance for organizing the workshop “Ethnography and Policy: What do we Know about Trafficking?” (2005); the Japanese National Museum of Ethnology (MINPAKU) and Yuki Konagaya for the “Narratives of Socialism” workshop in Osaka (2010); the Wellesley College Russian Area Studies Lecture Series and Philip Kohl for inviting me to speak at my alma mater (2012); and the Center for Semiotic Folklore Studies, Russian State University for the Humanities, and Sergey Nekliudov for so graciously hosting my participation in the seminar series “Folklore and Post-folklore” (2015). Early on in the project Marina Malysheva and Elena Tiuriukanova also encouraged me to pursue the research and facilitated access to the Moscow Center for Gender Studies. Nicole Constable deserves a separate note of appreciation for her long-term support and for inspiring me to think about gender and migration as an avenue for research. Finally, I am indebted to Bruce Grant for his warm collegiality over the years and for blazing a distinctive trail in the anthropology of the former Soviet Union.

Spaces for writing have also been essential for completing the book. I wish to thank the School of European Languages at the English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad, India, for arranging library access in the summer of 2006. Likewise, the Sociology Department at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, and especially Faruk Birtek and Nükhet Sirman, kindly facilitated my research arrangements in the spring of 2007. The Department of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History afforded me a much appreciated, ongoing affiliation, including for a sabbatical year in New York (2012–2013). I am grateful to the Harriman Institute of Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies at Columbia University for hosting me that same year as a Visiting Scholar; this enabled me to bring a complete draft of my manuscript into being in one of the most conducive spaces for writing that I could hope for, the library at the Union Theological Seminary. The coffee cart and its hardworking staff at the corner of 122nd Street and Broadway deserve a special acknowledgment for keeping me on track throughout 2012–2013.

I wish to thank those who contributed invaluable support and feedback at various stages of this project. Maria Believa, Dikmen Bezmez, Eda Cakmakci, Hansen Chou, Jenna Dur, Tatiana Gadjalova (Boya), Alexey Golubev, Oralia Gómez-Ramírez, Susan Hicks, Sungsook Lim, Anastasia Rogova, and Jayme Taylor assisted me in a multitude of ways. Joan Weeks, Head and Turkish Specialist
at the Near East Section of the African and Middle East Division of the U.S. Library of Congress, advised me on spellings for Turkish names. Eda Cakmakci provided essential assistance for arranging image permissions with the Yapı Kredi Historical Archives, and she provided Turkish language expertise. Oralia Gómez-Ramírez ably carried out the time-consuming tasks of preparing images used in the book, including the formatting and copyright details, and creating the book’s index. Jayme Taylor crafted the maps and Anastasia Rogova attentively corrected Russian translations and transliterations, as well as locating elusive sources. Under tight deadlines at the very end of the writing process Kathryn White and Susan Dwelle took on the job of editing the manuscript; Susan especially reminded me of the pitfalls of jargon and the joys of clear language. Office staff at the UBC Department of Anthropology cheerfully facilitated paperwork and grant administration throughout the project, and I especially owe gratitude to Radicy Braletic, Joyce Ma, and Eleanore Asuncion. Finally, at Cornell University Press I am indebted to James Lance for his timely enthusiasm for the project and for shepherding the book through its production. Three anonymous reviewers were immensely helpful as I revised and sharpened key arguments and Carolyn Pouncy turned a careful eye to copyediting. Any remaining errors are my own.

Friends and colleagues were essential to envisioning, carrying out, and completing the project. I am grateful to Julie Cruikshank for much-needed walks, gentle advice, and treasured discussions of writing and reading, including inspired new fiction. Laurel Kendall has been a mentor and friend, offering sage counsel and sharing her keen eye for textiles and love of fine vegetarian cuisine. Nina Diamond showed me the possible depths of friendship, and read and commented on an early draft of the manuscript, as well as lending her ear and sharp eye in the last stages of manuscript preparation. Early on Michael Hathaway provided frank assessments of key conceptual frameworks. Leslie Robertson offered regular reflection on the challenges of creating meaningful ethnography and she was a trusted sounding board for possible titles. Kyra Çubukçuoğlu has provided a thread of connection between Russia, Turkey, and New York that has stretched over three decades; I am also indebted to Kyra, her husband Ilhan, and their family for facilitating my research. Friends on the East and West coasts have provided welcome respite and perspective over the years; my thanks especially go to Gili Avrahami, Sumeet Gulati, Topher Jerome, Ashok Kotwal, Truus Kotwal, Nisha Malhotra, Terre Satterfield, and Homer Williams. A special note of thanks is due to Kate Swatek for the many sauna conversations and for nourishing my imagination through her love of stories that link us across wide expanses of time and place, from China to Pittsburgh to New York to Vancouver. Yael, Gideon, and Dror Lavi-Shelach knew just when and where to visit, as the project commenced in Istanbul.
and as it was wrapping up in Vancouver. In Russia the Savoskuls welcomed me in their home and provided me with an ideal location for initiating the project. Svetlana Savoskul aided me in making contact with shuttle traders and Oxana and Maria Savoskul consistently buoyed me with their interest in the book project. In Istanbul Thomas Bitner kindly allowed me to stay in his “tower” for research stays, short and long. Gaspard Biz shared his hearty laugh and his cosmopolitan outlook grounded in living for years in Russia and Turkey, and Gaelle Berthet shared her joie de vivre and knowledge of all the family friendly spaces one could imagine. Mostly, I was fortunate to meet Consuelo (Chelo) Echeverria early on in the research at her art installation at Istanbul’s Galata Tower; her unfailing belief in the book and her generous spirit contributed immeasurably to the project.

In no small measure the book owes its existence to numerous instances of family support. Two women in particular made the research possible: my stepmother, Rebecca Sheppard, and my mother, Susan Dwelle. I am grateful to them for their unreserved willingness to care for their granddaughter, Mira, during extended fieldwork: in 2003 in Istanbul (both Rebecca and Susan), in Moldova (Rebecca), and Russia (Susan); in 2004 and 2005 in Moldova and Vermont (Rebecca); and in 2007 in Istanbul (both Rebecca and Susan). My father, John Bloch, inspired me with his deep commitment to challenging social inequality and his curiosity about rural spaces in the former Soviet Union, and he also assisted in essential care giving. My brother Jared’s discriminating photographic eye gave me some fresh perspectives on the energy and allure of Istanbul. Finally, on numerous occasions my brother Tobias’s expert logistical support in New York City considerably eased the difficulty of travel to and from Turkey with a small child.

Finally, my immediate family has made the book project possible to envision and, ultimately, to bring to fruition. Mira’s life more or less spans the life of the research, and she has grown up knowing there are people across the world but especially in Istanbul, southern Moldova, and Russia who ask about her and revisit her infant pictures as they recall their own lives in the early years of the new millennium. Samir arrived as the research was wrapping up, reminding me of the pleasures of finding a fine balance between family and professional pursuits. I hope both Mira and Samir can ultimately see my efforts to forge a full, albeit sometimes harried, life as an example of one fulfilling way of being in the world. This way of being would not be possible to fathom without Milind Kandlikar. He unflinchingly single-parented during regular fieldwork stints, took on more than his fair share of household labor at crunch times, and reminded me to take time to laugh and enjoy a glass of wine. Mostly, he has steadfastly believed in the book.

In the following pages I have tried to bring to life the trials and tribulations, but also the hopes and dreams, of women on the move between the former Soviet Union and Istanbul. I can only hope that in some small part I have succeeded.