

As the competitive nature of the professions, the media and other sources of employment for middle class working women impose ever more pressures the demand for female domestic surrogates/domestic workers remains constant. A reading of this volume enables those concerned to understand the complexities of gendered migration and domestic worker status within a European framework. At the same time, as the final chapter in the book reminds us, whilst the care chain has become global, not only are there clear cut distinctions to be made between the European and North American experience but, in addition, there are significant differences within Western Europe itself. All of these factors serve only to reinforce the importance and value of pioneering books such as this.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe

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1. Outsourcing Domestic Work

'In mummy country'¹ was the title of a column that appeared in the German weekly *Die Zeit* in 2006. Subtitled: 'The German housewife is seen as the pillar of the nation. But it costs a fortune for well-educated women to stay at home', this column focused on the mismatch between German women's desire to pursue a professional career outside the home and the organization of everyday life, which requires the presence of a 'mummy' in the home, ready and available for the family and household-related issues. Indeed, by pointing to the absence of state support – most crèches, kindergartens and schools offer only half-day facilities, forcing women into part-time work or (occasionally) into the housewife role – the author struck a raw nerve concerning the organization of social life in German society.

However, this analysis ignored the fact that many professional middle-class women, in Germany as much as in many other European countries, are not waiting for the state or their partners to help them combine gainful employment and care work. Instead, they prefer a different solution. They pay another person to clean their houses, take care of their children and nurse the elderly and the disabled. In other words, they pay somebody to do the unpaid work formerly performed by them.

For a whole range of reasons which will be addressed in this book, the majority of those to whom this work is delegated are *female and migrants*.

Migrant domestic workers, coming to the European West and South from Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia, leave their own homes and migrate to wealthy regions of the world where salaries exceed those of their country of origin.

Migration theorists often suggest that this is just another market relationship, created by the so called 'supply and demand' balance, which has been used as explanation for migration movements for a very long time. However, there are reasons to argue that domestic work is *not just another labour market*, but that it is marked by the following aspects: the intimate character of the social sphere where the work is performed; the social construction of this work as a female gendered area; the special relationship between employer and employee which is highly emotional, personalized and characterized by mutual dependency; and the logic of care work which is clearly different from that of other employment areas.

1 'Im Land der Muttis' by Susanne Mayer, *Die Zeit* (13 July 2006), p. 49.

Together these factors contribute to the assertion that domestic work cannot just be analyzed using the terminology of migration theories following the rationale of a global push-pull model in which demand in one part of the world leads to supply from less developed areas with surplus labour.

Instead, I argue that there is more to say about this sector. Migrant domestic work in Europe distinguishes itself from other transnational services because this work:

- a) cannot be outsourced, like call centres, to those countries where the workforce is cheap. Instead, it is performed in the private sphere in the client's country.
- b) needs flexible and experienced (educated) migrants, able to integrate themselves into the households of their employers, following their preferences, their household choreography and their personal habits.
- c) is insufficiently theorized if one reduces it to the issue of replacement or substitution. In care work emotional barriers play a specific role because, for example, mothers do not wish to be entirely 'replaced' by a childminder, and housewives do not leave household tasks to another woman without making sure that their status and responsibility are not in question.

On the theoretical level, three different 'regimes' are at the heart of the phenomenon of 'migrant domestic work' in Europe. Firstly, *gender regimes* in which household and care work organization can be seen as the expression of a specifically gendered cultural script. Secondly, *care regimes* as part of the welfare regime, concerning a (multitude) of state regulations according to which the responsibilities for the wellbeing of national citizens is distributed between the state, the family and the market. Thirdly, *migration regimes*, which for various reasons either promote or discourage the employment of migrant domestic workers. The term 'regime' (Esping-Andersen 1990) as it is used here refers to the organization and the corresponding cultural codes of social policy and social practice in which the relationship between social actors (state, (labour) market and family) is articulated and negotiated (see also Williams and Gavanas in this volume).

Before these regimes and their intersection are introduced, I will focus on the landscapes of migrant domestic work in Europe, which have changed rapidly over recent years – a phenomenon coinciding with both the breakdown of the political system in Eastern Europe and the forceful introduction of neo-liberal market-driven policies, not only in Europe but also in many other parts of the world.

2. The 'New' Landscapes of Migrant Domestic Work in Europe

Social scientists are reminded by historians that what is currently characterized as 'new' may not be new at all, if seen from a broader historical perspective. As I have argued elsewhere (Koser and Lutz 1998: 4), 'new' and 'old' are arbitrary labels. As Raffaella Sarti (in this volume) shows, domestic work is a centuries-long phenomenon in which female migrants have participated in great numbers since the feminization of this sector around the middle of the nineteenth century.

However, in contrast to earlier periods of servant migration, there are certain distinguishing characteristics of current women migrants. In spite of poor data on

the European situation, as well as regional differences, the overall trends seem to be the following:

- a) Growing demand for labour power in the domestic work sector has contributed to the feminization of migration more than any other area of work (Zlotnik 2003; Sassen 2003; Anthias and Lazaridis 2000; Kofman et al. 2000). This is especially true for those countries in Europe which were former out-migration states like Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey and Poland, who have either transformed into countries of in-migration or combined outward and inward movement.
- b) Migration has followed a pattern from *East to West* that is from Eastern Europe to Western, Southern and Northern Europe and from *South to North*, from Latin America, Asia and Africa to the EU countries.
- c) Regarding education and age, migrant women are currently more educated than their predecessors; a section of them are from a middle-class background, and some have even reached higher education. They are migrating at an age when they have already finished their educational training sometimes after years of professional experience. They move alone, often leaving behind a partner or a family with (young) children. These factors contribute to the characterization of this phenomenon as the 'care drain' (Hochschild 2000), which intersects partly with the loss of knowledge and cultural capital, known as the 'brain drain'.
- d) The migration motivations of migrant women have been described by Mirjana Morokvasic (1994) as somewhat ambivalent: they leave home because they want their homes to be sustained and not because they wish to start and establish a new home somewhere else. Saskia Sassen (2003) has called this massive outflow of women 'counter geographies of globalization' in which migration can be seen as resistance to hardships of the transition period (see Coyle 2007 for the Polish example).

Not only is the ethnic and national diversity of the countries of origin of migrant workers noteworthy (see also Ozyegin and Hondagneu-Sotelo in this volume), but so is the speed of change in the new geographic relations between states. One of the better documented and therefore more telling cases is the development of the sector in Italy. As Scrinzi, Sarti and Parreñas note (in this volume), in Italy domestic work is the key area of occupation for migrant women. The main nationalities of domestic workers in Italy today are Ukrainian, Romanian, Filipino, Polish, Ecuadorian and Peruvian (Chaloff 2005: 4). Prior to the last regularization of immigration status in Italy in 2002, the Ukraine did not even appear on the list of sending countries; yet during 2003 and 2004 more than 100,000 Ukrainians made use of the opportunity of 'earned legalization' and were regularized and made visible in immigration statistics, which is why one now speaks about 'the 'Ukrainisation' of the field' (ibid.: 5). It is obvious that this development astonished many experts. Morokvasic's assertion that: 'The mobility rarely takes Ukrainians, Belorussians or Russians as far as Western Europe' (Morokvasic 2003: 109), was a widely held opinion which proved wrong. Now Ukrainian women are not only found in Italian households, but also in Austrian

(Haidinger in this volume), German, Spanish and other Western and Southern European ones.

What can be learned from this is that the movement of migrant domestic work in Europe is only predictable to a certain extent. So, for example, a high level of education seems to be a prerequisite for the 'new domestics', as in most of the destination countries they are required to speak or learn the language of the employers. It is also the case that perceived cultural proximity – with religious and 'cultural' affiliation as the main factors – seems to be a prerequisite for acceptance into this work area. However, many developments have taken researchers by surprise; thus, the analysis of emerging patterns is clearly a question of time and patience and one should not jump to hasty conclusions.

At this moment in time, it is noticeable that the shifting European geographies of domestic work are characterized by ongoing changes in the sending and receiving areas along the East to West and South to North axis of movement, many of which are covered in this book. There are, however, some gaps in this volume. Of the Nordic countries only Sweden is covered (Williams and Gavanas). Ireland, France and the Benelux states, for different reasons, are missing. Also, Eastern European countries, many of them sending areas, like the Baltic States, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria are missing, and in addition Turkey is not covered. The inclusion of the Israeli case (Mundlak and Shamir) can be legitimized by taking a closer look at the structure of the Israeli welfare state, which combines regulations present in strong and weak welfare state regimes in Europe: the state is responsible for providing care facilities for all age groups but has, at the same time, traditionally put care responsibilities on women's shoulders. As in Italy, Greece and Spain, the commodification of care work in Israel has increased tremendously and the migrant profiles of workers are similar to those in European states.

Further attempts to describe emerging patterns in the European landscape of domestic work focus on the analysis of the nexus of care, gender and migration regimes.

3. The Intersection of Care, Gender and Migration Regimes

The term regime derives from the famous study by Esping-Andersen (1990) in which he explained how social policies and their effects differ between European countries. While his model of three regimes (the liberal welfare regime, the social democratic welfare regime and the conservative welfare regime) has been criticised widely for the absence of gender (Lewis 1992; Sainsbury 1994; Williams 1995; see also the overview by Duncan 2000), the key concept of his analysis – namely the relationship between the state, the market and the family – has been widely embraced. While his main question can be summed up as: '... how far different welfare states erode the commodity status of labour in a capitalist system (how are people independent from selling their labour) and as a consequence how far welfare states intervene in the class system' (Duncan 2000: 4), gender studies scholars have emphasized the explanatory limitation of this model, reducing labour to gainful employment, thereby excluding care work, which in many cases is unpaid labour. Care as a central

element of welfare state regulation is part and parcel of the organization of gender arrangements (Pfau-Effinger 2000), or regimes (Anttonen and Sipilä 1996; Daly 2002; Gerhard et al. 2003). This raises questions such as: Is care work equally or unequally distributed between the genders? Are care work and gainful employment equally assessed financially and culturally? What is the relationship between them? And which institutional support systems (which are in themselves also gendered) are provided by the state?

European care regimes can be symbolized by a sliding scale, with the traditional care regime linked to a conservative gender regime at one end and equality in both regimes at the other. Birgit Pfau-Effinger (2000) and Simon Duncan (2000) see West Germany as a prototype of a 'home-caring' society, the Mediterranean states – with the involvement of members of the extended family – as traditional, while the Nordic states are characterized as the most equalized and modern. Another possible distinction is that of Jane Lewis (1992) who differentiates between 'strong', 'modified' or 'weak' breadwinner states.

Within the European Union, the emancipation of women and their inclusion in the labour force has been a priority for more than 20 years. Next to gender-mainstreaming policies, the 'reconciliation of personal, family and work life' is currently high on the agenda (for the analysis of the Spanish case see Peterson 2007).

This policy focuses on the dismantling of hurdles that keep women from combining employment and care work. While one can evaluate the fact that care work is no longer purely seen as a 'natural' job for women, the question is how states have become actors in this transformation process. While some European states have a record of providing services for children, the elderly and the disabled through subsidies for care work (parental leave, crèches, elderly care and nursing homes), neoliberal welfare state restructuring now seems to lead to a market driven service and a serious decline of state-provided social care services. For example, Misra and Merz (2005) notice that: 'Over the last decade, the trend has been for states to move towards subsidizing care that families provide or negotiate or withdrawing entirely from care provision' (ibid.: 10). They give the example of the French crèche system which has been weakened by new policies that encourage families to hire nannies and carers, using state subsidies. A comparable example stems from the Netherlands where the marketization of the home and of child care was introduced more than a decade ago and has led to a high dependency on the income capacity and/or social networks of those who receive care (Knijn 2001). According to Knijn (ibid.) the Dutch state has been a pioneer in the individualization of care obligations and arrangements and the leaking of economic market logic into this sphere; individual regulation supported by the ideology of choice and 'managing the self and the household' seem to be the bridgeheads of this process.

Notwithstanding the fact that the majority of the literature dealing with the juncture between care and gender regimes is very sophisticated, many authors are blind to the third regime that plays a significant role here, the migration regime.

Migration regimes determine rules for non-nationals' entrance into and exit out of a country. They are based on the notion of the cultural desirability of in-migration and they decide whether migrants are granted employment, social, political and civil rights, and whether or not they have access to settlement and naturalization.

Migration policy in the European Union has always been dominated by the so-called needs of the labour market. However, gender norms were always deeply inscribed in the definition of these needs. A good example is the West German 'guest worker' system (1955-1973), which was started not because of a general labour shortage, but because of the state's preference for the 'housewife marriage' which could only be continued by recruiting (male!) workers from abroad, rather than encouraging German women to enter the workplace. Likewise the actual migration regimes, which prefer a policy of 'managed migration' (Kofman et al. 2005) giving priority to skilled workers, are deeply gendered. In order to enable female nationals to 'reconcile' care work and a working life, some European states have decided to install quotas for the recruitment of domestic workers (Spain, Italy, Greece) or have opened their borders to them (Britain and Ireland). Others, such as Germany (see Lutz and Cyrus in this volume), the Nordic States and the Netherlands, have hardly acknowledged the need for migrant domestic workers, let alone included this need in their managed migration policies. This, however, does not mean that migrant domestic workers are absent from these countries; they are present and endure the difficult conditions of life in a twilight zone.

Interestingly, several articles in this volume show that in many countries the work of migrant domestics does not fall under labour law, presenting another indication that care work is deeply gendered and not considered proper 'work'. Together the articles illustrate that a new gender order – once the dream of the feminist movement – is not in sight. Rather middle-class women have entered what Jaqueline Andall (2000) has called the 'post feminist paradigm', reconciling family and work by outsourcing (parts of) their care work to migrant women. The presence of migrants willing to do this work does in fact help them to balance work and life; to a certain extent it even helps them to 'undo gender' in the realm of their daily gender performance.

Nevertheless, the articles in this volume also show that migrant women are not 'cultural dopes', acting on the demand of employers and migration regimes. They have their own agendas and their subjectivity needs to be emphasised. NGOs (Respect 2000, 2001) and very seldom trade unions have dealt with the problems of migrant domestic workers; even the European Parliament (2000), albeit with little practical effect, has discussed a 'Report on regulating domestic help in the informal sector' (see Cyrus in this volume). Until today, however, the majority of migrant domestic workers seem to perform their work in unacceptable working conditions. It is clear that the European discussion on migrant domestic work needs to be opened up and carried out in various institutions and on various levels.

4. The Book

- The first part of the book deals with the question of whether domestic work in a commodified form can be characterized as 'business as usual'. Fiona Williams's and Anna Gavanas's contribution deals with the intersection of childcare and migration regimes in a three-country study of Sweden, Spain and Great Britain. By elaborating on the different nature of the welfare states' childcare regimes they show that it is not simply the absence of childcare services for working mothers that differentiates one

country from another, but also how the nature of the services stimulates particular demands.

Francesca Scrinzi's article on change and continuity in the domestic work sector in Italy is a telling example of the intervention of the state as actor – very much in accordance with the Catholic church – in the organization of care work through (pro-active and re-active) migration regulation policies (see also Cyrus). The pressing need for care facilities formerly provided by the (women in the) families has led, as the author shows, to a bold renewal of utilitarianism in which domestic and care work is considered a market for migrants.

The German case study by Helma Lutz focuses on the question of whether or not domestic and care work can be defined as a 'normal job' given its gendered character in combination with its low social status. Though employers and employees, albeit for different reasons, seem to engage in the construction of a professional image of this work, Lutz argues that this work sector can only become 'normal' when the relationship between 'productive' work and care work is seriously redefined.

Pothiti Hantzaroula's article on the work experiences of Albanian domestic workers in Greece shows that the current phenomenon demonstrates some continuities with earlier periods. Domestic service, in particular live-in work, has never been and is still not considered 'normal work' protected by labour law regulations, but is seen as family business, which leaves its regulation up to individual employers. Hantzaroula shows the detrimental affects of racist employers' attitudes on Albanian migrant women which coincide with a public racist discourse and a lack in the provision of citizenship rights for these workers.

The theme of the second part of the book, transnational migration spaces, is one that is implicitly and explicitly covered by most of the authors in this volume. In this section attention is drawn to the analysis of the transnational migration spaces within which domestic workers perform their every day dealings with transnational biographies, families and households.

- Raffaella Sarti develops a historical perspective on the globalization of the European domestic service phenomenon, illuminating the long history of female migration from Europe to its colonies and between different European societies. She points out that, whereas in early modern times the international migration of domestics followed the pattern of rich to poorer countries, today this pattern is reversed. Although domestic workers have always combined motherhood with employment, Sarti states that the current large numbers of transnational mothers is a new phenomenon.

The implications of long-distance or transnational mothering is exemplified by Rhacel Salazar Parreñas in the case of Filipina domestic workers in Rome. She shows that next to racism it is the formation and maintenance of transnational households that reinforces the limited integration of these migrant workers in Italian society. Filipinas suffer from being perpetually foreign, stuck in the household in the destination country, not only excluded from a multitude of citizenship rights but also from occupational mobility and civic participation in Italian society.

With the case of Peruvian domestic workers in Spain, Angeles Escriba and Emmeline Skinner illustrate the complexity of transnational household management on both sides of the Atlantic and the need for a broader understanding of the 'care

chain' concept. The prospects for Latin American immigrants in Spain are better than those of others groups because they are eligible for citizenship once they have worked in the country legally for a certain period. The authors show the working of a complex web of care dependencies which encompasses several generations in the employers' and the employees' families.

In her account of Ukrainian domestic workers in Austria, Bettina Haidinger discusses the impact of the 'present absence' of Ukrainian women on the household organization in their country of origin. She illustrates that, for these women, working abroad is above all a strategy for maintaining their households back home. As in the case covered by Escriva and Skinner, Haidinger's evaluation of transnational household organization is much more positive than that of Parreñas.

The focus of the third part of the book is the relationship between states and markets, thereby highlighting the intersection between migration regimes and actors' strategies.

Marta Kindler's article on risk strategies of Ukrainian women working as carers and domestics in Poland is mainly an illustration of two developments. First it shows the further development – due to tremendous income disparities – of care drain dynamics. Second, it exemplifies the impact of the inclusion/exclusion policies of the European Union: as an accession country to the EU, Poland was forced to introduce visa requirements for non-EU nationals, thereby aggravating both the access to Poland and the establishment of legalized working conditions for Ukrainians.

In their analysis of the Israeli case, Guy Mundlak and Hila Shamir identify the role of the law in the commodification of care work as one with multiple tasks, reflective *and* constitutive of societal values and care practices. They show that the authority of law, in its allegedly neutral and professional manner, has the power to turn normative choices into (uncontested) social truths.

Norbert Cyrus's review of the ways in which European states have tackled the issue of illegality illustrates that the European Union remains unsuccessful in the development and implementation of a coherent and consistent approach, which reconciles the protection of humanitarian rights and social standards in the employment of migrant domestic workers with the goal of organizing employment in a formal and lawful framework. He argues that the official line of European immigration policy focuses on restrictive policy measures, which contribute to the increased vulnerability of domestic workers.

Gul Ozyegin and Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo conclude this volume with a reflection on the various topics raised by the different contributions by comparing them to the academic discussion on this issue in North America and other parts of the world. Their insightful questions will hopefully develop and deepen our understanding of domestic work as a global phenomenon. As the articles in this volume show, taking Europe as a particular case study means exploring a multitude of aspects and themes relating to migration and domestic work. This important topic will no doubt warrant further in-depth research in the future.

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PART 1

Domestic Work – Business as Usual?