

Introduction: Domestic and Care Work at the Intersection of Welfare, Gender and Migration Regimes: Some European Experiences

Majella Kilkey*, Helma Lutz** and Ewa Palenga-Möllenberg***

*Department of Social Sciences, University of Hull, UK
E-mail: M.M.Kilkey@hull.ac.uk

**Department of Social Sciences, Goethe-University, Frankfurt, Germany
E-mail: lutz@soz.uni-frankfurt.de

***Department of Social Sciences, Goethe-University, Frankfurt, Germany
E-mail: e.pm@em.uni-frankfurt.de

Research over the last decade and more, has documented a resurgence of paid domestic and care labour (that is, work performed for pay in private households, such as household cleaning and maintenance and care for elders/disabled/children) across the Global North.¹ Much of the research has revealed the increasing reliance on *migrant*, as opposed to home-state, domestic workers, and it has been suggested (Lutz, 2007: 4) that domestic and care work has contributed more than any other sector of the labour market to one of the key features of the ‘age of migration’ (Castles and Miller, 2009) – its feminisation. At the same time though, as Linton’s (2002) research on immigrant-niche formation in the USA suggests, the availability of immigrants in itself, has probably contributed to the growth of the sector.

As Ozyegin and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2008) point out, however, we should not read this scenario in simplistic supply and demand terms. Rather, it is, as others (Williams, 2005; Williams and Gavanas, 2008; Lutz, 2008) have observed, framed by changing regimes of migration, of welfare and of care; regimes and changes which are deeply gendered (as well as classed and racialised), and highly variable across space.

Research on the growth in paid domestic and care work, though, has been slow to recognise and account for the spatial variations in the phenomenon. This is in large part because it was pioneered in the USA (for example, Hochschild, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Parreñas, 2001), where in the context of a virtual absence of collective/state provision for care, the research did not examine how the growth of domestic and care work related to the overall patterning of care provision within the country (cf. León, 2008). This lacuna, however, is more problematic when our focus shifts to Europe, where, as another more longstanding body of research has identified, there is a great deal of variation between societies in how care gets organised. Following on from feminist critiques of Esping-Andersen’s (1990) *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, a range of frameworks of comparison, resting on the notions variously of ‘models of care’, ‘care regimes’ and ‘care cultures’, have been developed and refined (see, for example, Anttonen and Sipilä, 1996; Pfau-Effinger, 2005; Lister *et al.*, 2007). Care-regime scholars have also sought to examine how diverse care arrangements are associated with different expectations and outcomes in terms of gender equality, or as in the work of Pfau-Effinger (2000) how they are embedded within the societal ‘gender arrangement’ (see Lutz, 2008).

The research suggests that care regimes, like welfare regimes, are not static (Lister *et al.*, 2007), and care regime scholars have sought to capture shifts, highlighting amongst other trends, the growth in home-based care arrangements across many states (see, for example, Ungerson and Yeandle (eds.), 2007). However, they tend to define home-based care as familial, informal and unpaid care (León, 2008), and in the main the rise in *paid* domestic/care labour, and in particular its globalisation, has gone unacknowledged. This is because as others have observed (Williams, 2005; Kofman and Raghuram, 2007; Lutz, 2008), just as the migrant domestic and care worker literature failed to engage with the care-regime literature, so too the reverse is the case: care-regime work, with only a very few exceptions and only very recently (for example, Lister *et al.*, 2007; Williams and Gavanas, 2008), has not recognised how care regimes intersect with migration regimes – ‘immigration policies, forms of regulation, and paths and histories of emigration and immigration’ (Williams, 2005: 3) – which are also inflected sharply by gender (Lutz, 2008) (as well as ‘race’/ethnicity and class).

The purpose of this themed section is to contribute to the emerging research agenda of integrating those two bodies of work: the welfare/care/gender regime literature on the one hand, and the globalisation of migrant domestic and care worker literature on the other. More specifically, it is concerned with documenting the growth and character of paid domestic and care work across a range of European societies, and accounting for the patterns observed with reference to the particular configuration of welfare (care), gender and migration regimes in these countries. Five countries – Germany, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom – are included in the themed section. They have been selected to represent some of the varieties of European migration, welfare state, care and gender regimes. In addition, Poland is simultaneously a sending and receiving state in terms of migrant domestic and care workers, which makes it a pivotal case in analysing the structure and processes involved in transnational domestic and care work migration.

The themed section begins with a review of the key themes and concepts in the research around migration and care in Europe and elsewhere (Fiona Williams). In charting the trajectory of research on this topic, the review focuses in particular on the widely used concept of ‘global care chains’, the question of exploitation *versus* agency, the complexity of care relations within global care chains, and the diversity of the migrant care workforce. It then examines the methodological and theoretical developments which, on the whole, locate migration and care work within an understanding of dynamics at the global or transnational level, as well as, albeit to a lesser extent, within a historical perspective. Williams concludes her review by identifying some of the key challenges for future research in this field. These include: the need for a more rigorous examination of intersectionality in order to understand the positioning of particular national or ethnic groups in particular employment situations; more cross-national comparative research on the institutional frameworks configuring migrant domestic and care work; and, finally, a greater focus on ‘sending’ countries.

The next two articles deal with the situation in two Southern European countries (Portugal – Karin Walls and Cátia Nunes – and Spain – Margarita León). In comparative social policy research, these are countries often grouped together as ‘Southern European regimes’, where familialism is a key characteristic of social provision. As such, they are often identified as countries in the European context where both the commoditisation of domestic and care work and its ‘migrantisation’ are most prevalent. However, taken together these two articles reveal both similarities and differences in Portugal and Spain in

the configuration of the migrant domestic and care work phenomenon. In particular, while León, following Bettio *et al.* (2006), suggests that a 'migrant in the family care model' has emerged in Spain, Walls and Nunes point to the development of a more diversified care model in the case of Portugal. In Spain, the employment of migrant domestic/care workers in private households has become one of the main ways in which the care deficit has been addressed, and is a strategy utilised across the social classes. In Portugal, however, while home-based care plays an important role in the overall care-regime, it seems less dominant than in Spain, is not so specifically a migrant niche, and remains the preserve of better-off households. While Walls and Nunes locate Portugal's departure from the presumed Mediterranean model, in its distinctive gender and welfare/care regimes, a comparison of the two articles suggests that differences in the migration regime, and in particular the way in which domestic/care work has been positioned within this, also play a role in contributing to the variations observed between the two countries in the configuration of the migrant domestic and care work sector.

The fourth article (Helma Lutz and Ewa Palenga-Möllnbeck) deals with Germany, a conservative-corporatist regime, which shares a degree of the familialism apparent in the Southern European countries. Unlike Portugal and Spain, however, the implications of familialism in terms of how care is provided, particularly in the context of rapid social and economic change, are not recognised explicitly by policy actors. One consequence is that while the demand for (migrant) domestic and care work among German households, particularly for elder care, has increased rapidly in recent decades, the institutional framework, albeit with one or two exceptions, does not allow for migrants to work legally in this sector. Despite this situation, Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck argue that the phenomenon of migrant household domestic and care workers has become an 'open secret', in which the German government is complicit. Such a position, the authors argue, helps the government solve the care deficit, while avoiding social conflicts.

In the context of EU enlargement, Central and Eastern European countries have become a key source of (irregular) labour for the domestic care sector in Germany. Poland in particular, has emerged as a dominant 'sending' country to Germany. Yet, as Myroslava Keryk demonstrates in the fifth article, Poland itself has a growing migrant domestic care work sector. She suggests that demand for domestic care workers among private households has increased as a result of shifts in the gender and welfare regimes associated with the transformation to a market economy, and more recently membership of the EU, and that migrants from neighbouring Central and Eastern European states – in particular, Ukraine – are increasingly taking up these jobs. The Polish case illustrates that uneven *regional* – as well as global, economic and social development – is an important dimension in the growth of migrant domestic and care work performed for pay in private households (see also Williams in this themed section, and Perrons *et al.*, 2010).

The expansion of the EU also provides part of the context for the sixth and final article, which focuses on the growing commoditisation of male aspects of domestic work, such as household and garden repair and maintenance – a theme to have emerged recently in the literature on domestic work and its 'migrantisation'. Majella Kilkey shows how male migrants from Poland in particular, following EU enlargement in 2004, have entered the UK's handyman sector, establishing sector-visibility and gaining a reputation for high-quality work. Rising commoditisation of male domestic chores, she suggests, needs to be understood with reference to shifts in men's relationship to fatherhood and the particular policy framework around the reconciliation of work and family life to have

emerged in the UK over the last decade and more. Thus, she argues that in the context of growing expectations for more involved fathering alongside a highly gendered individual adult worker model of welfare, in which fatherhood is not expected to disrupt men's relationship to the labour market in any significant way, use of handymen becomes a mechanism by which some (that is, those that can afford to) households can resolve men's work–family conflicts. The UK's liberal position on A8-nationals' access to the labour market compared with the majority of the EU15, helps explain both the increase in supply of migrant, especially Polish handymen, and the increase in demand, since the availability of cheaper migrant labour, reduces the relative costs of outsourcing.

The themed section concludes with a guide to useful sources on a range of topics related to the subject of migrant domestic and care work. This includes sources for information, especially at the international level, on migration trends and policies, on welfare states regimes, particularly their care dimensions, on labour laws, on demographic trends and on gender equality.

In providing a number of case studies from a range of European societies, this collection of articles offers some important insights into the variation in the migrant domestic care work phenomenon. However, further research is required. In particular, there is a need to go beyond a collection of case studies, to undertake cross-national comparative analysis. In doing so, we need to broaden the range of countries to include the USA and other 'rich nations', to incorporate a wider range of European countries – specifically the Nordic countries – and to bring into the analysis the sending countries. Additionally, there is a need to develop appropriate frameworks for comparative analysis, which can capture, firstly, the levels at which the migrant domestic care work phenomenon operates – that is, the macro level of social institutions, the meso level of social networks and organizations, and the micro level of workers and their families; secondly, the interactions between these levels; and, thirdly, the relationship between these levels and wider structuring processes at global and local levels related to race/ethnicity, religion, class and gender.

Note

1 See, for example, Gregson and Lowe (1994), McDowell *et al.* (2005), Cox (2006) on England; Hochschild (2000), Escrivá (2005), Pojmann (2006), Degiuli (2007), Lazaridis (2007) on Southern Europe; Akalin (2007) on Turkey; Platzer (2006) on Sweden; Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) on the USA; Anderson (2000), Anderson and O'Connell Davidson (2003), Cancedda (2001), Lister *et al.* (2007), Parreñas (2001, 2005), Sarti (2006), Williams (2005) on cross-national experiences; and most recently Lutz's (2008) edited collection covering a wide range of European countries.

References

- Akalin, A.** (2007), 'Hired as a caregiver, demanded as a housewife: becoming a migrant domestic worker in Turkey', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 14, 209–25.
- Anderson, B.** (2000), *Doing the Dirty Work? The Global Politics of Domestic Labour*, London: Zed Books.
- Anderson, B. and O'Connell Davidson, J.** (2003), 'Is trafficking in human beings demand driven? A multi-cultural pilot study', International Organisation for Migration Research Series No. 15, International Organisation for Migration, Geneva.
- Anttonen, A. and Sipilä, J.** (1996), 'European social care services: is it possible to identify models?', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 6, 2, 87–100.

- Bettio, F., Simonazzi, A. and Villa, P.** (2006), 'Change in care regimes and female migration: the 'care drain' in the Mediterranean', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 16, 271–285.
- Cancedda, L.** (2001), *Employment in Household Services*, Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- Castles, S. and Miller, M. J.** (2009), *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, fourth edition, London: Macmillan.
- Cox, R.** (2006), *The Servant Problem: Domestic Employment in a Global Economy*, London: I. B. Tauris.
- Degiuli, F.** (2007), 'A job with no boundaries: home eldercare work in Italy', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 14, 193–207.
- Escrivá, A.** (2005), 'Aged global care chains: a Southern-European contribution to the field', Conference on Migration and Domestic Work in Global Perspective, Wassenaar, 26–29 May 2005, www.nias.knaw.nl/en/ [accessed 01.09.2006].
- Esping-Andersen, G.** (1990), *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, London: Polity Press.
- Gregson, N. and Lowe, M.** (1994), *Servicing the Middle Classes*, London: Routledge.
- Hochschild, A. R.** (2000), 'Global care chains and emotional surplus value', in W. Hutton and A. Giddens (eds.), *On the Edge: Living with Global Capitalism*, London: Jonathan Cape.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P.** (2001), *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Kořman, E. and Raghuram, P.** (2007), *The Implications of Migration for Gender and Care Regimes*, Geneva: UNRISD.
- Lazaridis, G.** (2007), 'Les Infirmières exclusives and migrant quasi-nurses in Greece', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 14, 227–45.
- León, M.** (2008), 'Exploring paid care work in the household sector', Paper presented at the Annual Social Policy Association Conference, Challenging Boundaries, Edinburgh, 23–25 June 2008.
- Linton, A.** (2002), 'Immigration and the structure of demand: do immigrants alter the labour market composition of US cities?', *The International Migration Review*, 36, 1, 58–80.
- Lister, R., Williams, F., Anttonen, A., Bussemaker, J., Gerhard, U., Heinen, J., Johansson, S., Leira, A., Siim, B., Tobio, C. and Gavanis, A.** (2007), *Gendering citizenship in Western Europe*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Lutz, H.** (2007), 'Editorial: domestic work', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 14, 187–92.
- Lutz, H.** (2008), 'Introduction: migrant domestic workers in Europe', in H. Lutz (ed.), *Migration and Domestic Work: A European Perspective on a Global Theme*, Avebury: Ashgate.
- Lutz, H. (ed.)** (2008), *Migration and Domestic Work: A European Perspective on a Global Theme*, Avebury: Ashgate.
- McDowell, L., Ray, K., Perrons, D., Fagan, C. and Ward, K.** (2005), 'Women's paid work and moral economies of care', *Social and Cultural Geography*, 6, 219–35.
- Ozyegin, G. and Hondagneu-Sotelo, P.** (2008), 'Domestic work, migration and the new gender order in contemporary Europe', in H. Lutz (ed.), *Migration and Domestic Work: A European Perspective on a Global Theme*, Avebury: Ashgate.
- Parreñas, R.** (2001), *Servants of Globalisation: Women, Migration and Domestic Work*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Parreñas, R.** (2005), *Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Perrons, D., Plomien, A. and Kilkey, M.** (in press), 'Migration and uneven development within an enlarged European Union: Fathering, gender divisions and male migrant domestic services', *European Urban and Regional Studies*.
- Pfau-Effinger, B.** (2005), 'Welfare state policies and the development of care arrangements', *European Societies*, 7, 2, 321–47.
- Pfau-Effinger, B.** (2000), 'Conclusion: gender cultures, gender arrangements and social changes in the European context', in S. Duncan and B. Pfau-Effinger (eds.), *Gender, Economy and Culture in the European Union*, London and New York: Routledge.

- Platzer, E.** (2006), 'From private solutions to public responsibility and back again: the new domestic services in Sweden', *Gender and History*, 18, 211–21.
- Pojmann, W.** (2006), *Immigrant Women and Feminism in Italy*, Avebury: Ashgate.
- Sarti, R.** (2006), 'Domestic service: past and present in southern and northern Europe', *Gender and History*, 18, 222–45.
- Ungerson, C. and Yeandle, S. (eds.)** (2007), *Cash for Care in Developed Welfare States*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Williams, F.** (2005), 'Intersecting issues of gender, "race", and migration in the changing care regimes of UK, Sweden and Spain', Paper presented to Annual Conference of International Sociological Conference Research Committee 19, 8–10 September 2005, Northwestern University, Chicago.
- Williams, F. and Gavanas, A.** (2008), 'The intersection of childcare regimes and migration regimes: a 3-country study', in H. Lutz (ed.), *Migration and Domestic Work: A European Perspective on a Global Theme*, Avebury: Ashgate.