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Helma Lutz
Gender in the migratory process

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Abstract

This paper summarizes the main arguments made by various authors over several decades for treating gender as a key category in the understanding of migratory processes. Starting with an illustration of the absence of *women* as much as *gender* in mainstream migration research, it presents several explanations for this phenomenon. This introduction is followed by a description of the state of the art. Subsequently, through the debate of current migration phenomena it is demonstrated how gender can be used in a conceptual framework. This framework, elaborated on various levels (micro, meso and macro) advocates the analysis of migratory processes within a broader framework of social change; using the case of 'migrant domestic work in Europe' the multifaceted aspects of a gendered analysis are used to demonstrate some of the present changes which can be observed in various national societies of the European Union.

1. La femme perdue – (In-)visible women in the migratory process

Number seven of the 'laws of migration' published by the social geographer Ernest George Ravenstein in the 'Journal of the Statistical Society' in 1885 reads as follows: "Females are more migratory than males." Ravenstein then modified this inclination to migration over short distances. Unfortunately, it took more than a hundred years before at the turn of the 20th to the 21st century, this article and in particular law number seven, was re-discovered and recognized (see Donato et al. 2006; Morokvasic 2003, 2007). Moreover, women were absent in much of the migration studies' research during the 20th century, causing Mirjana Morokvasic a hundred years from Ravenstein's publication (1984) in her introduction to the first IMR special on 'Women in Migration' (volume 18, winter 1984) to make the following comment: "It has become increasingly clear that migration of women, and migration in general, cannot be analysed within the framework which focuses on young male adults responding to formal employment opportunities. Rather than 'discovering' that female migration is an understudied phenomenon, it is more important to stress that the already existing literature has had little impact on policy making, on mass media representation of migrant women, but also on the main body of migration literature, where male bias has continued to persist into the late seventies and eighties in spite of growing evidence of women's overwhelming participation in migratory movements" (Morokvasic 1984: 899). Today, another 24 years later, it seems appropriate to have a closer look at the question whether, how and why the examination and theorisation of female migration has been neglected for such a long time.

From the perspective of today it would be easy to declare the 19th and the 20th century the 'era of mass migration' and – according to the mainstream[1] of research results - consider this a male phenomenon in which men were the primary actors, then followed by the feminization of migration as a particular characteristic of the 21st century (Castles and Miller 1993; Koser and Lutz 1998). A critical review of various studies reporting on migration movements at the beginning and during the 20th century shows that this reconstruction is debatable.

Female historians, re-evaluating the migration processes during the 19th and early 20th century (Moch 1992; Gabaccia 1996; Harzig 1997, 2003), have qualified the assumption that the migrant actor was first and foremost a male person as seriously deceptive. Moch (1992,153/4) for example shows that nearly half of the Irish and Jewish migrants to the United States between 1820 and 1928 were female and that their number among Germans, Swedes, English

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[1] Sometimes ironically designated as ‚malestream'.

and Scottish immigrants was 40% - a fact that should have been considered a divergence from Ravenstein's law on women's migration inclination over short distances, but was never discussed that way. One large scale survey, the 1929 study by Imre Ferenczi and Walter Willcox (Ferenczi/ Willcox 1929): on international migration detected male dominance in transatlantic migration; this finding which could have been interpreted as confirmation of Ravenstein's law was however not considered an issue for explanation. Apparently, and most probably following the social order of that time, masculine dominance seemed to be obvious and 'natural'.

One of the first and still most eminent theories on migration from the beginning of the 20th century, Thomas' and Znaniecki's "The Polish Peasant in Europe and America" (1918-1920), is a description of Polish immigrants' life in Chicago. In this study the authors focus first and foremost on the metamorphosis of Polish men from peasants to industrial workers, basing their diagnosis on the analysis of about 10.000 personal letters and some autobiographies which reflect the relationship between male migrants and their family members left behind in Poland. This analysis is an outstanding reflection of the arduous adaptation/assimilation development transforming a rural into an urban habitus. Today, Thomas and Znaniecki are still and rightly so, praised for their innovative approach in the reconstructive interpretation of subjectivity in social processes by bringing in social actors' perspectives, their biographies, trajectories and personal experiences. Notwithstanding this praise, it is interesting to examine the genesis of a male bias in this study.

In contrast to the description of the situation of men, the authors qualify the consequences of migration for Polish women as utterly devastating: for women, they write, migration is a calamity. According to them, women, in particular second generation girls, suffer from the strict social control of their community; locked up in their traditional role as wife and dutiful daughter, they develop illness and depression. The sociological configuration delineated from what the authors see as the community's disorientation in a modern, free and individualized society is the *'female as victim'* – a figure which they reckoned to be a product of group oriented closure and the incapability of a community to open up to the 'emancipated mode of life' performed by the surrounding dominant society. A closer look at the empirical data on the background of which Thomas and Znaniecki qualified immigrant women as 'tragic figures' is most instructive. The collected material differs essentially from that used for the research on male migrants: instead of ego-documents (personal letters, biographies) they examined the minutes/records of welfare institutions and excerpts of courtroom documents, all dealing with problematic/digressive cases of women and girls that had become

conspicuous or sought help in problematic family situations. Given the absence of documents on the subjective processing of female migration experience, these data could have served as an excellent source for the study of the *representation of female digression* in social work and state institutions' files; instead they were rather used to support the thesis outlined above. Therefore, it seems not exaggerated to conclude that this much overlooked aspect (see Kohli 1981) in the uneven collection of empirical data has contributed to a biased and unbalanced portrayal of males and females in migration.

It is exactly this figure, the female migrant as dependent and as a victim, that made an impressive come back in the research on (guest worker) migration from the 1980s onwards[2] in the European context (see Lutz 1997b for the Netherlands; Huth-Hildebrandt for Germany 2001; Brah 1996 for Britain;). 'The Polish Peasant in Europe and America' has for a long time served as a blueprint for a binary illustration of migratory processes in which women – often lumped into one category with children, the 'womenandchildren' (Enloe 1988) - were defined as passive followers of male migrant actors in the period of family reunification. As Everett Lee (1966) put it in his classic 'A Theory of Migration' "… children are carried along by their parents, willy-nilly, and wives accompany their husbands though it tears them away from environments they love" (see also Fielding 1993: 53).

Within this bi-coded framework of voluntary = male and involuntary = female and child migration there seemed no need to analyse the role of women in 'mass-migration'; nor were the family-reunification schemes investigated or conceptualized as a tool for women (and men) to achieve the aim of active participation in the labour market which they had been refused access to in the first place (see Kofman 1999: 271). It was indeed overlooked that in many mass migration processes women were often primary migrants themselves – a deviance from the common assumption and for a long time even a rule (Morokvasic 1987; Kofman 1999, Booth 1992).

From this retrospection it becomes obvious that various, often contradictory developments account for the long-term absence of women in theoretical (and empirical) studies on migration. I differentiate between four possible explanations which do not exclude each other but may be even complementary:

1. To start with, there has been little interest to investigate Ravenstein's statement by a comparative analysis of various data on the migration inclination of women and men; neither the violation of law number seven nor its confirmation was regarded in need of discussion. It

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[2] After the recruitment stop and the then starting heydays of family reunification.

is possible that within the dominant gender code of the late 19th early 20th century, the focus on 'men' was considered 'natural'; if that was the case then Mr. Ravenstein's publication was an exception to the rule, a pioneer piece, decennia ahead of his contemporaries' thinking.

2. Feminist researchers have suggested that the gender bias was a product of the absence of female researchers in the field and in theory making. Donato et al (2006: 9) e.g. suggest that even at the University of Chicago "where an almost entirely male sociology department co-existed with the casework-oriented School of Social Service Administration (SSA) with origins in one of Chicago's Social Settlement Houses, it was the work of men in the sociology department that defined those forms of knowledge understood as theory", [3] (see also Mahler/ Pessar 2006). Such a statement, however, would not explain the presence of women in Ravenstein's theory; on the other hand, theory building is never dissociated from the persons collecting data and evidence. And here the gender of the researcher can become an important element. [4]

3. A different explanation for women's absence is given by Jørgen Carling (2005:4) who writes that in studies on mass migration ".. women were not considered because they were seen as following men or *behaving like men*" (emphasis H.L.), thereby proposing that the gendered rule as such need not be revised as long as female migratory activity is considered a habitual aberration.

4. A fourth explanation draws back on theory discussions about modernity and social change. As historian Carolyn Steedman (2008) in her forthcoming book on service, servitude and servants between 1750 and 1820 argues, the gendered bias in much of social scientists' and economists' work dates back to the single edged definition of 'work' as gainful employment (waged work) in most economic and social theories (starting from Adam Smith to Karl Marx and neo-liberal theorists). In contrast care work, one of the main fields of female occupation, was and still is defined as non-productive/ re-productive and was ranked second, reduced and subordinated to the importance of *productive work*. According to Steedman, this asymmetry accounts for the fact that domestic servants, making up one of the largest occupation groups in the society of modern time, were almost entirely neglected by social and labour historians

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[3] Moreover, the authors make an interesting observation by saying that the Chicago School started off with a large number of female researchers who later left the department and found long-term employment as founders and administrators of social welfare and public health agencies. A showcase is one of them, Edith Abbott, a 'passionate statistician' and author of many quantitative studies on immigrant women, who became well known as the founder of social work rather than for her empirical and theoretical work (Donato et al 2006: 9).

[4] Many studies aimed at interviewing the 'head of household' have often considered this to be a men; accordingly male researchers talked to male migrants only, resulting in a distorted picture of decision making and bread winning (for various examples see Curran et al 2006). In the same manner, Massey and Espinosa (1998) tested different theoretical positions on transnational Mexican-US-migration by selecting merely male heads of household for their interviews (for a critique see Erel et al. 2003).

as the backbone of the development of modernity. From the work of historians mentioned above it becomes clear that the majority of women participating in mass migration movements at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century were not occupied in factories but were rather recruited for domestic work in the cities and the countryside, for nursing or for farm labour - occupational areas located rather in the re-productive than in the productive sphere, albeit as gainful employment and not unpaid. (The wages for workers in this area were and still are low; the same is true for the status of this work). The assumption that migrant women's work at times was simply overlooked because of its location in the private sphere and its characterisation as 'family work' when simultaneously the 'real work' was considered to be performed in factories is still open to study and confirmation by historians.

2. From Women to Gender in Migration Studies

 The renewed interest for migrant women is closely linked to the establishment of women's studies from the 1980s onwards in many western societies and international institutions. Without being able to give an exhaustive account of the various stages the research on migrant women underwent, one can at least distinguish four stages in the development of this field (see also Lutz 2004):

a)   The first - as mentioned above - pledged itself to make women *visible* in migration movements; it aimed at demonstrating typical female migration patterns as well as special aspects of female migratory processes. Seen from a theoretical perspective this could be called a *compensatory approach*.

b)   The second can be qualified as *contributory,* focusing on the contribution of women to various migration movements. It included research projects dealing with the specific role of women in the migration context and with their particular migration experiences.

c)   A third stage starting in the mid 1980s in the US and deployed in the 1990s looked at specific *differences* in power relations between women. Inspired by black US-American feminists like Angela Davis or bell hooks, black and immigrant researchers started to question dominant feminist epistemologies and their (homogenized) subject. The focus of their project was not so much the search for commonalities but rather the analysis of differences in social positioning (social inequalities through citizenship status, economic and cultural inequalities) and, 'racialised or ethnicised genealogies of identity formation, separating indigenous from immigrant women. This approach

which became known as the 'race-class-gender'- debate led to many heated discussions between so called 'black' and 'white' feminism and was deeply politicised. Immigrant and minority scholars identified politically as 'blacks', a collective identity formation which can be termed the 'radical resistance' approach. The virulence of this debate – in particular in the Anglo-American context - can be explained as a reaction to the *double edged position* of the subject area; migrant and minority women were neither considered a core subject of mainstream *migration studies* nor were they seen as a subject of mainstream *women's studies*. They existed purely as a 'subtheme' or a marginal category, separated or added on as exotic strangers, eclipsed behind the eminent subject of '*the* male' (migration studies) and '*the* female' (women's studies). Both fields[5] contributed to their perception as (ethnic, cultural or national) 'others', thereby reifying the binary of sameness-otherness and thereby reconstructing migration as a deviant social phenomenon or the female migrant as deviant from her male peer. Various studies have deconstructed the representation of migrant women as 'others' which has not only informed stereotypical common sense notions but also scientists, administrators and policy making in migrant receiving countries (Kofman 1999; Phizacklea 1998; Lutz 1991 a&b; 1997b).

An important insight from this debate is the understanding that gender relations are always mediated by other socially constructed categories as 'race'/ethnicity and class etc.; vice versa, various studies have illustrated that the analysis of 'race'/ethnicity, class or nationality cannot do without looking at its gendered dimensions (Anthias/ Yuval-Davis 1992). This approach has now received more attention under the term 'intersectionality' (see Yuval-Davis 2006; Phoenix and Pattynama 2006).

d) The fourth stage from the mid 1990's onwards, is the paradigmatic change from a women's studies to a gender studies perspective, following the evolution of this theoretical perspective in women's studies. Gender was introduced in the social sciences to emphasize the difference between a person's 'biological'(sex) and the 'socially acquired and performed' (gender) identity, way of living and role in society. It breaks open the essentialism of a narrow preoccupation with women alone or with women and men (as statistical variables) in data collections[6] but focuses, instead, on

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[5] One could even argue that the conceptualisation of each area as 'field' is hampered by the fact that both are multi-disciplinarily organized and fragmented – a characteristic, however, that should not only receive negative evaluation but also contributes to the intellectual wealth and high reflexivity of each field.
[6] Although, until recently, even these break downs were missing in many international statistics, Calloni and Lutz, (2000).

the question how gender asymmetry is a *product* of the social order, in institutional and socio-political processes and *produces* it at the same time. The subjects of concern are e.g. the social construction of masculinity and femininity, the differential meaning of private and public as a work place, and the gender specific evaluation and the differential consequences of migration experiences for male and female migrants in the context of being couples, parents and families ('fragmented families', distant parenting etc.). This approach opens up new ways of theorizing because it makes it possible to distinguish between practices, identity or sex without the urge to identify this within one single category: a woman is …; a man is … Furthermore, it makes space for moving away from monolithic and universalistic notions of the female and male by studying gender relations as expressions of asymmetry, inequality, domination and power not only between the genders but also within one gender category; as will be shown for the case of *domestic work* below, a relational perspective can show how the work of migrant domestic and care workers can enable their female employers to pursue their professional career, thereby 'undoing' their gendered obligations in care work to a certain extent.

In conclusion it can be said that this list of different stages does not imply the absence of any of the models in current research; in fact, many studies are still using the compensatory or the contributory approach. The latter are also important in as far as they can make a contribution to the recognition that gender is not just one 'aspect' in the study of people on the move like economy, politics or religion (see: Levitt, de Wind and Vertovec, 2003: 566), but a *central organizing principle* in migration flows and in the organization of migrants' lives. Thus, pushing gender 'from the margin to the core' (see Mahler/ Pessar 2006) requires a further elaboration and advancement of the gender approach.

3. The gendered nature of crossing borders and boundaries.

When Castles and Miller (1993) declared the 'feminisation of migration' one of the characteristics of the 'Age of Migration', they did so on the basis of statistical evidence that in processes of *international* migration on world scale women have outnumbered men, an observation that has been confirmed by various international large scale studies since (Zlotnik 2003; GCIM 2005; Carling 2005; Yinger 2006, 2007). While this is partly due to the fact that the majority of refugees and displaced persons is female, the number of those migrating voluntarily and transnationally as single migrants (and mothers) has also increased. According

to Yinger (2006) this development does not only account for a dramatic change in numbers but moreover the reasons why females migrate have changed tremendously. Here, I would argue, an appropriate analysis cannot do without the gender approach for three reasons: feminised and masculinised work sectors, the un-equal redistribution of care work among migrant couples and the changing welfare regimes in countries of destination and origin: First, the work areas into which women migrate are gendered, comprising feminised domains like domestic and care work, entertainment and prostitution, and feminised work sectors in agriculture and catering services.

The term 'feminised work sector' has been coined by feminist researchers (Wetterer 2002) on the basis of the observation that when the majority of the workers is/becomes female this links up with low wages, low status and low occupational mobility. It also concerns work performed in the private sphere in which workers tend to be isolated and collective organization is difficult. In contrast to 'feminised' labour market segments, there also are those that are dominated by male workers like the construction and road making industry, truck driving, butchery etc. some of which suffer from the same disadvantages (isolation, low status and low occupational mobility) like the feminised jobs. However, there are also huge differences in the work organisation which need to be more specified. [7]

Second: In contrast to expectations that in case the woman becomes the breadwinner of the migrant household, traditional female tasks are taken over by husbands and male partners (see Sassen 1991; 1998), in reality this did not prove to be the rule and in many cases it did not happen at all. Instead, in the absence of mothers the re-distribution of care work in sending households seems to be primarily performed by female family members such as grandmothers, aunts, oldest daughters or it is outsourced to a female domestic worker from the wider network of friends and families (Lutz 2007a; Parreňas 2001a&b, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Gamburd 2000). This pattern of organisation resembles the one well known as a special characteristic of the long-term female migration in and from the Caribbean (see Chamberlain 1997) where young women migrate only after they gave birth to one or two children which they leave in custody of female extended family members. While the Caribbean case was always declared an exception to concepts of motherhood elsewhere because of its matrilinearity, it now seems that even sending countries with a very traditional motherhood ideology (Poland, Ukraine, the Philippines to name only a few) - meaning that a child needs the proximity of her/his biological mother for growing up healthily – have broadly

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[7] On example here is the difference in public attention for the irregular workers in these sectors. While for example construction worker unions in Europe focus on and shame exploitative working conditions, there are few unions taking up this case for domestic workers and carers.

accepted 'distant motherhood' and made space for the migration of mothers.[8] As the study of transnational mothering and parenting is still in its commencement, currently one can draw only tentative conclusions. There is evidence that the absence of fathers is more widely accepted that the absence of mothers (Parreňas 2005). Moreover, some case studies qualify the effects of the change from male to female breadwinner status as causes for a crisis of masculinity, the symptoms of which are found in augmented male alcoholism, violence and child abuse, (Gamburd 2000; Lutz 2007a, chpt.six).

Third, the reasons for increased female migration participation are linked to changing gender relations, welfare state organisation and economics in receiving countries (see also the case study below). It is now estimated e.g. that at least one out of ten households in several European countries uses domestic 'help' – comprising a wide range of activities like cleaning, cooking and caring for small children and elderly people, nursing the disabled and diseased. This development is incomprehensible if one does not take into account the increased participation of 'native' women in professional occupations which did not lead to the redistribution of care work and family tasks, formerly performed by them, between spouses; neither did it cause states to enhance their efforts in the provision of care facilities; rather it led to the outsourcing of care work to an external, often migrant, worker.

In summary, a gender analysis has to take into consideration three aspects which are described in the following as three levels of analysis, the macro, meso and micro level.[9]

On the ***macro-level*** e.g., migrants are found in gender-specific labour market segments in the receiving context, like domestic work or the construction sector which exert a pulling power on female or male actors, respectively. Moreover, it is not only the sort of work that is feminised or masculinised, but also its organisation. For example the construction sector requires regular *full-time* workers, agriculture needs seasonal *target-earners*, domestic work, by contrast, can be arranged sometimes in a *frame of rotation* (e.g., three-month rotation rhythm; replacement by a colleague or friend). Thus, the organisation of work in these three sectors, the ***meso level***, is strongly linked to gendered models of care and family organisation.

On the ***micro-level*** individual practices, identities and positions come into sight. Since migrants live transnational family-lives, they have to reconcile work abroad with family-life at home. In everyday life practices gender-specific characteristics are mirrored and

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[8] However, this is met by serious public debates about drawbacks and damages for children's development, i.e. in Poland where these children are called 'Euro-orphans' or in the Ukraine where the former president accused migrant mothers to be whores. On the other hand, the Philippines acknowledge what they call the sacrifice of migrant women by designating them as 'heroines' or 'ambassadors' (Parreňas 2005; Shinozaki 2005).

[9] The following scheme was first elaborated by Ewa Palenga- Möllenbeck in her unpublished thesis (2008) and later applied in the context of our ongoing research project 'Landscapes of Care Drain'.

simultaneously, the individual migrant's position in transnational social spaces is marked by intersections of life-cycle, class, ethnicity that can turn out to be (more or less) resourceful. When trying to identify these positions, questions have to be asked like: What is her/his role in the household (or family) as a spouse, parent, and child? When does the individual start working as migrant labourer - as a young adult or as a pensioner?[10] Which social networks, skills, abilities or economic resources does she/he use and what are their biographical experiences which may be accumulating into biographical resources ?

Analytical Level	Gendered social phenomena
Macro level	Labour market segments
Meso level	Organisation of Work
Micro level	Individual practices, identities, positions

Such an analysis can exemplify how migrants develop gender-specific transnational migration patterns. For the clarity of the argument some examples are given:

A look at men and women from the same sending region (in this case Upper Silesia, Poland) is instructive.[11] In this region, both, men and women, sometimes from the same family, engage in transnational migration to Germany and the Netherlands. Considering the educational level, men and women match each other's cultural capital.

As was said before, men working in the construction industry tend to work full-time and thereby become full-time migrants; in doing so, they acquire knowledge that can be used to build up transnational (social, cultural, economic) capital and may lead eventually to social and economic upward mobility.

By contrast, married women with small children prefer a self organised rotational model (pendular migration) in their organisation of work, enabling them to return to their children every three months; by doing so they become part-time migrants.[12] As part-time workers, however, they tend to remain in the lowest economic positions and eventually rather resemble what Piore (1979) called the "birds of passage" than resourceful (full-time) transmigrants. However, subjectively, many women consider their part-time jobs in agricultural or domestic work rather an asset than a cause of marginalization. After all, it allows them to return home on a regular basis and to some extent reconcile work and family duties. Thus, the interests of those women are complementary to the interests of their employers in households or agriculture. In this sense it can be said that women and men look for segmentations in labour

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[10] In Germany live-in caring for elderly diseased people is increasingly dominated by (Polish) female pensioners.
[11] The examples are taken from Ewa Palenga's thesis.
[12] The latter is also true for women and men in seasonal agricultural work. However, single women, women without children or with adult children fit much better into the category of full-time workers.

markets which match their self-considered and socially expected gender roles; the (unintended) effect of which is a clear asymmetry in 'career prospects'.

Another example of surprisingly resourceful actors is middle-aged Polish women who are in strong demand in the precarious work of domestic geriatric care. Certain ascribed feminine characteristics and social skills, like warm-heartedness, cooking-skills, unpretentiousness, respect for conservative values, etc. serve as access into this job market. While these women have a weak position on the Polish labour market, on the German market for domestic care-workers their age and ethnicity are assets rather than handicaps. In contrast to working mothers, their obligations for their grown up children and grand children are limited so that their time management is more flexible than that of younger women; moreover, as older women they are neither considered a threat nor a (sexual) provocation to their employers and their families. No wonder then that the owner of an agency placing Polish care-workers in German households who was interviewed for the 'landscapes of care drain' project stated that the demand for care-workers is so strong that his company can hardly cope with it. In his view middle-aged /older women who are rather losers on the Polish labour market turn into resourceful, self-confident actors in the employer families – while earning four times their pension salary. On the macro level it can be said that the employment of these women aged between 55 and 70 establishes a situation where (migrant) elders care for (German) elders. This scenario in fact is not only fortunate for the Polish state benefiting from the remittances of these extremely loyal citizens, but also most welcome for Germany, a country with a traditional care regime, a 'home-caring' society (Pfau-Effinger 2000), even if it is not the case that the carers are not family members (as the state or the churches prefer) but migrants, ethnic others, to whom the work is outsourced. As the bulk of their salaries comes from the state allowances for 'caring family members', the outsourcing process is camouflaged: the state keeps up the image of family-care provision, the employers use and benefit from this arrangement; for the employees the setting seems useful for reasons outlined above.

As will be shown in the next paragraph this is also a topical example for the solidification of the individualization of care obligations in the receiving societies and the leaking of economic market logic into this sphere. The market concerned is a veritable twilight zone, unacknowledged by the German government which declares immigration for low skilled jobs as undesirable, concealed or kept as a secret by home-care organizations, unions, clients and workers. The underhand guide lines seem to be a laissez-faire and non-intervention policy by the state which avoids the discrimination or criminalisation of the employers (see Lutz 2007c)

In summary, it can be assumed that the evaluation of gendered phenomena on the three analytical levels can answer questions about the conditions and the experiences of women and men in migratory processes. It can also be considered an illustration of Joaquìn Arango's critique of theories portraying migrants as 'homo economicus': "It is true that almost everything can be translated into costs and benefits and that a value in monetary terms can be attached to it, but the price of such effort may often be the practical irrelevance, close to tautology, of finding that people move to enhance well-being. In practice the cost of overcoming entry obstacles is often so staggering that it dissuades the majority of those who might be candidates for migration if economic considerations alone were at play." (Arango 2004:20)

4. Migrant domestic work in Europe as a case for a gendered, intersectional approach

As Raffaela Sarti (2008) in an overview article on the globalisation of domestic service from colonial time to the present 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. Yet, 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, a family with (young) children or elderly parents. 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 2008), 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 (2008), Sarti (2008) and Parreñas (2001a&b) note, 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; more than 100,000 Ukrainians made use of the opportunity of 'earned legalization' and were regularized and made visible in immigration statistics during 2003 and 2004, 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 2008), 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 have not yet been sufficiently studied.

Migration theorists often suggest that domestic work 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 a number of special characteristics:

- 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.

Together these factors contribute to the assertion that domestic work cannot just be analyzed using the terminology of gender-less 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 would argue that there is more to say about this sector. Migrant domestic work in Europe distinguishes itself from other transnational services because this work:

I) 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.

II) 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.

III) 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 (Anderson, 2000:169).

It is also not by accident that the majority of the workers in this area are female because females are considered to display a number of characteristics like submissiveness, docility, care, responsibility etc.

On the theoretical level, three different intersecting '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 2008).

By introducing the term 'regime' Esping-Andersen (1990) 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 and they also can be characterised as "admission and repel policies" (Arango 2004). 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 Cyrus 2008), 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, 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'. Altogether, the studies on domestic workers 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, as already mentioned, it is important to acknowledge that migrant domestic workers 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 2008). Until today, however, the majority of migrant domestic workers seem to perform their work under 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.

In summary, I consider migrant domestic work a showcase for the execution of a multi-layered analysis reflecting the many facets and seeking to differentiate between the various levels and perspectives involved in the ongoing transnational migration.

Conclusion

In this paper I have argued for treating gender as a key variable for the analysis of migratory processes. My example deals with a topical transnational migration phenomenon, but it is not limited to that. Whether it concerns *voluntary or forced* migration, *poverty or betterment*; *internal or external*, *temporary*, *permanent* or *shuttle* migration, the gender factor seems to be indispensable for a sophisticated anatomy and a sound understanding of the subject area. As I have tried to show this does not mean that gender is being treated as the one and only important variable. On the contrary, the race-class-gender-debate and even more precisely the intersectionality approach has revealed the fact that several makers of inequality have to be studied in their interference, mutual amplification and mutual dependency. However, gender may serve in analysis as 'the' difference that makes the difference.
Several consequences for the understanding "gender" as a major variable in migration research can be summarized:
a) Methodological consequences; these are concerned with the embeddedness of masculinities and femininities in the respective context of the sending and receiving the regions and societies; also with the embeddedness of masculinities and femininities in the context of gendered labour markets, organisations and care-practices.
b) Theoretical consequences are concerned with the integration of gender aspects into transnational migration-, labour market and network theories: e.g. the sensitive balance between productive and reproductive work, social capital and various other resources have to be considered.

Various examples of 'good' or 'bad' practice in following this device should be discussed in the workshop.

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