Towards a Global History of Domestic and Caregiving Workers

Edited by

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CHAPTER 1

**Domestic Workers of the World: Histories of Domestic Work as Global Labor History**

*Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, Silke Neunsinger and Dirk Hoerder*

**Introduction**

Although domestic work has been a global phenomenon through the ages, it has only been explicitly connected to globalization very recently. First, the need for care work is universal as all human beings, at one time or another in their lives, are dependent on other people’s care. Second, the importance of domestic work has been evident across the world, with ancient Mesopotamian sources referring to it and continuing — and probably even expanding — into the present. Third, domestic and care work is often determined by and has contributed to global connections. It has been and still is a substantial aspect of the global division of labor. This work’s universal character and the need to improve its generally harsh working conditions and poor remuneration have recently been recognized by the International Labor Organization’s (ILO) 2011 adoption of international standards for domestic work in the Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (Convention No 189, hereafter referred to as C189).

Historically, as the chapters in this volume show, (labor) migration, gender, and ethnic and colonial encounters have played a large role in the lives of domestic workers. They have also been a constituent factor in labor relations. Domestic work has always been a highly feminized sector and still is today. Nowadays, more than 80 per cent of all domestic workers worldwide are women — men in this sector being mainly employed as gardeners, drivers, and butlers. Put in another way, one in every thirteen female wage workers is a domestic worker. For some regions of the world, such as Latin America/the

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2 See Chapter 2 by Raffaella Sarti on recent research and Chapter 3 by Dirk Hoerder on the relationship between domestic-care work and migration.
Caribbean and the Middle East, ratios are even far higher—one in four, and one in three respectively? As a consequence, most—but not all—of the contributions in this volume concentrate on female domestic workers.

The authors in this volume use a broad and inclusive definition of domestic work: Work in the households of others includes all tasks concerning household work such as cooking, washing, cleaning as well as care work such as taking care of children, elderly and sick persons. Defined in this way, domestic work can be paid or unpaid, forced or free, formal or informal employment. This inclusive definition is part of the broadening the scope of labor history as proposed by Marcel van der Linden and Jan Lucassen in their plea for a research agenda of Global Labor History.4

Traditional labor history was mainly concerned with "white," organized, male labor, typically found in the industrializing, and then industrialized Global North: Western Europe, North America, Oceania and Japan. The "Old" Labor History, established around the turn of the twentieth century, was inspired by Marxists, trade unionists, and other social activists, such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb. It was highly focused on the development of (labor) organizations, political debates, socialist parties, and strikes. The rise of New Social History in the 1960s also entailed a New Labor History, in which proponents such as E.P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm stressed the need to contextualize labor struggles in societal structures and cultural praxes. This implied looking beyond political struggles, trade union leaders, and successful strikes to examine the actual work and living experiences of "ordinary" members of the working classes—who incidentally were not always (active) members of the labor movement. In the 1970s and 1980s, neo-Marxist and feminist historians as well as scholars of race-and-ethnicity, developed this line of research further by including everyday forms of resistance, women workers, and black workers into their analyses. From the early 1990s onwards, scholars from the Global South began to produce histories of labor in colonized societies and developed "subaltern" visions of colonial labor relations.5

One of the ways of "doing" global labor history is bringing together scholarship from all parts of the world. Therefore, for the 49th Linz conference arranged annually by the International Conference of Labor History and Social Movements (ITH6), we brought together more than 50 experts on the history of domestic work from across the world in September 2013. The ITH, founded in 1964 as an international platform allowing labor historians from the "East" and the "West" to meet, has in recent years been shifting from the old labor and social movement history towards a forum where "old" and "new" labor historians from all over the world meet.7 Accordingly, its annual publication focuses increasingly on global and transnational labor history8 Integrating domestic work into the ITH agenda provided the opportunity to revisit the analytical categories of gender and ethnicity that the conference had explicitly addressed in the 1990s.9

This volume presents a selection of the papers presented in Linz. Collectively they provide a global perspective on domestic work, supplemented with a broad historical overview and part introductions that discuss research achievements and agendas. Central to these essays are the issues of gender, ethnicity, and social background. The authors include in-depth perspectives on historical developments, emphasize nineteenth-century developments, and concentrate on twentieth-century domestic and care work in three dimensions: of strategies, agency, and self-assertion of care workers; of race, color, and power in households in colonial contexts; and on elites', states', and international organizations' approaches to servitude-service-wage labor in households.

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4 See e.g. Marcel van der Linden and Jan Lucassen, Prolegomena for a Global Labor History (Amsterdam, 1999), notably 8-12, and Marcel van der Linden, Workers of the World. Essays toward a Global Labor History (Leiden, 2008), esp. Chapter 2,17-38. For a recent discussion about the future of transnational perspectives in labor history, including labor and empire as well as labor and migration see Leon Fink, Workers of the Americas. The Transnational Tom in Labor History (Oxford, 2010). For a recent discussion the definitions and yields of the global labor history approach see International Labor and Working-Class History 82 (Fall 2012), with contributions by Marcel van der Linden, Jurgen Kocka, Dorothy Sue Cobble and Prasannan Parthasarathi.
6 ITH stands for Internationale Tagung für Historikerinnen der Arbeiter- and anderer sozialer Bewegungen (in German) and International Conference of Labor and Social History (in English).
7 See for more information on the ITH: <http://wwwith.or.at/ith_e/i_index_e.htm>, last accessed 15 March 2014.
8 E.g. Berthold Unfried and Marcel van der Linden (eds), Labour and New Social Movements in a Globalising World System (Leipzig, 2003); Berthold Unfried et al. (eds), Transnational Networks in the 19th Century Ideas and Practices, Individuals and Organisations (Leipzig, 2008); Marcel van der Linden (ed), Labour History beyond Borders: Concepts and Explorations (Leipzig, 2010).
9 Gabriella Hauch, Geschlecht - Klasse - Ethnizität (Vienna-Zürich, 1993); Christine Schindler, Der Forschungsstand zum Thema Klasse und Geschlecht" in Zentral- and Osteuropa. Projektbericht (Vienna, 1993).
Like the Linz conference as a whole, while historical in essence this volume contains contributions from a number of disciplines: history, sociology, and anthropology. The terms used to describe domestic workers have varied in time and space, but also between different disciplines. For an activist today it may seem awkward to use historical terms like "servants" when she has been fighting to be acknowledged as a "worker." While most authors in this book have used the more comprehensive term domestic workers others have used the historical term of their sources. Even in recent discussion about this occupational group at the ILO, but also in the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) there are different opinions about the use of the term "domestic worker" in different parts of the world. In some areas of the Spanish speaking world the term has been criticized because it reminded activists too much of the domestication of animals, so the term household worker (trabajadora del hogar) has been suggested instead. The IDWF includes both household and domestic workers (trabajadores domésticos/hogar) in its Spanish name. We believe that historical shifts in the use of terms mirror the changes and continuities of domestic work.

This volume aims to contribute to a global history of work, in which the history of domestic work and domestic workers are not discarded as "unproductive" and therefore insignificant to labor history. It highlights ways to conceptualize the history of work in a more inclusive way. It explicitly addresses power relations at the household level, between women and men, between colonizer and colonized, and migrants and their receiving communities. It indicates how these power relations, while never unidirectional over time and space, have developed historically in ways that still shape the world of labor. While traditional historians and economists viewed domestic work as "unproductive," the authors in this volume carefully analyze how the "privacy of the household" is part of, in some cases even central to, labor relations. They demonstrate that domestic work has not only been an important social and cultural factor throughout space and time, but that its economic ("productive") value has for long been underestimated, misunderstood, or negated. They also show that assumed borderlines between reproductive and productive labor are interest-driven constructs.

**DOMESTIC WORKERS OF THE WORLD**

It is not only old-style scholarship that devalues work in the household but societal discourse in general. "Do you think domestic work is really work?" a domestic worker queried when asking other domestic workers and union representatives to sign a petition for similar rights as "regular employees," circulated in January 2014 by the Dutch "Service in the House" committee. The committee, established in 2013, investigates possibilities for providing an extension of their rights in the private sphere of the home to domestic workers — who are often (illegal) migrants. As of the spring of 2015 the Netherlands has not ratified ILO Convention No 189 on Domestic Workers — worldwide only seventeen countries have ratified it and only ten of these have put the Convention into force. The acceptance of domestic work as the "work" of laborers who deserve to be protected by international agreements still has a long way to go.

When asked, academics generally (whether historians, sociologists, or economists) do consider domestic labor to be "genuine work" or regular employment. As Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo noted, "paid domestic work is distinctive not in being the worst job of all but in being regarded as something other than employment." The fact that only one other profession, sex work, has consistently encountered similarly engrained assumptions of not being work calls for reflection. This attitude has had far-reaching consequences, not only for the working conditions of domestic workers in past and present but also for the scholarship on domestic work. In theory and empirical research this distinction emanated from the classical premise — prevalent among Neo-Liberal and many Marxist economists alike — that a "genuine" laborer generates a

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59 See e.g. Gail Pheterson and Margo Saint James (eds), A Vindication of the Rights of Whores (Seattle wA, 1989); Valerie Jeness, Making It Work: The Prostitutes' Rights Movement in Perspective (New York, 1993).
"productive surplus," adding value to a particular product or service. Service, in contrast, has been depicted as "reproductive" (read "non-productive") labor. Domestic labor — labeled as "service" both by the nature of tasks (caring and cleaning) and its location in the assumedly private sphere of households — could then be discarded from analysis and remuneration. This still has an impact on research, as domestic work never became part of the grand narrative of labor history. Scholars thus contributed to hiding the history and practice of domestic work behind the walls of private households. Narrowly focusing on industrial work and factory workers, their resistance and organizations, labor historians have blamed those they excluded: domestic workers and women in general were allegedly difficult to organize and thus irrelevant for labor organizations.

Ironically, domestic work precedes industrial factory work by millennia, appearing in multiple guises historically — varying in terms of payment, formality and degree of coercion, under the disguise of adoption, or outright exploitation. It has been regarded as an extension of women's postulated "natural roles" and children's training for such roles. Being located in the family sphere of the household it has been regarded as a continuation of kinship rather than contractual obligations that took place in a site of leisure, of recreation, instead of a worksite. These ideological constructions of work by domestic workers, bound laborers, and slaves hidden behind the walls of homes have been depicted as subordinate, voiceless "others" — women, migrants, non-whites, and children.

Only from the 1970s did a New Labor History emerge where historians, mostly women, began to investigate the position of domestic workers in past and present. Raffaella Sarti discusses the approaches and achievements of this research in Chapter 2 of this volume. The authors in this volume build on such studies. They show how domestic workers have been and are struggling for the better working conditions and remuneration by forming networks, building organizations, joining male-dominated unions, and negotiating alliances in many parts of the globe. If the majority of domestic workers, just like male factory workers, have probably never joined a union, many have pursued other ways of handling the everyday challenges of employment within the secluded sphere of a household.

When the New Labor History developed and studied shop-floor activity the 1960s these historians focused on the making of a working class, and working-class culture, while paying little attention to domestic workers and never viewing them in the context of labor internationalism. The groundwork was done by three approaches: historical demographers, feminist labor history and Marxist feminists, and migration historians. It needs to be added that domestic workers themselves reflected on both their status as workers and their internationalism as early as around 1900.

First, take the issue of domestic workers' identity as "workers." In North America, the agenda of early twentieth-century Finnish immigrant women who lived and worked on both sides of the then permeable us-Canadian border involved resolving the tensions between constraining domestic work, self-assertion, and class-conscious unionization. With the background of the strong class consciousness and communist movement in Finland, they established employment agencies, information networks, and hostels for accommodation between jobs. Demand for their labor permitted "maids" to quit a job whenever working conditions became unacceptable. They knew and expressed that, in distinction to factory workers, they needed to face their employer daily and that, self-taught and highly skilled, they worked for middle-class or even prosperous working-class employers rather than capitalists:

1. Because the maid meets her employer as a human being she must have the self-confidence and the sense of self-worth to demand decent human treatment.
2. Maids must become professionals by improving their skills to the utmost of their ability. The key to successful bargaining is the ability to perform well.

16 Shireen Ally. From Servants to Workers. South African Domestic Workers and the Democratic States (Ithaca etc.], 2009), 3.
17 Dorothy Sue Cobble discusses how study of the heyday of mass production organizing and industrial unionism has been shaped through "economistic and factory proletarian biases and has contributed to the neglect of an inclusion of intimate workers' mobilization and organization in labor history. Intimate workers are many more than only domestic and care workers, but also sex workers, workers in restaurants and hotels, or beauty workers (pedicure, hairdressing etc)." Dorothy Sue Cobble, "More Intimate Unions," in Eileen Boris and Rhacel Salazar Parreias (eds), Intimate Labor. Cultures, Technology, and the Politics of Care (Stanford, zovo), 280-294.
18 See the contributions by Eileen Boris and Jennifer Fish and Magaly Garcia Rodriguez in this volume, see also ongoing project on women and gender in the century project of the ILO led by Eileen Boris and Susan Zimmermann. See e.g. Ulla Wikander, Feminism, family och medborgarskap. Debatter paa interationella kongresser om nattarbetsf”rbit”d f”r kvinnor 1889-199g (Gothenburg [etc.], 2006); Suzanne Franzway and Mary Margaret Fonow, Making Feminist Politics: Transnational Alliances between Women and Labor (Urbana, 2011).
3. They must organize maids' clubs, cooperative homes, employment exchanges and raise the class-consciousness of the maids before they can put forth strong demands.19

These women (domestic) workers thus acted like class-conscious workers. On the other side of the globe, in Southeast Asia, migrant Chinese amahs — domestic and care workers, household managers, governesses — thought and acted similarly, in fact almost identically.20 A century later, organized locally as in Pune or worldwide as in the WWF, women still continue their struggles against the wall of clichés about domestic work.21

Internationalism, the other aspect, is not merely a fact of internationally mobile capital and its power or of international proletarian gendered mass migration from the 1880s to 1914, but of domestic workers’ everyday thinking — if experiences varied locally, the difficulties of regulating working hours, minimum wages and other demands were similar. In Stockholm, domestic workers established a domestic servant organization in 1904 and the women corresponded about their working conditions beyond national borders. They, in fact, used the common conditions and experiences in different parts of the world to mobilize people in Sweden for their organization.22 In distinction to the organizational, even bureaucratic, internationalism of male industrial workers’ unions, female domestic workers connected through migration, established transoceanic networks, and developed distinct patterns of transborder mobility. Those in Stockholm published a journal and collected information transnationally, reflecting the networks that evolved from the

migration patterns of Nordic domestic workers at the turn to the twentieth century. All of this passed unrecognized in the master narratives of the Old Labor History.

Historical demographers who paid attention to patterns of family life pioneered new approaches to labor history. Scholars like Peter Laslett and Michael Mitterauer identified domestic "service" (as they called it) as part of the life-cycle in the typical West-European demographical pattern. Young people first worked for some years in the households of families other than their own, then — with the experience gained — married, established their own households, and started (nuclear) families of their own.

A second decisive development for the historiography of domestic work was feminist scholarship from the 1970s. Marxist feminists in particular, regarded domestic work as crucial for capitalist accumulation. In the "domestic labor debate" of the 1970s they argued about the relationship between the two but clearly stated that women’s unpaid work in private households reproduced the labor required for capitalism and its production regime.23 Thus, as Raffaella Sarti shows in Chapter 2, domestic work assumed a role in defining the new feminist activism and scholarship beyond its intrinsic importance. Despite the fact that domestic workers did not leave sources as — for example — a metal workers’ federation did, domestic workers have become visible when questions about them and the work regime were finally asked. A first conclusion was that all women and their work were affected by patriarchy and capitalism and, so the argument goes, there was common ground for solidarity and equalization.24 However, in a second step, feminist scholars questioned the common ground empirically. Some women, due to status and class, never had to do household work. They employed other women using their own race and class privileges.25 Conceptually this created a paradox, paid employment as a strategy for women to achieve economic independence and a stepping

20 Keat Gin, "From Amah-chieh to Indonesian Maids: A Comparative Study in the Context of Malaysia circa 19305-19905," in Dirk Hoerder and Alnarjit Kaur (eds), Proletarian and Gendered Mass Migrations: A Global Perspective on Continuities and Discontinuities from the 19th to the 21st Centuries (Leiden, 2013), 405-425. See also Chapter 3 below.
21 http://www.iclwfed.org, last accessed 3 October 2014. See also the essay by Eileen Boris and Jennifer Fish in this volume.
26 Ally, from Servants to Workers, 14, referring to Judith Rollins Between Women: Domestics and Their Employers (Philadelphia, 1985).
stone towards gender equality vs. exploitation of women domestic workers by women employers and taking an active role in the oppression of women defined by class and skin color.

A third approach emerged from migration history once the labor-migration or proletarian-mass-migration paradigms were transcended. As Dirk Hoerder describes in Chapter 3, women have always been part of migrations and migrant women workers have always been and are overrepresented among domestic workers. Being a migrant implies a particularly precarious status in the labor market. The trajectory from family of birth to family of employment or service depended on power relations and borders crossed. One form of migration, sometimes called short-distance, involves rural or small-town women seeking a wage income in an urban environment — a common pattern all over the world, be it ancient India, preindustrial and industrializing Europe, or present-day Africa. These people have to overcome the border between rural and urban lifestyles, between lower-class and employing-class cultures. A second type of migration involves the crossing of international borders. Until the twentieth century this usually meant work in a different language environment; and since border controls were installed around 1900, it has involved a redefinition of legal status that often remained precarious. In the present with its rigorous border regimes, taking a job in a household may provide entry into (a labor market slot in) a state that is otherwise inaccessible. It may be a stepping stone into a society with better living standards and educational opportunities and may even involve finding a marriage partner in the new society. Thirdly, in colonial settings, domestic workers have crossed borders and continents either to work as bearers of imperialist culture or have been forced to cross borders as slaves or bonded laborers. While in their status of the "subordinate Other” such domestic workers seem relatively powerless, recent research shows that they too could obtain a considerable degree of influence in colonial households.27

After the Second World War, at least in the Global North, domestic work seemed to subside and at best be a vestige of the past. Rising living standards in the 1950s and early 1960s allowed lower-class married women, who were a reservoir of domestic workers, to withdraw from the labor market. At about the same time new and more attractive employment opportunities for women induced middle-class women to enter the labor market. And new welfare institutions sponsored by governments created “service jobs” and women from many social backgrounds (re-)entered this segment of the labor market. It was assumed that this increase in women's labor market participation in the North (which involved the dilemma of women's two roles, as Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein called it) would not negatively impact households because emerging welfare state institutions and modern household appliances would facilitate reproduction.28 Public childcare and collective housing with restaurants were part of the utopian plans of social engineers. Already during the interwar years, feminists had wanted to enable women to combine gainful employment and family life. In the postwar years this became possible and in some welfare states domestic workers seemed to have largely disappeared by the 1970s.29

Simultaneously, many societies in the Global South experienced decades of struggle for independence and decolonization. For (potential) domestic workers, this meant that their former colonizer employing households left the new state and decreased the demand for their work. However, old colonized elites had also hired domestic workers or, in some societies like Indonesia and Malaysia, had adopted the colonizers' custom of doing so 30 And new postcolonial elites also hired domestic workers. Thus the demand for domestic and care workers did not vanish in most decolonized countries. But independence did have economic consequences: former colonizers withdrew their capital, creating havoc and unemployment; new governing elites did not necessarily pursue job-creating economic policies; neo-imperialism reinvested in some countries but only created low-wage employment. With only a few exceptions these developments did not produce income for women that permitted sustainable lives. As a result, long-distance postcolonial migrations to former colonizers' countries emerged, from Africa and the Caribbean to Europe and from the Philippines to the United States. While those who decided to migrate did not necessarily move to the Global North intending to perform domestic and care work, the receiving societies often restricted them to these segments of the labor market. At this point new global inequalities, new migrant agency, and old views of service work as female coalesced.

27 See, for instance, the contributions of Shireen Ally and Robyn Pariser in this volume. See also the recent book by Haskins and Lowrie, Colonization and Domestic Service.
29 Karin Carlsson has analyzed how the development from domestic service to public service institutions was not as straightforward as it might appear. In Sweden, a new service profession called the “public home help service” was introduced at the end of the 1940s to work temporarily in private homes. Karin Carlsson, Den stifflilla husmodern. Hemveterdarinnekren i Sverige 1940—1960 (Lund, 2013).
30 Ann Laura Stoler, Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule (Berkeley, 2002), 24. See also the contribution by Bela Kashyap in this volume.
The Return of Domestic Work and the "Global Division of Labor"

At the turn of the twentieth century domestic workers were on their way back into private households: According to ILO statistics, the number of domestic workers grew by almost 52 million worldwide between 1995 and 2010.31 Employing somebody — some body — to clean the house, to look after the children, or to take care of the infirm and elderly, has become an essential part of life in many dual breadwinner families in the Global North.32 Women's increased labor force participation combined with little improvement in sharing household work between partners, declining welfare state provisions, and a new lifestyle with active time off, stylish homes, and more time for children have increased the demand for domestic workers, while difficult conditions in parts of the Global South have increased supply. Bridget Anderson has argued that delegation of domestic and care work is a way of avoiding gender and generational conflict in employer families. Migrant (often undocumented) domestic workers fill the niche and have to face the downside of this type of conflict resolution.33 In order to dissolve these power imbalances, domestic workers, union activists and many feminists have advocated (improvement of) regulations for domestic work and demanded recognition such employment as "real" work.34 Much of the research presented in this volume, however, indicates that regulation often changes neither the gendered segregation of this work nor the exploitation of women from the poorer strata of societies.

As in the past, migrants are still overrepresented among domestic workers and, as at the turn of the twentieth century, hierarchies between employers and employed reflect the ethno-cultural, skin color, high- and low-income distances between societies. Low wages paid to migrant domestic workers reflect the global division of labor and permit the growth of the sector. Migrants, especially undocumented ones, are in a weak bargaining position. In recent decades the social composition of migrant domestic workers has changed. Many are women who have to leave their own children behind — women from Central America or the Philippines are a case in point. Many were teachers or skilled nurses in their countries of origin, where lack of job opportunities or low salaries forces them to depart for jobs below their level of education in a different part of the world. In the modern metropolises like Hong Kong, New-York, Singapore or London they often have to accept low wages and bad working conditions.35 In some segments of the labor market neo-colonial labor relations have emerged as documented by the case of Eritrean women in Rome.36

In fact, the impact of colonialism on domestic work has continued to influence labor relations. Postcolonial migrations connect former colonized societies to the former colonizer via traditional migration connections (if in reverse), linguistic similarities, easier access to work permits, entitlement of residents, perhaps even (former) citizenship (as in the case of Algerians in France). Former colonizers now often provide development aid to their former colonies. The concomitant migration of experts to the so-called developing countries results in new domestic labor relationships: as they hire domestic workers (the children and grandchildren of the formerly colonized) for their ease or out of charitable considerations — and upon return home want to maintain the same service-supported lifestyle.

For those migrating into the working conditions of the domestic and care work sectors in the Global North their subordinate position may still be a stepping stone for building a life in improved conditions considering the conditions in their societies of origin. Entry barriers to the Global North reflect the nineteenth-century development in Western Europe of nation-states sovereign over a territory, with the mapping and fencing of borders. This form of organization collectivized individuality into "national identity" and imposed a border-regime of rigorous entry restrictions at the turn of the twentieth century. For those outside what was once, for example the German Reich, acceptance of or submission to domestic labor provides an entry path into a labor market segment inside what is now the Global North. If the state-of-entry allows or even provides options beyond the limits of this segment, this often exploitative economic niche may be a first step towards other segments of the labor market, or to full membership in the receiving society. If no advance in the receiving/exploiting society is possible, such domestic-care work may still

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31 From 33.2 to 52.6 million, ILO, Domestic Workers across the World Global and Regional Statistics and the Extent of Legal Protection (Geneva, 2013), 24.
34 Ally, From Servants to Workers, 6.
35 A special group of "domestics," often employed by diplomatic personnel and well-to-do expats, have repeatedly made headlines as particularly exposed to mistreatment. They often have to follow their employers as undocumented migrants across borders and/or are tied to their employers through work and residence permits. In a way, they are bound laborers.
36 See the contribution of Sabrina Marchetti to this volume.
serve to improve family position in the society-of-origin via remittances. Entry-
plus-advance was the case for the Caribbean women in Canada from the late
1950s who deliberately selected an immigration society as destination. Advance
is not possible in states imposing a regime of labor rotation or permanent sta-
tus as "alien." Mere survival was the migrants' minimum goal and sending
remittances to those remaining behind is a step ahead, as in the case of
Bangladesh and civil-war-torn Somalia. This was the goal of European women
(and men) during the worldwide agricultural crisis of the 1880s when remit-
tances from North America made possible a slow winding down of marginal
peasant plots and family life at inhospitable home countries. Remittances, the
backward link, are matched to a forward one: migrant domestic workers' futures,
their plans and projects.

States in the Global North have encouraged employment of migrant domes-
tic workers even while constructing a Fortress Europe or an Iron-Concrete
Curtain between North and Central America. The privatization of care institu-
tions in European welfare states during the 1980s and 1990s and the ageing of
the population across the North have led to an increasing need and demand for care
domestic work and its concomitant commodification. Tax reductions and
subsidies in some states have led to emerging new markets for domestic "ser-
vice" and care work, sometimes called "personal service." While tax reductions
have been presented as a way of providing all social strata access to basic -
"affordable" — domestic service in some countries, the advantage accrues to new
groups of middle-class families. Tax reductions have been said to increase
acceptance of the sector and to limit illegal employment. In the case of Sweden,
tax reductions introduced in 2007 led to a rapid increase of households buying
these services, but illegal employment has hardly decreased. Rather the visible
problems with undocumented entry and illegal employment have led to forma-
tion of cleaning firms that employ cleaners both legally and illegally (veiled
through a system of subcontractors). Traditional face-to-face hiring has

25 (1998), 483; Ruth Lister et al., Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe. New Challenges
for Citizenship Research in Cross-national Context (Bristol 2007); Lise Widding Isaksen
(ed.), Global Care Work Gender and Migration in Nordic Societies (Lund, 2010); Ella Kvist,
Szebehely, "Ny trendet, gamla traditionen. Svensk Eldomsorg i europeisk perspektiv," in
Christina Florin and Christina Bergqvist (eds), Framtiden I samtidern — könsrelationer I
förändring Sverige och omvärlden (Stockholm, 2004).

39 Anna Gavanias and Darin Mattson, Bland Rolexklockor och smutsiga trosor. Om skatte-
reduktion och segmentering på den svenska jünstemarknaden (Stockholm, 2011), and Anna

become anonymous and the new economy of "service work" serves the inter-
ests of "clients" and "business" through temporary work agencies. The result is
a less personalized, even depersonalized work relationship and growing pre-
cariousness of employment. Unions have only just begun to address the problem
and new forms of resistance and organization are emerging on a global level.

Towards the International Domestic Workers Federation

"Getting from the 'kitchen table' to the international negotiating table does not
come out of the blue" was the poignant statement of the former coordinator of the
International Domestic Workers' Network, Karin Pape. It was a long strug-
gle that began with the informal networks around 1900 mentioned above.
Domestic workers' employment and working conditions differed widely
between national and sometimes even local contexts. Some organizations
emerged in the interwar period and the Ito discussed the regulation of domes-
tic work. Some built alliances with organizations outside the labor move-
ment, others had the support of unions, and again others were illegal. Most
were short-lived and the declaration of war by Japan in 1937 and Germany in
1939 interrupted any and all activities.

Recent developments show a wave of (re-)organizing domestic workers in
the Global South since the 1980s and in the Global North from the turn of the
twenty-first century. In Latin America, the first macro-regional organization for
domestic workers was set up in 1988. Domestic workers began to organize in
the 1980s in different regions of Africa, and the South African ANC government
was the first to recognize domestic workers as workers in its labor legislation of
1995. In Tanzania, a campaign against child domestic labor often employed in
hotels helped to get public attention for the rights of domestic workers. In Asia
an Asian domestic workers union was set up in 1989; while workers in India
had been organized with help from a Catholic missionary since 1985; those in
Indonesia followed in 2003 and a Nepalese domestic workers union was
founded in 2006. Caribbean, Latin American, and Asian domestic workers
and communities carried the activities north, and founded a domestic workers' association in New York in 2000. During the United Nations' Women's

Gavanias, Who Cleans the Welfare State? Migration, Informalization, Social Exclusion and
Domestic Services in Stockholm (Stockholm, 2010).
40 Celia Mather, 'Yes, we did it!' How the World's Domestic Workers Won Their International
conference in Beijing in 1995, domestic workers’ organizations from Latin America, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago and the Philippines campaigned for wages for housework. They formed an international network that was probably the most important vehicle to gain recognition as "workers." But lacking support from the labor movement and lacking resources the movement had to concentrate on activities on the local level.

In 2005, European domestic workers met for the first time at a conference hosted by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and organized by Dutch trade union federation (Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging, FNV) in close collaboration with the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PIC GM) and the Industrial Restructuring Education Network Europe (IRENE). When the first global conference of domestic workers followed in the Netherlands in 2006, 60 participants from across the world took the first important step towards building a global network that promoted the exchange of information. The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations (IUF), with a longstanding experience in organizing marginalized workers, provided this new network with an infrastructure, made it part of its organization, and supported domestic workers’ lobbying at the no. The network has since built alliances with migrant organizations and cooperates with groups outside the union movement.

In their contribution to this volume, Eileen Boris and Jennifer Fish recount that the demands of domestic workers have been on the international agenda since the 1920 and that, in 1948 the ILO postponed discussion of domestic work due to other urgent issues and resumed discussion only in 1963, but still without results. During the 1970s the ILO continued to investigate the working conditions of domestic workers. Boris and Fish emphasize that only in 2007, when the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and IUF contacted the ILO, actual steps were taken towards a convention. With the support of two organizations, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) and the ITR, the challenge of collecting relevant data on a global scale could be met.

This cooperation enabled the network to organize on a global scale as an International Domestic Workers’ Network and to successfully fight for the recognition of domestic workers at the ILO in 2011.

Implicit recognition of the contributions of domestic and care workers is manifest in the rapid growth of the labor market segment — by some 20 million in the decade-and-a-half before 2010. Employers clearly value their labor, if not necessarily by appropriate wages. In contrast, many economists and labor historians remain welded to the proposition that "production" of material goods creates "surplus value" for capital and capitalists while production of a healthy family is mere "reproduction" without value added. In this perspective raising a beam on a construction site is skilled productive work, raising a child in a home is unskilled reproductive activity in a private re-creational sphere.

In any time period and any part of the globe, however, the one constant is the centrality of women’s labor — physical, emotional, and spiritual — for societies and economies in local, regional, and state- or empire-wide contexts. In other words: there can be no productive work without reproductive work. The proposition buttressed as economic ideology, that reproductive labor is


41 Mather, "Yes, We Did It!", 3-4.
42 Ibid., 42-44. WIEGO had been working closely with a number of researchers all over the world and was able to publish reports.
43 Vicky Kanyoka, chair of the African network of domestic workers, reported about this cooperation during the ITH-conference in Linz in September 2013.
women's work and should be unpaid or poorly remunerated is useful for capital accumulation, for men, and for male-constructed nations. Analytically this is absurd — an absurdity that liberal and Marxist economics share — and the ideological differentiation between work and re-creation is a major hindrance for analyses. The fact that this women's (and men's) labor is physical, emotional, and spiritual, indicates a problem for both economics and old-style labor history as neither emotions nor spirituality are usually associated with work. Political economists have not integrated reproduction and production. Feminist and Subaltern Studies theories suggested a combination of an external and internal colonization approach — whole colonized states-populations and colonized women within any society. Transcultural Societal Studies have added to this 46 Work adds value, surplus value, both to material goods and to human lives. Children grow through parents' or nannies' care work, artisanal families achieve a living income through reproductive work, and investors receive value in return for their capital. The issue is not an absolute surplus of value added, but a relationship: Who benefits from the value added?

First, domestic work — in addition to the production of food and emotionally satisfying environments — has yielded and does yield employing elites and middle classes "social capital" in the sense that it enhanced their status. The "services" domestic workers provide for their masters and mistresses, such as food preparation and cleanliness, most certainly add value in terms of higher quality food and hygiene, leading to a higher quality of life and fewer diseases.

Second, especially in more recent years, but for elites throughout the ages, domestic workers have freed — usually female — members of these higher echelons in society from household labor either to fulfill their symbolic roles as mistress of the house or — as in the Global North in recent decades — to perform increasingly high-status work in the labor market. Southern migrant domestic workers — sometimes highly educated themselves — have contributed to the effective allocation of Northern women's human capital and its accumulation and thus are an asset to whole societies. Production in the private sphere of homes thus sustains societies' labor force outside the home.

Third, the total remittances generated by migrant domestic workers' savings of whatever surplus their scant remuneration provides, sustain their families in the society-of-origin and, whether in Mexico, the Philippines, India, or Bangladesh, sustain the nation's balance of payments. In 2012, foreign workers, according to figures provided by the World Bank, collectively sent us $350 billion to "low and middle income countries" out of a total of $478 billion.47 A large proportion of this comes from the growing numbers of domestic workers. For some families this provides housing and education for the children — both adding value. The mechanics of remitting foreign currency permits states (and elites) to skim off part of the value added both for investments, servicing of debts, and luxury consumption.48 In all of these ways, the social and economic "surplus value" of domestic work — whether measured directly or indirectly — is undeniable.48

Continuities, Changes and Ambiguities of Domestic Work

While many scholars and policy makers as well as the general public have seen the achievements of domestic workers as the result of the struggles in recent years and while some economists, social scientists, and historians have attempted to develop a comprehensive definition of work, the contributions in this volume show the continued need for more rights for domestic workers and increased recognition of their work since the turn to the twentieth century. National and international struggles of labor movements, new approaches by emerging welfare institutions have helped; the exit of women from this labor

46 Political economy as a field was pushed out of research agendas and academic institutions during the Cold War on the capitalist, free-market side and it was dogmatized on the socialist-communist side. For a first step toward a "Transcultural Societal Studies" see Dirk Hoerder, To Know Our Many Selves*: From the Study of Canada to Canadian Studies (Edmonton, 2010), Chapter 14.


market segment and their choice of occupations that provided more standard-ized rights and protection as well as better incomes, may also have played an important role. Some sources suggest that women activists in the Global North’s labor movements who organized female factory workers employed domestic workers in their homes, whom they tried to organize or supported the workers’ own networking and organization activities. This double role of labor activists, some of whom entered political office, as employers and as organizers of domestic workers may, on the other hand, have contributed to the somewhat ambiguous relationship between movement activists and the domestic workers’ demands for rights and recognition. Such ambiguity has also characterized the relationship between feminists and domestic workers.

Domestic and care work remains inextricably entwined with migration as hiring practices, remittances, and “global task chains” indicate. Though migration from rural to urban spaces has declined in some regions of the world, women migrants from urban, small-town, and agricultural regions with few job opportunities still dominate in domestic work in wealthier regions and societies. They leave families behind to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families. Often, they have to leave their own children in the care of others—a phenomenon that has been called the “Global Care Chain.” Before the changes of the 1980s it was usually young women without children who migrated. In addition to destinations in the Global North, migration is increasingly internal to and between many societies in the Global South—Southeast and South Asia, for example. Elites and the growing middle classes increasingly hire domestic workers, cooks, and nannies from the countryside or across the border. To spend time on their careers and with their loved ones, employer families outsource much of their care work at low wages to women who, in turn, have to outsource the care of their own children to family members in return for remittances.

To understand the continuities, changes, and ambiguities of domestic and care work involved, for example, in the transition from enslaved/adopted/live-in worker to employee of a subcontracting temporary work agency, case studies of specific societies and their legal-institutional frames are necessary. It is this “new economy” as well as women’s increased labor force participation, democratization and global entanglements that have slowly changed the relationship of “domestics” from servants to workers. But, in addition to benefits, costs are involved. How did change develop, how was it perceived?

Shuene Ally has studied the transition in South Africa. During the apartheid era, black women were forced for economic and racist reasons to leave their children in the countryside and go to work as domestics in the cities. After democratization, the new government introduced the most progressive domestic servant act of the time. However, although the act changed terms of employment from a personal relationship to regulated contract, the division of labor remained the same. It is still women with black skin doing the work, even though the new middle class employers of domestics for doing the housework have the same skin color. Thus, South African domestic workers have experienced two regimes: they worked as servants in the apartheid era and became both citizens and workers under the ANC government’s inclusion of domestic workers into the labor relations act. This has depersonalized the relationship between domestics and employers and many women now choose to work as live-outs rather than live-ins. The law also protects them against arbitrary dismissals. But, at the same time, many domestic workers complained that relationships were better before the act and refuse to even register as domestic workers. Once again, the ambivalence is rooted in the character of domestic work as intimate work. Domestic workers living at their employer’s house would have been the first to know about family secrets and habits. As Ally has shown, sitting down with the employer for a cup of tea in the morning gave them room to ask for an extra day of holidays to visit the family and children, to negotiate a loan to pay for the children’s education, or other benefits. This personal strategy to extract extra resources despite the unequal relationship between servant and mistress/master was lost with the depersonalization—which, however, the majority of South African workers prefer.

Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum have explored a similar development among Indian servants. Love and loyalty of servants in relation to their employers create mutual obligations and protective securities. These no longer exist in modern labor relations, but as Lokesh argues in her chapter in this volume domestic workers in Maharashtra are fighting to decrease the personal bond by organizing—they prefer to negotiate their and their employer’s interest from this more independent position. On the other hand, Latinas working as


52 Ally, From Servants to Workers, 7-10.

53 Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum, Cultures of Servitude: Modernity, Domesticity, and Class in India (Stanford, 2009).
domestics in Los Angeles almost demand a personal relationship. To understand such widely varying positions researchers need to investigate the power relationships that structure the everyday life of domestic workers and their space to maneuver.

Towards a Global History of Domestic and Care Workers — the Structure of This Study

The themes of domestic and care work as producing surplus value — whether economic, social, or cultural — and as involving both extreme exploitation in many cases as well as room for negotiation as well as the resulting struggles for recognition run through all of the chapters in this book. We begin with two comprehensive surveys of research and of the historical development of servile-service-remunerated household work and care giving. Raffaella Sarti (Chapter 2) provides an extensive historiographic perspective and its long tradition. Research has become more systematic since the 1960s, when social historians, family historians historical demographers, and (particularly since the 1970s) women's and gender historians entered the field. Sarti traces the scholarly impact of the assumption that domestic service (especially by live-in workers) would decline, or even disappear, because of household modernization, social progress, and development of the welfare state. The largely unexpected "revival" of paid domestic and care work since the 1980s and the importance of labor migration have prompted sociologists and other social scientists to focus on the subject, opening new opportunities for exchange between historians and social scientists. Sarti provides a review of the research at a global level, if with a focus on Europe and the (former) European colonies.

Chapter 3, by Dirk Hoerder, provides a broad overview of historical developments in domestic work worldwide since ancient Mesopotamia and Vedic India. Through space and time the migration of domestic workers, be it rural-urban, transnational, or intercontinental was central to the composition of the sector's labor force. While noting similarities in historic and present patterns of domestic work, the specificities of socio-economic frames and developments in different regions of the world, globalization notwithstanding, demand differentiated approaches. These many contingencies and regional variations notwithstanding, it is evident that researchers need to leave the entire dichotomy between productive and reproductive labor behind, and focus on the productive, skilled, and value-adding aspects comparable to any other type of (paid or unpaid) labor. Throughout the centuries, women workers — and in some periods men have actively struggled for working conditions as decent as possible under the circumstances.

The subsequent three parts of the volume reflect the themes of agency and emotions of workers, of entwined colonizer-subaltern labor regimes, and of the role of states and international organizations in framing, in the double meaning, and regulating domestic and care work. The brief introductions to each part highlight overarching themes and relate the different contributions' arguments to each other. The first part, "Combining Work and Emotions: Strategies, Agency, Self-Assertion," focuses on the actual experiences of domestic workers and the ways in which women (and men) coped with their migration, their working and living conditions, the emotional aspects of care work. When entering the households of others as workers, which power relations did they enter and submit to — or question and challenge? Because of the intricacies of domestic work, involving elements of professionalism and emotionality as well as exploitation and room to maneuver, work in the domestic sphere requires a far more complex analysis than work in factory or in offices, as the in-depth analyses in this part show. Defending one's own personal integrity was part of the negotiation, getting recognition for childcare — as equally or more skilled than stone-masonry, for example — another. Was raising a child or caring for an elderly person, as some "nannies" felt and articulated, not more important than factory work?

The second part, "Domestic Work in the Colonial Context: Race, Color, and Power in the Household," deals with domestic work and imperialism in the broad sense of the term. Not coincidentally, therefore, domestic workers in the us figure prominently in two chapters, whose authors deal with issues of imperialism either implicitly or explicitly. The other chapters deal with domestic work in the colonial or postcolonial settings of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European imperialism. In this context, several of the authors point to the long histories of the intimacies of working in colonizers' homes, for instance in South Africa and Southeast Asia. Combined, the chapters illustrate how gender, race/ethnicity, class and colonial connections have all played a constitutive role, although not always to the same degree, nor with similar historical outcomes.

The essays in the third part, "From Servitude to Domestic Service: The Role of International Bodies, States and Elites for the Changing Conditions in Domestic Work between the 18th and 20th Century," demonstrate the vast changes that have occurred in the conditions of domestic and care workers over the past century. However, national labor legislation in many countries refused to incorporate and regulate domestic and care work for a long time, despite several attempts by trade unionists and social reformers to include it.
Ostensibly, it was seen as part of the private sphere of the family and household into which state regulation should not intrude. While international organizations, most notably the ILO, have fought for protection for numerous occupational groups since the early twentieth century, it was only at the beginning of the twenty-first century that the ILO recognized domestic work as similar to all other kinds of work. The chapters in this part show how domestic workers associations and supportive interest groups have sought in different regions of the world to first get domestic work recognized as work and, then to achieve decent working conditions and protection.

 Whereas the editors of this collective volume cannot offer a complete history of domestic work worldwide and while each selection of themes and regions has its merits but may shortchange others, we do expect our combination of approaches to contribute to the global history of domestic work. Through this long-term perspective covering widely differing regions of the world, we show the persistent value of domestic work and the struggles of the workers over time and space to have their value as persons appreciated and respected. By emphasizing the specifics of domestic work, the essays enrich and broaden the scope of global labor historians in order to, finally, arrive at a truly comprehensive history of work.

CHAPTER 2
Historians, Social Scientists, Servants, and Domestic Workers: Fifty Years of Research on Domestic and Care Work
Ragaella Sarti

Introduction
This article provides an overview of the research by historians and social scientists on domestic service over the past fifty years, at times touching upon earlier research. It offers a global perspective, though the main focus is on research on Europe and, to a lesser extent, (former) European colonies. I will highlight those studies of domestic service which in my view have played a major role in stimulating further debate. Furthermore, I will illustrate the studies’ different approaches and results, as well as those issues that appear more fruitful for future developments in this area of enquiry in order to move towards a global history of domestic workers and caregivers.

For a long time, scholars assumed that domestic service (especially live-in) would decline or even disappear because of household modernization, social progress, and development of the welfare state. Although actually declining in certain phases, paid domestic and care work never completely disappeared; moreover, in the past three decades in many countries it has experienced a “revival.” I am interested in studying the forecasts of the disappearance of domestic service and paid domestic work, and in understanding why they have proven inadequate or wrong, for both scientific and political reasons. I believe that organizing work and services in order to reduce the numbers of domestic workers should still be a goal for policymakers.

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1 This survey is based on literature in Italian, English, French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese. It inevitably has some bias, therefore, due to my lack of knowledge of other languages. I generally use the word “servants” when I deal with a (rather) distant past, and the term “domestic workers” when I speak about more recent decades.
Historical research on domestic servants is not restricted to recent decades, as I will illustrate with three examples. In 1814, Abbé Grégoire, the former "constitutioal" priest who took part in the French Revolution and fought against slavery, published a well-researched book entitled De la domesticité chez les peuples anciens et modernes which described the transformation of domestic service over time and tried to show clear differences in the working conditions and legal position of servants in different countries, regions, and cities. The aim of the book was practical rather than theoretical: it sought to contribute to the formation of "good domestics." Later in the nineteenth century, other French scholars also focused on domestic service: often motivated by curiosity, they compared conditions for servants before and after the Revolution. Some idealized a past of presumed harmony between masters and servants (which was generally not the case); others had a more rigorous approach, such as, for instance, Albert Babeau.

The second example is Italian medieval and Renaissance cities, where domestic staff might include enslaved women (mainly from eastern Europe and central Asia). In the 1860s, serious studies on the subject, based on archival research, began to be published. That such slavery existed so late elicited surprise; the common opinion was that slavery had disappeared before the Renaissance. This hotly debated finding prompted a flow of studies which continues to the present day, and has gradually shifted later the "end" of (legal) slavery in Italy, to the nineteenth century. It has also contributed to the history of slavery in the Mediterranean, a field of burgeoning research.

The third example is the well-documented 1897 book Domestic Service, by Lucy Maynard Salmon (1853-1927), an American historian, professor at Vassar College, Democrat, and suffragist. The volume remained the most
important book on the subject until the 1970s-1980s, when studies by Katzman, Sutherland, Dudden, Salinger, and Palmer were published. Salmon interpreted domestic service as an aristocratic residue which perpetuated personal subordination and dependence and aimed to contribute to solving the "the great American question," i.e. the reciprocal dissatisfaction of servants and masters. Her book not only looked towards the past; it also described the present and provided suggestions for the future: the stigmatization of servants should be overcome; as many domestic chores as possible should be moved outside the domestic sphere; the work should be performed only on a strictly contractual basis; masters and servants should stop living under the same roof; both domestic and extra-domestic work should be more equally divided among men and women.

On the continent, public opinion partly envisaged an (idealized) good old servant, loyal and faithful to his or her masters. Through propaganda that exalted the value of domestic service and urged masters to adopt a paternalistic attitude towards servants, they hoped to revive this ideal. Since the problem

was to find domestics who were morally impeccable and good at their jobs, the drive for obedient and respectful servants often intermingled with efforts to "professionalize" domestic personnel. 

Many others, particularly those who believed that the shortage of servants was a consequence of backward working conditions within domestic service, dreamed of a better future. For instance, the German socialist leader August Bebel, in his extremely successful book *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (1879), suggested that private kitchens should be replaced by communal ones equipped with every kind of modern (electric) appliance to make work easier. Communal solutions should be adopted for washing and laundry, too. 

This radical revolution of the household would lead to the disappearance of both servant and mistress. 

Other authors had similar ideas. 

On the other side of the Atlantic, at the beginning of the twentieth century Christine Frederick, in a completely different but also extremely successful book, proposed a new, rationalized system of housekeeping based on the application of Taylorism to housework. Like many others, she too suggested that, to solve the servant problem, servants should no longer live with their employers. 

In summary, about a century ago the belief that traditional servants would disappear was quite widespread. It was shared by people who simply noticed, and often regretted, that hiring a (good) servant was becoming increasingly difficult; by people who thought that servants would be replaced by a new kind of domestic worker, more independent and similar to factory workers; and by people who pictured a completely new society without any kind of servants. The persistence of this idea in the succeeding years contributed to making the study of domestic service less interesting. The history of the lower classes would for several decades indeed mainly focus on the formation of the "modern" working class and the development of class consciousness. Servants remained in the shadows: they were employed in a sector that from the late eighteenth century had been increasingly considered unproductive; they were barely present on the political scene; and, to an increasing degree, they were women because of the growing feminization of domestic personnel, 

A transformation in the Twentieth Century 

Census data, despite its many limits and problems, indeed confirm that the percentage of domestic servants in the economically active population declined in several countries after having peaked in 1880-1881. 

Contemporaries thus had good reason to think that there was a crisis at the turn of the century. Yet between the 1920s and the 1930s this trend stopped or reversed in many European countries, in the us and even in post-revolutionary Russia. 

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16 According to Salmon, *Domestic Service*, 278-279, both in Europe and America women "prefer work in factories where the hours of work are definitely prescribed and evenings and Sundays are free; [...] in shops where their individual life is less under control [...] in hotels [...] since these give opportunity for specialized work, a life of variety and excitement, and larger wages in the form of fees; because they prefer short engagements with moderate wages in families; because the growing spirit of democracy rebels against the inferior social position accorded household employees, even to those whose work is rightly classed as skilled labor." On the different ways of interpreting the crisis, its reasons, and its possible solutions, see among others Zull, *Des Bild von Dienstmädelchen*, 52-198; Wierling *Mii then frrl al/es*, 183-222, 283-296; Reggiani, *Un problema tecnico a un problema morale; 362-367; Sarti, “Da serva a operaira 92-99. 


18 *Ibid., Ch. 27, Section 4* ("Umwandlung des hiesigen Leben"). 

19 See Muller, *Diensbare Geister*, 172-178, for debates at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century about the future development of households without servants. 


reversal resulted from the economic crisis and, in some countries, from specific policies aimed at placing unemployed women in domestic service and/or at expanding the domestic service sector? Nevertheless, the idea of a shortage of (good) domestics did not completely recede. Besides, neither advances in household technology nor people's diminishing need for personal help seemed to eliminate the need for servants. Some people, therefore, started to look for new solutions to the servant problem. One of them was Alva Myrdal in Sweden, who suggested that some domestic work should be changed into wage labor with the state as employer. In other words, she suggested resolving the servant problem by cultivating public welfare services.

After World War II, new public welfare services multiplied in several countries. They contributed to a new, significant fall in the number of domestic workers in Europe and in the United States. This strengthened the idea that domestic service would evaporate thanks to "progress," and reduced, for social scientists, the interest in studying it. Domestic servants became an object of investigation mainly for historians. However, who, however, began to study them with new curiosity thanks to the spread of social history, the history of the family, historical demography, and (particularly from the 1970s) women's and gender history.

26 "Domestic Service and European Identity, 277-278 (appendix); Sarti, "Domestic Service: Past and Present, 223, Table 1.
27 Nevertheless, Lucy Delap has recently shown that being a "modern" middle-class woman always implied, at least in Britain, having some domestic help; Lucy Delap, Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth-Century Britain (Oxford, 2014), 98-139.
28 Social scientists who focused on domestic service include George Joseph Stigler, future Nobel prize winner in economic science (1982) and author of Domestic Servants in the United States, 1800–1940 (New York, 1946); James H.S. Bossard, who in his very influential book The Sociology of Child Development (New York, 1948) briefly analysed the role of domestic servants (265-267); and Gretel Keller, Hausgehilfin und Hausflucht ein soziales Problem von gestern und heute (Dortmund, 1950). Some of them explicitly denounced its crisis; see e.g. Wilhelmi Aubert, "The Housemaid: An Occupational Role in Crisis; Acta Sociologica (1956), 149-158. In some countries, such as Spain, there was a certain interest in the legal evolution of domestic service. See, among others, María Dolores Galvaniato, "Notas para la historia del servicio doméstico," Revista del Trabajo, 8 (1946), 143-147; Alejandro M. Unsain, "Evolución del servicio doméstico," Revista del Trabajo 10 (1948), 16-20; Luis Joaquín, Pedregal, Evolución legal del servicio doméstico (estudio histórico-jurídico) (Seville, 1951).

Fifty Years of Research on Domestic Service

In 1954, Joseph Jean Hecht published an article on "Continentale and Colonial Servants in Eighteenth Century England," and, two years later, a book on The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England, which for several years was to remain the most comprehensive study on English middle- and upper-class domestic staff. The title and content of Hecht's article might suggest that historical studies on domestic service in Britain were going to take colonialism into account. Yet this was not the case: even Hecht's book did not deal with colonialism; nor did other studies focus on the issue — this aspect was taken up only very recently.

A few years later Philippe Ariès, in his very influential book, L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime, stressed the importance of domestic service for the transmission of knowledge and values from one generation to the next in medieval and early modern times. School played a limited role and apprenticeship was crucial. Apprentices lived with their masters, as did young aristocrats placed as pages in families more important than their own. This was one of the reasons why, in Ariés' view, the relationship between parents and children was rather cold. On one hand, Ariès' interpretation was criticized, but on the other, it inspired ample research on the history of the family, childhood, emotions, transmission of values and culture between generations, and also domestic service.
Several studies have focused, indeed, on the role of domestic servants (both children and adults) in appropriating the values and customs of the upper classes and spreading them among the lower classes, such as, for instance, the book by Daniel Roche on the *peuple de Paris* in the eighteenth century. In investigating emotions within the family, scholars have also, in later years, examined the emotional and cultural influence of servants, wet-nurses, nannies, and governesses on their masters' children. Some years after Aries' study, Peter Laslett published a book on preindustrial England entitled *The World We Have Lost*, in which he paid great attention to servants. A few years later, in 1969, analyzing servants, he concluded that 'the substantial proportion of persons who turn out to be living in the households of others, other than those into which they were born, looks to us like something of a sociological discovery.'

In 1965, another very influential essay was published by John Hajnal, who wrote that western Europe was characterized by a peculiar marriage pattern with a high proportion of single people and marriages at a late age. These two features reduced birth rates, contributing to a slowing in population growth. In Hajnal's view, this solution to population pressure was specific to western Europe. According to him, western Europeans married late because they had to acquire the ability and means to support a family before marrying. They often reached this goal by working as servants. Life-time single people were often servants, too. Service was thus at the very core of his theory. In the following years Hajnal, Laslett, and the scholars of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure further developed this model, going on to introduce the concept of life-cycle servants.

The homeostatic mechanism initially suggested by Hajnal has been shown to be rather effective in north-western and central Europe, but not in other parts of the continent, either in the east or in the south (in particular in the Mediterranean region). Nor was life-cycle service common everywhere in western Europe. However, this hypothesis contributed to a new approach. In

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the 1960s-1970s, changes in the family were mainly understood to be a consequence of industrialization, whereas the model proposed by Laslett and Hajnal stressed the importance of particular types of marriage and family for making national economic development possible. Though criticized, their theories sparked dozens of papers, essays and books both on Europe and on other countries such as, for instance, Japan. In central Japan, according to Mary Louise Powell Nagata, villagers usually married and established an independent household after their service period ended, at the age of about

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40 Mary Louise Powell Nagata, "One of the Family: Domestic Service in Early Modern Japan," The History of the Family 10 (2005), 355-375.


Further developments in the demographic approach to the history of the family include the article by David Reher on family ties. According to Reher, family ties today are stronger and public welfare is less advanced in those European regions, such as the Mediterranean, where life-cycle service was uncommon in the past, i.e. where young people generally did not leave the parental home at an early age, long before marrying. Reher's hypothesis has been criticized but, at the same time, has triggered much research. Moreover, it prompts us to analyze the relationship between private and public welfare.

In 1969 Abel Chatelain stressed the importance of domestic service in understanding urbanization, another issue that would attract much attention in subsequent years. Later, Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux would even suggest that the particular sex ratio of preindustrial cities, where women were twenty-three for women and twenty-eight for men. In other words, service in central Japan showed some similarities with European life-cycle service. The role of domestic service in striking a balance between population and resources does not seem to be unique to western Europe in preindustrial times.
generally the majority of the population, arose from the arrival of rural girls who worked as maids.

When Chatelain published his article, the role of domestic servants in migration was not obvious. As described by Karin Walser, the emphasis on factory work as a specific feature of female modernity had led to a focus on industrial work rather than on domestic service. The recognition that working in a traditional and "backward" sector such as domestic service had been the main avenue through which women of rural origin had become integrated into "modern" urban society and culture instigated an important change in the established interpretative framework. "Almost paradoxically it [domestic service] served as a means of the modernisation of rural labor and particularly of women," during industrialization and urbanization, Theresa McBride wrote in her landmark study The Domestic Revolution. The Modernisation of Household Service in England and France 1820--rg2o.45

Since the 1970s, many works have focused on domestic service as a crucial channel for both migration and social mobility (upwards and downwards), particularly for women.46 Significantly, however, many of the earlier studies, even those that stressed the importance of domestic service within urbanization and modernization processes concluded that modernization would eventually entail the servants' marginalization. "Domestic service has retreated to a marginal role in the economies of most western societies" was the conclusion of McBride's book.47 In the same work she also maintained that in both England and France "domestic service reached its peak during the early decades of industrialisation." World War I was assumed by many scholars to have been the point at which the history of domestic service in "developed countries" came to an end.

McBride's conclusion supported the extremely influential thesis of the economist Ester Boserup. Boserup, in Women's Role in Economic Development, published in 1970, argued that in countries in the first phases of economic development domestic tasks are performed mainly by family members, whereas during the intermediate stages the personal services sector grows very large. Urbanization creates a demand for service personnel in bars and restaurants as well as in the homes of the newly rich entrepreneurial class. At the beginning, this expansion of domestic service involves both men and women, but over time the sector becomes more feminized. In fully industrialized countries, many services are no longer performed at home and the number of domestic workers is low. It is because of this trend, Boserup said, that female servants are particularly numerous in Latin America. Her suggestion, though criticized as too narrowly conceived, sparked research in regions such as Latin America and Africa.49

In the 19705, the idea that modernization and "progress" would precipitate the disappearance of domestic service was well established, and in 1973 the sociologist Lewis A. Coser spoke of the transformation of domestic service as "obsolescence of an occupational role": "that role is dying," he maintained.50 The progress of feminism and historical research by feminist scholars inevitably inspired the study of domestic servants. A very important essay was published by Leonore Davidoff in 1974, "Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England," stressing the similarities between maids and mistresses, while also mentioning the limits to this parallelism.51 Thanks to feminism and the development of women's and gender history, an explosion of studies on domestic service took place. These studies focused on many different aspects,

44 Walser, Dienstmädchen, 7-8.
48 Ibid., 34.
traditional and new: the feminization of domestic service, the relationship of domestic service with people's life-cycle, marriage, and/or celibacy, its role in migration, urbanization, functioning of the labor market, and (upward or downward) social mobility, its connection with illegitimacy and prostitution, maid stereotypes, and their links to actual social practices (or their lack of such links), domestic service as a shelter occupation, or as a preparation for marriage, its role in leading to alienation and suicide; domestic chores performed by middle-class housewives as "ghosts," doing jobs that would formerly have been carried out by maids. Positive aspects of domestic service were also shown (mainly thanks to oral history and autobiography), such as the ability of the maid to improve her status by moving from the countryside to the city, to negotiate with mistresses, or to travel to distant places. Women's historians were generally well aware of the class divide between mistress and maid, yet they often also stressed the common female oppression in patriarchal households as well as the role of domestic service as "preparation" for marriage and motherhood. At the same time, they (especially European scholars) generally overlooked the issue of race, though they were sometimes conscious of its importance.

Black and other non-white feminists reacted both to the emphasis on the common destiny of maids and mistresses and/or to the lack of attention to Lombardi and Flores Reggiani, "Da assistita a serva: Circuit/ di reclutamento delle serve attraverso le istituzioni assistenziali (Firenze-Milano, XVII XVIII sec.)," in Simonetta Cavaciocchi (ed.), Istituto Internazionale di Storico Economica "F. Datini," La donna nelle economia, sec. XVIII (Florence, 1990), 301-319; Angela Groppi, I conservatori della virtù: Donne recluse nella Roma del Papato (Rome [etc.], 1994), 166-173; Shurlee Swain, "Maids and Mothers: Domestic Servants and Illegitimacy in 19th-Century Australia," The History of the Family 10 (2005), 461-471.

See e.g. Wierling, Mädchen für alles, 14-15, for instance, contested the idea put forward by Rolf Engelsing that domestic work was a traditional and declining occupation: from women's point of view, it was an expanding one, and had new features in comparison with the past. For Engelsing's interpretation, see Rolf Engelsing, "Das hilfliche Personal in der Epoche der Industrierung, Jahrbuch für Sozialwissenschaft 20 (1969), 84-12a, republished in a longer version in Rolf Engelsing, Zur Sozialgeschichte deutscher Mittelstand Untersuchungen (Göttingen, 1973), 224-261. See also Walser, Dienstmädchen, 7-8.

Almost all the books and articles on domestic service in the eighteenth and nineteenth century analyze or at least mention the issue of feminization.


See e.g. McBride, The Domestic Revolution, 9, 82-98; Carmen Sarasúa, Criados, nodrizes y arnos: El servicio doméstico en la formación del mercado de trabajo madrileño, 1758-1868 (Madrid, 1994).


Fraïsse, Femmes toutes mains: Martin-Fugier, La place des bonnes, u; Fraïsse, Femmes toutes mains, 14; Walser, Dienstmädchen, 131-133.

See e.g. Wierling, Mädchen für apes: Angiolina Arra, "Nei carattere scortese, nel comportamento impertinente e sbaglia. Racconti di serve telesche nell'Ottocento," in Angiolina Arra and Maria Teresa Chialant (eds), Il racconto delle donne: Voci autobiografiche figure (Naples [etc.], 1990), n-26.


race. This was especially the case in the us, where race historically played a pivotal role in shaping the social destiny of people and strongly affected domestic service. Prepared by earlier studies, the article by E. Nakano Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Work," as well as the book by Mary Romero, Maid in the usA, both published in 1992, have been particularly influential.69

The issue of race and ethnicity has become central in those studies that focus on domestic service in colonial or former colonial contexts, which have recently attracted increasing attention.70 Colonial domination and its legacy often actually entailed (and still entail) the employment of non-white servants by white (colonial) employers,71 sharpening the hierarchy typical of the master/servant relationship.72 Colonizers, on the other hand, often viewed black slaves and native non-white indigenous servants with suspicion because they could have a very "negative" and contaminating influence on their masters, and especially, on their masters' children, as Ann Stoler has suggested in her very important work. Such an influence might indeed prevent the development of those children's cultural identity as "white" rulers; therefore the colonizers felt it should be avoided or at least limited. At the same time, however, native servants might appear fascinating, and emotional bonds could (and actually did) develop between them and their white masters (both children and adults).73 The issue of race and ethnicity was also very pressing because of the Importing" of white servants in several colonial contexts such as Canada and Australia in order to increase the white population and spread the colonizers' culture.74 At the same time, local native elites in colonized countries might be "interested" in employing white servants and goyernes who could teach the rulers' manners and language to their children.

Books and articles on Africa and Asia also illustrate different aspects of the complex intermingling of race, gender, and colonial rule. In many Asian and African contexts (unlike in Europe, the us, and Latin America), in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries male domestics were numerous. Scholars who have focused on local male servants employed by white people in countries such as Zambia, India, and Malaysia, but also Australia75 have shown that they were...
subject to several forms of de-virilization and inferiorization: male servants were culturally constructed and treated as "boys" even when they were adult.\textsuperscript{77}

Karen Tranberg Hansen's book on domestic service in Zambia, published in 1989, was important not only because of its focus on male domesticics, but also because of its contribution to the history of domestic service worldwide. Hansen noted that:

\[\ldots\] the Zambian case is but a variation on the story of domestic labor which has no final, or single, conclusion, for it is still unfolding. Domestic service is not an archaic remnant of feudal practices persisting only in remote corners of the twentieth-century world. It represents a labor process that takes many different forms, and it employs growing, not decreasing numbers of workers in an advanced capitalist economy such as that of the United States today.

While reviewing Hansen's volume and three others, Louise Tilly concluded in 1991 that the books and essays under scrutiny effectively demolished "any notion that there is a simple inverse correlation between development and the proportion of women workers in domestic service, as Boserup suggested." "Rather than a simple linear process at the national level, development is a world-level process, in which economic inequality between and within national states is a critical factor."\textsuperscript{79}

In the 1980s and the 1990s, scholars increasingly questioned the idea that industrialization would bring about the retreat of domestic service.\textsuperscript{80} As early as 1984 Saskia Sassen had described the expanding flow, towards the us, of Third World women who would be employed in domestic service and in the informal sector, as well as the expansion of services and informal activities in the so-called global cities.\textsuperscript{81} In 1987, Sassen and Alejandro Fortes went on to question the theories according to which widespread informal economic sectors were a feature of Third World economies and were destined to wither away thanks to modern, industry-led growth. They presented evidence that these activities were not waning in industrializing countries either, and that they were continuing or even experiencing a revival in the advanced economies (speaking of "apparent revival")\textsuperscript{82} A few years later, in 1994, two geographers, Niki Gregson and Michelle Lowe, in their book \textit{Servicing the Middle Classes}, more overtly "announced" the "resurgence of paid domestic work" in Britain.\textsuperscript{83} Even though they were not the first to notice the phenomenon, is the case": fewer workers "can still serve more households than ever before"; they are less likely to be enumerated in the census; in the us "a sizeable proportion of the illegal immigrants from Latin America and the West Indies hide out as unreported domestic servants"; David Chaplin, "Domestic Service and Industrialization," \textit{Comparative Studies in Sociology} 1 (1978), 97-127,105-106,123-124.


\text{83}\] Nicky Gregson and Michelle Lowe, \textit{Servicing the Middle Classes: Class, Gender and Waged Domestic Labour in Contemporary Britain} (London [etc.], 1994 4.

\[\text{84}\] In Italy, for instance, as far back as 1977 the sociologist Olga Turrini in \textit{Le Casalinghe di riserva: Lavoratrici domestiche e famiglie borghesi} (Rome,1977), 34, had noted that domestic workers were not disappearing, as some thought, and she emphasized the growing presence of foreigners in the sector. In 1991, John Clarke in \textit{New Times and Old Enemies: Essays on Cultural Studies and America} (New York, 1391),174, highlighted the fact that in the us the growing female presence in the labor market was often limited to marginal
their book was particularly influential. In the following years similar statements were made in other studies too.88

The year before, in 1993, the sociologist Bridget Anderson had published a book on those whom she called "Britain's secret slaves," i.e. overseas domestic workers. The publishers of the book were Anti-Slavery International, an organization founded in 1839 to work against slavery, and Kalayaan, a charity and company established in 1987 to provide advice, advocacy, and support services in the IT lc for migrant domestic workers.89 In 1994, the French journalist Dominique Torrès created the Comité contre l'esclavage moderne (Committee against modern slavery), and in 1996 she published a volume entitled Esclaves: 200 millions d'esclaves aujourd'hui denouncing the presence of "modern" slaves, often employed in domestic service.87

Many reports, books and articles focusing on modern slavery have started to appear. The uncovering of "modern slaves" and "modern slavery" has been particularly shocking since modernization had long been conceived as a process that would spread contractual (wage) labor. The definition of "modern" or "new" slavery addresses a complex phenomenon partially different from most forms of slavery in the past. A major difference is that in the past masters generally had legal rights over their slaves, while this is not the case with "modern" slavery, because legal slavery has been abolished all over the world.89 Exploitation and violence are instead common features of "old" and "new" slavery. So, while at the beginning of the twentieth century many people expected that domestic service would (soon) disappear, by the end of the century not only had there been a revival of paid domestic work but new forms of domestic slavery were also being denounced.

As mentioned above, domestic work in Europe and the us, particularly after World War II, had increasingly become a research field for historians rather than for sociologists, economists, anthropologists, etc. For several decades, social sectors, above all the service sector, where a 'revival of domestic service' could be noted. When Gregson and Lowe’s book (n.83) was published, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo also spoke of resurgence in paid domestic work in the us: "Regulating the Unregulated: Domestic Workers' Social Networks: Special Issue on Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America,' Social Problems 41 (1994), 50–64. The same year, the Italian publisher Manifestolibri published a booklet entitled, significantly, Nuove servitù [New Servitudes]. Among the essays, that by André Gorz on the 'new servants" (which built on his previous work) also spoke explicitly of the (growing) presence of domestic workers: "Perché la società del lavoro salariato ha bisogno di nuovi servi?" in Marco Bascetta et al, Nuove servitù (Rome, 1994), 61–70.

For instance Simone Odero, Die heimliche Rückkehr der Dienstmädchen: Bezahlte Arbeit im privaten Haushalt (Opladen, 2000); Francois-Xavier Devetter and Sandrine Rousseau, Du balai: Essai sur le ménage él domicile et le retour de la domesticité (Ivry-sur-Seine, sou).


The Parliamentary Assembly is dismayed that slavery continues to exist in Europe in the 21st century. Although, officially, slavery was abolished over 150 years ago, thousands of people are still held as slaves in Europe, treated as objects, humiliated and abused. Modern slaves, like their counterparts of old, are forced to work (through mental or physical threat) with no or little financial reward. They are physically constrained or have other limits placed on their freedom of movement and are treated in a degrading and inhumane manner; Giuseppe Gaburro, Report on Domestic Slavery: Servitude, Au Pairs and Mail-OrderBrides, Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 2003) doc. 10.144.
scientists almost ignored it. The (largely unexpected) "revival" of paid domestic and care work in the past three decades has prompted sociologists and other social scientists to focus on the issue, paying attention to its global dimension; to its relationship with the difficulties of welfare states; to its connection with the (growing) economic and demographic inequalities between the global north and the global south, and with the crisis of former communist countries in eastern Europe; to its role within international migration, human trafficking, and the growth of "modern" slavery; to the economic importance of remittances; to the spread of global care chains; to migration policies and the rights of migrants employed in domestic work; to the links between former colonies and colonizer countries; to racialization and ethnicization processes; to the segregation of the labor market and the evolution of ethnic niches; to citizenship and rights; to unions and organizations of domestic workers; to policies to fight unemployment through the expansion of domestic and personal services; to new connections between private and public services; to the very identities and sociological profiles of domestic workers as far as gender, age, marital status, education, and skills are concerned; to their movements in and out of domestic work; to social mobility (upwards and downwards); to the features of families having recourse to domestic help; to the relationship of domestic workers both with their own families and with those of their employers; to cultural exchanges within the private household; and many other specific aspects. Hundreds of articles and books have been (and continue to be) published (see Figure 2.1).93 New concepts and categories such as transnational motherhood,91 global care chains,92...
Possibly the most influential book in this field is Rhacel Parrenas's *Servants of Globalization*, which focuses on domestic workers from the Philippines in Rome and Los Angeles. Italy has rapidly changed from an emigration country to an immigration one, and has been characterized by limited welfare provision associated with growing female employment, by a failure to redistribute domestic tasks between men and women, and by a rapidly ageing population. Mainly thanks to this book and another important one, Jacqueline Andall's *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service: The Politics of Black Women in Italy*, the Italian case has become almost a paradigm of the possible consequences of new worldwide inequalities and new strategies of survival based on the exportation/importation of care and global care chains.  

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98 For instance, Whisson and Weil, *Domestic Servants; Rutˆ Garcia, Simplemente explotadas.


97 In the 19705-19805, as previously mentioned, domestic service was almost ignored by sociologists and other social scientists focusing on Europe and the us. Instead, it was investigated by some scholars who conducted research on Latin America, Africa and Asia. Here, as had been the case in Europe and the vs in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, there was some dialogue between historians, sociologists, and social scientists. Furthermore, a knowledge of history was considered necessary in order to change or improve domestic workers' conditions in the present (through, for instance, new organizations and unions), and there were also connections between scholars and activists.
historians, as well as between scholars and activists worldwide. Some arenas for discussion have developed. Seminars, workshops, sessions of congresses, and conferences, both at national and international level, have offered opportunities for meeting and exchange. Some international meetings especially deserve to be mentioned.100

The round table "La Phénomène de la Domesticité en Europe, XVIe XXe centuries," organized in Prague in 1996 by Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux and Ludmila Fialová, though mainly involving demographers and historians and focusing on Europe, was possibly the starting point of networking activity that in the succeeding years would link scholars with different backgrounds and research interests, and from many different countries and continents, as well as some unionists and activists.101 In particular, it was the origin of one big network, the Servant Project, funded by the European Commission, which was to connect some twenty European universities and research centers and to organize five main conferences and some minor meetings between 2002 and 2004, with the participation of about eighty scholars.102 Among the participants in the network were Regina Schulte and Pothiti Hantzaroula, who in 2000 had organized the workshop "Narratives of the Servant" at the European University Institute in Florence in 2000.103 A preliminary meeting of participants in the Servant Project was held in Brussels, during the conference, "Bonnes pour le service. Déclin, occupation, réinscription," organized by Gisèle Krief and Jean-Claude Casanova in 2001.

100 I list only international conferences where both historians and social scientists were present. I do not list sessions and panel in congresses, which are too numerous to be mentioned.
101 Fauve-Chamoux and Fialová, Le phénomène de la domesticité.
102 The application for the 'Servant Project' was prepared by Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, Raffaella Sarti, Suzy Pasleau, and Isabelle Schopp. The official title of the project was "The Socio-Economic Role of Domestic Service as a Factor of European Identity." See Fauve-Chamoux (ed.), Domestic Service and the Formation of European Identity: Pasleau and Schopp, with Sarti, Proceedings of the Servant Project. L. "Servants and Changes in Mentality, 16th-20th Centuries" (Florence, 14-16 February 2002); II: "Domestic Service and the Emergence of a New Conception of Labour in Europe" (Oslo, 13-15 June 2002); III: "Domestic Service and the Evolution of the Law" (Barcelona, 12 a.5 December 2002); IV: "Domestic Service as a Factor of Social Revival in Europe" (Essex, 8-10 May 2003); V: "The Modelization of Domestic Service" (Munich, 8-9 September 2003). For the conclusion of the project see Sarti, "Conclusion: Domestic Service and European Identity."
Among the conferences that have been held outside Europe, it seems to me that the conference on "Intimate Labors," in Santa Barbara, California, the proceedings of which have been published by Eileen Boris and Rhael Parrenas, was particularly productive of exchanges, while the conference held in Newcastle (Australia) by Victoria Haskins in 2008 addressed the crucial issue of "Colonization and Domestic Service," an international workshop with the participation of scholars looking at the idea of the servant from different perspectives, entitled "In Pursuit of Invisible Forces: Servants in History and Today," was organized in 2009 at the Humanities Center at Harvard University by Markus Krajewski.

Exchanges among scholars with different backgrounds are not always easy, but they are necessary if we want to understand what is really new with "new" domestic work and what is actually a "resurgence" or a "revival" of "old" characteristics. For instance, the presence of international migrant domestic workers, male and female, is not a modern novelty, even though the phenomenon of international migration of domestic workers has by now probably reached unprecedented levels. In several contexts, the growth of "new" domestic work has involved the expansion of arrangements that were long considered "old," "traditional," and not appropriate in "modern" societies, such as, in particular, the co-residence of employers and employees under the same roof. A point in case here is gender, which has played such an important role in research on domestic service. As previously mentioned, feminization of domestic staff was often considered a feature of the stages before the (alleged) final phase in the evolution of domestic service, i.e. its disappearance. A feminization of domestic personnel took place, indeed, in many different countries, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Significantly,
however, in recent decades paid domestic work has experienced not only a revival (instead of a decline) but also, in some contexts, a (slight) re-masculinization.

Obviously, strengthening the dialogue between historians and social scientists does not simply mean supplying scholars working on the present with information and data on the events of the past; it also (and more fruitfully) means developing new interpretative frameworks after the rejection of the old paradigms that have proven limited or wrong. "Throughout the twentieth century, domestic service had a compelling presence in British economic, social, and cultural life," Lucy Delap recently argued, moving away from previous interpretations of the history of domestic service in twentieth-century Britain, which considered it to be a declining phenomenon. However we view her interpretation (praising or criticizing it), it constitutes an interesting example of changing paradigms.

Conclusion: Towards a Global History of Domestic Service

As I have shown, a huge amount of research has been done on the history of domestic service in many different places and periods. Certainly, there still are contexts for which research (or at least research accessible to scholars with knowledge of western European languages only) seems to be limited, such as, for instance, Russia (where domestic workers did not disappear after the Russian Revolution), and the former European socialist countries, or China. However, those studies already available, as well as the many others under way, constitute a good starting point for a new global history of domestic service. This also implies, for the future, a discussion of what global history could, or should, mean in relation to domestic service? Could or should a new specific theoretical framework be developed?

The answer cannot be simple, particularly if we consider that, in the case of domestic service, comparison over time and place raises very serious methodological problems. Domestic service has always been a very difficult research subject because its boundaries are not well defined. Yet the broadening of the research field and arena for comparisons to a global level sharpens the problem and constitutes a challenge for the whole field.

A century ago, some historical studies had been written to contribute to a better future: a future without any kind of servants or, at least, with domestic workers enjoying dignity and rights. Instead, today many domestic workers still suffer because of stigmatization, poor working conditions, low salaries, a lack of dignity and rights, and even worse. It was only in zon that the ILO (International Labor Organization) eventually approved Convention 189 on

115 Torians, Social Scientists, Servants


119 For some efforts in this direction see, for instance, Moya, "Domestic Service in a Global Perspective"; Sarti, "The Globalisation of Domestic Service."

120 See, for instance, the discussion of the meaning of global history of labor by Marcel van der Linden, Workers of the World Essays toward a Global Labor History (Leiden, 2008), 6-13. Here he puts forward a series (provisional) definitions and research questions which can also serve as guide for discussions among scholars working on domestic service.

decent work for domestic workers, a success on the one hand, a sad confirmation of the persistence of bad working and living conditions for domestic workers on the other. Unfortunately, there is still a need for such a convention; combating the lack of rights and dignity is still on the agenda 123. Collaborations between scholars and activists can, one hopes, contribute to overcoming the current situation. Historical research has shown that servants and domestic workers have been fighting for their rights for at least a couple of centuries. Formal recognition of rights generally arrived (where it has in fact arrived) 124 later than for many other workers; at the same time, when formal rights were introduced, they often were, and still are, disregarded or have not always entailed real empowerment of domestic workers 125.

"Domestic work is work. Domestic workers are, like other workers, entitled to decent work for domestic workers, a success on the one hand, a sad confirmation of the persistence of bad working and living conditions for domestic workers on the other. Unfortunately, there is still a need for such a convention; combating the lack of rights and dignity is still on the agenda 123. Collaborations between scholars and activists can, one hopes, contribute to overcoming the current situation. Historical research has shown that servants and domestic workers have been fighting for their rights for at least a couple of centuries. Formal recognition of rights generally arrived (where it has in fact arrived) 124 later than for many other workers; at the same time, when formal rights were introduced, they often were, and still are, disregarded or have not always entailed real empowerment of domestic workers 125.

"Domestic work is work. Domestic workers are, like other workers, entitled to decent work," a brochure of the ILO maintains, while describing Convention 189.126 More than two hundred years ago, domestiques and other persons claiming rights for domestics during the French Revolution also argued that they were workers. 127 why is there still a need today to make the argument that domestic workers are workers? Some scholars suggest that this has to do with

122 See for instance "Pétition des domestiques (28 August 1792)," in Archives Parlementaires de 1787-1795: Recueil complet des débats législatifs et politiques des Chambres françaises; Première série 1787-1795 (Paris, 1867), L, 671-672. See Sarti, Who are Servants? 18-26; Raffaella Sarti, "Freedom and Citizenship? The Legal Status of Servants and Domestic Workers in a Comparative Perspective (16th-20th Centuries)," in Pasleau, Schopp, and Sarti, Collaborations between Scholars and Activists can, one hopes, contribute to combating the lack of rights and dignity is still on the agenda 123. Collaborations between scholars and activists can, one hopes, contribute to overcoming the current situation. Historical research has shown that servants and domestic workers have been fighting for their rights for at least a couple of centuries. Formal recognition of rights generally arrived (where it has in fact arrived) 124 later than for many other workers; at the same time, when formal rights were introduced, they often were, and still are, disregarded or have not always entailed real empowerment of domestic workers 125.

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128 See e.g. Sarti, "Freedom and Citizenship?"; Sarti, "Conclusion: Domestic Service and European Identity," 242-247 with further references.


130 Gutiérrez-Rodriguez, Migration, Domestic Work and Affect, 148-16g; she comments, "Crevizing human rights [...] evokes a cosmological perception of rights, one that attaches rights not to a single individual or subject, but to the relationship of this individual or subject to others and his/her environment. From this angle, human rights cannot depart from the separation between the Self and the Other or the Human and the Environment. Rather, it engages with an ethics of relationality and transversality [...]. Thus, framing domestic workers' rights from the perspective of creolizing human rights entails more than just fighting for fair working conditions or professionalization of domestic work. Rather, it interconnects domestic work as affective labor to a cosmological perspective, uncovering it as the main source for the production and maintenance of human vitality, the sustenance of 'perpetual life'. Further, it urges us to locate this labor within a collective framework of sustainability and transversal conviviality, departing from a decolonial ethics of affects" (164).

131 Pipemo and Tognetti Bordogna (eds), Welfare transnazionale.
the elaboration of new interpretations and new tools, possibly contributing to a more just future.\textsuperscript{132} What is needed is a global history of domestic service and domestic work, because domestic work had a global dimension in the past and possibly has even more of one today.

At the same time, the once common forecasts of, and hopes for, the disappearance of domestic service and (even) paid domestic work should not be forgotten. As mentioned, I am interested in studying them and in understanding why they have proven inadequate or wrong for both scientific and political reasons. In my view, the question formulated by Joan Tronto years ago, "Are there alternatives to hiring domestic servants?" is still relevant and should be addressed by the scholars involved. Do we still want to contribute to giving a positive answer to it?\textsuperscript{133}

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\textsuperscript{132} The issue of a lack of equality is at the centre of the most recent issue of the \textit{Revista de Estudios Sociales}: Lorena Poblete and Ania Tizziani (eds), "Servicio doméstico y desigualdad social," \textit{Revista de Estudios Sociales} 45 (2013).
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CHAPTER 3

Historical Perspectives on Domestic and Care-Giving Workers’ Migrations: A Global Approach

\textit{Dirk Hoerder}

I am not beautiful,/Yet, I am the most wanted woman.
I am not rich,/Yet, I am worth my weight in gold.
I might be dull, stupid,/Dirty and mean,
Yet, all doors are open for me./I am a welcome guest.
All of the elite compete for me.
I am a maid.

(\textit{Finnish women in North America, 1835})\textsuperscript{1}

Young talented Filipina

(\textit{T-shirt imprint of a domestic worker, Hong Kong, 2005})\textsuperscript{2}

The present debates on a "feminization" of migration suggest that women’s mobility is a recent phenomenon. Similarly, feminist and sociological concern and research about “domestic workers” — in household chores, skilled household labor, and care-giving emotional labor — often assume a development beginning in the nineteenth century and changing under the impact of the present phase of globalization. However, service labor, as archeologists note, may be traced back to urbanization thousands of years ago. Depending on period and society, household workers could be enslaved, bound contractually for years, unpaid dependent kin, waged live-in or commuting workers, or casual labor. This makes any survey difficult, since normatively and, in most countries, legally, modern household labor is waged work. In the theoretical considerations I will primarily refer to waged labor, in the historical survey I will deal with the interlacing of bondage and remuneration. I will, first, briefly

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\textsuperscript{2} Photographed by Christiane Harzig, September 2003.
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point to recent research on gender ratios in migration from the nineteenth century to the present for those regions of the world for which data are available. I will then note the connection between urbanization and specialized service labor. In the main historical survey part, I will summarize the development of migration of household and care-giving workers for selected major regions of the world to the Depression of the 1930s or, when changes in patterns of service labor suggest, to the decolonization in the 1950s. In conclusion, I will discuss some research issues raised by the studies on specific regions as well as from specific perspectives.

Dealing with the same issues but analyzing "feminization" by gender, migration, and ethnic niches, Jose Moya has recently provided a major synthesis. He criticizes the widespread assumption that industrialization provided jobs primarily for men — after all, factory production began in textiles — and he discusses strategies developed in ethno-cultural contexts. Meticulously summarizing the share of women in domestic service he documents a feminization, with regional variations, in the nineteenth century and asks why this is part of the route to modernity. He notes the shift from paternalist inclusion into households to waged employees and, focusing on transnational migrants, argues that for some groups domestic labor, for cultural reasons, became the preferred labor market segment for women and, depending on legal and economic frames, for whole families.

In the present, whole state apparatuses re-conceptualize themselves from administrative or ruling institutions protecting — or in charge of — a country's population to export organizations of labor and, in particular, of laboring women. The Philippine and Bangladeshi states, for example, set quotas for out-migrating women (and men) per year according to the need for their remittances to balance the deficits of external trade and state debt obligations. Other (nation-) states import household and care-giving workers but do not cover them by (protective) labor legislation. In the case of "domestic work" this creates a layer of residents with minor rights and thus undermines their very constitutional basis. The migrants themselves make their decisions within the framework of family economies and hierarchies, regional economic constraints, the international visa regime, and job opportunities — filtered by information flows and networks of support.

Research on domestic and, even more so, on care-giving labor began late and was undertaken to a very large extent by women scholars, as Raffaella Sarti has outlined the preceding chapter. Worldwide, a very few studies appeared in the 1960s in English, French, or German, while interest increased considerably in the 1980s and has grown rapidly since the 1990s. Most of this research focused on European, North American and Latin American societies. Usually, and for good reasons, historical studies on Africa address rights-in-persons slavery and bondage. Studies on past domestic service in Asian societies are still few. Taken together they indicate the connections between women's status and gender ascriptions in (macro-)regional cultural regimes and discourses.

Sarti provides an assessment of the thematic development of the often sociological research on domestic and care-giving labor in the present. Historians at first focused on the juxtaposition of life "upstairs-downstairs" or "below stairs" and, in North America, on skin color as a marker. Historically, the label 'domestic work" included artisanal production in family workshops. In the present, car giving and emotional labor in care facilities play an increasing role. In addition analyses of the relationship between acquisition of colonies and service labor for colonizers as well as core-colony-core ex- or re-imported labor relations and control have provided valuable insights. The emphasis on "exploitation" in both labor and in women's historiography is justified while an emphasis on "victimization" of domestics often overlooks women's agency and, in the case of migrants, their position in the society and family of origin. Departure may in itself be liberating from extremely constraining role assignments or individually abusive families. A discussion of some of the research issues and controversies about approaches and interpretations will conclude this essay.

Women's Migrations: The Data and the Conceptualization of Work

In the peculiar frame of nation-state structures and discourses the absence of women from statistics and historical memory is purposefully built-in: Nation-state ideology is male-conceptualized and, until the recent past, institutions were run and data collected by men: They often did not differentiate by sex or labeled women as "dependents" of men. In migration, labor as well as most other statistics, bureaucrats did not view women as individuals. The conceptualization and ideologization of the male nation-state is a nineteenth-century phenomenon undergirded by twentieth-century male scholars. Changes come

3 This survey is based on my own research on global migrations as well as on publications and research notes of the late Christiane Harzig. See also the recent European Servant Project, <http://wwwuniurb.it/Servantproject/>, discussed in Chapter a of this volume: Isabelle Schopp, Suzy Pasleau, and Raffaella Sarti (eds), Proceedings of the Servant Project, 5 vols (Liège, 2005).

only slowly. As late as the iggos, decades after the admission of women into academic life and the development of women's studies and gendered research, a United Nations Expert Group had to criticize the fact that women were frequently still labeled "associational migrants, i.e. moving as passive companions of other family members."6

Careful scrutiny of research and statistics from the mid-nineteenth century onwards indicates, however, that the data on migrating and emigrating women are no as inadequate as has been assumed. Using the Habsburg Empire as a case in point, Sylvia Hahn has pointed out that regional and local data in contrast to national statistics include all women, men, and children — and under the institution of Heimatrecht (the right to community support in case of need), they provide information on women's migration. They also indicate that women were breadwinners.7 On a European scale, Marlou Schrover has gone back to the massive statistical and gendered compilation of Willcox and Ferenczi (1929).8 She demonstrates that intra-European migrations, with some variations, involved approximately equal shares of men and women. On the global level, Katharine M. Donato and Donna Gabaccia with cooperating scholars have systematized the data available and have summarized the changes in gender ratios among international migrants, 1820-1930.9 For migration since 1960


7 Sylvia Hahn, Migration — Arbeit — Geschlecht Arbeitsmigration in Mitteleuropa vom 77. bis zum Beginn des 2o.Jahrhunderts (GBitingen, 2008), 18, 32-33, 157-244.

8 Marlou Schrover, "Feminisation and Problematisation of Migration: Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Dirk Hoerder and Amaju jIt Kaur (eds), Proletarian and Gendered Mass Migrations: A Global Perspective on Continuities and Discontinuities from the ight to the 21st Centuries (Leiden, 2013), 103-131.

9 Katharine M. Donato and Donna Gabaccia (eds), "Gender Ratios and International Migration," topical section, Social Science History 36 (Summer 2012), 191-274, with contributions by Elizabeth Zanoni, J. Trent Alexander, and Annemarie Steldi, Johanna Leinonen.


1a At many critical junctures in a society's development women are blamed by men: the feminization of consumption, of school teaching, of women's competition in the labor market in the West. In late 17th-century China, the drive to bring about a moral regeneration under the early Ch'ing seemingly targeted women with Neo-Confucians blaming all social evils on them.

iz Interview of the author with Jean Burnet, 9 Nov. 2000, York University, Glendon College, Toronto.
receiving society's entry regulations — where households may only hire certain categories of women or states only grant visas for care-giving-domestic work. The women migrants' goal is, minimally, to sustain themselves, preferably to use their capabilities, their human capital, for their own life projects and, if they have families, for the benefit of the family members remaining behind by remitting part of their wages.

Migration by rural women into service was often short-distance and, as male commentators and scholars posited, within the same cultural sphere. However, spatially and socially the women had barriers to overcome, social borderlines to cross: What did it mean for young rural or lower-class women to cross the boundaries to middle-class urban ways of life — to change position from being a member of a family to becoming a lowly live-in outsider in a family of different class and status? What did it mean for middle- and upper-class children to be cared for by an adult or adolescent whose position, their parents made clear, was inferior? Such perpetuation of dependency relationships, after Europe's Age of Revolution, challenges the political theory of nation-states with a citizenry of equal rights. In economic thought, Adam Smith, educated in the Scottish tradition of pragmatism and moral philosophy, advocated in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776) a society that would use the productive capacities of all to the best of all. Thus he condemned the gentry and aristocratic classes' ostentatious consumption and their large numbers of unproductive servants — and overlooked the importance of (re-)production, of production in the household, of women's work. In farming and urban crafts, women's work included care for farm animals or sale of artisanal products — it was never narrowly defined as household labor. The emphasis on commerce (Smith) and industrial production (Marx) lost sight of any work other than men's so-called productive work. These skewed theories fit well with societal practices and prevented an assessment of the economic value of household, childrearing, and care-for-the-elderly work and, of course, of its remuneration either in cash or kind. Societal re-production is usually based on women's unpaid labor.

In many societies and periods the status of women and men in service positions was legally as well as discursively circumscribed by designations and ascriptions. "Domestic workers" suggests payment of wages and/or remuneration in kind as well as class; "servants" suggests obedience and corporate structures of family and society; "domestic help" suggests unskilled, untrained people often unremunerated or casually employed; the label "hands" or *braceros, braccianti* (braceros, braccianti) turns human beings into a bodily extension of productive labor assumes-imposes the primacy of production, lasting and accumulative and usually done by men, over re-production, circular and repetitive and usually ("naturally") done by women. Re-productive work is better conceptualized as two aspects of the single complex process of living, procuring a livelihood, working for a (limited, larger, or global) market wherever jobs are available. The division of labor into skilled = productive and unskilled = reproductive segments is a social-economic convention without analytical base but with the lasting consequence of segregating reproductive labor into a low-wage segment and, in the case of marriage, into unpaid labor. These conventions of language and thought have long skewed research; a comprehensive political economy of work, not merely of men's industrial work, is still lacking.14

The — often extreme — frame of constraints in birth-family and region of childhood socialization needs to be reflected in scholarly terminologies and in everyday language when discussing the "uprooting" of service migrants. "Mother tongue" and "home society" imply nurturing and may be ideologized, as in the English "my home is my castle." Women migrating to service did not leave from a castle but from cottages in which food was scarce and parental support limited. Their dialect and manners — in other societies: caste, ethnicity or color-of-skin — were markers of inferiority in the eyes of employers. All of this complicates the task of connecting present to past domestic service and care-giving. It demands careful framing of macro-regional comparisons but also opens new avenues of thought.

Service Labor and Early Urbanization

Archeological research on Mesopotamian cities from 5,000 years ago and early, seminal, studies on the ancient globalization of agriculture all refer to multi-room buildings with quarters for service personnel and the social stratification of urban populations in which — at least — the top strata often employed large numbers of servants from among the needy, and captives from wars and slave


14 See the important call to rethink the political economic of labor and include reproductive work: Marcel van der Linden and Karl Heinz Roth (eds), *Beyond Mara Theorising the Global Labour Relations of the Twentieth-First Century* (Leiden, 2013), especially the introduction and the essays by Maria Mies and Silvia Federici.
raids. Wall decorations, ceremonial objects, and household utensils occasionally depicted serving women and men. Research is available for example on the Indus (2500–2000 BCE), Roman (400 BCE–400 CE) or Celtic (200 BCE–0 CE) civilizations. In the city of Mohenjo Daro (Sind) houses accommodated servants, slave or free, and a clay figurine shows a women probably kneading dough. In the earliest preserved text, the Rigveda, enslaved women and men were given to its priestly composers (1500-moo BCE). In the subsequent period, households were said to have at least one domestic woman slave, described in a Buddhist text to be useful for preparing food, lightening lamps, milking cows. Larger households had more servants and these were often overworked, tired, and suffered hardship. Personal staff included attendants for women, wet-nurses for babies, sex-servants for men. Free-born servants were not mentioned. While Buddha himself forbade the sale of human beings, practices of enslavement continued and later Buddha teachers devised rules for the good behavior of slaves and servants - equaling those for the poor and the destitute. South Asian society's division into castes assigned service and "unclean" work to the lowest who were expected to behave "meekly," while top-caste Brahmins had to avoid service work to avoid soiling their lives - so the religious ideology prescribed. By about 500 CE authors composed lists of clean and unclean house labor dictionaries (c. 700) illustrated the term "multitude" by reference to female slaves. In biblical stories, Abraham and Sara owned Hagar as an enslaved servant from Egypt with whom - consent is not mentioned - Abraham fathered a child. Celtic decorations of metal objects, c. 500 BCE, show women pouring libations to men. The cases may be multiplied - though egalitarian societies without bound service labor may also have existed.

Patterns of Migration from Medieval and Early Modern Times to the 1930s

This part deals with the "Atlantic complex" of societies and migrations, Europe to Latin and North America, with Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as with Asian societies. The order could, of course, be reversed. But well research is still more developed for the western hemisphere and thus these analyses are short or even rudimentary for some regions. Depending on periodization and sources, the surveys begin with what has been called the Middle Ages for Europe or with the time when most information becomes available. They end with the 20th-century Great Depression except where a continuity to the 1950s demands attention in some societies. Popular notions have assumed (and sometimes still assume) that the mechanization of household tasks and the increase in industrial jobs from the 1880s reduced paid domestic labor as well as the work of wives-mothers. However, upon close analysis it turns out that first, this "industrial revolution in the home" increased the work of mothers and, second, the status-providing aspect of having servants and the growth of the middle classes during the uneven process of global urbanization slowed such change. While the Depression reduced the means to pay servants in the 1930s and war did so in the 1940s, domestic labor has grown in newly developing societies since the 1970s, with macro-regional variations, and caretaking labor is increasing in societies where mothers may enter (well-) paying segments of the labor market and/or in where the population is ageing.

The Medieval Mediterranean World and Northern Europe

"Europe" was long part of the Mediterranean world, from the Levant and Anatolia via North Africa and Italy to the Iberian Peninsula. The regions north of the Pyrenean-Alpine ridge followed different patterns until an integrated Europe with distinct cultural macro-regions emerged around 1000 CE. At that time peoples of different faiths along the littorals of the Mediterranean (Muslim, Jewish, Byzantine Orthodox and Latin Catholic) practiced state slavery (administrative, military, or fiscal) as well as private slavery (productive, commercial, or domestic). Neither form of slavery was collective by ethnic group or color of skin. Rather, individuals were enslaved by raids, as captives of wars, through poverty-induced sale by relatives, or self-sale. Over time, this system contracted to domestic service only and became feminized; women outnumbered men by two to one around 1300. By 1460 97 per cent of Genoese slaves were women and prices paid for women were higher than for men. Sexual exploitation by Christian masters, though canonically condemned, was...
frequent, though some legal frameworks provided protection — in Ragusa, for example, slave women could sue aggressors 18

Mediterranean domestic slavery reflected the evolution of urban economics and lifestyles. General service changed to "personalized" care and nursing. Slaves held positions of trust and emotional attachment, could advance from a marginal to an integral part of family life, and, in the Jewish world, upon manumission became full members of the community. In Genoa, with solve 5,000 slaves in a population estimated at 60,000 in 1380, integration and trans-cultural contact of slave women often involved consensual unions with a man of the household; children were usually adopted and endowed by the fathers. In Siena legal provisions mandated that fathers assume the cost of birth. However, this semi-familial position notwithstanding, in the 15th century about 10 per cent of the Genoese slave population was traded annually. The presence of slaves was a factor of diversity and enrichment in urban societies.

North of the Alps, the eighth/ninth-century Carolingian rulers enlarged their realm by massive warfare and they sold Saxon, Slav, Langobard, Iberian Muslim, and other prisoners of war as well as civilian men, women and children into slavery, mainly in Byzantium and Muslim Iberia. But the small Carolingian elites of rich urban and landholding families also needed male and female servants. In post-conquest19 Iberia,20 the free or enslaved servants of Christian families could stem from sub-Saharan Black, Berber or Mediterranean Arab, Morisco,21 (black) Canary Islands, Hindu or Tamil,22 or Afro-American23 backgrounds. In the sixteenth century, women predominated among slaves; among free domestics, women were usually young. In aristocratic households large

servant labor forces were ranked according to superior or minor duties; in

aristocratic urban households, for which the laws rigorously limited the

number of domestics, service personnel was often declared to be kin. The relationship could involve education, emotional care, and company; but most low-level servants worked for food, a corner to sleep and clothing only. The Spanish

servitor means "to be subject to another person."

Development of dependency relationships accelerated after mid-fourteenth century plagues drastically reduced the size of working populations. Without coercion employers, usually landowners, would have had to compete for labor by offering better wages and working conditions. The state — meaning politically-structurally "the Crown" but implying, sociologically, the most powerful aristocratic family with the most privileged access to the society's resources — intervened to keep common people in "their place" and cost of labor low. In England, for example, a royal ordinance which was the basis for the 1351 Statute of Labourers attempted to provide for a complete conscription of labor.

Any man or woman, in our realm of England, of whatever condition, either free or servile, sound in body and under the age of sixty years, living not by merchandise nor practising [sic] a definite craft, nor having personally wherewith to live, nor possessing land which he would cultivate, nor being somebody else's servant, if he is requested to serve in a service congruent to his status, shall be bound to serve the one that shall thus request him 25

Laboring men and women, however, demanded payment in cash, day labor rather than the contracts for a full year and were ready to migrate or, in the official view, "to run away." To regain control, states imposed mobility-restricting regulations called vagrancy laws. These regulations established a lasting "us and them" dichotomy between those who were society and those excluded as "others." In the present, this dichotomy has become part of immigration legislation with "them" now applying to "foreign" women in domestic and caregiving tasks. This long view of hierarchies is analytically of wider reach than class analyses that only start with men's industrial work.26


19 The traditional designation "reconquest" falsely implies that before Muslim conquest and state-building the population was of Christian faith and Frankish.

20 León, Castile, Navarre, and Aragon y Catalonia rather than a unified Spain?

21 Muslims forcibly converted to Christianity.

22 Captured in South Asia by Portuguese slavers.

23 Brought by returning slave-owners from the Caribbean or Latin America.


25 Quoted in Dirk Hoarder, Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium (Durham, NC, 2,002), 71.

26 Bridget Anderson, Us & Them. The Dangerous Politics of Immigration Control in Great Britain (Oxford, 2013), esp. 12-47; Leo Lucassen, Wim Willems, and Annemarie
Research initially focused on poverty, rural life, and migration. In eighteenth-century France a rural or urban servant girl or woman would begin working life at age 12-14 “with the vision of equipping herself to cope with a predictable set of economic circumstances.” Each and every one faced a double challenge, her own family was uncommitted to providing very much for her future and societal constraints limited “her earning power as a single woman.” Servants in homes or in artisan workshops “could constitute up to 13 per cent of the total population of a town or city? They stopped working upon marriage, thus “accelerating an already rapid turnover.” Breton women, cultural “Others” in France like the Irish in England, were stereotyped by employers as not particularly bright or adept

Within and outside the Habsburg Empire women’s migrations have been studied from the sixteenth but mainly for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the German-language regions as a whole, domestic servants often engaged in multiple moves: (1) an initial migration from countryside to a nearby town, (2) onward moves to urban centers, and (3) frequent change of position and location at urban destinations. While female servants were less dependent on economic cycles and resulting labor market fluctuation than male workers, each job change involved a change of residence for live-in servants. High turnover indicates widespread dissatisfaction and perhaps resistance: In mid-1890s Berlin 61,063 servants registered 82,948 job changes in a single year. Contemporary ideologues of stable societies called them the “gypsies of the nation.” Only after the November Revolution of 1918 did the Rat der Volksbeauftragten (Council of People's Representatives) abolish the Gesindeordnungen (servants’ laws — a gender-neutral designation) which had their roots in the post-plague, mid-fourteenth-century Knechteordnungen (a male-gendered designation). After the First World War the share of working women employed in households declined. In mid-1930s Austria, “lower


30 Service staff in aristocratic households and in British university colleges requires analysis separate from those in middle- and lower middle-class families. One among many expositions of duties and legal relations was Almira Rumsey, Handbook for Employers and Employed (London, 1892).

further to Alexandria, Egypt. In the many regions of departure, socio-economic motives framed the decision to migrate: sending away a child, who would not inherit and whose labor was not needed, meant one less mouth to feed. Adolescent women migrated to earn money for a self-paid dowry though the practice was deeply engrained in societal discourse some women expressed unhappiness about having to package themselves with household utensils, linens and even farm animals, to become marriageable. Nineteenth-century transatlantic mobile women often emphasized in letters to friends "at home" that no dowry was required in their new "home" society.

Domestic workers were (and are) "Others" of different class, of a different rural or proletarian way of life, of "alien" ethno-cultural background. They were (and are) distinguishable by phenotypical denominators ranging from "the healthy skin of country girls" to darker color-of-skin than Anglo-white. Within families, helping female relatives, called "spinsters," were different since they had "failed" to marry. Difference was effaced rhetorically by designations as "boys," "girls," or even "house daughters."

Depending on period and region, service labor was a lasting occupational choice/necessity or a stage in the life-cycle. In most preindustrial cities 15-30 per cent of the population aged 15-65 were "servants"; in England three out of four children aged 15-24 lived in servant positions outside their family of birth. Since women in the nineteenth-century were disenfranchised even as they were elevated ideologically into "mothers of the nation" and designated to inculcate national virtues into children, the work of domestics from subordinated classes or other cultures, European identities, individual and societal, must have been influenced, even shaped by the universality of service.

In terms of individual life projects, despite all the constraints engaging in domestic labor for wages was agency to achieve specific, if limited goals: an independent income, a dowry, education for children. In this frame of goal achievement, some constraining conditions appear helpful: living-in- and wearing handed-down clothes saved expenses. Even employers' simple food was often more plentiful than family food "at home." In immigration societies household work also usually involved and involves guided acculturation to the receiving culture; in the culture-of-birth apprenticeship before taking charge of one's own household. Wages might be saved to create networks, supportive institutions, and social capital, or in the case of long-distance migration, to bring in female relatives and friends on prepaid tickets: fares were advanced when the senders knew of a job and thus sequential migration lowered opportunity cost.

The Atlantic Complex and the Americas

Transoceanic colonial migrations brought impoverished young women and men from European societies to the North as well as to Caribbean and South American colonies from the sixteenth century. Many could not pay their passage and, based on their respective country's labor and contract laws, "agreed" to bound labor for three to seven years in exchange for an advance of the fare. Such "indentured servants" or "redemptioners" redeemed their liberty through service work to become members of the respective colonial society capable of providing for themselves. When the system ended in the early nineteenth-century, nationalist and imperialist authors alike encouraged "surplus" women, defined as those who could not find a husband "at home," to emigrate to the colonies: as domestics they could tame men's rugged pioneer behavior and, in matrimony, become mothers of the (expat) nation. In the German Reich the state's elites encouraged educated middle-class women to migrate to the new African colonies. Trained at the women's branch of the Reichskolonialsschule (1908), they were to support themselves in class-acceptable fashion and maintain the German "race."

Working-class men and women, who were not yet


36 Lora Wildenthal, German Women for Empire, 1884-1945 Politics, History, and Culture (Durham, NC, 2001); Karen Tranberg Hansen, Distant Companions: Servants and Employers
accepted as members of the nation, were not sent out. In practice, Europea,
colonizer families in Latin America, Africa, and elsewhere relied almost exclu-
sively on "boys" and "girls" from among the "Natives" for their reproductive and
dirty work. Servants had to run the households of those convinced that they
could run an empire, as several authors in this volume show.

North America is imagined as country of "free" migrants, but between on-
half and two thirds of all Whites who arrived before the 1820s were indentured
servants. 37 Thereafter voluntary migrations into domestic service continued as
part of the "proletarian mass migrations" Given societal restrictions on wom-
en's independent access to income and to travel, many came with prepaid tick-
ets sent by brothers or female friends. Such invitations to come might include the
suggestion to marry a friend or acquaintance: transatlantic "mail order
brides," the counterpart to transpacific "picture brides." Arranged marriages in
terms of family inheritance and land ownership were common in their societ-
ies of birth. Transoceanic, like interregional labor markets resulted in imbal-
anced gender ratios in the social spaces of origin and thus led to long-distance
marriage markets. 38

Research on waged domestic service in the United States and Canada has
expanded considerably, though only since the 1980s as in Europe. 39 Early stud-
ies did not distinguish care-giving labor from domestic service in general. The

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37 David W Galenson, White Servitude in Colonial America. An Economic Analysis
(Cambridge, 1981); Farley Grubb, The Market for Indentured Immigrants: Evidence on
the Efficiency of Forward-Labor Contracting in Philadelphia, 1745-1773, Journal of
Economic History 45 (1985), 855-868, and Grubb, "The Incidence of Servitude in Trans-

38 Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder with Donna Gabaccia, What is Migration History?
(Cambridge, 2009); Harzig and Hoerder, "Femina migrans", Suzanne M. Sinke, "The
International Marriage Market: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives," in Dirk Hoerder
and Jörg Nagler (eds), People in Transit German Migrations in Comparative Perspective,

39 David M. Katzman, Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing
America (New York, 1978); Phyllis M. Palmer, Domesticity and Dirt: Housewives and
Domestic Servants in the United States, 1920-1945 (Philadelphia, 1989); Margaret Lynch-
Brennan, The Irish Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America, 1840-
1930 (Syracuse, 2009); for transpacific migrants Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Issei, Nisei, War
Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service (Philadelphia,
1986). Marilyn Barber, Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada (Ottawa, 1991); Abigail
B. Bakan and Daiva Stasiulis (eds), Not One of the Family: Foreign Domestic Workers in
Canada (Toronto, 1997).

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term "immigrant" rather than "migrating" women is appropriate for these
societies and Australia since women's rates of return were far lower than
those of men — they discovered that gender restrictions were fewer in these
societies. 40

40 A traditional role of African American women in domestic labor -- as house
maids to 1863/65 -- remained mostly limited to the southern US. The value of
female slaves in the modern North Atlantic was determined both by their abil-
ity to work and by their potential to bear children, i.e. the next generation of
workers. At the same time their role as nannies in plantation mansions was
mythologized in the imagery of "black mammies," while younger slave women
were often sexual prey. Massive out-migration to the northern cities began
only in the early 20th century 41 where most African-American women had no
other option than domestic service 42

For a long time us research at the intersection of immigration and labor
history studied immigrants only from the time of their arrival at Ellis Island. 43
But adults arrive fully socialized and, since socialization occurs in a particular
region — rather than state — of origin, scholars need to employ a regional rather
than nation-state perspective. Established patterns of migration provided

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41 From the 1940s to the 1970s nearly five million more left in a second mass migration. But
white society's racism often made jobs in the war industries inaccessible and African
American women's proportion of the labor force in private households rose to 60 per cent
in the 1940s as a result. From the 1960s and 1970s they and their daughters moved out of
domestic labor but could only enter out-sourced household labor in fast food kitchens
and nursing home chains. Lisa Krissoff Boehm, "Leaving the Employer's Kitchen for the
Drive-Thru Window: African American Women's Transition from Domestic Laborer to

42 Jennifer Morgan, Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery
(Philadelphia, 2004); Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work,
and the Family from Slavery to the Present (New York, 1985); Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, Living
in, Living Out: African American Domestic Workers in Washington, DC, 1910-1940 (Washington,
1994); Susan Tucker, Telling Memories among Southern Women: Domestic Workers and
Their Employers in the Segregated South (Baton Rouge, 1988); Phyllis Palmer, "Black
Domestics during the Depression: Workers, Organizers, Social Commentators," Prologue

43 The post-1990s research, not reviewed here, has focused mainly on Asian- and Latino-
background women and carefully discusses reasons for migration and conditions in the
region/culture of departure.
information on travel routes and on labor markets for quick insertion after arrival — those coming had many skills given the wide variety of tasks in rural households. In Canada, the culture-of-origin-and-culture-of-arrival approach has become standard. Comparative research on late nineteenth-century women from four specific regions who went to Chicago (from northeastern Germany, southern Ireland, southwestern Sweden, and the Zaborów parish in Austrian Galicia) demonstrated the degree to which attitudes to domestic service were time and culture sensitive. German-origin women showed a strong sense of traditional family formation and few entered the labor market. Women from colonized Ireland, where male and female cultures had diverged and average age of marriage was high, worked mostly as waitresses or washers. Women while only few entered domestic service. In contrast, Swedish women were in high demand as live-in domestics and could enter other waged work. Polish women faced both anti-Slavic "racial" stereotypes and had the option to work in the new factories. The transitions and skills of women need to be carefully evaluated.

In some cases historical and present experiences are clearly comparable. Single Swedish "maids" with good reputation and favorable labor market conditions established a well-travelled route. Informed by one of the millions of transatlantic letters — the equivalent of modern cell phone contact — they arrived "just in time" for a job, often aided by a prepaid ticket from a female friend. Control over their own wages permitted gender-specific migration sequences and, in a few cases investment in a farm in Sweden — a feat they could never have achieved without migration. In Chicago, the customary half-day off allowed them to socialize and exchange information about employers and positions. While many of the women were disinclined to marry, men coveted marriage to a "maid" — who had English-language skills and could prepare both Swedish and American food. Some Swedish-American publicists labeled independent women as undesirable and (morally) corrupted (as did their Slovene counterparts regarding women migrating to Egypt). This success story, however, depended first of all on the women's responding to working conditions by emigration. Rather than collectively building a labor movement in Sweden, the main protest option of European workers, they individually withdrew their labor and skills from the nation-state and particular employers. Secondly, while successful, few of them saw such jobs as a desirable option for their daughters.

Nowadays globally migrating Filipinas share similar experiences and critiques. 

terms of domestic employment changed dramatically after 1900. Live-in work declined and day-work increased. "Body-parts" views of human relations emerged: Along the Pacific Coast, white people, who could only afford part-time service, "took a share in a Chinaman." In British-American terminology employers hired "hands," in Mexican-us terminology "braceros." "Racial" legislation in both North American countries excluded labor migrants from Asia after c.1881. Implicitly "brown" women from the Caribbean were also unwanted. When, by mid-century demand for "domestics" could no longer be met, a revealing and innovative public debate developed in Canada about "color-coding" and capable care-giving. The first program to recruit women remained in the whiteness paradigm. In 1946, after six years of total war in Asia and Europe, the white Atlantic World's population planners/labor recruiters concerned themselves only with Europe's "Displaced Persons." Argentina, Brazil, Australia, Great Britain, and Canada recruited women "domestics" and male lumbering and other workers. In Canada, officials were reluctant to admit the "camp women" and conservative Canadian women's organizations feared their allegedly "immoral" lives and possible pregnancies. But potential employers — the labor market's demand side — were vocal: the program became a success. After the camps had emptied by about 1950 recruitment of white women stalled. Recruitment in Asia was not even discussed, but Caribbean women "of color" appeared center-stage. In the "British West Indies" (a colonial designation) unemployment was high and there were significant numbers of Canadian business people and tourists with children who experienced the sensitive capabilities of Caribbean nannies. When they wanted to employ the nannies in Canada upon return, imperial, governmental, and family-level discourses clashed over their work capabilities, bodies, and skin color. Racists in the immigration bureaucracy refused to admit them while the Department of Labour, aware of both demand for and supply of women with the emotional skills, supported admission. The government opted for equal rights and the Caribbean women were admitted on the same terms as other, i.e. white, migrants. After a year or two of domestic work the policy granted them landed immigrant status and the women were free to take other jobs, apply for citizenship after four years, and bring in close relatives and marriage partners. For them domestic service was a stepping stone and the large Caribbean-Canadian community of the 1960s emerged.

44 Christlane Larzig with Maria Anna Knothe, Margareta Matovic, Deirdre Mageean, and Monika Blaschke, Peasant Maids - City Women: From the European Countryside to Urban America (Ithaca, i9g7). See also Silke Wel-Franco, Deutsche Dienstmädchen in Amerika rgs0-rgrq (Munster, i9g4).

45 Dirk Hoerder, Creating Societies: Immigrant Lives in Canada (Montreal, i9gg), 224.
46 Christian Aarzig, 'The Movement of 100 Girls': 19050 Canadian Immigration Policy and the Market for Domestic Labour," Zeitschrift für Kanada Studien 1g (i9gg), 131-446, and
Canada's policy reframing was in sync with the contemporary decolonization movement. It coincided with the Bandung Conference of Non-Align countries and the publication of Aimé Césaire's "Discours sur le colonialisme" in the famous Paris-based Présence Africaine. Migrant agency, with femina migrans at the forefront, converted century-long colonizer outreach and exploitation into transcultural migratory connections, defeating racist exclusion and governmental policies. The match between labor-market demand and caring-giving skills elsewhere provided entry options for migrant women, who this labor market segment competition from native-born women was low and other "white" societies like Hong Kong and Singapore lowered entry barriers.

Spanish and Portuguese seafarers and migrants to the Caribbean and South America had brought with them their concepts of gender relations and the dishonor of physical labor; the "patrarchal household soon became the patriarchal household. The very limited in-migration of European-origin lower-class servants, usually as part of a patriarchal kin group, was a constitutive factor in the emergence of both a color-coded servant class and of "national" or colonizer identities.

The Iberian Catholic colonizers kept Iberian women under tutelage, immigrant European-origin artisans kept wives and children under the power of the husband-master. Lower-class women's employment — outside the plantation economy — was restricted to domestic labor. In Brazil, slaves could become craftsmen, purchase their freedom, and even have other (enslaved) African-Brazilians work for them. They constituted the largest segment of the population and were culturally more homogeneous than elsewhere in the Americas. Coming mostly from Angola, they re-constituted African cultural-religious practices in new contexts under white (minority) control. In the North American colonies on the other hand, slaves arrived indirectly and usually formed a minority under the direct control of resident rather than absentee plantation owners.

In the early colonial period — as in early modern Europe, Japan, and most other societies — production of consumables was an integral part of household work: cloth was woven and clothing sewed, flour milled and bread baked, carpets woven and furniture made, small animals raised. The wide variety of skills required led to specialization: chamber maid, wet-nurse, nanny, kitchen help, cleaning labor, laundress — not to talk about highly skilled women cooks and seamstresses for formal attire and ball dresses. Low-paid or enslaved "servants," allegedly of little skill and less motivation, produced the outward signs of black as well as Indian slaves (and perhaps Spanish servants) in their households. The wives of encomenderos and substantial urban dwellers were not to work but to direct a household staff of servant women. In the depopulated Caribbean islands and in Portuguese Brazil landowners relied mainly on African slaves, in the Spanish colonies most labor was done by (surviving) "allotted" Indians. The exploitation of "Indias" and "Indios," the massive forced migrations of slaves from Africa, and the very limited in-migration of European-origin lower-class servants, usually as part of a patriarchal kin group, was a constitutive factor in the emergence of both a color-coded servant class and of "national" or colonizer identities.
social hierarchy — exquisite food, elaborate dress, riding stables. Depending on location and period, Indian or African-origin persons predominated; over time, the numbers of Indian servants declined in relative terms, those of African-background increased as did — far more so — the number of "mixed, race" servant castas. In addition freed slaves became a further color-and-legally coded servant group.

Indian women in Spanish mainland America -- from a Native population which had declined by perhaps go per cent after conquest — left or abandoned their villages. Colonizer impositions destroyed traditional life ways (system of property distribution and support based on residence and kinship like the Inca ayllu) and imposed heavy tribute obligations in cloth, animal and agricultural produce on women. Under these pressures, work for urban Spaniards (and the few other Europeans) became the lesser evil. Upon entering a household, many women were virtually enslaved. They were prevented from many, but their capability to bear children was valued — the employers wanted use of their whole bodies. The resulting "illegitimate" children — a problematic term -- became the next generation of servants. Children of white men and Native or African women, as mestizos classified as castas in an elaborate color-of-skin and sexual-relations multi-layered hierarchy, remained in inferior positions in the patriarchal household — another category of what might be called "home-made" servants. Orphaned poor children and impoverished relatives might also be taken into a household in service positions.

With independence achieved by the 18zos in most of mainland Latin America and the abolition of the slave trade (in Brazil only in the 1860s) and of slavery (in Brazil and Cuba as late as the 1880s), the status and legal position of w the servant classes changed. Skin color and castes-status came to define servants along with female gender. New legal precepts extending European concepts of control over lower classes obliged the lowly to place themselves under the supervision of a master to (re-)assert the authority of men over other members of the household. The reduced importance of kinship was paralleled by growth of status/skin color hierarchies amounting to

52 In North America, where Native Peoples retreated and were pushed westward, only few women served or were forced to serve as domestic workers. However, during the program of forced removal of Native children from their parents for education in white-run boarding schools, the girls were trained as domestics for white families. See the chapter by Victoria K Haskins in this volume.


in exchange for their (usually unpaid) work. Impoverished families, of African-Brazilian, similarly transferred children into white and/or wealthy families. Girls would live and work in the home of a wealthy family as a transitional stage, without monetary compensation but with a vague promise of education and support for establishing a household of their own, under a system of contracted help (ajuda contratada) or as adopted "foster daughters" (filhos de criados). The act of "adoption" portrayed the home-providing and labor-extracting families as philanthropic. It veiled the shadow of slavery. In Mexico, where slavery had been abolished early, a similar relationships connected peasants (peones) to lords (patrones) in poor rural regions as non-coercive domination rather than use of explicit force. A kinship term, gente agregada, taken-in family members, obfuscated the system's exploitative character. Real and fictive kinship as well as emotional ties of habit, feelings of moral obligation to the employer-adopting family's children and elderly, as well as economic dependency made it difficult to leave such relationships. The traditional ideology of women under tutelage was buttressed by an urban middle-class discourse that elevated domestic labor in middle- and upper-class families to an ideal training sphere for poor girls' adult, married life.

Whatever the arrangements, servant women worked for a place to sleep and some food, perhaps compensation in kind and occasionally for a paltry monetary recompense. Some could negotiate a wage to support their own family. When, in the late nineteenth century, industrial occupations became available and fewer women "chose" to enter domestic service, both Argentina's and Mexico's elites added further legal and administrative regulations to the repertoire of dependencies, vagrancy laws, for example, similar to medieval European ones, to force women into domestic work. Factory work was not necessarily liberating since employer-patriarchs often de facto imprisoned women workers. Legal protection for domestic workers came late in most countries and required struggles and organization. Other labor market options, mainly in the service sector, only increased from the 1940s to the 1970s.

The Colonization Complex

In all colonized parts of the world, processes of rule impacted on indigenous practices of domestic service. Most colonizer migrants — soldiers and officers, administrators, plantation overseers — came as single men; some, in particular the occupying power's top representatives, brought wives (and perhaps children) for purposes of ritualized public display of power. These imperial immigrants expected the colonized residents to adjust and serve. Engulfed in discourses of superiority and protected by practices of power, they had no interest in subtle regional differences, everyday lifestyles, or achievements of earlier "local" high cultures. Power reduced cognitive abilities: there was no need to be discerning. Men and women of subaltern peoples, on the other hand, had to be highly alert to the whims and wishes of masters on pain of incurring heavy punishment. They had to be observant and creative to survive.

Administrators and plantation overseers hired local women (usually not designated "girls" as in Europe) or "boys" (usually not designated "men") for domestic labor, maintenance of gardens and stables, and as nannies. Men might expect sexual services or employing men and servant women might enter consensual, if hierarchical unions. In addition, free unions not sanctioned by civil or religious institutions developed. Sexual relations with non-white women, while countering concepts of "racial purity" did fit views of male virility. Purity in the "home" societies was maintained by prohibiting men from bringing back their colored wives/partners and mixed children when employment in the colonies ended.

Domestic chores for imperial men, particularly those in the armed services, were carried out by "boys" rather than women. Imperial plantation staff, not subject to military discipline or national honor, had its reproductive work done by local female housekeepers. Private investors did not object to sexual exploitation of Native domestics or laborers. The construction of local servants as "boys" reflected gender ascriptions in the "home" societies. If housework was a woman's job, then it could not be done by men and thus the colonizers invented "effeminate" boys who could never become men. In this interest-driven construction, colonizer men were of superior masculinity and, thus, their rule was natural. The construction of Native women's sexuality also emerged from all-male colonizer staffs. The involuntarily celibate men — if heterosexual — might feel tempted by the mere presence of Native women. The perception of colonial — subalternized — women's bodies, whether domestic, plantation, or other workers, emerged out of colonizer men's sexual deprivation and a

55 See the essay by Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman and Jaira Harrington in this volume.

56 This section is adapted from Hoerder, Cultures in Contact, 405-442.
conglomerate of a belief in the inviolability of (white) female bodies and the
construct of accessibility of colonized (colored, inferior) female bodies. Service
was not merely associated with gender but with racialized gender. In the sub-
ordinated domestic (and other) workers' perspective, the "natural" superiority
of the masters was not self-evident.

Imperial planners — women included — expected white women from the
core to emigrate and, by their presence, prevent "racial miscegenation" of
white colonizer men and "colored" colonized women. Organizations like the
British Women's Female Emigration Association, a "mothers of imperialism"
club, encouraged and coordinated migration of young middle-class women
by promising "genteel" domestic positions and coyly assuming marriage.
Childbearing was not mentioned. Middle-class white women were to civilize
(colonial) society as governesses and nurses, working-class ones to labor
as domestics. One goal, internal to the core, was to provide daughters of the
impoverished gentry with life-course options in the periphery at no cost to par-
ents. The Association intended to offer protection, help with finding jobs,
homes of welcome" for insertion, but aspects of control were paramount. The
exported "daughters of the empire" had to be young: The envisioned career
from domestic to wife of the single male householder and to bearer of white
children for the Empire's (alleged) empty spaces mandated childbearing age. In
practice, underpaid domestic or farm work awaited the emigrating women. 60
Since lower-class white women's wages were low — whether in "White," African,
or Indian colonies — they preferred other work. Some turned to prostitution
which paid considerably better. Others structured their own lives independent
of notions of race by forming unions with Black houseboys. Neither patriarchal
or colonial ideology had foreseen such independent reasoning. 61

After decolonization in the 1960s — earlier in India, later in the Portuguese
possessions — migrants from the newly independent societies to (former colon-
izer) cores had many motivations and goals. If domestic service served as
entry paths the color hierarchies of the (former) colonial regime entered fam-
ily spheres in the core. As domestics and caregivers women and, in smaller
numbers, men "of color" accessed middle-class white households. Education
offered by the colonizer administration in their colony-culture of origin, in
particular under British or Dutch rule, had imposed a skewed perception of
the "mother county — colonial children" relations: Convinced that the respec-
tive colonizers' home culture was superior, teachers in the colonies taught
about British or Dutch life and these societies' inherent equality and fairness.
Thus Surinamese women, migrating as nannies to the Netherlands, knew
Dutch fairy tales for infants and food habits but had to realize that the Dutch
parents had not been taught that Surinamese were Dutch. The founding prin-
ciple of their colonizer-dispensed education made no sense, had been non-
sense. This is similar for most other formerly imperial states-societies. 62 In the
(allegedly private) sphere of home, migrant women as domestic and care-giv-
 ing workers have to deal within their employer families' mentality shaped by
centuries of colonization, statesmen's pronouncements, and global inequalities.
The resulting practices and regimes of interaction varied according to macro-region.

Sub-Saharan and Mediterranean Africa

In sub-Saharan Africa's many societies the position of women in gender- and
generation-hierarchical structures made recourse to paid domestic labor
unnecessary. 63 Older men exercised power over younger men and women who
had to work for them; young men had to pay their elders bride-wealth for the
right to marry or hand over part of their earnings as migrant laborers to be
allocated a wife. On the one hand, women were the main producers, not only

59 Ann Laura Stoler, Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt 1870-1979 (2nd
ed., Ann Arbor, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race
and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures," American Ethnologist 16 (1989),
634-660; Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds), Tensions of Empire: Colonial
Cultures in a Bourgeois World (Berkeley, 1997); Margaret Strobel, Gender, Sex, and Empire
(Washington, DC, 1993).

60 Janice Gothard, "The Healthy, Wholesome British Domestic Girl: Single Female Migration
and the Empire Settlement Act, 1922-31," in Stephen Constantine (ed.), Emigrants and
Empire. British Settlement in the Dominions between the Wars (Manchester, 1990), 72-95;
Joanna Trollope, Britannia's Daughters. Women of the British Empire (London, 1983);
Hananeront, Emigrant Gentlewomen, 187-194; Clarke, The Governesses, in Nupur
Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (eds), Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and
Resistance (Bloomington, 1992); Linda Bryder, "Sex, Race, and Colonialism: An
Historiographic Review," International History Review 20 (1998), 806-822; Clare Midgley
(ed.), Gender and Imperialism (Manchester, 1998).

61 Jean j. van Helten and Keith Williams, "The Crying Need of South Africa: The Emigration
of Single British Women to the Transvaal,1901-10," Journal of Southern African Studies to
(1983), 17-38; Charles van Onselen, Studies in the Social and Economic History of

62 Dirk Hoerder, "Education for a Transcultural Life-World or for a Hegemonic Nation?
Schooling in the British Empire, in France, and in Canada,1830s-2000s," Studia Migracyjne
- Pregled Polonijny no. 3 (2014), 17-32. See Sabrina Marchetti's essay in this volume and
Marchetti, Black Girls: Migrant Domestic Workers and Colonial Legacies (Leiden, 2014).

63 I am indebted to the late Dennis Cordell for reading and improving this section.
the preparers of a household's food. They produced and reproduced and, in monetized economies, sold excess vegetable or other agricultural produce on local or — depending on region and period — larger markets, thus gaining income. In addition, many societies customarily allowed people to pay debts by "voluntarily" entering debt bondage. This rights-in-persons (as opposed to chattel) slavery involved men or women pawning themselves, a male debtor related females and children or other relatives to the creditor. Such pawned labor often repaid the interest on the debt but not the principal — thus extending debt servitude over long periods. Pawned persons usually stayed close to their family of origin, but moved when the creditor moved. Pawns might also be sold — thus the borderline between debt bondage and slavery was fluid. Given its social and familial functions, pawning served to acquire wives by taking in a debtor's daughter in lieu of payment of the principal. The wife-pawn could, through her capability to give birth, become a source of additional labor power: children. Such pawn-provided care work and reproduction was a strategy for expanding lineage exercise of power in non-state systems of governance. This arrangement continued into the twentieth century and grew in importance during the 1930s depression when it was feminized and generally limited to adult women and female children. Subsequent economic crises, political upheavals, and raiding may have brought a resurgence of debt pawning.

In the course of the introduction of the Atlantic-Americas-plantation work regime of chattel slavery, slave raiders and traders knew that because of European concepts of male and female labor, European planters preferred male slaves. Transatlantic traders marketed two men for each woman — which served African slave traders' profit interests because women's labor and childbearing capability was highly valued in African societies and the sale of women brought higher profits in these social economies. Thus the captives, in the most reproductive phase of their life-cycle, were segregated into a westward predominantly male transatlantic outflow while most captured women stayed within African societies. However, it is also important to remember that the slave trades to North Africa, the Levant, and the Indian Ocean privileged female slaves who were shipped out of the continent in large numbers.

In North African and East African coastal societies slave women for domestic tasks, childcare, or concubinage came from African, Turkish, Slavic, Georgian, and Circassian backgrounds. Women, children, and men, removed violently from their lineages by the act of enslavement, could, if they were fortunate and for lack of alternatives, socialize into the lineage of their masters. Received opinion suggests that women sold within or to Islamic societies, moved within a "relatively benign" system enjoined by the Koran and, given the impossibility of return, acculturated into their owner's family. Since, with regional variations, enslaved and free had the same relationship to Allah, it made a great difference whether people were enslaved as Muslims or as non-Muslims to whom owners had fewer obligations. But Muslim masters did not always acknowledge their slaves' Islamic faith. Well-integrated slaves, men and women, could marry with the owner's permission and slave women marrying freemen were to receive a dowry from their master. Slave women were not supposed to be separated from their young children. The Koran permitted men up to four wives, if they could pay bride-price and provide support — slave women as concubines could be supported in a lower status, permitted economizing. Muslims could not be good Muslims. This justified their enslavement. In one nineteenth-century case, Black Saharan female slaves protested their treatment to French Algerian officials.

66 Slave shipments from the Bight of Biafra were an exception, in contrast to all other export regions they were gender-balanced or even female predominant. Market structures and cultural customs in that region gave men a more important role in agriculture. They were the cultivators of yams, the preferred and symbolically most central food. Women, who cultivated crops imagined to be of less value were thus more dispensable household members and easier to transform into saleable commodities. G. Ijgo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the BightofBiafra: An African Society in the AtlanticWorld* (Cambridge, 2010).
68 Late nineteenth-century Arab and Indian Muslim intellectual leaders and reformers stressed equality and emphasized those passages of the Koran that encouraged manumission.
In agricultural societies in sub-Saharan Africa, where social and economic inequalities increased under colonizer impositions and in which the new authorities changed modes of production, the wealthier (and usually older) man was, the more land-tilling worker-brides he could acquire one way or another. Even as life-time slave labor was increasingly marginalized in some regions, given the increase of colonizer-imposed temporary forced labor requirements (and in view of growing options to take mining- and industrial-plantation-crop-related wage work elsewhere) ever more young men migrated, either to accumulate savings for bride-price, or to subtract themselves from old men's control, or to escape colonizer requisitions of forced labor. For those intending to return to their community of birth, wage labor meant savings that enabled them to pay bride-prices for several wives. This increased the number of female and child workers who contributed to their wealth as head of the family. For women remaining behind, men's out-migration meant that they had to shoulder the labor customarily done by them while remaining under control of "notables." To avoid or escape such burdens, women migrated with their husbands or partners, followed them, or migrated on their own. Some also found wage work in colonizer-owned extractive complexes. Most did unpaid domestic work for husband, partner, or other men. Some became paid service workers in plantation compounds rather than in domestic settings.

With the growth of mining towns and general urbanization women migrated on their own to towns and cities. Some became successful businesswomen, particularly in the southern regions associated with mining: colonial Northern Rhodesia (today's Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (today's Zimbabwe), the Belgian Congo, and South Africa. Women owned beer halls and even sold produce on a large scale to mining companies to feed their laborers. But domestic labor often remained unpaid, taking the form of a partnership with a man who had migrated earlier — in an arrangement that gave the woman room and board in return for "house"-keeping of a shack or a single room.

After the 1830s the French occupiers of Algeria added forced labor to the various forms of slavery in Mediterranean Africa's Arab societies, in particular for service. Both lasted into the twentieth century and may be compared to the new labor regimentation in Europe and North America from the 1920s and in the 1930s and 1940s. Labor regimes were mobile and crossed the borders between colonizer societies and colonized regions. Research on these issues and the fluid borders between "free" and unfree labor has only begun recently.

*The Asian Societies: South, Southeast, East*

In the distinct regions of Asia, domestic or other forms of service were related to culture, region, and period with deep historical roots. No overall "Asian" pattern emerged, though macro-regional systems developed along the littorals of the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian seas from the migration of traders and merchants and the imposition of European colonizer rule in the plantation complex. Merchants and traders from Gujarat and Chettinad in India, from Arab Hadrami, and from Fujian and Guangdong in China formed communities and networks that extended westward to the eastern Mediterranean and eastward across the Pacific to California and British Columbia. Merchant families brought domestics with them or hired them through long-distance connections from their communities of origin. Cultural groups like the Sindhis and Parsees whose trade networks crossed intra-continental land borders also required domestic workers. Chinese amahs and Indian ayahs also moved through the empires whether in networks of their own or taken along by wealthy merchant families. That generally fewer women migrated than men was either due to family economies, wives staying in the community of origin to manage the couple's small holdings, or to culture-specific high valuation of women's labor. Men could be spared and depart, women could not. Since the migrant men, especially those in trade and urban crafts needed help to keep shop or for other tasks, they often formed a "secondary family" at the place of arrival. Such migrations extended through the Indian Ocean and East African port city trading worlds, and subsequently through the imperial worlds — a British inquiry found both Indian and Chinese domestics in England as early as 1855.

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72 See the essay by K David Goodman in this volume. Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 464-347.


74 The activities often involved lending or transmitting of money: the commercial community was at the same time an international banking community.
As slavery was abolished in the British Empire in the 1830s, a system of indentured labor was instituted that lasted to the 1930s (though it was formally abolished in 1917). Two thirds or more of the "indentured servants" were women vs. men, and it was mainly women who were recruited from the respective society's lower segments or purchased as slaves in East Africa. In comparison to the Atlantic complex above, domestic-service work in both China and India. As elsewhere in the world, this profession declined with the growing availability of durable household tools, vacuum cleaners and washing machines, for example, but status considerations continued to encourage hiring domestics. And here too it increased again as middle-class women became able to go out to work and, given generation-specific migrations to urban worlds, grandmothers were not available for childcare. Recent changes in patterns of domestic and care work in Asian societies are associated with decolonization and post-colonial socio-economic structures. New directions of service work migrations (mainly by women) evolved similar to the new southern-to-northern-Europe pattern: from southern Asia (mainly the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka) to the more prosperous "north" (Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore). In addition domestic worker migrations to "West Asia' (Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States) targeted societies that have always been "external labor dependent" — as indicated by the historic Indian Ocean slave trade to the Guff. In all societies, servitude and service work had existed before the coming of the European colonizers. Towns in the many different South Asian states and societies interacted with the countryside and when urban service trades developed, rural in-migration filled the demand. Across Asia, famines sent populations into flight and compelled survivors to migrate far and wide. Victims of famines might be sold or sold themselves and their children into slavery to survive. Bondage in many Asian societies was rooted in family economies and hierarchies — children could be alienated by decision of parents — as well as in socioeconomic power structures that permitted servitude by poorer social groups. In Bihar, India, the kamias system secured loans to the poor with a right to their services and that of their children — "service" implying not merely domestic but any kind of labor. Subsequent generations remained kamias, to be sold, leased, mortgaged, or transferred with land until debts were repaid. In Madras, rural laborers and servants became virtual serfs of landlords when unable to repay loans. Such systems intensified under British rule and a subfeudalization occurred in indigo cultivation and tea plantations according to some authors.

For the South Asian subcontinent bondage and domestic labor may be traced to the Indus Civilization and the earliest Vedic texts since 2500 BCE. In the Maharashtra Empire or Confederacy from 1674 to 1818, to take a later example, the custom of keeping female slaves was widespread and covered many occupations and tasks as indicated by the large variety of designations, in Maharasthra for example, for servants whether in urban families, in

75 The British government required - depending on period and region - 25-33 per cent of those shipped to be women. While the ostensible reason was a concern for relationships, the practical and avowed one was that men were considered "unruly" without women who did the domestic and, in all probability, sex work.

76 Jo Beall, "Women underIndenture in Colonial Natal 286o-igu," in Colin Clarke, Ceri Peach, and Steven Vertovec (eds), South Asians Overseas. Migration and Ethnicity (Cambridge, 1990), 57-74.

77 Voluntary migration of women with their employers or employer families demands more research. The 19th-century Slovenia-Trieste-Alexandria and the 20th-century Caribbean-Canadian migrations developed from such beginnings, the first women relaying information and becoming anchor points for subsequent migrants who often found jobs with acquaintances of the employer family.

78 See the essay by Andrew Urban in this volume.

79 It is again rising in the present due to care work related to old age.
nobleman's or noble families' households, or at the imperial court: a hierarchy of servant women for the inner chambers from those doing general cleaning work, different kinds of maidservants, different kinds of female slaves with sexual services as part of their work, and court musicians, dancers, and performers. Designations could glide from "maid" to "mistress"; some indicated paid work, others service without pay. On a different level, kumbiner were originally identified as agricultural workers but the designation subsequently came to refer to all who worked. Women accused of adultery could be relegated to status of domestic slaves and/or mistresses as punishment. In a later period, domestic workers were simply considered "bad women" or prostitutes. This has been transposed to modern usage in which batik means a servant or housemaid, batikpura a "red light district." This terminological connection may have an economic background, as women who lost their employments may have turned to work as prostitutes.80

Among Hindus in South Asia, concepts of kinship encompassing village communities meant that women had to move to neighboring villages to marry. Marriage-ancillary migration involved servants who accompanied brides from wealthy families or needy female kin like aunts or grandmothers in the case of brides from poor families. These would be supported, but expected to perform household duties. A Hindu taboo against crossing waters - which would make migrants impure - has been interpreted as indicating low levels of migration. However, male traders had moved to Southeast and West Asia, and East Africa for millennia - and these migrations intensified under British rule and expanded to the Caribbean. Upper-caste men and families took advantage of the (new) regime as middlemen and medium-level officials and migrants to wherever positions opened. Commercial migrants, whether single men or family units, needed service workers wherever they settled. They took their servants (or some of them) with them, hired local women and men in the new society, or formed "secondary" families. Servants migrating with their masters might become anchor points for low-caste chain migrations. Dependency relations - a characteristic of landowner-peasant hierarchies in the countryside - were transposed to cities through caste position, actual bondage, or service under economic constraints.

The topic of British masters and Indian servants has been part of imperial (often critical) literature in the past and has brought forth "subaltern studies" on the scholarly level.82 This section is based on Hoerder, Cultures in Contact, Chapter 15; Ratna Saptari, "Studying Asian Domestic Labour within Global Processes: Comparisons and Connections," in Jan Lucassen (ed.), Global Labour History. A State of the Art (Bern, 2006), 479-512, See Bela Kashap's essay in this volume. I am grateful for permission to read and incorporate segments of an unpublished version.

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80 See the essay by Lokesh in this volume. I am grateful to her for information.
82 See the essay by Bela in this volume. I am grateful to him for information.
Dependency relations were regulated by unwritten custom (and power), not by contract. Servants received wages in addition to accommodation and board.  

From about 1600, the Dutch colonizers intensified traditional service practices and introduced new ones. The Portuguese, who had arrived earlier, had established gated trading post communities rather than larger extractive colonies. To impress their power and grandeur, the colonized, Dutch governors in Batavia employed richly dressed outriders and guards to accompany their carriages in addition to house servants. Dutch officials appeared at India’s Coromandel Coast with standard bearers, trumpeters, and musicians, as well as armed attendants and a swarm of coolies in addition to a bodyguard of Dutch soldiers. Servants conveyed the impression of "power and privilege" for both pre-colonial and colonial rulers.

Servile, rather than service, labor was sometimes ethnicized and recruited from "tribes," and was used for rice cultivation before the colonizers arrived. In parts of the Indonesian archipelago, both before and during European rule, rice cultivation and food production were tasks considered suitable for women—as vegetable agriculture and field work in African societies. This gender specificity might also convey the respect women received for their capabilities to provide food. But the British colonizers on the Malayan Peninsula brought male workers from India to work the vast rice plantations needed to feed the indentured Indian working men and women in their Empire’s section of the global Plantation Belt. For work in the new British-developed rubber, palm oil, and tea plantations whole families were usually recruited. Still, the vast majority of women stayed in the sphere of home in the archipelago’s and peninsula’s many societies.

For Dutch colonizer migrants the new society posed many challenges. Predominantly men’s migration at first led many to form families with local women, sometimes "secondary" ones when "first" wives and children had been left in Holland. Such unions could be based on exploitative power hierarchies or on consensual tender ties. Such families, in particular their children, formed a new hybrid culture. In addition, Buginese women from Celebes were enslaved as concubines since Dutch men valued their beauty—we have no source about the women’s opinion of the Dutch men. With increased colonizer penetration from trade ports to countryside and with the imposition of plantation agriculture, "factories in the fields," the racial and ethnic composition of the required labor forces changed as workers were brought in from afar. The new administrative and plantation staff required domestic servants in the narrow sense. In

Servile labor might include sex work or—perhaps consensual concubinage, an arrangement that racist ideologues decried and that levels of colonizer administrations condoned without qualms. It was the most cost-efficient arrangement and less susceptible to the spreading of venereal disease than prostitution. When employees of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) returned to the Netherlands, the level of service they had appropriated to themselves in the colony had changed their ways of life and expectations. They reached Europe, in a way as immigrants, with new expectations about service labor and new patterns of consumption. But at that time they could not bring wives and children of Southeast Asian cultural practices and skin color back with them. Dutch racism blocked their entry and thus many settled with their families "half-way" in the Dutch Cape colony (South Africa).

Later, when women came from the Netherlands and "white" households became a feature of colonial life, the intimate sphere of the home remained a space of exchange. Enslaved and, later, paid nannies or nurses socialized Dutch children. Single men continued their relations with Indonesian women (as did some married ones). Dutch women’s role changed in an unexpected way. With the availability of low-wage servants far fewer accepted paid employment outside the home—women became "domesticated" and supervised local staff. Wealthy Indonesian families adopted the status-conferring practice and adopted Dutch patterns. Domestic work became the main source of income for Indonesian women from families with lesser means and by 1930 about one third of them labored as domestics.  

When "Dutch" families were repatriated after independence, they too carried their life experiences and service expectations with them. Ways of colonizers and colonized had become inextricably interwoven.

Southeast Asian and south Chinese societies were closely entwined. Since European administrators, merchants, and entrepreneurs generally did not care to learn local languages and develop cultural competence, knowledgeable Chinese traders and merchants—with their families—acted as middlemen.

85 In 1930, of 240,000 European residents in the "Dutch East Indies" more than four fifths were "of Dutch origin"—a designation veiling the other, Asian, side: 70 per cent were "Indos" born out of intermarriages.
They brought dependents with them — poorer kin and less fortunate village
serve both as commercial staff and as domestic servants. One proud
sometimes idealized group was the _amahs_, women who migrated on their own
savings around 1000. They took positions as skilled household employees as a
ideally, lifelong vocation. They could become household managers and, to use
a Western term, governesses. The general respect for age reflected on their
position, described as "honorable" or as fictive grandmotherly kin. Since
employment conditions did not always turn out well, they formed networks
provided accommodation for friends without a job and developed a self-idea
ification, indicated by a white-and-black professional dress. They might be
compared to class-conscious guild and craft workers with unions in Western
societies.87

In China, Confucius developed his male perspective of a well-ordered soci.
ety 2,500 years ago. It lasted. It placed women under the notion of subservienc
at the bottom of society. However, practices differed between regions and
across time and, again "domestic service" is not merely paid hired labor.88 It
involved young married women expected to serve their respective mothers-in-
law. It also involved bound female and male servants, a category originating in
the practice of selling, usually female, children and more rarely adults into ser-
vices during general subsistence or specific family crises. Sale ensured survival
during famines and income for the rest of the family. Few sources mention such
"menials." Many, bound to the age of marriage, could leave bondage while oth-
ers remained for life. Since Confucian societal discourse posited (and still pos-
ts) that the birth of "a daughter implied inevitable loss, as she was to be married
away and thus contribute her _productive and reproductive powers _to a _family
other than her natal one._" (emphasis added), "options for making profit out of
daughters were manifold" and easily turned into their commodification.89

In the texts of the literati, mostly men, women were hardly mentioned
except for prescriptions on their role as, sometimes, highly literate, wives.
"Chinese encyclopedia" writings, i.e. compilations of norms and customs dat-
ing from as far as 2000 years ago, usually cast women from the upper strata as
talented, or jealous. Ever since the classic "Book of Rites," compiled
nder the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), they were expected to be pleasing
"peach and manners as well as docile and obedient. They were to be capable
in handling hemp fibers and silk cocoons, weave complex outer garments and
sew the family clothing. Though upper-class women delegated the actual work
to servants, they managed production with expert knowledge of processes and
quality. Brides were groomed in the arts of needlework, poetry, painting, cal-
igraphry, and music-making — but were marked off from professional (and
respected if often bound) entertaining women by dowry and lineage. From the
era of the Northern and Southern Sung (960-1279), women were considered
almost exclusively in relation to family — mothers, wives, daughters, daughters-in-law. To emphasize their low rank, compilers of encyclopedia texts relegated
"female matters" to the end.

Under the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties (1368-1644—tom) regional administra-
tors, delegated from the capital or selected from local nobility, had their labor
and household needs covered by servile work. Wealthy families employed large
numbers of servants from the surrounding countryside (which they often con-
rolled). Women and men experienced involuntary mobility when sent as ser-
vants to the Court or moving with masters delegated to positions far from the
place of hiring. Before the twelfth century women worked as midwives and
healers and, when Neo-Confucian scholars and (male) advocates of a medical
orthodoxy condemned this role, continued to practice. To the late imperial
period they were dispensable and, as one recent scholar noted:
"uncontrollable._"89 From the late fourteenth century on, gazetteers mentioned
more specialized tasks. Rural women under the deteriorating standard of liv-
ing were expected, in addition to agricultural labor, to produce silk and/or cot-
tton to secure family economies by market production if only on a bare
subsistence level.

The proper place for women of rank was the home with an emphasis on
competent household management — in other words, they set (bound

87 Ooi Keat Gin, "From Amah-chieh to Indonesian Maids: A Comparative Study in the
Context of Malaysia circa 19805-19905," in Hoarder and Kaur (ads), _Proletarian and
Gendered Mass Migrations._ 405-425.

88 I am grateful to Sucheta Mazumdar and Magaly Rodriguez Garcia for a discussion of
domestic work and migration in China.

89 Maria Jaschok, _Concubines and Bondservants. The Social History of a Chinese Custom
(Hong Kong, 1988), 7._
servants and younger female household members to works. If this suggests status based on servant and servile labor, if emphasis on capabilities and responsibility may suggest respect, and if seventeenth-century women in Jiangnan established a public women's culture and traversed the borders pre, scribbled by Confucian gender ideology, the classical texts merely masked hierarchy and obedience. "Complementary" spheres and "natural" roles of women, underpinned by ritual hid subordination to men. Since obedience — rather than coercion — upheld authority, Confucianism could postulate the harm of the household. Women had to internalize the "ultimate significance" of the classical texts: filial piety to in-laws and fidelity to the husband (or, for men of authority in the political sphere). Such submission could be deadly. It could involve socially mandated suicide after the death of the husband (or a ruler), a ritualized custom "in observance of marital fidelity" that, in the late Ming period, reached sizeable proportions. "The 'private ordeals' of widow who chose to die rather than serve a second master" (emphasis added) indicate both custom and service roles to men.

Service and position at the bottom of society was defined far more broadly than domestic service or, perhaps more accurately, was fluid and established by custom and interest. Bound and outcast groups existed in some provinces, like the wedding and funeral musicians of Shaanxi and Shanxi provinces; the hereditary servants of Anhui; the boatmen, oyster gatherers, and pearl fishers of the coastal regions; and others. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the imperial Court emancipated some groups. The "Lien-shih" encyclopedia that was probably completed around 1797 and directed especially to women, discussed concubines and maidservants, prostitutes and streetwalkers. Menial roles increased in the nineteenth century as the framework of imperial hierarchy came under pressure through incompetent rule, destructive rebellions, internal warlords, and British sponsored opium addiction. The latter impoverished large numbers and men had to work off debt as "coolies" under the regime of indentured servitude, especially in the expanding (port) cities and industries. The system, institutionalized by the British in India, was traditionally managed in China by local, often brutal men.

Male position and the functioning of Chinese society rested on the shoulders of women. If their labor was not valued explicitly, it was central. The extremely low level of women's emigration compared to other parts of the globe "reflects the importance of their labor in comparison to that of men" in the family economy and community of origin. Even in regions where women faced little opposition to migration, they rarely departed. Their role in local economies made them essential, even indispensable, while families could easily spare men who also had better earning opportunities elsewhere.

In contrast, the position of pre-adolescent daughters over the centuries was far weaker and under economic need parents could sell them into service. One destination, sexual services in "the market of vice," meant brothels of the fast growing cities but, in the case of high-class patrons, would involve years of cultural training. If a financially desperate family gave, pawned, or sold the productive and reproductive capabilities and powers of a daughter to a well-off or wealthy family, the transaction was — as in Latin America and Cyprus — masked as "philanthropy of the wealthy" or as "apprenticeship." With the transaction, the father transferred all rights of "ownership" to the new master and mui tsai — Cantonese for "little younger sisters" or "little maids" — entered servitude without monetary recompense to age of marriage, usually to a poor man, but could be kept in slavery for life, could be resold or be forced to do contract labor (iadó fan) with the earnings accruing to the owner. In the Hong Kong region, mui tsai constituted the majority of non-family labor for domestic chores in the early igoos. Well-to-do families' households might include, on the women's side, wives, concubines, and older maids and even slaves and indentured menials; servants might care for specific elders. In one single household employer-employee, master-servant, lender-debtor, owner-slave relationships could coexist. Service women migrated to Southeast Asian societies or were exported at a very young age. Of girls sent to the Philippines, 40 per cent were under 14 years of age, while only 5 per cent of the male migrants were that young. From the early 1850s, Guangdong workers were sent as far as the Hawaiian plantations, including some 1,500 women laborers and 94 Sucheta Mazumdar, "What Happened to the Women? Chinese and Indian Male Migration to the United States in Global Perspective," in S. Hune and G.M. Nomura (eds), Asian/Pacific Islander American Women: A Historical Anthology (New York, 2003), 345–52.
96 See the essay by Magaly Rodriguez Garcia in this volume and, comparatively, the essays by Hordge-Freeman/Harrington and Kalantzopoulos.
domestic servants. With British rule over Hong Kong, Western inquiries ink the system began. The British imperial government ignored the de fact enslavement although it had abolished slavery in the Empire in 1834; the Empire's Hong Kong Resident had no intention of offending the city's owning Chinese elite families who were vital to British economic interests.97

The establishment of factories (mainly for silk production) in the Pearl River Delta and Shanghai enabled women to attempt to regain agency becoming wage workers. This escape from patriarchy had its limits since marriage was expected. In an unusual pattern, some of these working women did marry but did not live with the man; instead they used part of their wages to pay his family to purchase a concubine. Thus they lost financially but kept their independence. This wage-work option abruptly ended with the Great Depression and some of the unemployed women sought amah-positions in the Southeast Asian, mainly Fujianese diaspora.

Vestiges of the system remained through the 1911 Revolution's attempt to change women's roles and into the transition from nationalist Republic to communist People's Republic of China in 1949. This political economy had involved "the largest and most comprehensive markets for the exchange of human beings in the world, and in many parts of China 'nearly every peasant household was directly or indirectly affected by the sale of people."98 In some regions farm labor in general had been bound, but mostly the system of sale was feminized. In the 1950s, communist cadres attempted to influence wives of emigrant workers, first to divorce and become workers in their own right, then to remain wedded to their distant husbands because the Party had come to recognize the value of remittances for the government's balance of payments.99 If women's submissive filial piety to men and elders and their work supported the whole of Confucius' postulated "social harmony" across the ages, this did not end with the coming of new political structures. It was explicitly reinserted into the public agenda by President Hu Jintao in 2005.

In Japan, from the prohibition of the sale of people 1619 to the beginning of the war of aggression against China and much of East and Southeast Asia in 1944, domestic service practices and actual practices influenced regulatory processes. Thus "lowly" domestics and "top" levels of the dynastic state reacted to each other. Service — overwhelmingly live-in — and its recruitment in the 260 feudal domains of Tokugawa Japan varied according to local Policies and economies. From the 18th century, (planned) development of village proto and larger industries impacted on service work. The medieval and early modern self-sufficient(extended) family household — sometimes labeled "the whole house" or "the big house" — was, as in many societies, a production unit in which tasks extended far beyond "domestic service" and could include a market-orientation.

Before 1619 — and surreptitiously thereafter — sale and purchase of a person was one of the standard ways of gaining a servant next to taking into the household young kin (nieces, nephews, cousins) or, alternatively, children from a network of acquaintances and dependents. "Sale" involved pawn service when the head of a household borrowed money against the collateral of the labor of a household member. Such pawned servants could remain in the creditor household after repayment of the debt and work for a wage. Since the law of 1619 only prohibited permanent sale, families sent children under a temporary sale, i.e. against an advance of the wage for the stipulated period. Thus monetization of service and a wage system developed earlier than elsewhere in the world. Written contracts replaced informal agreements based on trust between the parties. Patterns changed when economic growth led to servants being recruited from a wider labor market. Under a "pawn service" a prospective servant would work for five days and, if both parties were satisfied, the contract was signed and the agreed-upon wage advanced. When the enlarged recruitment region required middlemen, the trust aspect subsided; agents absconded with their fees, servants disappeared from their employment. In reaction, state-side regulations were tightened and servants needed to present a reliable guarantor for the discharge of the contract. While in rural regions informal networks continued to function, contract enforcement proved difficult in Japan's big seventeenth-century cities with impersonal labor markets.

By the early eighteenth century, when the shift from informal dependent relations to formal wage contracts had been completed, economic changes reduced domain lords' income and increased servants' employment options. Nationwide demand for proto-industrial products — cotton and silk textiles, sake and soy sauce, paper as well as other products — increased. Since domain lords could not levy a tax on these products, some tried to maximize their rice-producing labor force and discouraged manufactory. The new proto-industries attracted labor under service, apprenticeship, and casual labor arrangements and villagers could thus gain substantial wage incomes. In

consequence, pawn service declined. By the nineteenth century, employers began to hire domestic-service and farm labor on a casual basis rather than through live-in arrangements. The latter had involved dozens or more producing and agriculturally working "servants" and thus are not comparable to "living-in" of one or two female domestics or male artisan apprentices in household.

In the Meiji Period of change from the 1870s, domestic service continued to be a major source of employment for women but (textile) factory work offered an alternative — as it did to proto-industrial work. Domestic service continued to be a life-cycle rather than lifetime occupation and was viewed by many women as a training period. With urbanization and industrialization the new bourgeois families increased demand for servants, partly from status considerations. This pattern of employment, one or two persons per family, differed from the earlier "big household" where live-in servants included shop assistants, kitchen help in inns, servers in tea houses, as well as farm work. But from the early twentieth century the term "service" gradually came to mean job, household work. The new conceptualization of a private sphere of (nuclear) bourgeois families coincided with servants' new preference for daily "commuting" from their abode to that of their employer. The separation of working and living spheres changed relations and dependencies. Heavy taxation, imposed by the Meiji government on farming families to fund industrialization, forced rural young people to migrate: as workers to industries, as domestics to bourgeois urban households, or transpacific to North America where some became racialized domestics of American or Canadian employers. By the 1930s the demand for young domestics outpaced supply. Recruitment and search for positions was still through informal contacts but also through agencies and municipal employment offices. Working conditions, hours in particular, remained very difficult and as a result, turnover was extremely high. Many also left employment for personal/family reasons since young women were expected to be available to their own families.

Japan, as state and as society, has been traditionally hostile to "foreign immigration and thus domestic service migration remained internal. Japan's imperial outreach to the Korean Peninsula, however, intensified with the imposition of a protectorate in 1905 and annexation in 1910. Labor migration of Koreans for low menial tasks was encouraged or enforced. During World War II, large numbers of Korean women were forced into "brothel service" for Japanese army units across the empire. Figures for Korean forced workers are scarce, but

\begin{align*}
\text{Research Issues} \\
\text{This survey demonstrates to what extent macro-, meso-, and micro-regions retain their specificity even under the two phases of globalization, under European expansion and colonization and in the present under economic and migratory integration. Similarities have been pointed out when obvious or suggested when comparisons seem promising. While overarching approaches to domestic and care-giving work will probably remain superficial, this analytical survey indicates that the meaning of "service" and "domestic service" varies over time and by social space. It may include productive work. It may include tasks not subsumed under household "skills," on the one hand hard chores and care for children/the elderly on the other. Emotional labor may be done inside or outside the household. The close relation between reproductive work and sex — as voluntary togetherness, hierarchical consensual unions, service work, or violent exploitation — depends on societal discourses, power hierarchies, and individual decisions. "Family" is a fluid concept that posits women's household work as "labor of love" and in which (female) children maybe sold, pawned for the value of their labor, or annexed by fictitious kinship. The combination of class or status, culture or skin color, subalternization and superiorization has multiple impacts on household workers including men. Color-culture is evident in historic and modern hiring patterns when women (and men) from certain cultures of origin are preferred over others. Such preferences may be due to }
\end{align*}

\footnote{To what degree Korean women served as domestic workers is not clear from the research in languages 1 (D.H.) can read. Peter Duus, "Economic Dimensions of Meiji Imperialism: The Case of Korea, 1895-1910," in Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (eds), The Japanese Colonial Empire, 7895-1945 (Princeton, 1984), 128-171.}

\footnote{Public attention and, to some degree research, focuses on the sex workers, who even in the entertainment sector are a minority. Nobue Suzuki, "Filipino Migrations to Japan: From Surrogate Americans to Feminized Workers," in Shinji Yamashita et al. (eds), Transnational Migration in East Asia - SemiEthnological Reports 77 (2008), 67-77.}
to ascriptions ("the" Irish, "the" Somali, "the Indias"), to different socializational to different interests behind the two-sided process of taking a service job (a, in most cases, to migrate) and of hiring someone for service?o

Domestic service was (and, perhaps, is) often related to bondage which, i, gendered perspective, involved debt relations incurred by families whether due to general poverty, temporary dire straits, or mismanagement by a male household head and was secured and/or paid off by wives' and daughters' labors and bodies. However, recourse to self-sale or sale/pawning by family may be the only means to secure survival in periods of disasters, whether poor local harvests, larger regional famines, or other. Power relations may assign groups labeled by ethnicity (eth-class would be a modern term) and skin color to service/servile labor: "Indios" in Latin America, "hill tribes" in regions of India, "Irish" in Great Britain to give only a few examples. While, under this regime, whole cultural groups are assigned to service tasks, an extra burden is always placed on women.

The societal as well as economic institutionalization of regimes of service work uses differences of culture, language or dialect or sociolect, skin color ("race") via intentional otherizing, racializing, and inferiorizing to turn segments of internal populations into a reservoir for domestic work ranging from chore to care or to admit women service workers as migrants with, even in modern democratic states, lesser rights than citizens. However, this structural approach — like feminist approaches emphasizing subservience and labor history approaches emphasizing exploitation — though empirically and theoretically sound, undervalues the agency of women (and men) if under often severely constraining circumstances. Since over the centuries — millennia in fact — women have also chosen domestic-care-giving labor, their reasons and options need to be assessed (and accepted with respect) in addition to the analysis of the frames of inequalities.

Depending on societal and stateside frames, the actual difference as expressed in discursive constructions of culture or skin color, language or class may also be an asset within given macro-economic, societal, and stateside constraints. Since domestic labor "naturally" — i.e. by unquestioned societal convention — involves constraints on both a person's independent life and level of remuneration, many locally-born women avoid such jobs. Thus this consequence to be avoided if in any way possible. In the same way, nineteenth-century male industrial workers sought entry into receiving societies' labor market segments as a pathway to a society as a whole that, in their own lives' future, would provide better options than the society of birth. Excluded from many immigration entryways into states with high standards of living, in the late twentieth/early twenty-first century women have to seek household and caretaking jobs as a stepping stone for improved lives. Since demand for labor cannot be and could not be satisfied without the incoming (or internal) Others, they are admitted and hired "precisely because they carry a different cultural baggage."

Otherness may permit resistance or, at least, a self-perception that counters a receiving society's negative ascriptions. A domestic worker may "situate herself outside the very same culture with its specific hierarchical power relationships, which inevitably places her at the bottom. She may take recourse to the knowledge about her own social position at home and to her being essential through remittances to the family's survival." Swedish women in Chicago, Slovenian women in Alexandria, Philippine and Somali women in Toronto or Rome, Indian women in Pune, all show such self-confidence. While their work and diligence is taken for granted and hardly acknowledged, they are aware that their work and skills keep the Others' households functioning: sweeping, shopping, wet-nursing infants, caring for children. Employers often seem/ seemed incapable of working both as hard and as skillfully in the home. The African "boys" in colonizer homes and Chinese mui tsai in wealthy families knew as much as the Finnish "maids." A domestic worker "may also have a


104 Industrial employers sometimes bore the cost of recruitment and travel to obtain a reliable labor force; domestic workers may receive help from sympathetic employing women in negotiating bureaucracies and language acquisition.
strong sense of her own culture’s superior food habits and child rearing practices.” Women need such resilience because: “The race-class-gender systems of 'importing' cultures (North America, Europe, and Middle East) provide ready access to stereotypes in order to structure and organize historical 'immemorial edge' and present 'experience. Cultural markers are attached to the woman. 'Los When able to develop social capital and cross borderlines of segregation, femina migrans may move within the receiving society to labor market seg- ments with better working conditions and wages.

Equally rooted in history are harassment and even inferiorization. Women domestic workers experienced poor living conditions and often assumption of sexual accessibility by employers or male co-workers. In nineteenth century Austria, rural girls, sent away by families unable to feed them, had to head for Vienna as the only possible destination — its facades, like the images projected by wealthy families in Brazil and in Hong Kong — indicated wealth and ease of living. But in the intimate sphere of the homes of the self-designated “respectable” bourgeoisie they found an arena for being sexually harassed, for being dismissed if ill, for being cheated out of wages, accused of stealing, and mis-treated in other ways. The memoirs of service women are almost uniformly bitter.106 Others, like the amahs, succeeded in carving out a space and the Molkarni in India struggle to do so.

The dialectic between life-course or life-cycle options and exploitation con- tinues at the turn to the twenty-first century. Bridget Anderson’s Doing the Dirty Work provides a thoughtful exposition and others have raised similar issues for particular ethno-culturally defined domestic and care-giving workers. Like Harzig, Anderson emphasizes women’s "foot in the door" strategy as a goal-directed shaping of personal as well as family prospects. Her sources — in contrast to Harzig’s Canadian cases — are domestic workers in 1990s Fortress Europe. Many experienced demeaning work: "I do everything. I don’t have time to sleep or eat." "I have no rest and I have no place to sit."407 Others did achieve emotional satisfaction in caring for others.108 Anderson distinguishes between

selling of labor power and selling personhood. Migrant women’s strategy — the selling in their own lives — is to sell their labor for the best return as entrepreneurs, but, as the Finnish domestics explicitly noted, they face their employers or those for whom they provide (paid) care daily. This turns paid work into a question of identity. The relationship is bound or contractual and emotional. Employers attempt to buy "personhood" in addition to labor and, given the unequal power relationships, can impose working condition that damage personality. Common language usage, like "slaving" in the household, highlights by work in homes and care is often delegated to racialized groups. Such racial- ization occurred in the United States against African-American women, occurs in Afghanistan against Hazara or in Japan against Korean workers. Women domestic workers labor under the twin burdens of gender and ethno-racial discrimination. In terms of political economy, racializations play a core role in the supply and cost of reproductive workers. Skin color, religion, class and nationality all impact on the wages and working conditions that women seeking employment may negotiate. In addition, passport issues determine identity — immigrant workers not only negotiate working conditions with employers but general 'behavior” with the state as incarnated in immigration bureaucrats — or, in the past, admission to respectable families incarnated in the oldest male available, the patriarach.

Thus entry of a migrant domestic and care-giving worker into a family, society or polity posits a medium- or long-term perspective towards establishing an economic as well as cultural base in the receiving emotional-ideological community without incurring exorbitant costs in terms of personhood. The need for entry is premised on conditions in the domestic workers’ families and societies of birth which offer neither sustainable lives nor options for advancement and which impose exploitative and violence-prone gender relations. However, even the entry process governed by personal patriarchal or imper- sonal bureaucratic procedures may do violence to a person. Women of all skin colors have availed themselves of options, have created options, and wherever possible have moved on to more independent lives. They have had to compromise and negotiate between imposed working conditions, interests and emotions of those cared for, and their own emotions, capabilities, and goals. This needs to be part of a political economy of work in societies regardless of spe- cific economic system.

105 These paragraphs, quotes included, closely follow Harzig, 'Domestics of the World (Unite?).'
108 Deirdre Meintel, Sylvie Fortin, and Marguerite Cognet, "On the Road and on their Own: Autonomy and Giving in Home Health Care in Quebec," Gender, Place and Culture 13 (z066), 563-580.
PART 1

Combining Work and Emotions: Strategies, Agency, Self-Assertion
CHAPTER 4

Introduction: Combining Work and Emotions: Strategies, Agency, Self Assertion

Dirk Hoerder

Researchers have approached domestic and care work from many angles with two major interpretive frames emerging. One focuses on exploitation and harassment of the, mainly, female workers. The other, in contrast, emphasizes the women’s self-assertion and strategy to use domestic work as a stepping stone for better jobs and better lives for themselves, for families in the culture of origin or, through sequential migration, for family reunification in the society of destination. Though sometimes juxtaposed, both approaches have similar merit since the position of domestic and care-giving workers depends very much on societal frames: entry to Canada via domestic work as a starting point may — and frequently does — lead to residency, citizenship and family (re-)formation. Entry into any of the oil-producing economies in the Middle East often involves exploitation and refusal of permanent residency. Intra-societal frames, like the caste system in South Asia, also privilege exploitation while regional intercultural networks may establish a desirable work environment. The outcomes of internal or international migration into domestic and care-giving work are framed by societal as well as individual and institutional as well as informal attitudes, gender constraints, respect for reproductive work or its lack. Societies with a past burdened by slavery or caste and skin color-based discrimination make it more difficult to assert household worker identities and to achieve respect. Societies in which wage labor and resulting discourses replaced constraints like serfdom and servitude early seem to be less constraining but the insidious gendered discrimination between productive and reproductive work imposes massive barriers to agency, self-assertion, and lifecourse strategies.

The authors of the essays in this part analyze domestic and care workers in six different societies, more if we count migrants’ societies of background and their trajectories through several societies. They look at workloads and agency and at the emotional involvement sought or incurred when caring for others. Work in homes — in close contact with employers — also involves identity work — who am I? The essays discuss wage relationships — am I a worker or a helper? — and family proximity — am I “part of the family” or an outsider within? Am I a caring — paid — person or a replaceable hireling? Domestic workers
agency may be restricted to survival, resilience, self-protection by limiting the damage to one's personality - or it may involve medium-range strategies to achieve individual life plans or even family welfare; it may focus on individual self-assertion of one's dignity - or on achieving collective demands for better working conditions and wages; it may involve individual resistance and proactive agency, informal networking to increase options and support - either formal organization either in women's groups or trade unions. At the center of most domestic workers' agency are the need for a self- or family-supporting income and the demand for respect both expressed materially in working conditions and wages, and emotionally in being treated as a human being. The workplace requires mutual emotional involvement resulting from the closeness and intimacy of home and, more particularly, in care-giving. For analytical purposes domestic chores on the one hand and loving care for infants or debilitated elderly on the other may neatly be separated. In domestic and care-giving workers live these aspects are inextricably entwined: a cook serving a family knows that if she falls ill or takes a day off the employers are stuck; no food on the table, often no one having the time to prepare food, sometimes even no one in the employer family capable of preparing a tasty meal.

Strategies of domestic and care-giving workers thus are framed by societal historical attitudes as well as present-day discourses about such work and those who perform it. They may be constrained or encouraged by legal frames, if any, and by the poverty of the worker's own family of origin. The women face employers whose attitudes and power range from helpful to arrogant, from supportive to exploitative. Domestic and care-giving workers have to deal with their own socialization - have they been taught submissiveness by their parents or self-assertiveness? They may be proud breadwinners for their families or subjected to demands to support others by continuously remitting large parts of their salaries. They are born into societal, class-specific lifecourse expectations in which service maybe a training period before forming a family of their own or in which service is the life-long "fate" of women from poorer social groups.

The societies analyzed in this part's essays cover, socio-geographically, the Eastern Mediterranean world from the Slovenia-and-Trieste region to Alexandria, Egypt; Brazil with its history of slavery; Poland over time and across social strata; Vietnamese migrants in present-day Czech society; India and caste hierarchies; Canada and the Philippines in a setting of access to citizenship. Together these cases present a wide range of constraints and options from nearly (emotionally) bound via a relative range of options for improving one's life conditions to an agreeable, self-determined sphere of work. Women in the Mediterranean world who moved from Slovenian Goriza to nearby Trieste and - only geographically - distant Alexandria (as well as to other cities) over more than a century of macro-level economic and political changes from the 1840s to the 1950s, had to adapt their strategies to the micro-regional impact of top-level destructive or constructive political decisions. Diachronic analysis contributes to a historicization of contemporary interpretations of global care chains and to women's agency in this undervalued sector of the economy. The room that these women created for themselves was sizeable, notwithstanding national, clerical, and male opposition to their migration in Slovenian society as well as negative ethnicization in the fascist period of Italian history. For many of them, service was profession and a calling if the employer family was agreeable. Did they lead independent lives taking care of children and family affairs of others? "As independent as possible under the circumstances" they would have claimed and they proudly faced the Slovenian society's talking heads but also suffered from the denigration of their lives. The approach to understand their lives and decisions over time permits a diachronic analysis of the tension between the declining importance of rural economies in one culture and the demand for qualified labor in middle-class urban families in several cultures and women's strategies to determine their own preferences and the family economics. (Part-time) domestic work was a lifestyle beyond an option to earn money. And it was preferable to factory labor.

In contrast to the self-assertiveness of the Goriza women, women in domestic service in modern Brazil are heavily burdened by the historical legacy of slavery, by ongoing color coding of people's station in society, and by the continuity of patriarchal frames of family organization. The constraints of the past burden the weak in the present. To reduce the number of mouths to feed, poor families give their daughters to well-to-do or wealthy ones. This could be a wage relationship but is cloaked by rhetoric of philanthropy: the wealthier supposedly support the poor by taking their daughters as servants into the family. This emphasis on "family" and emotional ties obscures the work relationship and makes the topic of wages vanish. Gratitude is expected of the servant women and, if they are adopted as fictive kin, they often receive no remuneration besides an occasional gift. As "outsiders within" the young and, sometimes, older women had and have to develop strategies to affirm their rights and personalities within this frame of layered restraints. They do so - bound by discourses and practices of gratitude - to some degree on their own, occasionally in contacts with women in similar predicament, or - for some - by joining domestic workers' unions. Most understand the dependency relationship but are so deeply enmeshed into it that they can liberate themselves only partially - even when they have moved out of the family they
continue to respond to calls for "help." And in contrast to the Slovenian women, their domestic labor was not a voluntary choice.

Less dependent through fictive kinship than in Brazil but also less able to determine their working conditions than the Alexandrinkes were the many distinct groups of domestic workers in Poland from the 16th century to the present. A long-range perspective on servitude and service in Polish noble, bourgeois, and modestly well-off urban society indicates how class and status, as well as rural-town-urban frames affected women hired for chores, as wet-nurses, or governesses. In addition attitudes to paid care work have been influenced by Poland's general economic development, the political constraint imposed by the partition of Poland by three neighboring empires between 1772 and 1918, and, in the present, the lack of institutionalized care and increasing wage work of mothers. A central turning point however was the recognition of "childhood" as a distinct life phase which required care and education — which was not even a concept at the beginning of the period under review. Parallel socio-economic societal changes led to an emphasis on quality of upbringing rather than quantity in numbers of children. In this frame a dialectic emerged between usually more powerful employing families and domestic workers, regulated in part by state institutions. Those hiring themselves out had to earn their and, perhaps, their family's livelihood but had little power to negotiate. While wet-nurses of the infants of the royal family could achieve national renown, governesses and male preceptors positions of respect, the chore women in families of few means earned neither respect nor decent standards of living. The early 19th-century reestablishment of a Polish state saw an increase in the domestic work sector when it still was the principal employment sector for women, especially during the depression after 1929. In the People's Republic of Poland (1945-1989) the number of people hired by households dropped dramatically — along with intense industrialization and a devaluation of paid domestic work for its servile connotations. After 1989 the market economy became a context for the economic re-polarization of Polish society and an affluent part of society appeared that could afford private care solutions while the quality of institutional solutions continued to be poor. Particularly striking is the employment of nannies as individuals who devoted all their attention to the needs of one family's child or children. A new version of middle-class child upbringing seemed to emerge and with it a new status of care-giving women.

The emphasis on children shifts analysis from domestics as doing the "dirty" work to their emotional attachments or "emotional work" and "identity work." This distinction between domestic and care-giving work is, of course, dependent on societal legal and historic frames, migration strategies, ingrained changing attitudes, and most of all strategies of families and caregivers. In the case of Vietnamese migrants in Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic, a specific conjuncture demanded a quick solution to the issue of who takes care of children when both migrant parents have to work for long hours. Neither parents or other kin nor Czech institutional solutions like kindergartens were available for Vietnamese immigrants. At this point the parents' needs intersected with a search for supplementary income and emotional relationships by middle-aged and older Czech women. In a symbiotic relationship, the (often Czech-born) children of Vietnamese parents receive care and affection from Czech women who go beyond the (poorly) paid work relationship to become fictive grandmothers or aunts. They also bridge Vietnamese and Czech cultures and become both an anchor point in and an access gate to Czech society for families in which both parents work, sometimes seven days a week, which they do in the interest of their children, especially to fund their education. In this three-sided arrangement, all sides gain emotionally: the parents know that their children are lovingly cared for; care-giving Czech women fill an emotional emptiness in their lives and earn small supplementary incomes; and children with well-meaning but distant parents receive warm care and learn the ways and language of both cultures in family settings. Some tensions may appear: mothers may feel that their child is closer to the Czech nanny than to themselves, the nannies expect recognitions of their emotions but, in view of the fact that, at some point, the children will leave them have to develop detached attachment. In the case studies discussed by Adéla Souralová, the arrangement is a win-win situation for all three parties concerned.

In contrast women domestic workers in Pune, India, were in a no-win position through the 1970s based on caste, gender, and class. They migrated within the state of Maharashtra or within the city between neighborhoods but, in the work sphere, the "intimate" sphere of home, had to cross the borders of caste as well as of gender and class. Caste is as much a burden as the institutionally different legacy of slavery in Brazil. In contrast to the cooperation between Czech and Vietnamese women the meeting of different castes in well-to-do Maharashtra households involved massive discrimination against low-caste women and those from other marginal/marginalized groups. Under conditions of extreme exploitation, not at all hidden by any "member of the family" clichés, women were mistreated, poorly paid, and denigrated. A spontaneous walk-out by a single deeply-hurt woman in 1980 led to an unplanned protest and a larger strike and collective action, first by unorganized women, then with the help of their self-organizing and support by parties, women's movement, and unions. Legislation came slowly, if at all, and remained largely ineffective. Women, fully aware of the denigration of their persons as workers, as
women, and by caste, demanded rights, acceptable pay, and improved working conditions. And they began to improve their self-esteem while becoming aware that their employers were, in a way, helpless without their household work: from spontaneity to strategy. But since negotiating takes place in the workplace and in work relationships, the less overt but underlying issue of caste is not properly addressed.

As opposed to Pune women's historic pattern of societal caste, class, and gender-based discrimination in the intimate sphere of home, the migration of Philippine women into domestic service and care-giving occurs in a frame of global discrimination set by unequal terms of trade. As a result their society and economy is unable to provide sufficient jobs and family incomes. Their migration is a strategically planned move with a background of a long history of migration and thus the opposite to the on-the-spot reaction of the abused Pune women. The solidarity and mutual help among Filipinas is of long standing and the women deciding to migrate to jobs in domestic and care-giving work follow well-traveled routes. They select "sympathetic" destinations, Italy as a Catholic society like the Philippines, Great Britain because most have English-language capabilities because of the former colonization by the U.S., Canada because it provides access to citizenship after two years of domestic labor and four years of residence. A few employers make such labor demeaning as that of the Pune women — but the abuse is not systemic.

To increase their options the women may make conscious choices as to where to work on the basis of information from earlier migrating friends. Some even plan a trajectory through different societies to increase their intercultural competence. The relationship to the family of birth in the Philippines remains emotional and economic. Like the Gorica women they strategically plan independent lives globally in the framework of admission legislation and networks. "Family" is neither mere rhetoric as in the Brazilian case nor a closely-knit unit as customary language usage suggests. It is a backdrop, emotionally valued but in need of continuous cash infusion through remittances. For the women selecting Canada and gaining citizenship the family of birth becomes a "recruiting pool" for sisters or female friends to join the migrants. Thus a reconstitution of geographic and emotional closeness through sequential migration establishes a "glocal" family with several nodes of proximity.

These essays show that the different overall approaches — exploitation, paid work, family emotionality — cover only one aspect of lives that these women (and men in the past and to some degree in the present) have to carve out under extremely constraining or relatively open societal frameworks. They may have to struggle to negotiate improvements for themselves and overcome historic mental frames whether slavery, caste, skin color, or gender and class. In
Slovenian Domestic Workers in Italy: A Borderland Care Chain over Time

Majda. Hrzenjak

Introduction

Numerous research data show that the key strategy by which private households in countries at the centre of capitalism compensate for the care deficit caused by increased employment of women, population ageing, and social policy measures that encourage the commodification and individualization of care work instead of public care capacities — is the outsourcing of care services to migrant care workers from the countries at the "periphery of capitalism". The "global care chain" concept, which evinces these developments in terms of global structural inequalities, has been established as the dominant concept for critical analysis of these processes. The concept unveils the features of the "transnational political economy of care" which involves the exploitation of specifically feminized care work performed by female migrants, who emigrate from poor to rich countries to provide care for employed middle and upper-class women, in order to give a better life to their own children left behind in care of their female relatives in the country of origin. The global care chain concept reveals the dependence of European societies’ reproduction on global structures of inequality according to ethnicity, race, class, and gender that are intensified by migration and employment regimes and the concomitant insecure citizenship and working statuses for migrants. As shown in this analysis, the global capitalist hierarchy of countries as core or periphery, as well as class, ethnicity, and gender all combine to produce this exploitation of the specifically gendered labor of care work.

The concept of a global care chain establishes a markedly synchronous analysis of migrant care work. By integrating topical but heterogeneous elements, such as the feminization of migration, globalization, structural inequalities, gender inequalities, changes at the labor market, demographic trends, new developments in social policies, border regimes etc., an interpretative framework is established that analyses migrant care work exclusively from the perspective of the present. Focus on the present in this analytical framework is so dominant that migrant care work appears as an almost new phenomenon that arose only in the past few decades. The key explanatory elements are an increased women’s employment rate, a care deficit, commodification of care, changes in the nature of social provisions, and migration based on global inequalities.

However, as Yeates states, "if the concern is not just to map the spread and structure of global care chains but also to understand the transformation of these chains over time and the confluence of factors that bear on that transformation, the currently strong emphasis on the contemporary context requires historicisation."3 The purpose of this study is to contribute to the historicization of the contemporary interpretation of global care chains through an outline of a tradition, over a century old, of Slovenian women of the coastal border region between Slovenia and Italy (the Primorska and Gorjika regions) who have worked in Italian private households as migrant domestic workers continuously since the nineteenth century. I am interested in what emerges from a look at the contemporary phenomenon of migrant care workers from a diachronic perspective, if we follow the continuous presence of the phenomenon back in time at a specific location. What new dimensions, meanings, and contexts emerge from considering migrant care work from a diachronic perspective, as well as from contrasting the diachronic and synchronic perspectives?

The border region between Slovenia and Italy simultaneously represents both a symbolic border between Eastern and Western Europe, and also, until only two decades ago, the border between two confronting political and economic systems ideologically dividing Europe. This border has experienced an agitated history, full of political changes, shifts of imperial and state borders, changes of border regimes and multi-directional migration. It is a peripheral region that has been marked recently by the symbolic, ideological, political, and economic borders of the contemporary European Union. Throughout these shifts, the phenomenon of women in this region leaving their homes to perform domestic work in Italian households has remained continuous and constant from the mid-nineteenth century until today. This makes one wonder how the past is embedded into the present, tradition into modernity, in different guises and in various political and socio-economic contexts. A topical

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analysis\(^4\) shows that, because of population ageing, the increased employment of women, the absence of a public care capacity, and the consequent individualization and privatization of care work in Italy, the "male breadwinner/fermi-carer" model is transforming into the "migrant-in-the-family" model. However, the extended tradition of women from the Primorska and Goriska regions working in Italian households as servants, laundresses, cooks, nannies, attendants, cleaners, companions, etc. shows that "migrant-in-the-family" is more likely a deeply rooted cultural pattern that persists as a self-evident and normalized custom from the past, lingering in the present where it has gained new dimensions, contexts, and interpretations.

In this chapter I outline how the position of Slovenian female domestic workers in Italy has both changed and remained continuous through a century of change in the political and economic systems of both countries—a change that also influenced the border regimes between Italy and Slovenia. Today, this long-standing symbiotic relationship between Slovenian and Italian women places Slovenian domestic workers in a privileged position in comparison to other transnational migrant domestic workers from other East European countries or even the Philippines. I also want to show how two factors (the longevity of the tradition of this phenomenon in this micro-region of Europe, and the fact that in this border region definitions of border and border regimes have been changing constantly) influence the difference in the position of Slovenian domestic workers in a privileged position in comparison to other transnational migrant domestic workers from other East European countries or even the Philippines. I also want to show how two factors (the longevity of the tradition of this phenomenon in this micro-region of Europe, and the fact that in this border region definitions of border and border regimes have been changing constantly) influence the difference in the position of Slovenian domestic workers in a privileged position in comparison to other transnational migrant domestic workers from other East European countries or even the Philippines.

The Life-Cycle Model

Until the First World War, when a part of Italy and the Slovenian territory belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Italian urban centre of Trieste, with its harbour, influenced the Slovenian rural hinterland as a strong magnet for migration, Slovenian women represented more than half the migrants in Trieste compared to men.\(^6\) The majority of them were young rural girls, many of them even children, aged between 15 and 22,\(^7\) who came to Italy seeking work and earnings. Their departure was often the consequence of the deep economic crisis at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century that hit the poorest strata of the rural population hardest.\(^8\) The migrants came from impoverished families with too many members to survive on modest plots burdened with enormous taxes and debt. The patrilineal inheritance system also dictated that the major part of the farm and property belonged to the firstborn son; therefore, most of the children, especially daughters, had no choice but to leave home\(^9\) and to find employment as workers, mostly servants, cooks, and household maids in families.

According to Barbiet and Miklavčić-Brezigar,\(^10\) it was almost a rule for rural young women to find employment as maids in order to earn their own money for their dowry, as well as to support their families. Young women generally started work at about the age of fifteen, worked as servants for a few years, and then, between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, returned to their home villages with the money they had earned, got married, and settled down. Besides assistance to the family, the main purpose of their migration was to earn their own dowry, thereby preventing them from falling among the poorest on the marriage market. As stated by Kalc,\(^11\) the movement of the young women to Trieste was an alternative to the social marginalization that they would have encountered in their home village and which was often connected to involuntary single status. This rural-to-urban economic migration represented a typical life-cycle model of employment, in which servant work, as part of the transition from the family of origin towards the formation of one's own family, was considered as a learning process, an opportunity to establish contacts, as well as to move up the social ladder and to save money.

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\(^6\) Marta Verginella, Ženska obroba. Vpis zensk v zgodovino Slovencev (Ljubljana, 2006), 144.

\(^7\) Mlekuz, "Izbrani vidiki," 141-164.

The "Alexandrians" were in a different position. These were women from the Primorska and Goriska regions, who immigrated to Egypt to work as servants, housekeepers, and wet nurses in wealthy families — especially in Alexandria — thus their name "Alexandrinkes." Slovenian women and men started to migrate to Egypt shortly after the construction of the Suez Canal was completed in 1869, which was also when Egypt, in the middle of economic prosperity, attracted cotton merchants, architects, craftsmen, doctors, officials, and others. In the first emigration wave in the 1870s, when the Slovenian territory was a part of Austro-Hungarian monarchy, numerous Slovenian women were employed as domestic workers in Italian and Austrian families. When moving to Cairo and Alexandria, Italian families from Trieste and Milan, along with Austrian families from Vienna, took along the Slovenian women they employed. Slovenian women continued to migrate independently to Egypt after the First World War, when the western part of the Slovenian territory came under Italy's rule after the Austro-Hungarian monarchy's disintegration. Most of them came from the rural surroundings of Trieste and Gorica. According to the available data, mostly women migrated but also some men and children. In 1900, as Makuc estimated, the number of Slovenian emigrants in Egypt amounted to a total of 5,300, of which some 5,000 women were servants. The economic situation after the First World War and the economic and political restraints under Italian fascism between the World Wars reduced the potential earnings of men. Therefore, a family could only prosper, indeed even survive, with women's work in Egypt.

However, contemporary research shows that not only hard living conditions motivated women's migration but also possibilities of women's promotion, cosmopolitanism, the modernization of farming, etc. Familial and social solidarity networks played an important role to make use of these possibilities and break out of traditional patterns of women's work of housekeeping and child care to access a new and richer market available through new transport connections. Kalc maintains that domestic work of Slovenian women in Egypt may be understood also as an upgrade from women's work in Italian households. This intensive migration to Egypt lasted for 65 years, from the 1870s to 1935, and was interrupted only in the turbulent period prior to the Second World War.

The return of Alexandrians after the Second World War was on one hand a consequence of changed political attitudes towards immigrant residents in Egypt (for instance, the nationalization of the property of Europeans), but on the other hand also a consequence of changed economic conditions at home where owing industrialization provided new work options. The stories of these Alexandrinkes, as well as those of life-cycle migrant young women, deconstruct patriarchal myths, often repeated by scholars, of "the woman as primarily the stay-at-home mother who takes care of the home and the children." While this represented the dominant model of women's social position at that time, the decisions of the "Alexandrinkes" and those departing to Italy reveals an alternative image of active rural women, who at the turn to the twentieth century migrated locally and globally to emancipate themselves or to take the active role of family breadwinner by entering the labor market, although their "labor market entrance" was still limited to traditional, feminized fields of work such as child care, nursing, housekeeping, cleaning, cooking, etc. But domestic work was only one of the profitable activities in which women engaged. In contrast to the dominant discourse, women from the Slovenian rural environment have always been economically and socially active. Women who migrated to work daily or took temporary jobs abroad played a special role in the economy. They worked as chestnut sellers, bread sellers, fruit and vegetable market traders, milkers, egg sellers, hawkers, yarn makers, cooks, maids, wet nurses, chambermaids, washerwomen, housekeepers, and other types of employment. These were informal forms of gainful employment that enabled women to contribute to the survival of the family or to their own economic independence. All of these activities demanded mobility in various forms: daily crossing from a rural to an urban environment, travel from town to town to sell farm produce for a few days, live-in services in a neighbouring or faraway town, or transnational migration to Egypt, the United States, and Argentina.

12 Daga Koprivec, Dediriña Aleksandrinke in spomini njihovih potomcev (Ljubljana, 2013), 57-58.
13 Dorica Makuc, Aleksandrinke (Gorica, 1993).
15 Marina Luksn?Hacin, 'Concealment and Patriarchy. Man is an Idea, Woman is Matter; Man is a Head, Woman is a Heart," in Marina Luksn?Hacin and Jernej Mlekuz (eds), Go Girls! When Slovenian Women Left Home (Ljubljana, 2009), 63-87, esp. 76. See also Mirjam Milhar?i6 Hladnik (ed.), From Slovenia to Egypt: Alexandrike's Trans Mediterranean Domestic Workers' Migration and National Imagination (forthcoming: Göttingen, 2014). See also the documentary film "Alexandrinke" (son) by Metod Pevec.
Young women, married women, mothers, and widows migrated to Egypt for different reasons. However, in spite of this diversity, in the Slovenian colletive awareness, Alexandrians represent a symbol of mothers who left their little children, sometimes just born, in care of relatives and fathers to take on a well-paid work of wet nurses abroad and thus provide for their families’ livelihood. The symbol of Alexandrian women thus reflects contemporary ambivalence of transnational mothers, on one hand elevated into victims who sacrificed their motherhood for improvement of economic situation of their families but, on the other hand, judged as women deserting their children for a better life in a richer world.

The story of "Alexandrian" Marija Koren, presented by Barbie and Miklavcic-Brezigar, elucidates this multi-generational global care chain. Marija knew about Egypt as a child, since after her father’s death before the First World War, her mother left to work in Alexandria, leaving her three children in the care of her sister. Marija went to Egypt for the first time in 1935, leaving her four-month-old daughter with her sister-in-law. Two years later, in 1937, she returned home, bought a vineyard, and enlarged the family property with the money she had earned. In 1939 she gave birth to a son and seven months later left again for Egypt as her husband pressed her to earn more money. Her baby son was left in the care of her sister, who taught him to take a bottle, while her mother-in-law took care of her husband and her three-year-old daughter. Marija returned for good in 1972, after a total of 37 years working as a maid or nanny in Egypt.

In times of their absence, Alexandrians who were mothers, similar to transnational mothers in modern global care chains, paid female relatives and neighbours to take care of their children, sometimes including the responsibility of surrogate breast-feeding. Fathers, the same as in contemporary transnational families, have not played a significant role in childcare. The money that an Alexandrian woman sent back to her family for their livelihood and improvement of quality of life represented, like modern remittances, motherly love and care. An important difference between past and contemporary transnational motherhood is technology. Modem transnational mothers may keep contact with their children through electronic communication networks, as well as in-person visits facilitated by fast and affordable air transport, while Alexandrian did not have these possibilities. Therefore conditions of transnational motherhood were significantly more difficult a century ago.

It is significant that both the church and the secular authorities were concerned about the "moral" threat faced by Slovenian women abroad and thus lobbied intensively for women to give up their profitable activities, return home, and devote themselves to housekeeping and the upbringing of children. The Vicar of Bilje, for example, was shocked that "their physical and moral life was endangered and lost for the future" and demanded a ban on the emigration of women. Institutions’ fears and concerns about the morality of female emigrants was manifested in constant warnings by priests and lay writers about the temptations posed by foreign lands and single life and culminated in the condemnation of the supposed immorality involved. Today, ethnographic studies about the "Alexandrian" usually list their unbearable suffering because of separation from their small children and from family life. Far less attention, however, is devoted to the discrimination, undervaluation, and degradation the women suffered because of such moral condemnation from their national authorities, village communities, and public opinion. By labelling the migrant domestic workers of that time as immoral and worthless, secular and church authorities strove to "domesticate" migrant women to give up profitable activities and stay home as devoted and traditional housewives and mothers. In their opinion, the "Alexandrian" migrants, living outside their families and earning wages, "violated the natural order of things" as regards both the strict division of labor and gender hierarchy between men and women. It was an act of moral judgment similar to that of present-day media and majority public opinion, which condemn transnational mothers as "bad mothers" and directs attention from basic problems of migrant care workers such as their prospects for working visas, citizenship status, social rights and family reunion.

Double Ethnicization

With the Italian military occupation of 1918, followed by the Treaty of Rapallo in 1920, the Primorska and Gorica regions came under Italy as part of the Julian March. Thus, Slovenians in these regions and Croats of Istria were separated from their nations and subjected to foreign authority. Working as servants for the Italian urban upper class remained the main employment...
for many Slovenian rural young women in Trieste and Gorizia as well as in Milan, Rome, and Naples. Although Slovenian women from the Primorska and Goriska regions were transformed into citizens of Italy and consequently were legally working and living in Italy, their situation took a significant turn for the worse. With the annexation, and more dramatically with the subsequent rise of Fascism, Slovenians became second-class citizens and, as Slays, an inferior race. This was reflected in the working conditions of Slovenian servants. Zora Tavžar left to work with an Italian family when she was fifteen. As she said, the pay was poor, she received no respect, and she had to sleep in the boiler room. They renamed her Alba because they felt it was inappropriate for "such a beautiful girl to have a Slavic name." During this period of legitimized discrimination and denationalization of Slovenians in Italy, many Slovenian migrants to Yugoslavia and the Italian authorities actively encouraged this emigration.

In this period, Slovenian servants, chambermaids, nannies, and laundresses who retained employment in Italian households were subjected to ethnic and racial discrimination by their employers — a type of discrimination that is also a defining structural characteristic of care work of migrant women in the present. However, as Verginella points out, ethnicization also came from those in their own nation, albeit with different aims. The processes of discrimination in Italy strengthened and deepened the sense of ethnic affiliation among Slovenians; the stronger this sense of ethnic affiliation, the more indispensable female members of the national community became in their role as childbearers, mothers, and educators of future Slovenians. National awareness-raising activities among educated middle-class women became publicly important and were perceived as the key contribution to strengthening the Slovenian national concept. However, as noted by Verginella, if the process of national affirmation was beneficial for middle-class women, it was far less positive for the rural women working in Italian households. They were considered "deserters of the national body" and their crossing to the foreign, Italian environment was considered as weakening and tarnishing the good name of the nation. The figure of the nationally conscious housewife and mother, bringing up nationally aware individuals, was not consistent with the image of the woman who broke the rules and served a foreign nation. 'Nationally minded men who fostered the figure of 'loving and caring wife and mother' considered these women as a source of shame, especially laundresses and servants that were in contact with foreign national environment, with its most intimate and therefore most dangerous side, its 'dirty laundry.'

Domestic Work during the Socialist Period in Former Yugoslavia

After the Second World War, the borders shifted again. Part of the Primorska and Goriska regions now belonged to Yugoslavia, a multi-ethnic country. Slovenians, Croats, Serbs, Macedonians, Albanians, Montenegrins, and Bosnians. The new border was not only geographic, but also became an ideological divider between two utterly alien and contradictory economic, social, and political systems. Those people who traditionally eased their economic underdevelopment by dependence on Italian urban centres, such as Trieste and Gorizia, were strongly affected by the negative impacts of the Italian-Yugoslav border. From the first post-war years until 1954, the border was extremely closed and ideologically aggravating. Though the beginning of industrialization in Yugoslavia represented an opportunity for employment to rural people, the resultant jobs were for men. Women mostly stayed at home, worked on the farms (which was rarely recognized as formal employment), and took care of children.

However, in spite of the nominally closed border as established by the Peace Treaty in 1947, Slovenian women, migrating daily, still worked in Italian households or sold home-grown vegetables on the other side of the border and hence contributed to the family budget. Although some of them decided to relocate to the family where they worked and thus became live-in domestic workers because of the difficulties in crossing the closed border, most preferred daily migration, a live-out form of work and, occasionally, part-time work for several families. The varying degrees of border control compelled daily commuters from Yugoslavia to Italy to develop multiple strategies to cross whenever they wished and to take whatever products they wanted to sell in Italy. Between 1945 and 1954, a substantial number of Slovenian families moved to Trieste, thus immigrating to Italy, because of uncertainty about whether Slovenian coastal territory would fall to Yugoslavia or Italy and in fear

23 Verginella, Genska obrobja, 143.
24 Because both Italy and Yugoslavia demanded the territory in question, a Free Triestan Territory under the protection of the United Nations was established in 1947. A zone A belonged to Italy and zone B to Yugoslavia. In 1954 the London Treaty on annexation of the Slovenian coastal area to Yugoslavia was signed and, thus, a new state border between Yugoslavia and Italy was established.
that the Trieste hinterland, vitally dependent on the urban centre, would be cut off from the city. It was these emigrants who provided a new social network that daily commuting Slovenian woman could lean on. As in Italian cities, women developed their own social networks, vital for keeping regular customers and widening the circle of city buyers for their services and farm produce.

Symbolically, the image of the Primorska and Goriska women, who daily outwitted border control to earn money informally in Italian households, acquired connotations of mobility, inventiveness, interference, and artfulness. They were embedded in numerous structural and symbolic contradictions between Yugoslavia and Italy, rural and urban, capitalism and socialism, traditional female roles and women’s autonomy, good wages and undervalued work, migrant and native etc. Among these contradictions they managed to steer their course quite successfully and even to turn them to their own advantage.

In the 1960s and 1970s, enhanced industrialization and better educational and working opportunities in socialist Yugoslavia for all contributed greatly to the emancipation of rural women. Still, the number of women from the Primorska and Goriska regions who were cleaning and ‘helping’ in Italian families did not decrease significantly. Many women who worked full-time as industrial workers in Yugoslavia additionally worked as household help in Trieste a few times a week. Many even left their industrial employment, preferring to work informally as housekeepers in Italian households while they were paying social and pension contributions in Slovenia. In factories, working conditions were hard, working hours inflexible, and salaries poor. On the other side of the border, in Italy, the informal economy offered completely different opportunities: flexible and part-time work and, despite their undervaluation, significantly better salaries than workers with higher education could earn in Yugoslavia.

Good wages for household work resulted from two different economic standards and economic systems in two neighbouring countries. In addition, the flexibility connected with informal employment led to a re-evaluation of this usually unappreciated work. The state border, which in the beginning restrictively divided and limited two countries with different values and economic standards, became (though conditionally and to a limited extent) permeable after 1954: creating the potential for easier work and better earnings in an urban and economically more advantageous environment. After 1954, agreements establishing special functional exceptions for the movement of goods, services, and people in the border region allowed inhabitants to cross the border under more favourable conditions than other citizens of Yugoslavia. The migrant domestic and care work of women from the Primorska and Goriska regions, situated in this inter-space between two normative systems, thus shows the continuity and predominance of mobility among this social group of women after the Second World War. It shows their work outside the home, their role as family breadwinners, and their economic independence.

The Situation of Slovenian Domestic Workers in Italy in the Present

The secession of Slovenia from Yugoslavia and the establishment of a nation-state in 1991 were followed by the restructuring of the Slovenian economy and the economic recession of the 1990s. This led to the closing of many factories and companies and temporarily increased the economic importance of informal paid domestic work in Italian border towns as a means of family survival. In crises generally, domestic work represents a frequently adopted strategy for securing the means of life, particularly used by women without occupational training or education and their families. However, even after 1995, when Slovenia had recovered economically, and differences in economic standards between Slovenia and Italy significantly diminished, women from these regions continued their domestic work in Italian private households on the other side of the border. The entrance of Slovenia into the European Union in 2004 and the Schengen regime from 2007 practically abolished all limitations on their daily border crossing.

A demographic analysis of the interviewed women from the Primorska and Goriska regions who work in Italian households today shows that middle aged (40 to 65) and older women and pensioners prevail (the oldest respondent was 76 years old). Young women (20 to 35) are inclined to take such jobs far less often. Most of the respondents were married and had children. With the exception of one respondent who had higher education and took a job cleaning Italian homes after her retirement, all respondents had lower levels of

25 Marija Orehevec, "De10 Istrank v Trstu," Etno log 58 (1997), n5-429, esp. 120.

26 This analysis is based on 16 individual interviews — five interviews in 2006 (IPA project, Equal Programme) and eleven interviews in 2009 in the frame of the diploma research of Ivana Bratoh, "Donne di servizio: piane druinsko delo" (Engl.: Paid Family Work). The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviewees were found by using the snowball method. In addition to basic demographic information, the interviews contained questions on previous work experience and the person’s motive for doing this work, their positive and negative experiences, the general work day, relations with members of the household, their opinions about why the households hired them, their outlooks on doing this work for a living, potential links with other workers from the same field, social security and their plans for the future.
education, finishing either primary or two-year vocational school. Almost respondents were formally employed in Slovenia in the past but exchanged their employment for work in Italian households. Their motives were diverse. Economic factors are still important, but not as pressing as in the past. One important aspect is qualification: Women with lower levels of education have a hard time finding employment and, if they succeed, get badly paid for the physical work. In Italian households they receive a substantially better salary for shorter and more flexible work hours. For retired women with a small pension due to their previous work as housekeepers, factory workers, or informal domestic workers in Italy, domestic work in Italy is a necessary addition to their pensions. For many families this work augments the family budget and permits an improvement in their economic standards.

Respondents who could not find work in Slovenia often stressed that domestic work in Italy allows them to be independent from their spouses. "Anything just that I'm not dependent on my husband," said one. Flexibility and length of working hours are also important motives. The women work exclusively in live-out arrangements in one or more households, on average five to six hours per day, and thus have enough time for the children, farm, and household work at home. Barbie and Miklaveic-Brezigar subtly analyse the emotional and social motives behind this form of work. 27 Rural women are still "closed" within the circle of their families and have few opportunities to be active outside. By taking a temporary informal job, they obtain some privacy by distancing themselves, at least for a short time, from children, a husband, or other members of the family, make contact with other people and have new experiences. A respondent who works in Italy while she is retired in Slovenia commented: "Because I'm bored with being alone at home. It is nice to leave the house every now and then." Some workers commute to Italy by car; they are individualized and isolated. Many depart for work collectively by bus and have developed a sense of affiliation to a special women's community. The shared ride to work connects them to a collective where they can exchange experiences and information on "good" and "bad" employers; they can also assist each other in finding new employers. In short, this socializing provides an informal social security (as well as social control) network. This social network plays a key role and is useful for finding employers; therefore, Slovenian domestic workers never use agencies to find work. Most of them perform cleaning, tidying up, and cooking chores, which are occasionally combined with childcare or elder care. Those who have worked as nannies and carers of the elderly report on the normal emotional and physical burdens of this work; therefore, they prefer housecleaning and tidying, which also permit more favourable time flexibility.

The sharing of domestic work among today's women from the Primorska and Goriska regions still carry on the tradition of cross-border trading with home-grown products, vegetables, bread, dairy goods, fruit etc. to the mutual satisfaction of both sides. They supply the households where they work with these products and are thus even more appreciated. It is common for them to tidy and clean in double-career households with children and with pensioners who need company and minor assistance in their otherwise still independent life. Some respondents have stated that, while they clean and tidy, these families additionally employ a nanny or someone to perform elder care. In many cases they also work as domestic workers in well-off families where the wife is not employed outside the home. As noted by one respondent, "They also have many dinners they organize at home for others, and so I also go there during the weekend to cook and to serve the dinner."

The services these women deliver are related to filling in the care deficit in double-career families and to elder care; however, it is not uncommon for them to perform life-style services in well-off households that are not linked to the care deficit. Actually, according to respondents' narratives, there is an extremely thin line between care work and life-style services; and hence, naming the care deficit as a main motive for employing a migrant domestic worker is not always correct. This line of separation has so far been under-researched. The division between care work and life-style services can determine to what extent contemporary employment of domestic workers in European households is a continuation of the tradition of service from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to what extent it is a new structural situation interpreted as a care deficit.

The working relationship between an individual domestic worker and a household is usually a long-term one. It can last for several decades, and the workers feel accepted as "part of the family." Employers allow them to have leave; sometimes they even pay for their sick leave, reward them at the end of the year and give them occasional gifts. As stated by one respondent, "If I need a vacation, there is no problem. If I get sick, two families still pay me, although I actually do not work. And the other two do not. But they do give me a 13th salary and some additional money for my summer holidays: In spite of the Italian Fini-Bossi law by which the Italian government aimed to curb the illegal employment of migrants in 2002, the situation of Slovenian domestic workers did not change significantly. Their persistence in the informal economy suits employers as well as themselves, since this hidden activity in a surrounding country allows them to profit from the remains of the Slovenian welfare state and at the same time provides the opportunity to gain income.

27 Barbie and Miklaveic-Brezigar, "Domestic Work Abroad," 175.
independence. As stated by a respondent, "They wanted to employ me right at the beginning. But I did not want to, because I was already employed with my husband and I preferred that. So actually I worked undeclared. They give me 1,000 Euros once a month so I can pay for my social insurance here in Slovenia, I prefer to pay for this here than in Italy. I receive child benefit, a scholarship for my child, and this works better for me."

The Slovenian women display great autonomy in their relationship with their Italian employers. If they are treated disrespectfully, they simply change employers. Thanks to the experience accumulated through work passed down from generation to generation, they have established their own social networks, which allow them to have control over the informal "labor market" in Italian border towns. Although in the last decade more and more women from the Philippines (who, being Catholic and often English-speaking, are highly appreciated in Italy) have been offering their services on the informal care market, alongside migrants from Eastern European countries and the Balkans, women from the Primorska and Gorisiška regions today have a kind of monopoly over paid domestic work in Trieste — despite the fact that their price is up to twice as high as that of these "new" migrants. The ethnicization and hierarchization of domestic workers in this case establishes Slovenian domestic workers as privileged, and the reasons for this may be found in the long tradition, in the characteristics of the border region where many families in Italian border towns have Slovenian ancestors, and also in the greater ease with which can overcome the language barrier.

This century-long tradition and the special border region puts Slovenian migrant workers in Italy in a position significantly different from that of migrant care workers in Southern and Western European countries, which has been analysed in many studies. They remain commuters, so continue to take care of their own families on a daily basis. As revealed in the interviews, most of them receive unemployment or other social support in Slovenia, which makes them less dependent on their earnings gained by informal paid domestic work. They do not face problems related to citizenship status, working visas and housing, as many migrant care workers in the EU do. All these circumstances empower Slovenian migrant domestic workers and make them less vulnerable in relation to their employers.

Conclusion

This historical analysis contributes to contemporary interpretations of global care chains by adding meanings to, and contexts of, women's mobility, their activity, and paid work in private households in the past. The historical developments in the border territory between Slovenia and Italy represent a constant dividing line between Eastern and Western, "old" and "new" Europe, as an in an in than a single century the people in this territory witnessed the downfall of less the rise of new states, several border shifts and border regime changes, as well as the formation and deconstruction of new and different political and economic systems. Slovenian domestic workers have been one of the constants throughout these changes, though political and economic rearrangements have also influenced their situation. From the second half of the nineteenth century to the First World War, Slovenian rural young women have been emigrating to Italian urban centres to work as servants, housekeeping helps and nannies, to earn money for a decent dowry and to help support the large families that stayed behind on their small, indebted family farms. This was a part of local labor and economic female migration within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and later on also within Italy. In addition, women, many amongst them already married and mothers of small children, left to work as wet nurses, nannies, and household helps in Egypt.

Nowadays these women, Alexandrians, are preserved in the Slovenian collective memory as ambivalent matriarchs, and the term is an emotionally loaded symbol of transnational motherhood. Though their route into the "labor market" was limited to the feminized care activities, their migration typifies the active role women took in supporting their families, their mobility, profitable activities and economic independence in times when the dominant discourses constructed women solely as being tied to the family and economically dependent on husbands. But, for their deviation from the "natural" role of a woman, they were often judged as immoral and as traitors to their own nation by the church and secular authorities, while in the households where they worked as servants they were often negatively ethnicized.

After the Second World War, in spite of the changed economic and political situation and the "new" border strictly separating Slovenia in Yugoslavia from Italy, communism from capitalism, and East from West, the Primorska and Gorisska women continued their profitable activities in Italian households. In years of the highly protected border to 1954, they still crossed on a daily basis. Thereafter, because of mutual economic interests, the border became increasingly permeable. In 2007 it was abolished. As an alternative to the socialist factory worker — emancipated, equal to men, and employed full time, who after work also tends a small farm and looks after the kids — they chose domestic, informal, live-out, flexible, well-paid work, always accessible and embedded in traditional networks. Although this work was especially stigmatized in socialist ideology, features such as good pay and the simultaneous drawing of social
allowances, flexible and part-time arrangements, personal freedom in time management and "familiarity" with this work outweighed its stigmatization.

The economic aspect of unemployment and indigence once more became important for a short time in the 1990s, when the Slovenian economy went through a crisis because of the changing political and economic system and separation from Yugoslavia. In contemporary times, Slovenia has come close to Italian economic standards and quality of life; therefore, economic reasons such as poverty and reduced opportunities for education and employment are no longer the reasons pushing Slovenian women to work in Italian households. However, a symbiotic relationship between Italian urban and Slovenian suburban women continues and is passed on inter-generationally from mothers to daughters. It is a deeply-rooted traditional pattern that is comfortable, familiar, and always accessible. This cultural pattern persists on the border between the centre and the periphery of the EU, but the relation between Italian households and Slovenian domestic workers remains asymmetrical, regardless of how privileged the position of Slovenian workers on the informal care market.

The economic frame for this tradition is marked by multiple peripheries. This essay discusses a country on the periphery of the EU, a region on the borders between two countries, and a topic that is marginalized in mainstream society. The shift of analysis from centre to periphery, from national to regional, from macro to micro, from mainstream to marginal, allows observation of phenomena that remain invisible on the macro-level or from the perspective of the centre. A diachronic analysis reveals an image of an active working woman, who takes on the role of family breadwinner and is mobile. The specifics of migrations at the junction of two countries and the power of the border's symbolic meanings and not only its regulatory impact also become visible. In addition, the study brought to the fore the relationship of rural to urban and the situation where borders of nation states traverse the borders of rural and urban. The empirical evidence from interviews demonstrates that the contemporary phenomenon of employment of migrant domestic workers can be interpreted from the perspective of tradition, habit, and life style, and not necessarily as the result of a care deficit. This thin dividing line between care work and life style services should be articulated in more detail in further exploration of contemporary paid domestic work.

Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman and Jaira J. Harrington

March 13, coinciding with International Women’s Day, the Brazilian Congress approved a series of sweeping labor reforms related to domestic work, which some argue represent the "second abolition of slavery." The reforms were framed in this way in part because black and brown women are over-represented among domestic workers in Brazil — a legacy of slavery and the ongoing racism and sexism that they face? On the international stage, Brazil, led by its first female President, Dilma Rousseff, touted this legislative victory as offering hope to millions of domestic workers who have been historically and relentlessly exploited in the homes of their employers.

Undeniably, the new law is one of the most far-reaching of its kind, including provisions related to the number of hours that domestic workers can work, overtime, sick leave, health insurance, and a grievance process for infractions. While these legislative changes have been framed as indicators of Brazil’s progress and economic growth, the national narrative less often connects this achievement to the decades-long struggle and organizing of Afro-Brazilian women’s groups. Moreover, the narrative of national progress fails to identify ways in which the most vulnerable women in Brazilian society may still continue to be exploited as domestic workers. Similar to Brazil’s post-slavery era when the absence of formalized racism did not mean that racism was non-existent, the passage of the new laws is not indicative that exploitation in the domestic sphere will also cease to occur.

This essay will compare and contrast the experiences of two groups of women who are identified as: (1) non-union affiliated domestic workers and (2) informal domestic workers, specifically, filhas de criagão (literally translated as "raised daughters"). The former refers to women who are employed as

1 This phrase was coined by Nicolas Bouncier, a daily correspondent in Rio de Janeiro, based on conversations with domestic labor unions.
2 Robin E Sheriff, Dreaming Equality: Colon Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil (New Brunswick, 2001). In her zoon study, Sheriff states every woman that she met in the favela Mono do Sangue Born in Rio de Janeiro had at one point worked as a domestic worker.
domestic workers and have accessed unions, but do not participate actively in domestic worker's labor unions. The latter refers to Afro-Brazilian women who provide domestic labor under the auspices of being children or “adoptive family members” or filhas de criadãos. While these two groups of women are different, an understudied facet of domestic labor is whether and how these arrangements incite alternative understandings of resistance and identity. To this end, we will discuss what factors motivate some women to: (1) remain employed/connected with these families and (2) privately resist while others choose the public path of seeking out domestic worker labor unions.

Literature Review: Brazilian Slavery and Notions of Family

In 1890, two years after the abolition of slavery in Brazil, the Minister of Finance, Rui Barbosa, ordered that all "papers, registry books, and documents that relate to slavery that exist in all divisions of the Ministry of Finance" be destroyed by fire. He argued that this action was to eliminate the "stain" of racism from Brazil's history. The formality of burning government documents does not, in fact, erase the "stain" of slavery. For Brazil, the largest slaveocracy in the Americas, slavery is embedded in the very fabric of life revealing itself in the persistence of a distinct code of racial, gender, and class interactions, and the "everyday habits and attitudes of middle class and upper-class families with respect to giving orders, and the expectation that lower-class individuals, especially women, obey their commands and satisfy their needs."

Domestic labor in Brazil is associated with low-skill and low wage labor, but there are important transitional stages that link traditional chattel slavery to contemporary domestic exploitation. One could argue that abolition simply paved the way for a "new slavery." On the route to the current form of more regulated wage labor, domestic labor has taken the form of labor in exchange for payment in kind, contracted help, and the informal adoption (criadãos) of young girls. None of this would be possible without both a pervasive racial and gender hierarchy providing the logic for this particular system.

Slavery crystallized an ideology that inextricably linked blackness with servitude and with domestic work. The society’s dependency on slavery was so great that the availability of non-white bodies was considered the main instrument of economic and social survival in Brazilian society. Black bodies were assumed to be best suited for menial and interior tasks, as is represented by advertisements in national newspapers, which make the link between gender, race, and labor explicit. The ads read as follows:

Precisa-se de uma criada de car preta que cozinha e lava;
precisa-se de uma negrinha para arranjos de casa e lidar com criangas.
(In need of a nanny that is black who can cook and clean;
In need of a little Blackie to clean the house and deal with children.)

A similar construction of black womanhood has a long history in the United States, embodied by black mammy imagery, which is often employed in nostalgic portrayals of the Old South and antebellum us. The black mammy figure is a selfless servant to white families and she is often portrayed as unattractive and asexual. Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present (New York, 1985).

Biblioteca Nacional, Setor de Microfilmes, "Rudolph Comorerci 08 Janeiro 1890 e 14 abril 1901."

Claudia Rezende and Marcia Lima, "Linking Gender, Class and Race in Brazil," Social Identities 10 (2004), 727-773. It should be noted that sexual survival was an important element of social survival during slavery. Black women were required to provide the “masters sexual satisfaction, the young boys’ sexual initiation” among other responsibilities (760).


Miriam Adelman and Lennita Ruggi, "The Beautiful and the Abject: Gender Identity, and Constructions of the Body in Contemporary Brazilian Culture, Current Sociology 56 (2008). 555-589. Esp. 559. In this article they quote Da Matta in order to make a broader case about contemporary gender dynamics in Brazil.
saying that reflected the embeddedness of the racial and gender hierarchy to Brazilian society:

_Branca para casar, mulata para fornícicar, e negra para trabalhar_  
(White woman to marry, mulatta to fornicate with, and a black woman to work).

In addition to the continued labor of black women as domestic workers, one of the legacies of "new slavery" was paternalism, which has often defined relationships — also stratified along racial/color lines — between the poor and the wealthy in Brazil and in Latin America, more generally. Paternalism "negates autonomy and undermines the very possibility of democracy:11 Montejano defines the prevalence of the patronage system as consisting largely of _patrónes_ (lords) and _peones_ (peasants) in Mexico. As he argues, the patronage system was a form of non-coercive domination, a more plausible alternative to explicit force, particularly important in areas where the subjugated class greatly outnumbered the elites. These relationships were effective in maintaining the racial and class status quo because the work-home boundary was intentionally ambiguous. In Brazil, as in other regions of Latin America, this ambiguity was further exacerbated by a _patrño/patroa_ (in the Portuguese language) who often acted paternalistically in ways that constructed his/her role as simultaneously boss and family member. These bonds were reinforced by a number of practices including _compadrazgo_ (godparenting), paying for/attending baptisms, weddings, and funerals. An important feature of patronage and paternalism is that there is both direct compensation for work (though minimal) as well as compensation-in-kind (housing and food). Patrons were expected to care for _empregados_ (employees) in their old age and support their families in times of need in exchange for dedicated labor. As a result, wealthy families had the ability to support _gente agregada_ (literally: "taken-in people") was considered a status symbol and indicator of a family's wealth and moral fortune.

This is the precisely the case in regions like Bahia, where slaves and people of color significantly outnumbered the Brazilian elites. Research suggests that the relationship of a domestic worker and her boss relied on the same discourse of "doméstica" and "patroa." The social control of Afro-Brazilians

white elites was a delicate negotiation where brute force was used in exceptional cases and where more often "cordial relations" was used to lessen the blow of exploitation. In post-slavery Brazil, Afro-Brazilian women worked for sums in the homes of wealthier (not necessarily wealthy) families. But the precise arrangements varied significantly. Some received a consistent (though low) wage, which they would use to support their family. In other cases, women were not paid or paid a very low wage and/or served as live-in employees on call 24 hours a day.

Moreover the complete transference of poor, mainly Afro-Brazilian children into white and/or wealthy families occurred in the Northeast.16 Initially labeled _ajuda contratada_ (contracted help), a young girl would be sent to work in the home of a wealthy family when she was only a few years away from marriage. She usually received no compensation apart from receiving food and housing in return for her labor. Her presence in the wealthy home was considered merely a transitional period until marriage. Poor families were compelled to participate in this arrangement due to scarce family resources, which they hoped could be overcome by the promises of education in exchange for domestic labor. However, many of these promises never materialized.

These shifts did not occur as completely discrete processes, but it does appear that contracted labor gave way to alternative forms including informal adoptions, in which adopted daughters, filhas de criação, provided domestic labor in exchange for food, clothing, and housing. The practice of "adopting" young girls actually began not long after slavery but it became an increasingly attractive option because of growing poverty throughout the country. Desiring to distance themselves from the shadow of slavery, wealthy families dependent on domestic labor were partial to the language of adoption because it allowed them to exploit young girls under the guise of family. Despite their attempt to mask these unequal power relations, the connections between informal adoption and slavery has led some researchers to refer to this "slave-like dependency" as a form of contemporary slavery. In many ways, labeling the young girls members of the family only perpetuates the unequal power dynamics. Though most filhas de criação eventually separate from their adoptive families either after marriage or by running away, research illustrates that, in 2013, some

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11 Reiter, Negotiating Democracy, 79.  
12 David Montejano, _Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986_ (Austin, 1987).  
13 Dain Borges, _The Family in Bahia, Brazil r87o-1945_ (Stanford, 1992).  
14 Reiter, Negotiating Democracy, 74; Sueli Kofes, _Mulher, Mulheres Identidade, Diferenca e Desigualdade na Rela6ão entre Patrño e Empregadas_ (Campinas, SP, 2001).  
16 Twine, _Racism in a Racial Democracy._  
17 Kevin Bales, _Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy_ (2nd ed., Berkeley, z000); Reiter, Negotiating Democracy.  
18 Twine, _Racism in a Racial Democracy._
of the *filhas de criagclo* remain tied to the adoptive families indefinitely. The reasons for living with the adoptive families for a lifetime remain complicated but tend to cluster around key factors such as a sense of moral obligation, economic dependency, and emotional attachments.\(^{Z}\)

Formal Organizing

While the experiences of the *filhas de cria9do* are not representative of most domestic workers in contemporary Brazil, they do share important commonalities with women who labor under the formal title of “doméstica.” The new legislation has stimulated renewed interest in exploring resistance in the realm of domestic work.\(^{21}\) Such research tends to highlight the ways in which domestic workers are moving away from the informal status of *filhas* and request that employees sign their workers’ card (*carteira assinada*). In addition, they use formal organizing to address inequality and unequal power dynamics in their employment.\(^{22}\)

Since the 1930s, domestic workers have organized in associations and later, unions to articulate the interests and needs of their occupation. The unions provide legal services, accounting, and general orientation to legal rights. Other unions extend their activities to marches, protests and consciousness raising seminars. Under the national organization FENATRAD (Federacao Nacional das Trabalhadoras Domésticas) domestic worker unions across the country meet at annual conferences to set the long and short-term political agenda. From its beginnings to the present, domestics have collectively worked alongside the Unified Black Movement, the Feminist Movement and other labor unions in Brazil. Race, gender and class consciousness were a part of the union movement from its beginning. Although the vast majority of domestic workers are not formal members of the unions, many more access the unions and their services. All stand to benefit from the formal legal changes that the


\(^{21}\) J. Harrington, Re-Conceptualizing Rights and Labor Union Politics at the Intersection of Race, Class and Gender through Domestic Work in Brazil (doctoral din., University of Chicago, 2015).

\(^{22}\) Joaze Bernadino-Costa, Sindicatos das trabalhadoras domésticas no Brasil: teorias da descolonizazção e saberes Subalternos, Ph.D. din. Universidade de Brasília, 2007; Judith Karin Cavalcanti Santos, "Participação das Trabalhadoras Domésticas no Cenário Politico Brasileiro," *Agenda Genrera Diasporas, Diversidades, Deslocamentos* g (20x0), 1-4.

activists have pushed for both within Brazil and in international organizations including the United

Some current research focuses only on the power of formal politics to restructure gendered work.\(^{23}\) Others underscore the interrelationships of gendered work and class.\(^{24}\) Again others complicate these approaches by pointing to the intersections of race, class and gender identities and the implications for domestic work.\(^{25}\) While some research points to the impact of emotions and affinities of domestic workers and their employers in Brazil,\(^{20}\) to date few studies have compared how non-unionized and informal domestic workers negotiate their positions and power within these work environments.

**Outsiders Within**

In this essay, we seek to bring these approaches together to deepen the understanding of the other side of the narrative, women outside of the formal channels of political debate. A comparison of the women who have embraced other forms of resistance will provide insight on how domestics come to understand themselves as both belonging to and absent from politics. Ultimately, this research shows that although Afro-Brazilian women in domestic work endure exploitation from similar histories and narratives, they recognize and exercise their agency differently due to the degree and intensity of these factors. Women
who have a stronger sense of obligation, economic dependency and emotional attachments, will be less likely to seek out a union and will resist privately.

We argue that both groups of women function as what Collins calls "outsiders within," and hence we analyze their lives within three analytical categories: racial consciousness, gender/women's work, and political power/negotiation to illustrate the complexity of their lives.27 This research reveals the multi-layered nature of resistance and the inevitable contradictions that result from domestic workers' ambiguous roles in the families in which they work. We conclude by arguing that both union-affiliated and informal domestic workers represent the quintessential paradox of marginalization and inclusion in Brazilian society.

Thus, we discuss and contrast non-union affiliated domestic workers and filhas de criação. From the period of December 2012 to March 2013, Harris interviewed leadership, affiliated and non-affiliated union participants in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. In the waiting area of the union's quarters she compiled her interview data from 46 women and one man (a union leader). The women, who entered were often aggrieved by mistreatment from their employer and were seeking support. Others wanted clarification about their labor rights. Still, other women were present to negotiate directly with their employers with the union's legal advisor as an arbitrator. The sample represents women who entered the union headquarters for support and resources but remain otherwise unaffiliated non-members of the union. In terms of union membership, domestic workers' participation is low, only about 2% of the entire labor force.28 Although the women who visit the union are qualitatively different than the population of domestic workers who do not, to privilege the interviews of non-members offers insight into a group of women that is more representative than union-affiliates and leadership.

Hordge-Freeman conducted research on Afro-Brazilian families in Salvador, Bahia between the years 2009-2010 and June July 2013. By happenstance, she came in contact and interviewed approximately ten adoptive families and filhas de criação. Many of the filhas had never talked explicitly about their experiences. While the filhas each have life histories that vary significantly, important threads link them: sentimental bonds that they share with their adoptive families, a strong sense of exploitation, and a concurrent sense of bondage through non-coercive family obligation. Three of the ten life histories

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28 IPEA, Situação Atual das Trabalhadoras Domésticas no País (sou).
domestic technologies is much less embedded in homes."^34 We discuss the aspect of emotional labor together with the implications of the Brazilian specifics first in terms of gender and women's work.

Filha de criagiao: Tais

One of the most compelling cases of the implications of exploitation under the guise of informal adoption is Tais. At the age of five, her mother died and her father and two siblings were left without their most important family member. Their father, who had always taken little interest in them, remained distant. Eventually, the three sisters were separated and Tais was sent to live with a wealthy couple, Benedita and Antonio, who were married with no children. Upon her informal adoption, which involved no exchange of papers and a mere promise of care, the new family insisted that she call them aunt and uncle and she obliged. Eschewing the more control-laden term of "patroa, Tais' adoptive family embraced terminology that implied one family. However, she was treated quite different than a biological daughter. At age 50, Tais recounted what her life was like when she entered the home — the very same home in which she resides today. Her daily responsibilities included:

Everything, everything, everything! I washed, ironed, cooked, cleaned, and went grocery shopping. I did everything but I didn't earn anything, nothing. I only got money to take the bus to school. I worked more than I rested. I felt like a maid. It wasn't even the fact of having to do everything around the house. It was the difference in how I felt.

Tais' responsibilities aligned closely with the racial and gender expectations and her labor, in addition, reflected the ways that these hierarchies apply to black, female children. Reflecting on her life, rather than suggest that she had been treated "como se fosse parte da familia" (as if I were part of the family), she distinctly recalls the numerous and time-consuming responsibilities that were assigned to her as a child. Unlike other filhas de criagiao, she was allowed to attend school and even continued beyond basic education. All the while, her work remained all-encompassing. Hoping to engage Tais in conversations about her youth, I asked her to describe her childhood. She paused and responded in a deliberate, yet chillingly emotionless manner, "Nao tinha infancias" (I did not have a childhood). It is for this reason that she resents suggestions that she was a "daughter? She feels that she had to work like a domestic worker. Pondering the difference, she states:

Ironically, her lack of monetary compensation is used as evidence of her "true" membership into the family, as proof that she is not being exploited. Throughout the interview, Tais attempts to reconcile the contradictions of being called an "adoptive daughter" and feeling exploited and she reconceptualizes her relationship as not of family but of social exchange. Her willingness to question her "aunt" reflects her search for understanding, her insistence that her exploitation be recognized, and her sense of loss of childhood. She offers a critique of her aunt's hypocrisy in the face of the ambiguous work-family position: "But you're not treated as a daughter. I think that to feel that you have to feel affection. You have to receive affection, get attention, like a daughter! I don't feel that."

From a young age, Tais resisted the ideological socialization that her adoptive family attempted to impart to her, deciding instead to focus on the ways in which she was excluded or treated as though she were a domestic worker. She refuses to internalize norms of cordiality and exposes her families' mask of philanthropy that reveals her understanding of the profound exploitation. Though Tais continues to refer to Benedita as aunt (tia), she never compromises her counter-hegemonic view.

Union-Non-affiliate: Elisete

Monetary compensation for union visitor and former member Elisete was a part of her "growing up" in domestic work. Lacking self-esteem and having few employment options after dropping out of high school, she accepted whatever compensation she could in return for her work:

"My first job was in a house. I took care of three children and I didn't earn any money. Two, three months passed where they didn't pay me. I did everything. Still, they didn't pay me. I spent three years in this home. They said: "This month, I don't have anything to give you." They sell sandals, ok? They brought me a pair of sandals to placate me, right? They brought a box of cigarettes. "Here, take this. Next month I'll give you money.'"

According to her words, she was entrusted with the responsibility of caring for children, the usual feminized responsibility alongside other household tasks.

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^34 Pinho and Silva, "Domestic Relations," 90-u2.
Lacking employment options diminished her motivation to leave. Though her ability to work was repeatedly devalued she stayed in the household. Finally, upon her brother's suggestion, Elisete went to the union for information and after her a&1_...viation, became aware of her rights and exercised them.

Filha de criação 2: Ana

Ana, who is currently 48 years old, entered the Santos family at age 14. She never disclosed the details about why she originally left her biological home presumably because it is too traumatic for her to discuss. Her adoptive mother was reportedly reluctant to accept her because Ana was considered too young. But, as the adoptive family recounts, they took pity on her. Apparently, the family had a penchant for taking in and informally adopting poor Afro-Brazilians—they often mentioned the number of gente agregada they had supported. Similar to Tais, Ana's responsibilities as a child included cooking, raising the children, cleaning, and other responsibilities. At the beginning of our initial conversation, she professed that she loved her adoptive family because they treated her "como se fossefiaha" (as though I was a daughter).

When I met Ana she was still living with the Santos family and sleeping on the floor of their home on a pallet placed on the side of the living room sofa. Our most candid conversation began when with the family away, Ana had both the freedom and privacy to express her feelings. Though she had portrayed her family as perfect in our several conversations, she acknowledged that there were significant differences and expectations for her behavior compared to those of her "siblings." Her household work was done in exchange for food, old clothing, and a place to live. Only reluctantly does she mention that, while her two siblings are a lawyer and medical professional, she is uneducated and semi-illiterate. Her adoptive family attributed this to Ana's own lack of interest, 'new queria aprender' (she didn't want to learn), rather than to her removal from school and lack of access education. As more details emerge, the intricacies of the relationship and her sentiments become clearer: "Everything goes well as long as I do everything exactly like they want me to. The moment that I don't, they call me an ingrate...and other names."

Over several hours, Ana recounts harrowing details of a life of abuse and mistreatment, including physical and emotional abuse. Frustrated with the treatment, at the end of our conversations, she states that it was time for her to move out. Upon hearing this, the family stated they were "orgulhosa" (proud) of her decision because they "raised her to be independent." Once Ana moves out, without access to the social networks of her adoptive family, she suffers from the adjustment difficulties of living alone and misses the responsibilities and relationships. She had virtually raised her adoptive sister's son, Ricardo, and referred to him lovingly as "o nosso filho" (our son). She uses her family connection as a point of pride and status, telling her neighbors that she is like a mom to Ricardo. She does so in hopes to gain the status that comes with motherhood, which is particularly important to Ana as she never had any biological children of her own.

Not much time passes before her adoptive family calls her to ask her to cook a few meals in their home. She anticipates their request, "Quando ligam para me é só porque eles querem que faga algo" (When they call me it's only because they need something). Afraid to deny their requests, she avoids their phone calls, feigns not hearing the phone, or manufactures a reason why she cannot go. She is caught between the sentimental bonds she feels and the exploitation she is hoping to avoid. Clearly bothered by the way that the family exploits her, her negotiation of power relies on a reinterpretation of her position vis-a-vis that of other women. With an air of superiority she brags, "I would never lower myself to work in slavery for the little money that domestic workers receive in the homes of families in Brazil." This offers her a sense of freedom and of superiority perhaps even over formal, low-paid domestic workers. Because she can choose not to answer the phone and because she is sometimes selectively incorporated in family activities, she sees herself as more powerful, agentive, and more free than other domestic workers. Paradoxically, the ambiguity of her family-work position is what sustains the unequal relationship—it keeps her performing the labor and convinces her that her situation is preferable to women with paid wages.

Union-Non-affiliates 2 and 3: Maria Luisa and Ivo

Maria Luisa, a 39-year-old domestic worker, came to the union headquarters to inquire about unpaid temporary employment. When asked about her treatment by her former employers she complained about the quality of her work, despite the fact that Maria Luisa took pride in her work: "Outside of these things that I heard from her, that I didn't like. I believe this: if you work, you have to be respected. I am a domestic worker. I am proud. Understand?" Maria Luisa also demands respect of other categories of worker. While her statements about pride and respect seem to be race and gender neutral, they are meaningful to black women who have had to constantly battle against employers who treat them as inferiors on both racial and class grounds.

35 She views her labor as voluntary (and not coerced), though she performs it out of sense of obligation.
The poignant narrative of Ivone, also an unaffiliated domestic worker, makes the connection between domestic work and slavery more explicit.

My entire life was like this: from the age of seven to fifteen I lived with a godmother. A life only of suffering. Slavery Completely. For me, it was a kind of slavery. I was never paid and my entire childhood was work.

The emotional toll that this experience took on her development is evident. Like the fi/has and other unaffiliated domestic workers she drew a direct connection between slavery and her early unpaid work. And, similar to Ana and Tais, Ivone had to learn to call her adopting woman "godmother" and, accordingly, never received compensation for her work. Different from both, Ivone eventually does leave her life of exploitation only to find herself in another form of exploitation, formal domestic work.

Racial Consciousness

Afro-Brazilians confront the contradictions of a hegemonic ideology of racial democracy and the reality of their lives. The women who are fi/has de cria9do find themselves in an even more complicated situation because while they often describe themselves as "explorada" and "aca0ada" (exploited and run-down), their close involvement with their adoptive families prevents them from accessing counter-hegemonic discourses that might allow them to make systematic connections between their treatment and the history of a race and gender-based forms of exploitation. Perhaps one of the best representations of these negotiations is a statement from Neide, a pastfiha and a current domestic worker, "They treat me equally, we are all the same. But I don't confuse the reality? While some of the domestic workers verbally connect their work to slavery, this does not necessarily equate to a racial consciousness. But this consciousness does sometimes emerge in surprising and unexpected contexts.

Fi/ha de cria9co: Ana

Ana's racial consciousness is fragmented due to her position and experiences in her adoptive family. At moments her consciousness emerges, however, When she decides to move out of her house to a new neighborhood, she says:

Bete, I love my little house. I have my little corner and I like it. Everyone is good people here. They are not people, you know stuck-up people. Everyone here is our color. [She rubs her hands across her lower hand to indicate our similar skin color.] Isn't it much better? My neighbor always offers me coffee, they never forget to say good morning.

Ana's reference to her new neighborhood as mostly Afro-Brazilians was surprising as she had rarely mentioned her color/race before. She was not blind to the differences but rather embraced them as important markers of sincere friendships. Later, she comments that she trusts me and has confidence in me because we are "da mesma cor" (the same color). I had not expected this consciousness because Ana actively avoided cultural events and locations associated with blackness. The Historic Center of the city of Salvador, named pelourinho, serves as the core of the gentrified area with museums, entertainment, and cultural items that celebrate Afro-Brazilian contributions. Though she lived within walking distance, Ana had never visited Pelourinho and felt that there was nothing of value for her to see there. When I ask about her color or racial categorization, she replies in a slightly irritated manner, "Ah Bete, Sou morena, ne?" (Come on Bete, I'm morena right?). While she defines herself by color not race, she still exhibits a racial consciousness that permits her to forge what she perceives are more equal and friendly relationships in her new community.38

Union Non-affiliate a: Maria Luisa

As mentioned, vocabulary and naming are of critical importance in negotiating power differentials between status unequals. In Brazil, in particular, a person's racial and color categorization influences his or her life chances and shapes interactions with others. While certain terms may mask inequality (as is the case of "ilhas") others can function as empowering labels, as Maria Luisa suggests:

So, when a visitor arrived, he called to me and said, "Madam Maria Luisa, could you please pour some water? When I arrived, from another errand,

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36 Sheriff, *Dreaming Equality*; Twine, *Racism in a Racial Democracy*.

37 The term morena is considered one of the most ambiguous racial terms used. It can be used to describe nearly all people in Brazil ranging from a person who is very pale with dark hair to a person who is very dark-skinned with dark hair.

38 These findings are consistent with Sheriff's research about how color categories are racialized. That is, even when Brazilians use color terms they may still have an underlying understanding of racial categorization.
or from a coffee break, he said: "This woman here is my secret I thought this was so beautiful! There are still some people that open their mouths to say, "This is my domestic." With that something, that seems like something to undo you... I don't know if it is because of racism, as well, which, still exists. Unfortunately, it exists! Get it? But I've really experienced it.

For Maria Luisa, her employer's euphemism of "secretary" provides an elevated sense of status. From her vantage point, employers who call their domestic workers "empregadas" (maids) lack sensitivity and respect and are perhaps trying to racialize the position. But while the coveted designation "secretary" is more formal, it often involves the same type of responsibilities as that of empregada. Thus, it parallels the way families refer to filhas de criação, nieces, daughters, or "like they were members of the family" without affording them the treatment that these relationships imply. Maria Luisa, however, neither addresses these potential contradictions nor does she mention the possessive nature of describing one's employee as either my secretary or my domestic: the power still rests in the hands of the employer as the figurative "owner" of the employee. Later, Maria Luisa also points out that her employer does not pay her social security, a benefit that would undeniably be extended to a secretary.

Filha de criação: Tais

In contrast, Tais was adopted into a mestisa (racially mixed) family and continues living with the woman she has always called tia. Rather than internalizing the racial consciousness of her socialization, she actively rejects normative ideas about race and expresses the absurdity of her adoptive family referring to themselves as white when to her it is clear that: "We are all black! But it's just that some have lighter skin and others have darker skin but we are all blacks. During slavery we would have thrown us all in the slave quarters." To Tais, the family's desire to avoid the label of black is linked to the racist and gendered ideas that she once heard from one of the (paid) domestic workers in the home. The young woman did not want her worker's card signed out of fear that "nab queria sujar a carteira" (I don't want to dirty my worker's card), thus connecting dirtying of the carteira with domestic work and its association to black women's work.

Filha de criação: Natalia

Natalia, who was informally adopted into the Lacerda family at eight years old, often reflects on her experiences in ways that are contradictory, as her memories are filled with both nostalgia and bitterness. She vacillates between discussing differential treatment, including examples of how she walked to school and when her siblings did not or that she would never get new clothes except for de necessidade, mesmo (if there was really a need). While it is easier for her to remember the positive moments, even in those delightful moments she is able to identify how the politics of race seep into these experiences:

Yeah, I have a good relationship with them. They always treated me well. They never left me you know or treated me badly... I don't know because they thought "you are black and poor." No, none of that. They always took me to nice places, I always ate in nice restaurants, they always, always took me with them to nice places. They brought clothes for me so that I would be "igual aetas" nicely dressed. I mean its partially because they didn't want to walk around with a negra looking you know... (giggles and laughs).

Thus Natalia asserts that she has a racial identity but also illustrates her understanding that the status and philanthropy of her adoptive family could be jeopardized if "their" negra was not well-presented. While she idealizes her life with the family at the beginning of the interview, by the end she discusses the ciúmes (envious) feelings of not being treated equally. Natalia is one of the few filhas who ultimately does move out from their adoptive family. However, she retains very close ties to the family, and is often called upon to take care of older family members when they are sick without compensation.

But, having a strong racial consciousness permits Natalia to be critical of racism of her own family members, even if it is not directed at her. With regards to her adoptive father she says: "He doesn't like blacks. The type of black person that he receives well (makes air quotes) is you: She continues by asserting the absurdity of his racism particularly because according to her, "Ele é negro!" (He is black!). Completely bemused by the idea, she repeats the paradox, "He doesn't like blacks but he himself is black, but he doesn't like blacks! He treats me well because he has to or Dona would kill him." Natalia reveals that she understands the racial nuances of her positionality in the family. Not only does she adopt a racial consciousness that would label "black" her light brown-skinned, straight-haired adopted father because of his black father, she also wears her hair in dreadlocks. In this way, Natalia and Tais share conceptualizations of racial classification whereby ancestry and not merely skin color is determinant of racial categorization. This construction of race is closely tied to the all-inclusive way in which the Afro-Brazilian movement defines
blackness. In addition, they both illustrate that they are capable of identifying how their families tend to reproduce racism and inequality.

**Political Power/Negotiation**

The narratives of the filhas de criação indicate that they are not passive victims of racial and gender oppression. To the contrary, they illustrate the unique ways in which they negotiate power. Tais vividly recalls having to serve guests who visited the home and, at the age of 11, answering business phone calls of her adoptive family. As a form of rebelliousness, she would tell people that she was not Benedita’s niece, but rather: “Sou a empregada doméstica” (I am the maid). Later Tais was asked whether or not she would like her tia to officially adopt her. She responded with an emphatic “no” with the rationalization that if she had agreed to the formalization of her adoption, she would never be able to escape her aunt. She perceived that her informal status as filha de criação provided her with protection from total exploitation, though in reality, her presence in the home at the age of 50 suggests otherwise.

As is the case with the filhas discussed, even if no formal bond of adoption is present, the informal and perhaps more powerful bond of gratitude and moral duty is the one that allows the relationship to continue. After a narrative replete with isolation and physical and emotional abuse, Tais summarizes her relationship with her “aunt”: “Despite her ways, she helped me. I don’t know if I would have stayed with my father I would be here today. I thank her for everything.”

After 42 years, now with the opportunity and financial situation to be able to leave, Tais feels as though she cannot. She is both bound by moral and familial responsibility, as well as broader societal notions about family loyalty and protection. And so, while she bitterly regrets that “perdi os melhores anos da minha vida” (I lost the best years of my life), she remains forever tied to the person and family who she views as both the source of her survival and bond-age. In solitary moments, she asks herself, what she must have done to deserve this treatment. In others, she reconceptualizes the experience by focusing on her moral fortitude and the ways in which her decision to remain with her abusive family is an indication of her special God-given ability of patience and long suffering:

I don’t feel, I’m not angry, I feel pity. I feel pity because I know that she is alone. Despite having nieces and nephews...but she doesn’t have patience like me... Even her nephew Andres sometimes gets angry at her. She is difficult, really hard indeed.

Similarly, Natalia recounted her feeling of being exploited but ended her interview by reiterating that she had to be grateful for what the family had provided. With a strong view of moral fortitude and loyalty, she felt deeply conflicted, but it remained clear that she had an obligation. But how far would she go to {Ufrj} this obligation? She replied, “não sei quando você pagar essa dívida...acho que nunca você poderá pagar” (I don’t know when this debt will be paid. I think I will never be able to pay it). For Natalia, the best strategy is to assist the Medeiros family whenever she can, but she has also made a conscious effort to move out of the family home — though her new home was given her by the Medeiros family. And, in these relationships nothing is free. Confronting this reality, Natalia accepted the gift and has begun to establish a nearly-separate life away from her adoptive family — all while knowing that when they knock she needs to answer.

For Ana, the negotiation process is much more difficult. She, too, moved out of her adoptive family's house. She struggles to balance the time she spent in the home of her adoptive family and the time that she spends in her own house. To the residents in her neighborhood, she often bragged about her family who lives in the wealthiest, most exclusive neighborhood of Salvador. She even told stories of her high-class upbringing to explain her preferences for certain foods. This status is incredibly important to Ana, who otherwise might easily be overlooked. In her negotiation within the family, Ana is resourceful and convinced them to pay her monthly medical bills, purchase her a cellphone, and buy her personal items. In many ways, she has learned to exert agency, to find creative way of getting her needs met. At the same time, in these unequal power dynamics, the family has the power to choose to accept or deny her requests. The cellphone was purchased ostensibly for Ana, but in exchange she was expected to answer whenever they called. Her monthly medicine and transportation, on the other hand, were less consistently covered, presumably because they are of less immediate relevance to the family.

For un-affiliated domestic workers, political negotiations are exerted in drastically different ways. Instead of relying on the reconceptualization of the position, they engage in political action and even when un-affiliated with the union, they may rely on its resources. For whatever formal education Elisete lacked, the union offered her a space to more deeply understand her rights, which gave her a greater sense of authority. She states, "I began to understand the Union. There, I began to change. The Union was a school for me, you see?"

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As a nation, Brazil has struggled with providing equal rights to its citizens and establishing itself as a modern society. Brazilians and Afro-Brazilian women, in particular, have much to celebrate with the recent passage of the domestic workers policies. While the structural conditions of racial and economic disparity may help to understand the institutional development and continuation of informal domestic work and cria do, there are additional micro-social factors that help to reinforce an ideology that both makes these women invisible and justifies the unequal system.

As the interview data demonstrate, domestics who access unions with unaffiliated status and women who work under conditions of adoptive free labor share similar desires to resist, but have qualitatively different approaches toward resistance. From the responses we observe that both groups of women understand that both their gender and race shape their work and can lead to exploitation. Additionally, both groups of women do not passively accept threats to their dignity and respect as workers. Yet, the domestic worker labor unions foster a particular kind of consciousness that is relatively inaccessible to women deeply bound to tenuous and constructed kinships with their employers. The women who enter the unions have a grievance or are seeking clarity on their rights; they exit that space with a strengthened orientation toward collective worker identity, individual agency, and legislative rights. Despite their differences, both groups still struggle with contractual

She demonstrates through a mock interchange between herself and her employer how she had changed her approach to negotiation:

"Ma'am...please sign my work document" [The employer said]: "I will not." [I said]: "I will sign it only if you sign as well. If you do not sign, I will not stay." That was it. I didn't stay... Then I began to frequent the union...

Similarly, Ivone’s perspective led her to the Union, as she states: "These people must be publicly embarrassed and treat their employees like human beings, Because they need us. We don't need them as much? Ivone speaks about the ease of moving from domestic work to other sectors of informal labor like daily house cleaning, seamstress work, baking cakes and cooking. She also views the autonomy as freedom, whereas if she is not respected, the diverse skills that she has developed as a domestic can take her elsewhere.

Agency and Exploitation: Societal Structures and Micro-social Factors

As a nation, Brazil has struggled with providing equal rights to its citizens and establishing itself as a modern society. Brazilians and Afro-Brazilian women, in particular, have much to celebrate with the recent passage of the domestic workers policies. While the structural conditions of racial and economic disparity may help to understand the institutional development and continuation of informal domestic work and cria do, there are additional micro-social factors that help to reinforce an ideology that both makes these women invisible and justifies the unequal system.

What becomes clear in all of the cases is that the emotional bonds are truly the most difficult to sever. This is why it has been so important to professionalize domestic work and legislatively mandate what is considered appropriate work conditions, pay, and treatment. As is evident with the non-affiliated domestic workers, the results of both the legislation and growing concern about domestic exploitation has already ushered in a new era in which Afro-Brazilian women are informed about their rights and feel empowered to negotiate. With Brazil’s rapidly growing economy, the hope is that more women will demand their rights or become more educated so that domestic work is one option of many occupations. But, as this development moves forward, advocates for domestic workers will have to be vigilant: increased opportunities for native-born Afro-Brazilian women should not transform domestic work into the exploitation of migrant women workers from other countries.
CHAPTER 7

Maid-of-all-Work or Professional Nanny?
The Changing Character of Domestic Work in Polish Households, Eighteenth Century to the Present

Marta Kindler and Anna Kordastewicz

In this study of the various types of domestic and caregiving workers in Polish bourgeois and noble households we distinguish general and specialized stall and briefly place Poland in a comparative European perspective. Next we survey the history of childcare and domestic work from the 18th to the 20th century and analyse the emergence of a legal framework for the sector. We discuss the changing character of the work, including its specialization, and, in the final part, turn to childcare as a particular form of internally differentiated specialization. We conclude by summarizing the transformations.

Let us start with a brief comment on the data used for this chapter. To present an overview of the domestic sector including the care work on the Polish territories from the 18th to the 21st century we use historical as well as sociological sources. We draw on the following types of sources: sociological interviews, statistical data, censuses, scholarly literature and belles-lettres. The data include qualitative interviews on post-war domestic work and on contemporary Ukrainian domestic workers in Poland. Since we could not go back to the broad range of historical sources, we rely extensively on historians’ studies and are hence limited by their nature. Writing a history of servants is a challenging enterprise.

Studies of servants in Poland are scarce and fragmentary, the only comprehensive one being the recent work Radosław Poniat. Historians have had to rely mainly on the institutional sources, such as proceedings in courts of law, the employers’ and not the servants’ perspective. Comparatively, the position of scholars researching, for example, British servants is far better: memoirs of servants have been preserved and servants wrote letters that were published in the press. Some contemporary sociological studies make it possible to reconstruct the perspective of workers, these we will discuss in the final part below.

In the history of domestic work two basic types of jobs may be discerned, those with general (or universal) and those with specialized tasks. A general domestic worker, usually the only employee in the household, was responsible for all household tasks: maid-of-all-work, bonnes-d-tout faire, sluga do wszystkiego (a minion/ servant for everything). Specialized household workers possessed particular, sometimes narrowly defined skills or expertise. The degree of specialization depended on such factors as the social and economic standing of the household, its size or its domestic life culture, and was sometimes specific to ceremonial and status purposes. In Polish mansions of the 19th century, for example, men or women were hired as kawiarka (coffee-maker) or herbaciarka (tea-maker). Such specialization was far more common in medieval times and, later, in courts, for example in France under King Louis XIV.

Domestic workers hired for childcare were either assigned taking care of children (or single child) as sole task or also had to do other domestic chores. This changing role is embedded in what has been called the invention or discovery of childhood as a separate and distinct life phase. Historically, care

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1 We use the tern bourgeoisie for all people residing in cities and having non-rural occupations, for example as traders, bankers, or factory owners (following Ireneusz Iłhatowicz et al., Spoleczeństwo polskie odX doXXwieku (Warsaw, 2005 [1981]), 531-534. The group was stratified and in the period under investigation one segment was the petite bourgeoisie: The nobility (rzuchta) was a large and very diversified group. We distinguish between nobility (in general), small nobility, and landed nobility (magnates, magnateria, a form of aristocracy). The landed nobility developed a lifestyle centered around big manor houses surrounded with their lands, where they sometimes employed as many as hundreds of servants, among them smaller nobility and magnates’ youth (Ibid., 264-274, 358-368, 499-504).


3 Marta Kindler, A Risky Business? Ukrainian Migrant Women in Warsaw’s Domestic Work Sector (Amsterdam, zon).
Changes in the Domestic Work Sector

In a first step, we first outline the changes in the domestic work sector from the 18th to the 21st century. We begin with size and sex-balance of the sector, then discuss the demand- and supply-side, and finally turn to institutionalization by legal regulation. We will also address the changing character of the work. It needs to be kept in mind that throughout the 19th century Poland did not exist as an independent state since the neighbouring powers, Russia, Prussia, and the Habsburg Empire, partitioned parts of it in 1772 and the whole in 1795. The independent state was only re-established with the Treaty of Versailles in 1918.

Size of the Sector and Sex-Balance

Lack of comparable data through the whole period in question and/or across the different territorial-political entities involved, present a challenge to provide quantitative data — thus we attempt to trace trends. From the late 18th century to the inter-war period, domestic workers played an important role in the wealthier Polish households. In the early part of this period the sector was divided into a range of specializations according to phases in a child's life and the sophistication of employers' requirements: wet-nurse, dry-nurse, nanny, bonne (from French bonne — nursemaid), governess or home teacher (tutor).

The distinction between general and specialized household workers is valid both in historical and contemporary forms of remunerated childcare. Over time the degree of specialization changed from a great variety of job descriptions to and throughout 19th century to the popularity of maids-of-all-work in the 20th century and a reintroduction of specialization from the beginning of the 21st century. The "nanny/housekeeper," a post-war variety of the domestic worker-of-all-work, was the most common type from the 1970s to the 1990s in Poland. Since then, in some cases, the single employee of a family is a nanny without any non-care tasks, which indicates a re-invention of childhood in the present.

Throughout the 19th century men were very much present in the sector, at its end the percentage of men, 19.3% women) and in Warsaw to 19.7 per cent (70.1% men, 9.4% women) in the 20th century. At that time 9 per cent of all households employed a domestic worker.

Before and in the 19th century servants were found on estates in rural areas. They also constituted a prominent group in the cities. In Cracow, Warsaw, and Posen their share in the total population at the end of the 18th century exceeded 30 percent; throughout the 19th it oscillated around to-15 per cent but decreased at the turn of the 20th century to 3-6 percent's. In Warsaw, after the post-war increase, the number of servants amounted to just over 60,000 in 1931.

In the next decades numbers decreased rapidly: the 1970 census listed a mere 21,159 persons as live-in domestic workers in the whole of Poland (15,824 in cities) and in 1978 only 6,160 persons (3,631 in cities). However, employment then increased considerably: in the years 2000 and 2007, 7 per cent and 15 per cent of households respectively employed a person from outside the household, now categorized broader as "domestic work, agricultural work and construction." Of these, to and 4 per cent respectively were foreigners, mostly of Ukrainian origin. However, in 2007 only 3 per cent of the households studied declared employment of a domestic worker. The sex-balance shifted from male to female workers over time. In the 18th century men were very much present in the sector, at its end the percentage of domestic servants in Krakow amounted to 32.1 per cent of the total population (34.6% for men, 28.9% for women) and in Warsaw to 19.7 per cent (20.1% men, 19.3% women). However, by the end of the 19th century, domestic work clearly had turned into "women's work," with 31,032 male and 170,089 female servants listed for the Kingdom of Poland. In Warsaw, one of the most


13 Radosław Poniat, Sluiba domowa w miastach.


16 Żarnowska, Workers, Women, and Social Change.
industrialized cities, in 1882 48.8 per cent of economically active women were servants. In comparison, in 1860s London, one third of all women aged 15–24 were servants, in France 29 per cent of all working women but, by 1904 45 per cent. In the newly independent Poland of 1921, 229,701 women but only 2,999 men worked as servants, 95% and 5% respectively; in Warsaw men accounted for only 2 per cent of all servants. This ratio remained unchanged in the 1931 data (94%). Still, women increasingly took advantage of other job opportunities. In late-19th-century Warsaw the share of domestic workers among economically active women decreased in only 15 years from 48.8 per cent (1882) to 26.6 per cent (1897), while that in industry grew to 23.3 per cent and among day laborers to 20 percent. However, with the economic crisis of the 1930s, the occupational structure changed dramatically and returned to the 19th-century status quo as women primarily found work in domestic services. The employment of women in Poland thus contrasts with that in Europe's industrialized countries: apart from those in industry women continued to work primarily in agriculture and services. As late as 1931 the largest group in services was constituted by domestic servants and women performing personal services.

**Changing Demand and Supply**

What were the reasons behind the demand for domestic workers and how did they change? What were and are the reasons for seeking employment in this sector? Historical literature as well as contemporary research point to two main reasons for demand, pragmatic and status-related. On the supply-side, motivation included poor financial standing of family and availability and easy access to this work. The number of servants was greatest when demand was high. This work was a "life cycle" occupation which explains the large pool of young people seeking employment in this sector in the past. In the past, access to such jobs was related to social class/stratum, in the present gender continues to be the determining factor, nationality/ethnicity and migration being differentiating factors.

In the 18th century domestic work constituted one of the most popular jobs. Becoming a servant was an obvious choice for many children and youth from poorer families. Service work was the first job for 80 per cent of peasant youth but also for two thirds of youth descended from noble families. Children from peasant families worked on the family’s land from early childhood and subsequently entered domestic work, on average at the age of 17. They took such jobs to become independent, due to worsening economic conditions of their family, or perhaps following the death of their parents. In the case of the impoverished landowner nobility, children as young as 14 started their first job, the poor financial circumstances being the main reason. Not only did the employers cover the cost of living (food, shelter and clothing), but parents also did not have to pay for any training since domestic work did not require any. The social background/stratum to a large extent determined the type of duties required of a domestic worker: peasant children primarily worked as farm-hands, children of bourgeois descent had a broader variety of tasks, while youth from the impoverished nobility could only choose between joining the army or becoming a servant. Learning a handicraft or becoming a trader, the options available to the bourgeois and Jews, were open to a smaller proportion of noble youth. This was due to a fear of losing their social status but mainly a result of lack of contacts to kin or friends who could provide such training. In advertisements placed by employers, service was depicted not as a job but as a chance to gain new abilities and skills. This corresponded to the notion of servant-work as a particular period in one’s life course.

An important feature of the sector was the high geographical mobility. Until the 19th century, when servants worked almost exclusively in rural areas, they migrated between different mansions of the landed nobility. For example, wet-nurses from the 16th to the 18th century came from villages situated near the manor and nannies were employed based on recommendations by acquainted families. In view of the extensiveness of nobility networks, this could imply work far away from their place of origin. By the end of the 19th century, mass migration from countryside to the cities created a large reservoir of very young unskilled women, often still children, seeking employment in domestic work.

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17 Maria Nietyksza, "Przemiany aktywności zawodowej kobiet." Warszawa na przełomie XIX i XX wieku," in Anna Zarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (eds), Kobie\'ta i społeczeństwo na ziemiach polskich wXIXw (Warszawa, 1990), 99–104.
19 Nietyksza, "Przemiany aktywności zawodowej kobiet."
20 Zarnowska, Workers, Women, and Social Change; Nietyksza, "Przemiany aktywności zawodowej kobiet."
22 Poniat, Służba domowa w miastach.
23 Poniat, Służba domowa w miastach.
24 Renata Gałaj-Dempniak, "Migracje kobiet zamTinych w 'swietle pamigtnik"w staropolskich, in, Agnieszka Chlebowska and Katarzyna Sierakowska (eds), Kobiety i procesy migracyjne (Warszawa, zolo), 29-46.
25 Nietyksza, "Przemiany aktywności zawodowej kobiet."

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KINDLER AND KORDASIEWICZ...
This sector was the "stepping stone" for women to enter urban labor markets and earn some money before potentially seeking a different type of employment. In the 1920s and 1930s, Christian associations (whether set up in Poland or branches of international associations) attempted to prevent trafficking of women and children and worked with young women migrants. The urban-rural ties remained strong even after World War II employers from Craw coal sought nannies from nearby villages. In cities like Warsaw or Wroclaw, however, the nannies employed often came from more distant regions.

After 1945 and the formation of the People's Republic of Poland, the sector changed fundamentally. According to political rhetoric, servants had been employed and exploited by the bourgeois and upper classes and undertakings of this kind of job was not encouraged. Initially, however, i.e. from the 1940s to the 1960s, pre-war domestic specialists were still available on the market. Nevertheless, a complex combination of supply-demand factors adversely affected this sector: on the one hand, the burdensome nature of domestic labor and the lack of institutional solutions as regards care increased the demand and, on the other, the poor financial condition of most households, the bad housing situation, and the fact that about half of all women did not work professionally countered the development of the sector. The main feature from the 1970s to 1990s, the second period of the post-war history of the domestic work sector, was access to the new technological devices and a shortage of skilled household employees. Women's professional activity was necessitated by the fact that earnings of one person were not sufficient to support a household.

With the political and economic changes after 1989, a third period began. The 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century were characterized by high unemployment, especially among women, who thus sought work in the domestic sector. At the same time, a section of society became wealthier and thus has the possibility to employ a domestic worker, often for the first time. Women's employment in Poland increased after the war, with 59 per cent engaged in some form of economic activity between 1959 and 1966. However, before the war it was mostly single women who entered the labor market while married women were slow to join the workforce. By the 1970s economic activity of women became the dominant pattern. This changed during the transformation after 1989 and one of the factors motivating women to take on domestic work was the loss of the previous source of income. This period is also characterized by the arrival mainly to large cities of migrant women, primarily from Ukraine as of the mid-1990s. For employers this meant an increase in the accessibility of employees and possibly contributed to specialization of domestic services.

The reasons behind the demand for care work and cleaning services in contemporary Polish households include several factors. First, it is dual career couples who lack time to take care of the house and children; second, it is the bigger financial differentiation of Polish society, which means that certain segments of society are able to pay for extra services, while others take up work in such services; third, it is the ageing population (since the 1980s Poland has seen a decrease in fertility and a reduction in mortality). State support for institutional care of the elderly as well as childcare is underdeveloped and the quality is questionable. Privatization of some social services, such as residential homes for the elderly, meant that they became expensive and thus are no longer affordable for the majority of those in need. Third, two thirds of the elderly prefer to live in their own homes and receive help from kin and friends only when needed. Some researchers argue that Poland, with its declining public provision of care, is characterized

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26 Jan Belcikowski, Warszawa kobieca (Warszawa, 1930), and Belcikowski, Polskie kobiety stwarzajace i zygiski wspolpracy medizarodowej (Warszawa, 1929).
29 The periodization emerged in Kordasiewicz's doctoral research, "(I)shig domowe." Some researchers argue that Poland, with its declining public provision of care, is characterized

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31 Sokołowska, Frauenemanzipation und Sozialismus.
33 Jerzy Krzysztofowski, Gotowo do podjuzcia aktywnosci ekonomicznej wrodz mozib koz tetem niskozurbanizowanych (Wroclaw, 2007).
36 According to the PolSenior study - the latest large-scale survey from 2006 investigating the care needs of people over 65 years-of-age in Poland, 93.5% (N = 1245) of the respondents reported to receive help from family members. P. Biłdgowski, "Potrzeby opiekuńcze
by a "private paternalism," where both market and family are becoming the primary institutions responsible for welfare provision.\textsuperscript{37} In large urban centres, a number of inhabitants are internal migrants, recruited from the intergenerational support-providing households, who search for remunerated childcare workers.

Although it is primarily Polish women who are employed in this sector, many Polish women also migrate abroad for this type of work and, to a lesser extent, migrants from neighbouring countries search for this kind of work in Poland.\textsuperscript{39} Migration to Poland is characterized by a feminization of the migrants from the former Soviet Union, primarily from Ukraine.\textsuperscript{39} As of 2014 there is no official recruitment policy regulating labor migration from Ukraine and women moving to the domestic sector rely on informal networks. They engage in temporary short-term migration; they engage in intense circulation, spending the majority of the year in Poland and, with their income earned, contribute an important part of the overall household income in Ukraine. In fact, they often act as main breadwinners.\textsuperscript{40}

\textit{Legal Institutionalization of the Sector}

Despite all the informality of this sector, the first regulations of servant work appeared in the 16th century. The official state or commune/district/town institutions dealing with the servant issue and related social organizations and associations gradually elaborated and modernized the existing regulations. The abrupt abandonment of the issue in the days of the People's Republic of Poland was followed by very modest legislative efforts after 1989.

Early regulation was a domain of parliamentary acts (konsyltyacje sejmowe), then of town laws (privileges). In the 18th century the regulations dealt with such issues as the duration of contract and the question whether it could last for life, the scope of responsibility of masters for their servants' misdeeds, maximum remuneration, gifts and what was called excessive luxury of servants' clothes. Middlemen providing servant services appeared. As early as in the 16th century, a change of job placement required certificates from previous employers. In general, it was customs rather than regulations that determined the relationship and, since customs favoured servants, regulations were meant to be restrictive, e.g. by fixing a maximum wage. Regulations reflected the masters/employers' perspective and were intended to provide them with cheap labor force.

The 19th century brought significant changes to the master-servant relationship. State control increased and the position of servants improved due to the new concept of contracts which postulated equality of the two parties. A comparison of the three Partitions shows that the degree of control over servants was highest in the Russian part and lowest in the Austrian one. Regulations included a legal definition of a servant (a person who works for remuneration), instructions on how to enter an oral or written contract, conditions under which a contract could be terminated, and a listing of servants' obligations. Police-issued documents called "servants' books," intended to identify the servant (and including information on the employment history and employers' opinions) were mandatory in all the three Partitions, while in the Russian and Prussian part servants were required to register with the local police. Special officials (middlesmen) had the tasks of seeking job offers and recruiting servants like today's employment agencies but unlike the latter their primary function was that of controlling unemployed servants. Only Austrian authorities prohibited physical punishment under a rule in force from 1798 to 1872.\textsuperscript{42}

In theory, the servant and the master had equal rights under contract law; in practice, however, the rights of servants were reduced and their obligations increased. There were, for example, far fewer legitimate reasons for the servant to end the contract than for the employer and, in the case of a dispute (e.g. concerning remuneration) the master's testimony was considered more veracious. In the Kingdom of Poland, the Office for the Servants' Control was established and servants were registered and had to have a "servant's book." The regulations solidified the dependency of servants on employers more than for any other profession, especially in terms of working hours. In all the Partitions they reproduced the feudal exploitation.

After independence in 1918, improvements were limited. Domestic work was at first explicitly excluded from the list of regulation of employment...
contracts for blue collar workers (President of the Republic's Decree, 16th March 1928) but then under the designation "worker, admitted as a household member" included in the Code of Obligations of 1933.

Institutionalization did not go hand in hand with professionalization; in fact, the domestic work sector underwent a decrease in specialization in the early 20th century. Only very few associations explicitly represented remuneration, professional domestic workers and negotiated work conditions and participated in the Polish Labor Union of Christian Domestic Servants (Polski Związek Zawodowy Chrzescijańskiej Shluzby Domowej) established in 1915, the Section of Working Women in the Committee of Self-Help of the Christian Intelligentsia (Komitet Samopomocy Inteligencji Chrześcijańskiej, 1927), and the Civic Work Union of Women (1928). Among ethnic associations, the Association of Jewish Women in Poland (Związek Kobiet Żydowskich w Polsce) organized, among other things, childcare courses. What is worth emphasizing is that the majority of these associations and sections of organizations and unions explicitly addressed women and were probably organized by women. This points to the fact that women's labor in the domestic work sector was treated as separate from general labor in this sector.

After 1945, in the People's Republic of Poland, domestic employment remained (theoretically) governed by the interwar Code of Obligations until a new 1974 Labor Code was passed. Domestic workers could receive an employment contract and domestic work was vaguely recognized in the statistical yearbooks as part of the not centrally planned (non-state owned) economy. Communist approaches to domestic work were ambivalent. Hungary, for example, had its own state-led trade union of domestic workers.

At the beginning of the 21st century household work re-entered the realm of legal regulations but through so-called "activation contracts," a tool to facilitate the mobilization of the unemployed. The laws of 2004 and 2005 concerning employment promotion and labor market institutions defined domestic work:

- To do profitable household work is to perform, for the benefit of household members, activities relating to the household or care of a person residing in the household; it is not permissible to delegate within the household work activities serving the needs of business conducted by a person residing in the household, even if the activity is carried out in premises located outside

The term "profitable employment" was added to "household work" to distinguish paid from unpaid work. In the present, the government's attitude may be viewed as positive at the level of declarations, manifested in the tax deduction and the new acts on the care of children under the age of three (Act of February 20th, for example). In view of the complexity of the regulations, however, very few people follow them and there is no reliable data since household work is still not recognized as proper labor. As regards migrant workers in the domestic (and other) sectors no official policy has been implemented to regulate labor migration between Ukraine and Poland. While there are private employment agencies, domestic work remains a largely informal sector.

To summarize, the impact of legal regulations has been limited. Throughout the 18th century regulations protected employers and public order rather than workers. They focussed on penalties (for employers or servants) for overly high wages, excessively luxurious clothing, too costly gifts, or hiring a person with no certificate from a previous employer. Such certificates were to protect employers from servants departing before a contract's end. But servants were able to use courts to enforce their modest rights in areas such as fixed-term contracts to prevent exploitation and enslavement, protection against physical abuse beyond "normal" beating, a right masters held against servants and as well as all members of their family (children and wife). Masters could be held responsible for legal protection of their servants and provision of healthcare. Although the concept of workers' rights emerged during the 19th-century modernizing processes, the asymmetry of masters and servants remained. In 21st-century Poland, the government's...
The Character and Gendering of Domestic Work

The character of employment in domestic work has undergone tremendous changes, though the extent is not always easy to gauge because of the sector's informality. In the 18th century the majority was employed for a limited life-cycle period as a kind of formation before starting one's own family/household. Family formation thus meant a change of employment. However, as we may infer from studies in the UK, the duration of employment was linked to specialization, with the least specialized being the most mobile. Only households that employed a number of servants provided the possibility of specialization in more than twenty different categories with top-level occupations, such as butler, rare. The disappearance of the so-called "life-cycle servants" by the end of the 19th century may also be linked to the decrease in prestige of domestic work, with a number of specialized institutions taking over tasks previously carried out by servants and the duties of domestic workers being limited to household maintenance and childcare.

A further change involved the reduction in the number of domestic workers employed overall and per household and the shift from the specialized to the "universal" worker. In 1897, 29 per cent of households in Warsaw (total 104,000) employed a live-in domestic and for the majority of them only one person. In Cracow two thirds of all households employed only one person. This contrasts with data from the Prussian annexation region's census where half of the households employed only one person. In Cracow's households employment decreased by approximately one half from the end of the 18th to the end of the 19th century, with a clear change in terms of number of servants per household.

This decrease in number of workers per household was accompanied by increasing feminization. While by the end of the 18th century half of Cracow's households employed male servants only 16 per cent did so a century later. Employing a male servant was linked to the social status/class of the head and the prestige of the household. Approximately two thirds of the households employed only one servant, a woman. This was connected to the fact that domestic workers were also responsible for childcare seen as solely women's duty and ability. Thus women were usually responsible for all basic chores as universal workers, while men, who were usually hired for households with any servants, became specialized workers with privileged positions, often responsible for professional service for the head of the household. Exceptions to the "women as the only employee" rule were female cooks and cooking helps, but for these tasks, too, men were often hired.

Cooks, tokaje (lackeys/footmen) and garderobiani (servants responsible for wardrobe) were among the elite of domestic workers. Treated as professionals, they were better paid then the "universal worker" and often also supervised other servants. They were usually older than the latter and, in contrast to the "life-cycle servant," were often employed permanently. By the late 18th century the greater part of lackeys working in Cracow had their own families and might employ servants in their own household. However, it was also possible for a lackey/footman to have duties similar to those performed by the rest of the servants. Thus the particular "job title/position" did not always translate into specialization.

The decreasing number of servants in households was also related to the decreasing number of qualified persons willing to take such jobs. In the second half of the 19th century, complaints of employers unable to find professional servants appeared in household guidebooks and the press:

A peasant girl appears in winter due to lack of other work, almost unable to write and primitive, accepted to a wealthy household as a floor-cleaner or a "young" one, or to a less wealthy household as one responsible "for everything," for a short time sees how the cook or the housewife prepares meals, and if she likes this task or by accident no other task comes along, only that of a cook — she takes it. It is easy thus to conclude what her abilities are in the art of cooking, what intelligence, what guarantee we have as to her sense of cleanliness and conscientiousness. The worst of all is that when it comes to her health, she is a true sphinx, and to check the

49 Poland has not ratified the 189th no convention on decent work for the domestic workers. A comparison with Southern Italy indicates a similar informality of contracts. But in Italy detailed regulations for domestic work are in force: collective labor agreements, institutionalization of the domestic sector, activity of domestic workers' unions. In Italy workers are aware of their rights even if there is no formal contract (Kordasiewicz, Etniczny wymiar).

50 Poniat, Służba domowa w miastach,17.

51 The end of the 18th century approximately one third of those employed in the city of Cracow worked in a household which employed at least five domestic workers. Poniat, Służba domowa w miastach,18z,188,189.

52 Poniat, Służba domowa w miastach,191, 249.

Ibid, x5z.
Servants in families with only one servant (which grew in number in the course of the 19th century) suffered from numerous duties and lack of free time; in such households an active involvement of household members, primarily the housewife, was required. Skills and status of domestic workers differed between the Partition zones and cities. In Warsaw, Russian Partition, the majority of domestic workers lacked qualifications and were not related to their employers; in Cracow, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, skilled domestic workers constituted a significant percentage among older women and were often relatives of employers.

As to remuneration, a substantial part was in kind, esp. food and clothes. By law annual contracts were to be paid quarterly, while monthly contracts were to be settled upon their termination. To take Cracow as an example, in 1880, 70 per cent of the servants were employed for very brief periods and thus could rarely count on support in case of illness. No emotional ties developed, nor was there a sense of responsibility on the part of the employer. In this respect urban households differed from those of the wealthy landed nobility. Employees without job specification dominated. Guidebooks of the early 20th century listed as duties, for example, heating the stoves and making sure that wood or coal was available, independent cooking or help with it cleaning, washing clothes and ironing and childcare. Serving meals or buying food was also among the duties. According to the census of 1921, the most numerous categories of domestic workers were chambermaid, lackey, and general servant. Wet-nurses and nannies, exclusively women, were the third most numerous group.

In terms of living conditions, by the end of the 19th century, the so-called "maid-of-all-work's" position was characterized by physical closeness to employers due to the small size of apartments, for which servants used the term "life below stairs." In 1921, the majority (91 percent) lived with their employers, by 193115 per cent had their own quarters. Live-out domestic workers meant lower costs for employers. In the present, live-in conditions are of poor quality, with many lacking a room of their own and having to sleep in adapted basements, the garage, or the kitchen.

Care Servants, Care Workers

Studies of the different roles and relative prestige of domestic workers are lacking. Contrary to childcare, with qualifications such as wet-nurse, nanny, "bona," and governess, no comparative assessments of domestic workers' social position and duties exist. Childcare was mentioned in job listings: In Warsaw in 1791, of the twenty-five types of occupations, only two were connected with childcare and in Cracow, in 1880, among the twenty registered job descriptions only four. According to Poniat, childcare was one of the key reasons for employing servants and it was one of their main tasks. Late 18th-century data from parishes in Warsaw and Cracow indicate that families with children aged 0–2 were more likely to employ servants, especially women. In 1791, 94.3 per cent of registered female servants in Warsaw were classified as "general servants" and we may assume that childcare was among their tasks along; specialized care servants, wet-nurses and nurses, constituted merely 0.4 per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively. In 1880 Cracow, 64 per cent of women were "general servants," 2.5 per cent nurses, 2.3 per cent wet-nurses, 0.9 per cent bonas. Only the 0.6 per cent of gouvernant (from French gouvernante) were men. In 1921 census, among the 11,000 servants, wet-nurses and nannies were the third most numerous group (n.060).

Our research indicates that in contrast to domestic workers responsible for everything including childcare, specialization in childcare began early. From the 16th to the 18th century, wet-nurses and nannies were employed by the landed nobility. The positions of "nanny" or "governess" appear for women descended from small nobility in the 19th century. Given their education, they were able to work as private teachers at an estate or a wealthy urban mansion. It can be assumed that the prestige of "universal workers" also
responsible for childcare was lower than that of the specialized employees. However, in the early period, the social status of those responsible solely for childcare was not related to the actual duty but to the status of the employing family. Only with the change in the perception of childhood, which will be discussed below, did the actual function of childcare become a prestigious task. An exception was the status of tutors, responsible for the older children.

Specialized Childcare Workers
Childcare involved wet-nurses, nurses, bonas, governesses and tutors. Wet-nurses breast-fed non-biological infants for pay; etymologically, the Polish word for wet-nurse, mamka (like "mama," "mommy," and similar terms in many European languages) is derived from the Latin mamma meaning "breast." The term "mamka" appeared in the 9th-century Polish dictionaries and, at the beginning of the 20th century, mameczarnia appeared referring to a house of professional wet-nurses.63 The hiring of wet-nurses was widespread across different social strata, but recruitment methods and quality of the care differed. Their employment was connected with status as well as economic reasons but, according to Badinter, for example in France, this was mainly due to the general disinterest in the child as such. A child could be cared for by a wet-nurse at home or be sent to live with her in the countryside. Usually between 18 and 40 years old, wet-nurses cared for children up to four years old.64 The wages of live-in wet-nurses were higher than those of other servants and they were hired for shorter periods and subject to greater control on the part of employers and state as regards health and hygiene.65

Wet-nurses usually from villages close to a noble household, if capable, were recommended to other families often far from their place of origin. Provided they cared well in a landed gentry household, they remained with the family and migrated from household to household. In contrast, nannies often were of gentry background and even those from poorer families held a relatively high position in the social hierarchy.66 Nurses continued childcare when the wet-nurse left "So Johnny is born — make a wet-nurse ready for him; and as soon as he starts to walk — get him a nurse called Hanka" was a line in a 19th-century folk song.67 A good nurse was expected to be in excellent health and display a positive attitude and high moral standards. About half of the nurses were between twenty years of age but this group was the most diversified in terms of age, some being in their fifties and sixties.

Bonas and governesses appeared as occupations at the turn of the 19th-century in response to a new notion of the child and the growing importance attached to education. The first were hired in the homes of the Polish aristocracy/landed nobility, but by later in the century gained popularity in other social strata. Bonas appear to have been less qualified then governesses (and tutors), the latter often of foreign, esp. French and German, background and expected to teach the child a foreign language. Governesses might originate from poorer gentry families as did Maria Sklodowska-Curie and, in their youth, some subsequently renowned Polish male writers.68 Due to the need for education and training they were the oldest age group among childcare workers, about half of them aged between 25 and 35. Bonas were younger, sometimes in their teens. A governess's status ranked between a servant and a teacher and the relatively large number of governesses from mid-28th century on indicates their increasing education levels as well as their professional and social emancipation.

Tutors (usually men) served several social strata: the magnates, the affluent and moderately wealthy nobles, and the wealthy bourgeoisie. In the second half of the 18th century they enjoyed a relatively high position, however status was not a mark of respect for the teaching profession, which was considered lowly in the opinion of his contemporaries, but stemmed from the tutor's belonging to either the clergy or the nobility, or from his being of foreign origins.69 Monks working as tutors often came from the impoverished nobility. Among foreigners, the best recommendation—especially for a language
teacher - was to be French, but there were also Germans, Czechs and Italians. A tutor's privileged position usually placed him at the top of the hierarchy of household workers and, in some families, he oversaw the work of others. In homes of the moderately wealthy nobility, tutors might even be referred to as "family members? In the 19th century the importance of rank was visible when women of small-gentry background ate separately from servants of peasant background even though their duties were the same.74

Specialization and status separated professional and non-professional tutors. The latter were of varying educational standing, while professional tutors knew foreign languages and were appropriately prepared to act as travel companions to young magnates during their journeys. As cultural intermediaries they were in high demand and changed employment with letters of recommendation. They were "of exceptional knowledge, talent, high professional status, usually pursuing their own academic or artistic career. Undoubtedly, they comprised the intellectual elite among private tutors. Distinguished tutors were frequently entertained in aristocratic company and raised to the rank of nobility.75


Changing Perception of Childhood and Childcare
Childcare evolved together with changes in the perception of children. These, in turn, were related to changes in size and character of families in the societal frame of industrialization and increasing individualization. Depending on social class, families had fewer children; mass migration from rural to urban areas resulted in decreasing size of working-class families. Copying lifestyles, bourgeois families followed the aristocracy, and working-class families followed the bourgeois. The intelligentsia's distinct lifestyle was nevertheless inspired by the aristocracy.

Between mid-19th and early 20th centuries, a significant change occurred in the perception of childhood in intelligentsia and bourgeois families. Birth rates declined from G.0 to 1.7 children per family with women marrying later in life and the marriage timespan thus shorter. Sexual intercourse was reduced as the aristocracy's separate bedroom behavior was adopted among bourgeois families; in addition, everyday hygiene levels increased. Economically, the establishment of family businesses required manpower, children included: it was a "heir of good quality" that was now desired. After the mid-1850s, the first childcare guidebooks were published and the idea of family planning emerged. Childcare was seen as the wife's obligation, with support from female family members and employed servants. Over time, an increase in wealth and larger apartments allowed hiring additional staff for the children's upbringing and, as in aristocratic homes, foreign bons and teachers were employed. These were the closest person for the child as relations with parents became highly formalized. A separate child's room was created and the child taught artistic skills, domestic work and music as a symbol of social advancement. Learning foreign languages from an early age became a social and business necessity. The woman's role in the bourgeois household shifted to that of the manager of domestic servants and assistant in domestic tasks which did not involve physical work. With smaller numbers of servants, mutual ties became closer: family extended to include servants 77

By the turn to the 20th century parents were again becoming more involved in childcare. However, the family model remained dichotomous with the father as the breadwinner and the mother as the "lady of the household? The inter-war period saw the emergence of a new type of family focused on the child. The child was seen as an object of care, education and protection, and a new model of mother was promoted: she cared for her child according to the newest medical and hygienic standards but without the help of a nanny or bon. A lasting, good marriage as well as fulfilling the role of the ideal mother continued to be the main indicator of women's status in the social hierarchy. This model was vividly discussed among the intelligentsia, especially among women with well-defined professional career objectives. This new, aspiring, attitude and position of women and their new and active role in the labor market affected areas previously reserved for men. The new model of the family, promoted by the state's welfare institutions, led to backlash reactions from nationalistic and anti-democratic forces.78

Childcare in the Present
Anna Kordasiewicz's research on post-war care and domestic work indicates a clear distinction between the specialized nanny and the "nanny/housekeeper."

73 Ibid., 517.
74 Chamerska, "Sytuacja społeczna drobnej szlachcianki."
77 Siennicka, Rodzina burżuazji warszawskiej.
From the 1970s to the 1990s, the "nanny/housekeeper" became a prominent household worker type and two alternative modes of childcare came to co-exist. What is characteristic of this period is that in some cases the single employee of the household is a nanny without any non-care tasks whereas employees of a domestic worker in the early post-war years typically employed a maid-of-all-work.\(^{79}\)

Currently, paid childcare is a solution used by only a small number of Polish households. Only 1.8 per cent of working parents with children up to fourteen years old declared employment of a paid care worker.\(^{80}\) Such workers are employed more often by parents with higher education (5.1%), live in urban areas (2.4%), and are in the 20–39 age-group (2.7%).\(^{81}\) Hiring care workers is more popular in larger cities and an estimated 20 per cent of Warsaw households with small children hire a nanny.\(^{82}\) Employment is now often based on a recruitment process that can be sophisticated and may involve several steps.\(^{83}\) Remunerated childcare has an important emotional aspect.\(^{84}\)

Individual employers and employees have clear-cut preferences concerning specialization, yet these do not translate into any collective understanding of roles. Some employers prefer a nanny to be a nanny/housekeeper, others forbid nannies to engage in domestic tasks. Some nannies are eager to undertake cleaning and others would neither clean nor cook. This may be illustrated by the case of Olga, one of the employers. Looking for a specialized nanny, she was dissatisfied with the candidates, because, "all of these ladies wanted way too much to do some home tasks, more than to play with the child." Finally, she hired a person who actually gradually turned into a nanny/housekeeper with reciprocal acceptance, which proves that the work experience is very dynamic. Thus each "domestic/care contract" has to be worked out between the partners and it subsequently informs their relationship. Kordasiewicz discerned more asymmetry and more closeness in relationships with nanny/housekeepers than with specialized nannies. The latter are hired less frequently and are constructed as independent agents/actors. Such special carers were often older than nanny/housekeepers.\(^{85}\) We hypothesize that a connection between the class background of employers and their choice of paid childcare modes exists: middle-class couples stress the need for a caregiver to specialize while upper-class ones accept the combination of care and domestic work. But the categories are fuzzy and more research is needed.

The agency of contemporary domestic workers may be documented through sociological methods such as in-depth interviews. They reflect the perspective of the subjects studied. Following Giddens, we understand an agent as an active subject who has access to a common cultural stock of knowledge that allows him or her to act in a given temporal and spatial context. The agency of the contemporary domestic, including child-care workers, can be analysed on two levels: the micro or individual level and the meso-macro level of collective action. On the micro level, general domestic and child-care workers may be analysed as reflexive agents, seeing their work as a learning process which allows them to gain awareness of how to respond to risks. A domestic worker learns, for example, what working conditions she or he can accept. Even though the resources and thus the division of power between the domestic worker and the employer are asymmetrical, the domestic worker engages in what Giddens referred to as "dialectic of control": even the least powerful agents (as the "maid-of-all-work") have the ability to mobilize resources and have some control in a particular setting, because "all relations of autonomy and dependence of resources involved, all power relations express autonomy and dependence 'in both directions'.\(^{86}\)

Analysing the agency of contemporary child-care workers in the historical context developed above, we suggest that the youth sent to work as servants by their families as part of their life-cycle had less possibilities and awareness to exercise agency than their contemporary counterparts: generally already adult women, who, following consultation with their families, take an independent decision to engage in domestic work. This agency is particularly visible among the migrant domestic workers, whose migration decision involves a number of complex procedures related to international mobility. Apart from age as the decisive factor, the actual experience and specialization played and continue to play a crucial role in the reflexive monitoring of the domestic workers' actions. Experience in the domestic work sector is strongly linked to building up a particular type of social capital and social networks. It also depends heavily on the type of work in the domestic sector, with care workers having weaker social networks than cleaners and thus less agency, and live-in care workers have less agency than independently living ones.\(^{87}\) In the past, however, when

\(^{79}\) Kordasiewicz, "(U)sługi domowe."

\(^{80}\) GUS/BAEL, Praca obojga rodzinnie w 2005 roku (Warszawa, 2006).


\(^{82}\) Kordasiewicz, "(U)sługi domowe."

\(^{83}\) Ibid, Kujawa, "Mania ideaiana".


\(^{85}\) Kordasiewicz, "(U)sługi domowe."

\(^{86}\) Anthony Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory, Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1979), 39.

\(^{87}\) Marta Kindler, A Risky Business?
most servants lived in, child-care seems to have empowered workers more pi-

- vis the employer than research on current nannies and tutors suggests.

Although in the past the servants' status and duties were regulated, the law
privileged employers and the legal status actually posed a risk of more oblig-
tions and less rights.

Another important factor is the issue of changing legal regulations when
comes to migration of contemporary child-care workers from outside the EU.

Their conditions continue to change. Little legal agency was needed in the
early 1990s, the near-absence of entry barriers allowing permitted easy access
as quasi-tourists. More and more agency was required with the introduction
of entry barriers in 1998, then in 2003 in the form of a visa-regime and in 2007
with the introduction of Schengen visas. These entry barriers translate into
greater dependency on informal employers, who also become facilitators in getting the
required travel documents. However, at the same time, accesses to Poland's
labor market was facilitated for nationals of neighboring countries, esp. Ukraine
as the main migrant sending country, and for domestic care workers.

On the level of collective action, historically unions and organizations that
mobilized around the issue of servants' working conditions (e.g. Lokesh in this
volume) were established, and today in some contexts such organization
groups operate for example trade unions in Italy and associations in the

In contemporary Poland, however, collective forms of agency do not develop as both employers and workers do not generally constitute groups due to the
individualized character of relationships.

Conclusions

Only a long-term historical analysis permits to discern continuities and
changes or radical discontinuities. In Poland, the transformation of speciali-

zation in the care and domestic sector involved a trajectory from ceremonial,
i.e. status, importance to functional. Households with limited means had to

88 Marta Kindler, A Risky Business?
89 Jacqueline Andall, "Organizing Domestic Workers in Italy: The Challenge of Gender, Class
and Ethnicity," in F. Anthias and G. Lazaridis (eds), Gender and Migration in Southern
Europe: Women on the Move (Oxford- New York, z000), 145-172; Anderson, Doing the Dirty
Work?
90 Anna Kordasiewicz, "Class Guilt? Employers and Their Relationships with Domestic
Workers in Poland," in Anna Triandafyllidou and Sabrina Marchetti (eds), Paying for Care:
The Employers' Perspective on Migrant Domestic Work (forthcoming, Ashgate).
91 Michal Kopcylis, "Sluiba domowa...."
Mutual Emotional Relations in Caregiving Work at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century: Vietnamese Families and Czech Nannies-Grandmothers*

Adéla Souralová

Introduction: Addressing Emotionality in Caregiving Work

In July 2001 I met Minh, a 17-year-old boy born in the Czech Republic to a first-generation Vietnamese immigrant mother, Ms. Truong. We were talking about life in the Czech Republic, his studies, and his family. Minh shared many stories from his childhood which he spent with his Czech nanny. He remembered how they grew vegetables in the garden and watched TV fairy tales together. He also told me how much he loved the meals prepared by his nanny, and that even today he eats lunch with her every day after school. Two weeks later I had an opportunity to speak with his nanny, Ms. Kosová, as well as with his mother, Ms. Truong. Ms. Kosová started her narration by telling me how many grand-children she had, Minh included. She also explained to me how she became his nanny and how nice but difficult it was for her to take care of him. A few hours later, Ms. Truong talked of her son with pride, and her deep appreciation for the support his nanny had given both Minh and herself. Minh is one of many second-generation immigrant children in the Czech Republic who have been raised by Czech nannies. His mother, Ms. Truong, is one of many first-generation immigrant parents who came to the Czech Republic (former Czechoslovakia, respectively) from Vietnam over the last several decades to start a new life. Ms. Kosová is one of many retired Czech women who decided to become nannies in Vietnamese immigrant families after finding themselves dependent on a "welfare" state — whether as pensioners or unemployed. These three actors — Vietnamese parents, the child, and the Czech nanny — are part of a triangular relationship based on an unwritten, oral contract between nanny and child, and between nanny and parent(s), which then develops into interpersonal attachments between nanny and child, and between nanny and parent(s).

It is widely acknowledged in research across the globe that caregiving work establishes highly emotional and personal relationships which are characterized by particular forms of (mutual) dependency? Addressing the issue of emotionality in caregiving work, some scholars have focused on the emotional dimension of care work itself — care work as "commodification of emotions"3 — while others have analyzed emotional attachment in the employer-employee relationship4 at the micro-level, and the value of emotional meaning within that relationships. These studies have played an important role in developing a more nuanced picture of the employer-employee relationship. Other studies have focused primarily on the unequal, exploitative character of ties between mothers and care workers.6 The focus on emotionality in caregiving cannot neglect the exploitative character of caregiving work. Rather it leads the scholars to acknowledge the paradoxical character of paid care work which combines the structural inequality of employer-employee relations with the potential for the work to be emotionally significant to the workers and to those who hire the workers.7 This focus demonstrates an understanding of the ambiguity of care work, which "paradoxically" combines unequal relationships with emotional ones.

7 Uttal and Tuominen, "Tenuous Relationships," 776, italics added.
However, I will argue that the impression of paradoxicality does not reflect the genuine nature of care work, but is shaped by the formulation of the research agenda which involves a methodological and conceptual gap: the missing perspective of care receivers. In our case, children. I will argue that listening to the voices of the cared-for may show us that paid caregiving is not paradoxical after all. The relationship between caregiver and care receiver is complex, and marked by the interplay between emotional attachments and detachments, which operate alongside one another and are not necessarily contradictory. The relationship between caregivers and care receivers is highly emotional and based on proximity, intimacy, and daily contact. It develops alongside the employer-employee relationship, which is based on ontologically different principles from those in a caregiving relationship — namely, that of paying and being paid. These two aspects must be analyzed separately as two sides of the same coin. Viewed in this manner, paid childcare work begins to appear less paradoxical and more double-edged: for the caregiver it is a relationship established between two actors — employers and cared-for children — but one that is based on the principles of being paid and providing care.

Taking into account the perspective of cared-for children and their experiences with both mothers' and nannies' caregiving, my aim is to offer a microanalysis of the dual mutual emotional relationships between nanny and child, and between nanny and mother. After explaining the migratory background and emergence of the demand for nannies on the part of Vietnamese immigrants in the Czech Republic, I will then discuss two sets of ties (between nannies and children and nannies and mothers) and the role of emotions in them. First I will analyze the nanny-child relationship, focusing on caregiving and the emotional exchange between caregivers and the cared-for as being inherently linked to identity work. Then I will move on to the relationship between mothers and nannies, where emotions (rather than payment) become the issue over which quarrels may occur, and which reveal caregivers' vulnerability to emotional abuse or misrecognition of their emotional investment.

Vietnamese Migrants in the Czech Republic and their Demand for Nannies

Vietnamese migrants in the countries of Central Eastern Europe are a specific group within the world-wide Vietnamese diaspora, which emerged after 1975 earlier in France as the colonizing power. They differ from their counterparts in Western countries. Migration from Vietnam to the former socialist countries was driven by East-West geopolitics and the Vietnam War, when a bilateral treaty was signed allowing for the arrival of around one hundred war refugees. Small numbers of Vietnamese students and workers also came to Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and 1960s, supported by the "fraternal assistance" Package provided by Central European states. During the 1970s, contacts between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam were intensive, formalized by a number of agreements of "mutual assistance." Cooperation between the GDR countries and Vietnam was reinforced by Vietnam's entry into the Council on Mutual Economic Assistance in 1978. Between 1980 and 1983, the number of Vietnamese citizens in Czechoslovakia rose to 30,000. In the mid-1980s these treaties expired, and new ones — this time calling for a reduction of the number of Vietnamese migrants in the Czech Republic — were signed. By the end of the 1980s, only about 10,000 Vietnamese migrants lived in Czechoslovakia.

After 1989, state-managed migration changed into economic labor migration. As Bala and Williams strongly argue, the two phases (before and after 1989) are interrelated. Some of the migrants who had come under the agreements before 1989 settled in Czechoslovakia, and legalized their stay through marriage or by applying for a trade license, while others returned to Vietnam. The flow of migration from Vietnam to Czechoslovakia (and later to the Czech Republic) did not stop; but after 1989 it was shaped by "the welfare maximization strategies of individual migrants." Simply put, three types of Vietnamese migrants began to arrive: (1) those entering under family reunification policies, such as relatives of those who had stayed after 1989; (2) those who used to live, work, or study in the CSR but who had returned to Vietnam after 1989 and then left again in the 1990s for the Czech Republic (the majority of my interviewees); and finally, (3) people with no connection to pre-1989 migration.

In 2013 Vietnamese were the third largest group of migrants in the Czech Republic after Ukrainians and Slovaks. Approximately 60,000 Vietnamese live in the Czech Republic, and account for approximately 15% of the immigrant population in the Czech Republic, and 0.6% of the entire population. According...
to the Czech Statistical Office, in 2005, 21% of the Vietnamese population were children 0-14 years old (15% in the Czech population), 78% are of productive age (15-64), and only 1% were over 65. This age stratification reveals two characteristics of the Vietnamese migrants that were also verbalized in the interviews: it is a labor and circular migration (see below). The interviewees cited that they aimed at providing "a better future" for their children, and that on the mission is accomplished (the child is well-educated and starts his/her own family), they (the parents) plan to return to Vietnam. The Czech nanny helps parents accomplish these aims, and for many families plays a key role in parents' work and caregiving strategies.

The emergence of the demand for a nanny must be interpreted within the context of post-migratory family settlement. Interviewees' family life is deeply influenced by three main factors: The change in work life (raising the question of how to reconcile work and family life); the transnational balancing between two cultural worlds (which leads to re-thinking and combining the family and care models from the country of origin and the host country); and the absence of social networks, (which gives rise to the dilemma of how to deal with the new family situation without the help of a kinship network). The demand for a nanny emerges at the junction of these three factors, and becomes a norm and practice that "everybody just does" within the Vietnamese community, While there are no official statistics of how many Vietnamese families hire Czech nannies, my interviewees estimate that number maybe as high as 80-90 percent.

After coming to the new country, the Vietnamese parents find themselves in a new economic world and labor market. Most Vietnamese adults become part of the migrant economy, mainly as entrepreneurs in wholesaling and retailing, (i.e., owners of small shops and/or open-air markets) 13 Self-employment is thus the crucial aspect of their work life in the Czech Republic. In 2009 around 88,000 foreigners (63,000 men and 25,000 women) in the Czech Republic held a valid trade license; some 36,000 of them were Vietnamese. The roots of such occupational concentration can be found in the early 1990s, when establishing a business license was a way to formalize and legalize residence for migrants who came under the former agreements. "This choice requires an enormous investment — often at the expense of private life. If we close the shop, we won't earn anything," many of my interviewees stressed when pointing out the lack of time spent with their families and children. The migration project is filled by both parents' breadwinning activities and monetary investment in the children's education, not by spending time with their children.

A second factor shaping demand for nannies is the balancing between two cultural worlds. The differing arrangements for care and state support in Vietnam (four months of paid maternity leave and a network of child care facilities) and in the Czech Republic (up to four years of paid parental leave and a decline in state support for public child care) put parents in an awkward position, where the preferred ideals from one country can hardly be accomplished in another. Living in a transnational social field, the parents have at their disposal multiple referential frames, which provide them with often contradictory ideas and ideals about child care arrangements. Similarly to what Lisa Widding Isaksen has demonstrated in her research on Norway, Vietnamese migrant mothers often choose the customs of their homeland. 15 They attempt to organize their family lives according to how it is normally done in the country of origin. "How would I have arranged the care for my child if I had stayed home," becomes both the hypothetical question and answer in the new country. This means a return to the workplace when the child is a few months (rather than years) old.

This again is closely connected to the third issue: the absence of kin — and more precisely of grandmothers — to whom child care is usually delegated in Vietnam. For many parents, hiring a Czech nanny is a reaction to post-migratory disconnection from the kinship network. By employing Czech nannies, the home-country model of care can be imitated: the Czech nanny supplements the mother and supplants the grandmother. 16 Thus, the implicit definition of the nanny's position in the family is that she takes over the responsibilities that in Vietnam would be performed by the grandmother. In addition, if the age of the nanny is roughly that of a grandmother in Vietnam, the woman is called "grandma" (in Czech "babi") in Vietnamese "bd," which is used in Vietnam for all women of a similar age to a child's grandmother. If she is younger, she is called "aunt" (in Czech "sia," and in Vietnamese "ca") — a word used for all women of similar age to a child's mother). Such a definition of the relationship...
within the "pre-existing cultural codex for family relationships" profoundly shapes the character of emotional ties, as will be discussed in this chapter.

Study Design: Give Voice to All Actors Involved

In her influential article on "The Nanny Question' in Feminism," Joan Tronto emphasizes three differing approaches to analyzing the subject: from the perspectives of the families (mothers), of the children, and of the nannies, is this chapter, the perspectives of all three actors will be analyzed to capture the complexity of kinship ties, including their inherent tensions and contradictions.

My interest in Vietnamese children that have been cared for by Czech nannies entails looking mainly at the consequences and outcomes of former paid caregiving. I wish to examine the dynamics of the relationships, and their continuity and changeability over the course of time in family life. It is obvious that paid caregiving is a time-bound activity: responsibilities and relationships change over the years as the children grow up, become increasingly independent, and ultimately no longer require a nanny. I therefore examine relationships between (nannies and children) during two distinct phases: during paid caregiving, and (z) and once paid caregiving terminates.

Between 2010 and 2012, I conducted a total of 50 in-depth interviews in some of the largest Czech cities, as well as in the Czech-German and Czech-Austrian border regions, where the concentration of Vietnamese migrants is traditionally greater. The interviews with children focused on recollections of childhood, and a description of their current relationship to the nanny. The selection of 20 children-informants followed pre-set criteria, which ensured not only diversity within the sample, but as a purposive sample, reflected the research question. Hence, the first criterion was that the children still be in touch with their nannies. The second was their age, which I limited to 16-25 years, in view of the research interest of capturing the long-term aspect of the entire relationship. The third criterion—place of birth—was intended to include children born in the Czech Republic (io interviewees), as well as children who came to the country with their parents, or who joined their parents in the Czech Republic at the age of 7 or younger (10 interviewees). The interviews with nannies were conducted with both women, who were currently being paid for caregiving work (7), and with women, who had worked in the past as nannies in Vietnamese families, and who are still in touch with formerly cared-for children (8). Finally, the interviews with mothers were conducted both with mothers who currently employ nannies (8 in my sample), and with mothers who had paid for caregiving in the last few years, and whose children are still in touch with the nanny (7 in my sample).

The interviews covered a broad range of issues, including families' past and future migratory strategies, the decision to recruit a nanny, and the current relationship between family and nanny. In the case of the children, recollections of childhood were at the core of the narrations. My analysis of the findings then focused on the interviewees' perceptions of their ties, and the origins of these statements, the motivations for them, and their outcomes in the context of their self-presentation in the interviews. The analysis presented below focuses on a particular group of Vietnamese migrants (first-generation parents and second-generation children) that employs a specific model of child care that leads to particularly long-term ties.

Mutual Emotional Dependency: Identity Work in Caregiving Work

In this section I will analyze the nanny-child relationship, focusing on caregiving and emotional exchange between caregivers and cared-for, and argue that it is inherently linked to identity work. Being a nanny in a Vietnamese family requires two basic predispositions. First, the nanny needs to have sufficient time for intensive caregiving, as Vietnamese parents need a person whose schedule can reflect their own. This person must be able to provide care ten hours a day, five/seven days a week, or (in cases when the child lives at the nanny's and parents visit only once per week/month) even twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Second, this person must have another source of income, as the pay for a nanny is normally only one-third the average monthly salary, and is far below the minimum hourly wage. Thus, when focusing on women's motivations to become nannies, we must ask not only who wants or needs to be a nanny, but also who can afford to be a nanny. In other words, who can afford to perform full-time caregiving work with minimal financial remuneration? The answer must be sought in the nannies' position in the welfare state. All nannies (with one exception) were dependent on the welfare state—either as unemployed, retirees, or as disability recipients, and thus entitled to

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18 Joan C. Tronto, 'The Nanny' Question in Feminism; Hypatia 1(2002), 31-51.
government support which assured them a regular income (social wage) and a surplus of free time (free time which was very often unwelcomed and undesired).

A common pattern emerged in the interviews: Once retired, many women found themselves in a new and unsatisfactory position of economic unproductivity — with "no reason to get out of bed in the morning," as one of the nannies, Ms. Dudková, described her life immediately upon retirement. She, like twelve other nannies in my sample, had not intended to look for a job or to earn extra money. She had looked forward to retirement because she felt tired and burnt out. However, retirement brought too much of a change to her previously active life, and set off (in her words) "a big personal crisis." When a friend told her about a Vietnamese family that needed a nanny for a six-week-old girl, Ms. Dudková began caring for the girl a few days later. This girl is now eight years old and lives at her nanny's. Her parents work six days a week in Slovakia (about 150 km away). The nanny does her homework with her, takes her to gymnastics lessons and plays piano with her. Being a nanny for this girl is a time-consuming responsibility that requires sacrifices, such as giving up her hobbies, her leisure time, and even her privacy. But what does this work as a nanny give Ms. Dudková? What benefits does she derive by being a nanny?

The nannies in my sample were unanimous in stressing that caregiving work cannot be done without emotional investment, and can therefore only be performed by women who love the children they care for and who love children in general.9 This finding is similar to that of Margaret K. Nelson and others, who stated that "the women become genuinely attached to the children and can acknowledge openly the feelings generated in their daily activities."0 Furthermore, the interviews with the nannies (as with the children) suggest that these feelings are mutual. Emotions flow both ways: emotional investment does not imply that the nanny is actively passing her feelings on to child as the passive recipient. Rather, emotions manifest themselves in a form of a gift which entails, reciprocally, both giving and receiving.21 "I love her and she gives me everything back," Ms. Dudková said, emphasizing the two-way channel of affection.

Mutual emotional exchange, which by its nature is highly reciprocal, appears in the nannies' narratives as more than a mere by-product of caregiving. For many nannies in my sample, this emotional exchange is the raison
dérole of their caregiving — from the very decision to become a nanny, to the daily performance of tasks which are paid far below labor market standards. Some nannies, such as Ms. Křepelková, value caregiving in general for its emotional nature and fulfillment. She considered herself a very good caregiver with extensive experience, and felt that the roots of her success could be found in her childhood, when she took care of her younger siblings. Caregiving — first unpaid and performed within the family, and later paid for by both Czech and Vietnamese families — became the main structuring activity of her biography. When asked about her current caregiving work and its meaning for her, Křepelková responded in words similar to all the other interviewees: "You cannot count the hourly wage. That is simply impossible. You have less than 20 CZK. Take it or leave it. But if you like doing it, then why not?" For these women, caregiving is not performed just for the pay, as it is never an exclusive breadwinning activity, and is rarely considered a regular job with adequate pay. Rather, caregiving is an activity that is performed for its emotional value, and not for the poor financial compensation. "You must like doing it; is the common response of nannies performing caregiving services for Vietnamese families.

For many nannies in my sample, emotional fulfillment is derived from the personified caregiving for a particular child, the emotions exchanged in the daily practice of caregiving, and the enduring emotional ties that provide emotional fulfillment — not from the caregiving work itself. In one nanny's words, taking care of the child was a "source of energy" and established a balanced exchange of emotions. Such was the case with Ms. Havranová. She started her caregiving job when she retired. At that time her only son had become seriously ill and passed away. Both Ms. Havranová and her husband were devastated by their loss, but the presence of the Vietnamese boy they took care of helped focus their attention elsewhere. Giving him their care, attention, and love, the couple received from the boy an enormous amount of emotional comfort. Ms. Havranová recalled her husband telling her (soon after their tragedy, when he had to consult a psychologist) "You know, when this little boy puts his arms around me and hugs me, that is better than a thousand pills." This short sentence indicates the irreplaceable role of the cared-for boy in the life of his caregivers. At the same time — on a more general level — it suggests a shift in the definition of caregiving from that of a mere job to that of an activity that brings emotional satisfaction. Despite low pay and the broad set of responsibilities delegated to caregivers (including for example doctor visits, and communication with schools), caregiving becomes a fulfilling activity that brings great emotional satisfaction.

In the interviews, many nannies repeatedly articulated the basic logic of their decision: "to get something that I miss and need." What are the women
looking for, and what do they expect? What is the meaning of caregiving in their lives? What is the role of paid caregiving in their biographies? To answer these questions I turn to Ms. Brhliková, the nanny of a three-year-old Vietnamese girl. She has three adult daughters, and is hoping impatiently to become a grandmother. One of her daughters, whom I also interviewed, explained to me the importance of caregiving for her mother’s subjectivity, and the essential role of caregiving work at this particular stage in her life-cycle.

Now she is happy because she has another person she can take care of and who is dependent on her. She is happy because of this relationship. We all grew up, we moved away, and she used to feel lonely and needed to cuddle up to somebody. And she found it here. So it is a kind of compensation for her.

Reflecting the observation and description of her daughter, Ms. Brhliková talked about how her current stage of life is less meaningful because she is not "grandmothering." She even mentioned having an inferiority complex because she still does not have grandchildren and her daughters no longer need her. There are two interconnected roles of caregiving essential to nannies' adult biography. First, caregiving is essential for the nanny’s female identity work, as many scholars have argued. Caregiving is an essential component of female identity and structures many women's adult biography.22 Intensive caregiving permits the nanny to perceive herself as being a complete woman. The need to be needed — as evident in the quotation above — indicates that caregiving impacts nannies' self-perception and self-evaluation. By providing the women with daily activities, responsibilities, and consciousness of being irreplaceable (if only temporarily) in a child's life, work as a nanny relieves the women of former feelings of emptiness, boredom, loneliness or even uselessness.

Second, caregiving plays an essential role in nannies' intergenerational relations and hence in their kin identity work. In describing Vietnamese families' motivations for hiring nannies, I argued that the nanny supplants the grandmother. I wish to extend that argument further by suggesting that the nanny actually becomes the grandmother for Vietnamese children. But how does this occur, and how is the process perceived by the nannies?

Daily caregiving establishes intensive and strong emotional ties which result in a kinning process — the subjectivation of paid nanny to grandmother.

I felt like they were hurting me and I did not understand why they were so cold to me. When I lived with my grandma and grandpa [the nanny and her husband], they kept on showing me clearly their love. They kissed me, hugged me all the time and told me how great I am and how much they love me. I think this is how it is in Czech families, but the Vietnamese do not do it, they do not motivate their children like that.

The emotional attachment is verbalized in children's narratives in various ways. All of them have the same denominator, which could be expressed as "the nanny gave me something my parents could not give me." First, as the case of Linh shows, it may be expressed as a display of feelings — kisses, hugs, verbal support — which the nanny passes to the child and the parents do not, either because they are not present or because it is not a habitual part of their parenting style.

Secondly, the fact that the child spends the greatest amount of active time with his or her nanny leads the child to develop ties with the nanny that are based on mutual understanding and trust. During a particular period of a child's life it is the nanny who solves the child's problems, both because she is "at hand," and/or because she understands the child. This role of nanny slowly...
vanishes when the child grows up, and the nanny is replaced by a peer group, which then becomes the child's main frame of reference.

And third, for many children in my sample the emotional attachment is described in terms of "living family life together" — of building a sense of belonging and home — which shapes these children's understanding of their position in the Czech Republic and Vietnam. The Czech nannies — present and equipped with their social and cultural capital — also operate as a "door" to Czech society. This door is composed not only of "lessons" in the Czech language or mediation of habits and customs maintained in the Czech Republic, but above all, transmission of social capital, when the nanny makes the child part of her social and kinship networks. In many narratives, the nannies are described as an anchor or "safe haven" that connects these immigrant children to Czech society, and provides them a set of certainties that their own parents cannot provide.

Similar to the nannies, the children also acknowledge the double process of identity work. First is kin identity work. Parallel to the nannies' experiences of becoming the grandmothers for cared children, the children also pass through their own subjectivation to become the grandchildren of their nannies. "Why it is good to have a Czech grandmother?" I asked my interviewees. Aside from giving me a list of practical reasons (the nannies taught them Czech, were with them [the children] when their parents were working, etc.), many of the children mentioned the need to "have a grandma." Considering that all of these children have their parents' parents in Vietnam, we must interpret this need as one based exclusively on the specific kinds of attachments that the children can experience only with their Czech grandmothers — attachments that are reproduced every day, face-to-face, and rooted in mutual emotional exchange. The Czech grandmother enables the children of Vietnamese parents to experience a grandmother-grandchild relationship. This is something the children cannot experience with their Vietnamese grandparents whom they visit only once in a great while.

When it comes to ethnic identity work, the recollections of childhood presented by my interviewees suggest that the nanny plays an essential role in children's ethnic identification. Han, an 18-year-old girl, told me "When I was small, I felt like a little Czech. I had my Czech grandma, I attended Czech kindergarten." When narrating her understanding of her place in the world, Han often referred to her Czech grandmother. Nira Yuval-Davis argues that the emotions of home and belonging are closely linked to emotions, while Ni Loire et al. state that belonging "captures the lived realities of longing, belonging attachments which can contradict or go beyond assumed and/or ascribed identifications." When the nanny becomes an anchor, as I argued above, she provides the child with a tie to Czech society, and mediates the child's connection to a "homeland." She gave me a home at that time," says Han, when describing the crucial role of her Czech grandma during her childhood. Simply put, the emotional attachment to a Czech grandma may lead to an emotional attachment to the Czech Republic, which the children establish from early childhood.

Silent Quarrels over Emotionality: Recognition and Superiority Declarations

In order to understand the emotionality of the nanny-mother relationship, it is necessary to start with a brief description of the nature of interactions. I will begin with the particular case of Ms. Brhliková and Ms. Pham. Ms. Pham's daughter, Than, was 3 years old when I first contacted her mother and her nanny in zozo. I met with Ms. Brhliková several times during my research. During one of our first meetings I was able to observe her ordinary morning — the start of her "working day." She enters her employers' apartment just a few minutes before they leave for their shops and finds herself in the centre of activity. The mother has just finished preparing lunch, packing it in two boxes — one for her and one for her husband — and has left the rest in the casserole on the stove. The sink is full of dirty dishes. Both parents set out for work; the number of words exchanged during this short meeting can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Ms. B rhliková greets little Than. After serving Than breakfast, Ms. B rhliková cleans the kitchen and later, around noon, boils rice or potatoes and serves it together with the meat the mother has prepared for the child. Interaction between Ms. B rhliková and Ms. Pham is marked by a lack of time spent together, and a mutual lack of language competencies (the mother speaks no Czech and the nanny no Vietnamese), which together do not allow the two women to create a common space for exchanging words, ideas, or even emotions. The only common topic in the nanny-mother conversation is the child. However, even in these cases the communication tends to be non-verbal.

26 Caitriona Ni Loire et al., Childhood and Migration in Europe. Portraits of Mobility Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Ireland (Farnham, zou).
(a cooked meal in the casserole means an order to "give my daughter this meal for lunch") or limited to simple verbal exchanges about what the child did during the day and what she or he learnt new etc.

Most of my nanny-interviewees and mother-interviewees characterized their relation to one another as "a kind of friendship." In only a few cases women described the relationship in terms of kinship ties. Similarly, there were only a few who used the vocabulary of "employment" relations. However, there was a huge difference between how nannies perceived their ties with the children, and how they perceived their ties with the mothers. This difference was also apparent to children and some mothers, who observed how the child frequently became part of the nanny's family, while the parents normally did not. Nevertheless, emotionality plays a crucial role in nanny-mother ties, although in a radically different way than in the nanny-child relationship.

If the key term characterizing the nanny-child relationship is "emotional satisfaction," in nanny-mother ties the key term is "emotional recognition." As stated earlier, here again we see that the emotional value of caregiving work is much more important than financial compensation. What exactly does it mean for nannies to be "recognized"? Above all it means respect for their role in children's lives. These nannies have a major impact on children's development and, by providing for the child's wellbeing, and being essentially irreplaceable, the nannies are assured a stable and permanent place in the child's life. The nannies' emphasis on their recognition by mothers comes up during the interviews in four ways. Which of them is verbalized by the nanny depends on how the nanny's role in the child's life is perceived in terms of kinship. Though my sample was limited, one pattern became evident quickly: there were huge differences in the perception of the relationship between nannies and mothers depending on the nanny's age relative to that of the mother. Simply stated, if the nanny was considerably older than the mother and her relationship with the child defined in terms of kinship, the exclusive place of the mother was preserved. However, in cases where the age difference between mother and nanny was not significant and the nanny was a viewed as an 'aunt' to the child, the mother's exclusive place could potentially be challenged.

Foremost is the recognition the nannies receive from mothers. In these cases mothers see the emotional attachment between nannies and children as a guarantee of quality care, which relieves the parents of worries about the child's wellbeing while at work. These mothers describe themselves as lucky for having found a nanny that really loves the child. Consequently, nannies are happy when their real love for the particular child is recognized by mothers and they allow this affection to flourish. In many regards this is a "win-win situation" for both the women and the child, and which grows into an emotional symbiosis between all three actors (see the cases of Ms. Kosová, Minh and Ms. T. uong in the introduction of this chapter).

Second, it is recognition that the nannies explicitly call for when emphasizing their roles in children's lives. Nannies perceive the uniqueness of their role in children's lives, especially with regard to language acquisition and socialization. When I asked nannies to summarize their impact on children's lives, many of them responded unreservedly that they taught the children "everything." For example, Ms. Brhlíková said:

There was a Czech language competition for students and the Vietnamese boy won it. I liked so much that he said he owed everything to a Czech woman who had taught him everything, the language, since his childhood. So I always say to myself, if I brought up someone who would become a success, then the child would say, my nanny taught me so well.

Similarly, the importance of the nanny in the child's life is mirrored in the importance of the child in the nanny's life as well. The nannies want to be recognized not only for investing emotionally in the children, but also for receiving affection from them. Such need is manifested in the worries and fear about ending caregiving. Ms. Brhlíková, for example, was afraid of the moment when the cared for girl would begin attending kindergarten. "I don't know what will happen," she said sadly, because the continuation of her relation with the child was uncertain. The prospect of ending her relationship with the child clearly upset her, and she said that "I must somehow try to keep a distance, I cannot be so much attached to her? This case shows a particular model within my sample, where the rule of detached attachment (as a rational choice) clashes with the need for emotional satisfaction. The strategy of detached attachment was defined by Margaret K Nelson, who found that nannies must negotiate the "feeling rule," which stipulates that they should like the children they take care of just enough, but not too much? The temporary nature of caregiving work and the unstable position of the nanny in a child's life (the nanny can be replaced by kindergarten or later by peers) led many nannies to stress their exclusive role in the child's development. This may be read as a defense strategy — part of detached attachment and protection from the anticipated loss of emotional satisfaction.

Third, it is recognition that the nannies explicitly require when comparing their caregiving strategies to those used by the mothers. In doing so the nannies employ moral hierarchies through which they present themselves as...
more dedicated caregivers, who show more emotion toward the children than the children's own mothers. Some nannies in my sample were quite direct in sharing with me their view of Vietnamese mothers' mothering style, and how they (the nannies) were more educated and loving caregivers than the mother. “The children very often call you 'mum', that is normal,” reports Ms. Křepelková, a nanny with extensive caregiving experience. Ms. Jestfáblová described the lack of emotions displayed by parents towards the children, saying that "I often observe it when I take the children home and the parents only ask about home work, you know? They push them in this but they never ask how the child is doing, what they did. They only ask if they were learning? These two cases reflect the nannies' sense of emotional "superiority" over the mothers, as well as the greater strength of emotional ties between nanny and child compared to those between mother and child. Rhetorically, emotional attachment in these cases becomes the nannies' invisible (because rarely told directly to mothers) weapon, allowing nannies to present themselves as better caregivers or even as better women.

And fourth, it is recognition denied when nannies' emotional investment or satisfaction is used by mothers as a weapon against the nannies. Because of the characteristic of my sample, this strategy was very rare. There was only one nanny in my sample (Ms. Zvonková) who said she felt abused by a mother who was aware of the emotional attachment between nanny and child and who used this attachment to achieve what the nanny interpreted as the mother's personal ends. When Ms. Zvonková asked her employer for a raise in pay, the employer refused, adding that if the nanny didn't want to care for the two girls, she didn't have to. Ms. Zvonková decided to terminate her caregiving work; however, she was aware that the girls would have to then go to the workplace with the parents, where they would not receive good care. Therefore she reversed her decision and continued with the caregiving, for her affection for the children was greater than her need for more money. This case illustrates that nannies are very much aware that, despite the emotional attachment, it is the parent that possess monopoly control over the child. Caregiving can be terminated at any time, and the parents do not need to discuss it with the nanny. Such a skewed balance of power makes nannies vulnerable to having their emotional investment in the children used against them, and they may justifiably feel they are being blackmailed by the mothers.

What all these cases show is the inevitable, automatic knitting of emotional ties in the daily practice of caregiving, and its articulation in the nanny-mother relationship. When it comes to mothers, their definition of emotionality and caregiving differs radically from what the children and nannies describe. This is not to say that the mothers do not want to recognize the emotional ties between nanny and child, but rather they often do not recognize the formative role of caregiving in establishing emotional ties and creating mutual dependency between their children and the nannies paid by the parents themselves. “The child always knows who his/her mother is,” mothers stated. Their reflections on delegated caregiving are based on two assumptions about caregiving and emotional ties between cared-for and caring. The first assumption refers to the nature-versus-nurture definition of emotional ties, and hence the role of biological ties versus caregiving in the creation of emotional dependency.

The emphasis on biological connectedness manifests itself in the interviews with mothers directly, when they state that their role in children's lives is undeniable and stable because they are the parents. This connectedness is indirectly manifest when the formative role of caregiving in knitting the ties is not recognized, and in the parents' eyes, cannot challenge the kinship ties between themselves (the parents) and their children. A similar logic is employed when it comes to parents' understanding of their children's belonging: children have their Vietnamese roots and they have Vietnamese parents, and there is nothing they can do about it. This contrasts with the accounts of the children, who often feel sorry that their parents do not realize what consequences the delegated caregiving have had on their relationship — i.e. in creating an emotional gap between the children and the parents.

The second assumption has to do with the definition of caregiving itself. Financial provision and self-sacrifice for the children (read: sacrifice of private life for work life) appear in the interviews as proof of good and dedicated parenthood. Parenting occurs not in the household through emotional exchange between parents and children, but in the workplace, where parents work hard to financially provide for the children. In other words, the parents express their affections to children through absolute dedication to their lives and future. The emotional distance (acknowledged by many children but rarely by parents) is an unintended consequence of such arrangements that may lead to misunderstandings between mothers and nannies as well as between mothers and children. Children's understanding of parents strategies changes over the time, shifting from "incomprehensible" (how could they do it, why they were so cold to me) to being "appreciated" (they did all this for me and my wellbeing). The recognition of parents' investment in their children's lives is much harder to achieve compared to recognizing the nannies' efforts, because it is less direct.

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and not instantly manifested (compared to, for instance, hugs and kisses), and because it requires time to reap its results (financial investment in education for example). All in all, these assumptions lead mothers to be secure in the exclusivity of their place in the child’s life; however, this place is not acquired actively through daily face-to-face caregiving, but rather through biological connectedness on one hand, and financial provision on the other.

**Concluding Thoughts: Between Emotional Mutuality and Distance**

This chapter dealt with a specific case study of migrant families that hire native nannies. I focused on how emotionality is addressed in the narratives of children, mothers, and nannies. Throughout this chapter, I stressed the need to diversify our perspective of caregiving work by addressing the voices of all three actors — of the caregivers, of the parents that hire the caregivers, and of the children receiving the care. Research that includes the perspective of cared-for children can move beyond the basic assumption that paid care is by nature an exploitative relationship between two women. This is not to idealize or romanticize caregiving work, but rather to rethink it and the research agenda surrounding it. Caregiving work is an employment relationship between employers and employees, but one in which the content is carried out between caregiver and child.

On the one hand, caregiving work is inherently an emotional activity that requires and generates emotional attachment and investment. This chapter has demonstrated that the ties between nannies and children are based on the mutual exchange of emotions and emotional satisfaction. In addition, everyday caregiving leads to the establishment of kinship ties and the subjectivation of nannies into grandmothers, and cared-for children into grandchildren. On the other hand, caregiving work is characterized by relatively distant relations based on the logic of employment and the exchange of money for caregiving service. Compared to the warm feelings exchanged between nannies and children, the ties between nannies and mothers are rather distant. This might be caused by several factors — competition between two caregivers, demonstration of superiority (being the mother and having monopoly control over child versus being a better caregiver than the working mother) — or may simply be the result of a lack of communication between the two women.

In conclusion, caregiving work creates a variety of ties between a variety of actors. In many regards, it plays an essential role in the identity work of caregivers, care receivers, and care demanders. This identity work reaches far beyond the logic of straightforward employment, and impacts on the very intimate micro level of individual biographies. This chapter illuminated the fundamental role of emotionality in nannies' definition and performance of caregiving work — starting from the initial decision to become a nanny, to the emergence of strong emotional kinship ties, and finally, to the recognition of emotional investment. The stress on mutual emotional exchange pervades the interviews with children as well, and indicates that the main benefit of caregiving work (in this particular case study with a limited sample) lies in the creation of enduring ties between cared-for and caregivers, and the satisfaction of emotional needs.
CHAPTER 9

Making the Personal Political: The First Domestic Workers' Strike in Pune, Maharashtra

Lokesh

In February 1980 there was a domestic workers' strike in the city of Pune (in Maharashtra, India), most of whom were women. The agitation started with the demand for sick leave and a pay raise, and led to the formation of the Rune Sahar Molkarni [domestic servant] Sanghatana. What followed were prolonged negotiations with employers that resulted in a significant victory for this union in the city and personalized work relations were transformed into professional, contractual ones. This was probably the first time that domestic workers had struck anywhere in the country or formed a city-wide union.

This paper documents the history of organizing among domestic workers in Pune. I shall look at the way "work" is understood within the "mainstream" labor unions and how the intersections of caste, class, and gender form our understanding of paid domestic work. I began my engagement with the Paid Domestic Workers' Unions in 2010 for a month in Pune, Nagpur, and Mumbai. This essay is based on fieldwork conducted in the May 2013 in Pune. My respondents were primarily the leaders and activists of three paid domestic workers' organizations: Pune Sahar Molkarni Sanghatana (Pune City Domestic Workers' Organization), Pune Zilla Ghar Kamgar Sanghatana (Rune District Domestic Workers' Union), and Pune District Molkarni Panchayat which was also involved in organizing ah and Mathadiss in Pune. Several of the responding domestic workers were from either the so-called Other Backward Classes (OBC) or the dalit, the so-called untouchable castes.

I will first present a brief review of the research on paid domestic work in India, next provide a historical account of the spontaneous February 1980 strike in pune, and its aftermath of organizing, and conclude by analysing the main consciousness issues involved in organizing domestic workers: working-class, gender, and caste consciousness.

Review of the Research

paid domestic service is one of the self-evident facts of everyday life in India, but this remains rather under-researched by sociologists and historians, including Indian labor historians. Recent writing by feminist scholars in India such as N. Neeta and Raka Ray, however, suggest an increasing concern with why paid domestic work is now increasing in importance.

In an early study in the 1960s Aban B. Mehta traced the continuity between domestic service in modern India and older forms of servitude and debt bondage? She assumed that paid domestic service would inevitably decline with the professionalization and commercialization of many services even as it would be made the subject of state regulation and protective legislation. With the benefit of hindsight, it appears that the institution has been notoriously impervious to decline and despite state benefits, where available, it seems set to burgeon into a global institution.

More recent research falls into three broad categories: several feminist scholars have discussed domestic service in ancient and medieval history and the intersection between caste and gender; other scholars have focused on developing a conceptual framework for the study of paid domestic work; and finally, more contemporary feminist scholars, such as N. Neeta and Sujata Ghotoskan have written about paid domestic workers' rights and issues of legislation.

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1 See the section "Gender Consciousness" below for the term molkarni.
2 Organized by Lal Nishan Party.
3 Organized by All India Democratic Women's Association, AIDWA, and affiliated to the Centre of Indian Trade Unions, CITU.

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4 Organized by Baba Adhav, President of Mahatma Phule Samta Parishad.
5 Hamals and Mathadis are local names used to refer to casual laborers such as head-loaders, women who transport loads of textiles on their heads, and porters engaged in heavy manual labor such as loading and unloading trucks of commodities.
6 In modern India, the so-called untouchable castes have gained political consciousness and prefer to call themselves dalit, literally meaning those in chains. In this essay I will use the term dalit.
7 Aban B. Mehta, The Domestic Servant Class (Bombay, 1960).
In ancient India, domestic work was largely performed by landlords’ serfs. These were mostly from the so-called lower castes, the shudras, who were supposed to live by the sweat of their brow. The Varna systems ensured that they served those who were higher in caste. Caste continues to play a crucial role in deciding the kind of work that individuals may do. Caste discrimination and ritualistic caste purity are maintained in addition to class-based cultural differences, as I will demonstrate. In fact, a great majority of paid domestic workers in Pune are the so-called untouchable castes or dalit and a government mandated economically vulnerable category called Other Backward Classes (OBCs), usually consisting of middle and peasant castes.

Unlike domestic work, caste has generated much scholarly debate and discussion, like Uma Chakravarti’s work on domestic servitude in ancient India for example. She traces several examples in Pali Buddhist literature that provide a picture of dasi (female servants):

There was once a mistress who was famed for her good temper and gentle nature. One day her dasi, Kali, began to think to herself: does my mistress really have a good temper or was it because she did her work so diligently and well that the mistress had such a good reputation? Kali then decided to test her mistress's real nature: she got up later and later on three successive mornings. Finally on the third morning the mistress's temper cracked and she hit Kali with a heavy iron bolt. Kali then displayed her bold-splattered head to all the neighbourhood, and that put an end to the myth of her mistress's gentle temper.

In another example, an old Brahmin man had a young wife he doted on. She insisted that she needed a domestic maid to do her household chores and the old man readily provided such a person by reducing a dasi family to bondage so that the wife's chores could be performed by a bonded woman.

According to Chakravarti, the Buddhist sources show the social unwillingness to recognize the exploitative nature of the relations between masters/mistresses and servants. And, while there is an acknowledgement in the sources of the labor and diligence of the dasi whose work is taken for granted, those who perform the labor know that it is their labor that runs the household with such skill, even though they do not get credit for it. Dasis leaned, swept, cooked, fetched water from rivers, pounded and ground food-stuffs, cared for children, wet-nursed infants, preserved food, threshed, looked after cattle...in short, they did everything that women of the house were expected to do to maintain and reproduce the household.

Another group of women mentioned by Chakravarti who were expected to provide domestic service were widows in upper-caste Hindu households who occupied a space in the household between the “regular” members and the domestic servants. Banned from remarrying, these women circulated between various kin performing household work in return for food and shelter. Unlike the dasi system, widows continued to act as live-in domestic servants in the late 18th century and through most of the first half of the 19th century For Chakravarti, domestic servitude is simply a form of the usual sexual division of labor in which women provide unpaid labor for the household.

In 1983, Tellis-Nayak developed the next category of writing on conceptual understandings by arguing that instead of a class or a caste model, the "patron-client" model is a more appropriate conceptual framework for understanding this kind of "asymmetrical, voluntary, and instrumental friendship in which non-comparable goods and services are exchanged for mutual benefit." Tellis-Nayak sees this as enhancing, rather than dividing, sentiments of community solidarity. This interpretation ignores the power inequality of the paid domestic work relationship.

Since 2000 the volume of scholarly writing on paid domestic work has seen an exponential increase. Several of these articles and books are discussed in Patricia Uberoi’s review of literature on paid domestic work in India. Kathleen Adam and Sara Dickey’s work focuses on how the employer/domestic worker relationship is constantly being negotiated at very close quarters in everyday encounters while it is modulated by wider issues of social structure and political economy. That is, domestic service is a type of work that tends to reiterate in the domestic sphere caste, class, gender, regional, national and racial
hierarchies, and often does so by drawing on pre-existing forms of servitude and bondage.15

The most recent ethnographic study of domestic work by Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum16 adopts a comparative perspective and is based on a three-year-long study. They consider the relationship between domestic workers and middle-class bhadrakalok (a Bengali term meaning "gentlefolk" or well-mannered people, used to refer to the middle and upper classes of Bengal) located in contemporary Kolkata and New York. They locate this relationship in a long historical frame stretching back into the colonial period. Considering the subjectivity and everyday relations and practices of both employers and "servants" or paid domestic workers, Ray and Qayum investigate the "culture of servitude" in Kolkata and find its traces in the social myth of the modern bhadrakalok as a class above the hoi polloi and as the national/ transnational "vanguard" of Indian modernity. The authors theorize this culture of servitude and argue that classes come into being not just through relations of production and consumption outside the household but critically through "quotidian labour and intimate practice within the home."17 In their conclusion they suggest cooperatives rather than unions as the means to organize domestic servants. The cooperatives, however, seem in essence to be the model of unions and they provide no critique of limitations of the union model. The activities of the domestic workers union in Maharashtra provide suggestions for a better form of organizing.

A final and important category of work is that of feminist scholars who look at the rights and issues of domestic workers. Research on paid domestic work over the last decade by scholars like Ravinder Kaur,18 N. Neetha,19 Rajani Palriwala,20 and Sujata Gothoskar21 indicates an increase in the number of migrant female domestic workers in cities. They show that paid domestic work is highly informal and they highlight the vulnerabilities of domestic workers. Their studies note that women from marginalized castes form a substantial up of domestic workers. They range from full-time to part-time, skilled-and unskilled workers. Since women know how to clean and cook, domestic workers are seen as requiring very little skill training. This reinforces the sexual, race, caste, and class divisions of labor, within the world of work and poorer economies.

N. Neetha and Rajani Palriwala reflect on how the structures of caste, class, gender, patriarchy and capitalism combine to make domestic work invisible and unimportant to legal and societal agendas. The informal nature of the work site, patriarchy's undervaluation of domestic work, and capitalism's preference for waged work - all these factors have made the site of domestic work very difficult for organizing and thus preserve it as one of the most exploitative sites. Providing a historical survey and analyzing existing laws the authors comment that "the recognition of the home as a workplace is a critical step in legislating the rights of domestic workers...destabilizing the constructs of gendered familialism and the home/private/emotion equation does not only mean revaluing domestic labour, unpaid and paid, it also brings into question processes and values that are fundamental to the present social, economic, and political structures."22 They argue that there is a need to question how undervalued and underpaid domestic work feeds into cultural notions of domesticity and the devaluation of housework in the present.

Five Indian states - Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala and Rajasthan - have set minimum wages for domestic workers in recent years. N. Neetha examines the minimum wages of domestic workers in these states and demonstrates the ways in which this sort of legal intervention is translated into the social understanding of domestic work.23 Instead of improving working conditions, the gendered understanding of housework and its devaluation through hierarchies within it based on caste divisions seem to have received legal sanction. Wage rates for cleaning tasks, which are usually done by women from the lower castes, are at the low end of the scale when a task-based differentiation is followed. Neetha concludes that "better statutory wages for domestic work could perhaps contribute to a revaluation of unpaid housework. This would have a more profound effect on the social and political foundations of gender relations in the countries."

15 Kathleen Adams and Sara Dickey (eds), Home and Hegemony: Domestic Service and Identity Politics in South and Southeast Asia (Ann Arbor, 2000).
16 Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum, Cultures of Servitude: Modernity, Domesticity, and Class in India (Stanford, 2009).
17 Ray and Qayum, Cultures of Servitude, 19.
18 Ravinder Kaur, "Migrating for Work: Rewriting Gender Relations," in Sadhna Arya and Anupama Roy (eds), Power, Gender and Migration (New Delhi, 2006), 192-213.
21 Sujata Gothoskar, The Plight of Domestic Workers: Confluence of Gender, Class and Caste Hierarchies, Economic & Political Weekly 48, no. 22 (1 June 2013), 63-75.
Domestic Workers' Organization in Pune

Beginning with the 1980 strike, women paid domestic workers in Pune have built up strong representative organizations including two trade unions. This section discusses the many ways in which the paid domestic workers' organizing developed and provides a critical appraisal of the issues raised by such organizing. This historical account is based on information gathered on the field through interviews with paid domestic workers and their leaders, as well as from secondary sources like paid domestic workers' organization pamphlets and the written materials on the strike and its aftermath by Amrja Pawar and Sujata Gothoskar.

The First Strike of 1980 and the Formation of a Domestic Workers Union in Pune

In February 1980, a domestic worker named Khandarebai, who worked in a house on Karve Road in central Pune fell sick and went on leave. When she came back to work, she discovered that she had been thrown out of her job. The former employers told her that she had asked for four days off, but in fact had not come for six days and, as a result, they had replaced her with another domestic worker. Khandarebai shared this information with other paid domestic workers, Padmatai Sutar and Subhadratai Kandare. The three decided that they should discuss the issue with all the domestic workers who worked in that wada? Khandarebai's predicament enraged the other domestic workers because her experience echoed theirs.

They first confronted the woman domestic worker who had replaced Khandarebai and roughed up the woman. They thought of her as someone benefiting from the miseries of her fellow worker. The only surviving woman from this group, Kandare, remembers:

A molkarni [Khandarebai] used to work in the neighbourhood. Another molkarni from the next house took her work. Then we asked her, "Why did you take her work?" She replied, "How does it bother you?" rudely. I felt very angry and told her not to use abusive language. I said, "You took her work, so give her work back to her and leave the house." She said she would not leave the house and would continue working there. Then we fought with her. I caught her with one hand and hit her quite a bit. After that, we came out and tried to lodge a complaint at the gate of the wada. A person there said the incident happened inside the house and that they wouldn't lodge any complaint for that. After that, we all came out of the premises. One the way, we met many other molkarnis, they asked, "What happened?" We told them that a molkarni has taken our job and we had a physical fight with her. There itself, we decided take out a procession in protest, and we were joined by few others, but then we began discussing what to do next. We also confronted Khandarebai's former employer and had appealed to them to give her job back. When our appeal was refused, we left the workplace and narrated the incident to various maids we met on the way, adding that we were on strike. Within an hour, about 150 women from Karve Road spontaneously struck work. This was a spontaneous strike against the dismissal.

This informant, now in her sixties, continues to work as a paid domestic worker, and is one of the longest standing members of the organization Pune Shahar Molkarni Sanghatana that was formed as a result of the strike. Khandarebai, meanwhile, has passed away.

At first glance it seems as if the women went on strike in reaction to a single incident of dismissal. However, paid domestic work has been a particularly ignored sector for long. Kiran Moge, a feminist activist affiliated with a national communist women's group, the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), and an advocate of domestic workers' rights in Pune discussed the social and economic context of the strike: "I think, you have to locate this eighties spontaneous strike within the economic crises of that time. They [paid domestic workers] felt so exploited, and though they didn't relate this directly to the low wages, they began feeling that their wages were not adequate to sustain their lives...then this consciousness is born."

Wages had apparently not increased in years despite rising inflation and workers had no right to any paid leave and felt they were treated in deeply degrading terms. Though these women who had no prior experience of political organization they identified themselves as workers and chose to strike. As my informants told me, Pune had witnessed industrial and employee unrest for some time and the women knew that striking was a possibility and could lead to wages hikes. But they had no idea about how to go about it. They did know that not only factory workers but even doctors, nurses, officers and others were striking for their demands. Their procession was moving aimlessly when they met Bhal Chandra Kerkar, a union activist affiliated with Lal Nishan Party, active in Maharashtra and some other parts of southern India.
Kandare’s words, "We kept going and then we met Kerkar. He asked us why happened. We told him about the incident. He said us not to worry and not to go back to the work. From there our group left and came to Prabhat Road, and then Karve Road, and then we did a meeting. After some time Bhosaleta and her friends also joined us. Thereafter, we started our protests and procession every day...This is how it all started."

Medha Thatte, lawyer and current general secretary of the Pune Shaha Molkarni Sanghatana and Shramik Mahila Morcha, remembered how the striking domestic workers felt a need for an organization. "After the first strike we discussed it and realized that this is not how it is done, we had to put forward some demands. The strike happened because Khandarebai was thrown out of work, wages were very low: all this is enough reason to meet. But the question was how to reach the employers. So we realized that we must meet and discuss regularly to decide what are our demands and are our priorities are. If we met regularly, this would mean we were an organization. When we asked ourselves whether we should organize ourselves, we all agreed." With the involvement of the Lal Nishan Party, meetings with five to six hundred paid domestic workers in attendance were organized every night for a few days at the house of a local elected administrator. They began sharing their experiences of the strain of physical work, inadequate wages which were never raised, harassment caused by pending and unpaid wages, troubles arising out of the increasing cost of living, household difficulties, etc.

One such story was of a paid domestic worker who was employed with the family of a lawyer for about twenty-five years. The lawyer went from being a student to a married man, a father and finally became a grandfather. But throughout this period, her pay remained at Rs.10 to Rs.12 per month. Many of the older workers attending these meetings were very old and had no alternative support and were holding on to their job, despite abysmally low wages. Others spoke of being given stale food as if it was a favour and being routinely insulted. The breaking of a glass led to terrible aggression and in many houses. They were not paid for holidays.

Many paid domestic workers were widows or had been abandoned by their husbands, while others had husbands who depended on their incomes. Living in huts with no water or electricity they had to work both in their homes and outside it. Most daughters joined their mothers at work. Such abject poverty also meant that there was keen competition among the workers for the jobs, and this meant that a strike had to be short and effective. In some localities, the workers did not report to work for 30 days till their demands were met. In the end the workers were taken back to work at new wage rates despite employer resistance because of the dynamics of middle culture in India — where physical work is considered drudgery and both husbands and wives have to go out for work while the children go to school.

The intensity of stress led to emotional scenes and songs of resistance emerged:

Come on Heera, Come on Meera.
Answer these questions, O Government of Indira.
0 Venubai, why are you so depressed?
Come on, join us in leading a protest!

According to my informants and the paid domestic workers’ organization pamphlets this sharing of experiences led to the realization that they were a group of workers with similar issues.

News of the agitation appeared in Pune and Mumbai dailies like Sakai, Kesari and Prabhat. Reflecting on the coverage by the print media, Kiran Moge said, "This is such an invisible section of society...that was the reason the strike also got lot of publicity. Because suddenly groups of women, nobody thought about them as workers, were right on the streets." The paid domestic workers began referring to themselves as molkarnis. Paid domestic workers from different areas like Meera Society, Narayan Peth, Sahakarnagar, Shivajinagar and Gultekadi also decided to strike. They had not been contacted by activists or been asked to go on strike and took the decision on their own, after hearing about the Karve Road strikers.

In this phase, wage increases and paid sick leave were the only demands. After the formation of the Pune Shahar Molkarni Sanghatana (Pune City Domestic Workers’ Organization) daily meetings became a training ground for the domestic workers. The strike had proven to them that given the absence of labor laws, they were at their employers' mercy, so they decided to propose a wage structure and list of demands.

Wages were wildly different and in order to arrive at a comprehensive scheme the paid domestic workers decided to take into account the number of persons in the employer's household, the financial status of the employer, the present pay, and the workload involved before deciding on the increased wage.

28 Leela Bhosale, who died a few years ago, was a feminist who later became deeply involved with the Pune Shahar Molkarni Sanghatana and Shramik Manila Morcha.

structure. The demands put forward were: an immediate raise in pay, a bonus equivalent to a month’s salary to be paid at Diwali, a monthly contribution of a minimum of 15 per cent of the salary towards a Provident Fund, paid sick leave, two paid holidays a month, and if the employer left town temporarily, pay should neither be cut nor the period be considered as leave. This was printed out and circulated among employers. While employers agreed to the new rates, they demanded increased workloads in return, but the workers stood by their demand for extra pay for extra work.

After the 1980 strike and the establishment of the Pune Shahar Molkarni Sanghatana, two more domestic workers’ organizations were set up. One was formed by the All India Democratic Women’s Association and was called Pune Zilla Gharkamgar Sanghatana, while the other was called Baba Adhav’s Molkarni Panchayat. Over the years the three organizations have worked jointly on many issues at several junctures. This strike also led to many strikes being organized in various city neighbourhoods from 1984 to 1996, mostly for wage increases. The agitation in 1995 included maids from newer parts of Pune such as Dapdi, Aundh, Pimpri, Kothrud, Salunke Vihar, Khadki, and Vithalwadi, along with the older parts of Deccan and Karve Road.

Numerous reforms were secured through these collective actions as the women domestic workers negotiated their wages and conditions and terms of work. Paid weekly days off was an important victory. Wage revisions are enforced through a rate card that sets minimum wages for various items of work such as cleaning utensils, sweeping the floor, washing laundry, etc., depending on the number of family members and the square footage of the area to be swept. These rates are revised every four years. Other benefits such as an annual bonus, retirement gratuities, and so on are also set and a "provident fund" is collected in local banks through the organizations. Paid domestic workers in Pune are now entitled to take two paid holidays per month, a privilege that remains unheard of in other parts of India. Employers are expected to pay substitute workers separately. False charges of theft and threats of wage cuts in case of broken glasses and other property damage have also gone down. It has been through organizational pressure that many of these demands have been enforced.

30 Hindu "Festival of Lights" celebrated in autumn.
33 Indian Express-Citizen, 1 February 1996: Interview with Leela Bhosale, former general secretary of the Pune Shahar Molkarni Sanghatana.

But as significant as the victories gained vis-à-vis employers have been, most important was the sense of unity as workers that has developed among the women. They realized that it is harmful to undercut each other for jobs. Now a prospective maid asks for pay that is higher than that received by the previous one. Besides, no new job is accepted without consulting the previous employee. Employers continue to attempt to employ new domestic workers, but the unity among the organized domestic workers has defeated these tactics.

Even though the leadership of the domestic workers organizations is often drawn from political activists, it is clear that it is the active support of several paid domestic workers that keeps these organizations alive. Prominent members who are domestic workers work voluntarily in the organizations after completing their jobs in various homes. Most evenings, one sees them thronging the offices. These local leaders organize meetings, discusses demands with co-workers, inform other members of union decisions, ask for members’ opinions, attend meetings in other localities, and so on. They also guide members in personal matters and settle rivalries between them. They accompany members to the police station to report cases of physical assaults by employers and also negotiate with employers on behalf of their union members. Being paid domestic workers themselves, they have firsthand knowledge of the problems which proves very effective in handling them.

According to my informants the hostility of their employers has become very apparent to the women during the organizing and strikes, and this revelation has destroyed the illusions underlying the emotional attachment and respect they had for their employers. A cup of tea and leftover food is no longer considered generous.

The Struggle for Legal Recognition

An important plank of the three organizations is legislation for the protection of rights and benefits of domestic workers as well as the regulation of service conditions and provision of social security. Since domestic workers were not protected by any labor legislation in India, it was difficult to act against practices like dismissal without notice, non-payment of sick leave, false charges of theft and wage cuts.

In the initial phase, the organizations proposed some reforms to the government such as medical aid, low-cost housing, jobs to offspring and minimum wages. These reforms were to be included in the Mathadi Kamgar Act, a law for unorganized workers that mandated the government to enforce minimum wages. But the state maintained a convenient silence on this issue, especially because most of administrators and politicians were of the middle and upper classes.
Later, the organizations came together on a joint platform with other groups from Maharashtra such as the Vidharbha Molkarni Sanghatana, Nagpur, and presented a model bill for paid domestic workers to the government of Maharashtra state. After a twenty-eight-year long struggle, the state government passed the Domestic Workers Act in 2008, the first and only such legislation in India. However, action remains slow. Although the Act mandates that paid domestic workers' Board be constituted, no such boards had been constituted until 2011. Two years later, in 2013, district-level boards were constituted during municipal elections, and after their formation more than 213,000 workers got themselves registered. No action has yet been taken on other categories mandated by the Act like budget allocations for pensions, educational support for children, sickness benefits, etc. Neither has there been any decision on including domestic workers in the category of workers eligible for minimum wages. The Minimum Wages Act of 1948 is an Indian law which fixes by statute the amount of wages to be paid to both skilled and unskilled workers. As the focus of the organizations shifts to the demand for the enactment of a national legislation for the protection of the rights of paid domestic workers, the strong unity of paid domestic workers achieved over the last thirty years should prove useful.

Worker Consciousness among Paid Domestic Workers

The paid domestic workers who are part of these organizations have a clear understanding that they are workers and they demand legal and social recognition as such. In individual interviews and group discussion I had with them, they shared their everyday experiences and struggles at their workplaces. The narratives of these experiences range from caste practices within the household to rules of conduct in the wada. Insecurity of domestic work is another aspect that is constantly raised.

Deepa, an upper-caste member of the Pune Sahar Molkarni Sangathana, remembers how often domestic workers were subject to false allegations. She narrated one incident when in order to counter a domestic workers' complaint that her son was sexually harassing her, the employer foisted charges of theft on the worker. The workers decided to turn this case into an example and not only beat up the employer with a broom, but made her go to the local police station to take back her allegations. Shyama, a fifty-three-year-old domestic worker and member of the All India Democratic Women's Association affiliated Pune Zilla Gharkamgar Sanghatana, spoke about the issue of holidays. Given the heavy dependence of employers' families on paid domestic workers, holidays and days off are constant problems. As a result, the workers adjust work duties and share wages amongst themselves in order not to cause any holiday-related distress.

The fact that many paid domestic workers are now part of unions makes a difference in their attitude and the unions intervene to settle the disputes about work, wages, and legal aspects. Susheela described how when she was summarily dismissed after a day's leave she went to the union and complained. The union managed to get her a month's salary and compensation for such a summary dismissal. But then she chose not to go back to work in that house and many other informants told me that if they got the union involved, it became difficult to continue working for the same employer.

In brief, the organizations focus on these issues and target the state to ensure legal rights. But everyday experience of caste discrimination and humiliation at the workplace have not been integrated into the organizations' demands and actions. While issues related to the status of paid domestic workers as workers can be addressed, it has been difficult for the organizations to intervene in or think of a strategy through which the "intimate" boundaries of gender and caste can be undermined.

Gender Consciousness

A significant part of the recent literature on domestic workers is framed through the lens of gender. Maharashtra has had a long history of domestic servitude of lower castes and classes and personal services in the class and caste-stratified society were organized through the feudal jajmani system. Historically, it was common practice for royalty to buy domestic workers, and the Peshwas, the erstwhile rulers of Pune and around, bought Kunbi (a peasant caste, now oac) women for domestic work. Elites in this region also had a custom of keeping female slaves. According to Sharmila Rege, "A prominent feature of slavery of later Peshwa period was the predominance of the female slave."

There are many words that define and typify women in Marathi language. About 200 words are synonymous to "fallen" woman or a veshya (prostitute).

34 All names of informants who are paid domestic workers have been changed in this section.

36 Pawar, Organization of the Unorganized, 1994.
Similarly many words have had a long history associated with various kinds of woman who in some ways have linkages with domestic work. Dasi, batik or kunbin usually refer to female servants.38 Dasi and kunbine refer to female servants across strata. The words daashiru/daasru/daasru/daci are different versions of the same word and all of them mean a female slave. A woman working as maidservant in the inner chamber of a palace or royal house was referred to as garbhadaasee. Sejwaala referred to women servants who were employed for cleaning and preparing the beds of masters. Batikee and kunbinee in many instances were not paid any salary, implying that they were bonded.39

Shirgaokar, writing about the luxurious life of the Peshwas, says that the words kunbin and naatakshaalaa have been often used synonymously, the latter meaning mistress and former a female servant. In some cases kunbin, the female domestic servant became a naatakshaalaa. Historically kunbin were identified as agricultural labor. Later, the term became a generic term to define people who work. During the Peshwa period Kunbin began to be identified with the term molkarni (domestic worker).40 The meaning for present-day usage of servant or housemaid comes from the term batik which means dasi/molkarni but batikpura41 refers to a "red light area. The proximity of the terms is indication of the relationship between a woman who works as prostitute and a woman who works as a servant.

The term molkarni, located in this tradition of thought, refers only to women attending to domestic work. According to Kiran Moghe, "The traditional and commonly used Marathi word molkarni was abhorred by workers as it was perceived as a gender biased pejorative term signifying low status domestic (gharrelu) labor."42 Hence in Maharashtra the identity of a domestic worker is clearly that of a woman. Domestic work consists of sweeping, washing clothes, cleaning utensils, shopping, cleaning grains, grinding, etc. Cooking is excluded from this work profile as will be discussed in the section on "Caste Consciousness" below.

Based on their experience with domestic workers’ organizations, the All India Democratic Women’s Association (henceforth AIDWA) specifies three basic reasons why women enter paid domestic work. First, there is the sheer lack of opportunities for women in urban areas. Little or no education combined with desertion by husbands or widowhood leave paid domestic work as the only alternative for generating income. Some women “take over” jobs done by their mothers or mothers-in-law, resulting in the occupation taking on a quasi-hereditary status. Second, many women have entered paid domestic work because the male members of their family have lost their jobs in the organized industrial sector. The third important reason is the deepening agrarian crisis in India that drives the poor off the land into urban migration.43

All three organizations that work with domestic workers address the issues of gender independently from workers issues, While the Pune Shahar Molkarni Sanghatana initiated a separate organization named Shramik Mahila Morcha (Laboring Women’s Front) in 1985, the Pune Zilla Gharkamgar Sanghatana was set up through the work of the AIDWA. The reason for forming a separate women organization, according to a prominent leader of the Pune Shahar Molkarni Sanghatana, is that the interests of women of different classes are different and that an organization for women workers can assert their rights and issues separately from a largely middle and upper class-led feminist movement. One result of this approach has been the yearly award handed out to “good” employers by the paid domestic workers’ organization. This class-specific position of the Shramik Mani Morcha complicates simplistic understandings of women’s issues in a patriarchal world.44

Caste Consciousness

According to AIDWA, a survey in 2006 revealed that 22 per cent of all paid domestic workers in Maharashtra were dalit, 26 per cent were OBC, and 3 per cent were from religious minority communities. The hierarchy in the kinds of work done, which affects the wage structure, is also caste-based. The wages for washing clothes, utensils, sweeping and cleaning floor, amount to Rs loo to Rs 400 per month. On the other hand, child care fetches monthly wages in the range of Rs 500 to Rs 700, and cooking is the best paid in the range of Rs 500—Rs 1000 per month. According to the survey, relatively menial tasks including washing bathrooms are done by dalit women, while cooking appears to be the preserve of upper or middle caste women. Union leaders of both the Pune

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38 Hemant Apte and Rohini Sahni, "What Does a Language Have to Say? Words for Prostitute in Marathi Vocabulary," in Rohini Sahni, V. Kalyan Shankar, and Hemant Apte (eds), Prostitution and Beyond An Analysis of Sex Workers in India (New Delhi, 2000), 301-315.
39 V. Shirgaokar, Peshyanche VilasiJeewan (in Marathi) (Pune, 2005).
40 Shirgaokar, Peshyanche VilasJeewan.
41 Apte and Sahni, "What Does a Language Have to Say?"
42 Kinin Moghe, "Organizing Domestic Workers in Pune City."
43 Moghe, "Organising Domestic Workers."
45 Findings of the Socio-Economic Survey of Domestic Workers in Pune, Maharashtra, AIDWA 2006.
Shahar Molkarni Sanghatana and the Pune Zilla Gharkamgar Sanghatana however, caution against viewing caste as a divisive factor since some women work in non-dalit households as do women from minority communities. In her interview Medha Thatte commented, "If we look specifically at Pite domestic workers, these are women from laboring classes who mainly migrated from within Maharashtra, some from Karnataka and other parts of South India. They have now settled in urban areas and come out to work to be able to help in carrying their own domestic expenses. However, she has to do this work much against her will: Thus, the unions and organizations of domestic workers do not see caste practices as deep enough to become part of their agenda.

At the same time, the social composition of the work force has remained primarily lower caste women. The household thus becomes a site of new configurations that emerge between women and between castes. The work space of the domestic worker is not only constituted by her class but also by her caste identity. The emphasis in public discourse on being workers and on the lack of legislation has meant that the caste dimension of paid domestic work remains insufficiently theorized and questioned.

My informants told me that because the molkarni has a low social status, the usual practice is to keep their identities concealed, which is done (metaphorically) by actually keeping their mouths covered with the edge of the saree. The root of this practice, according to Baba Adhav, is in the caste organization of the society. For him, physical work has fallen to the lot of the dalit. And since these women are classified even lower than so-called untouchables, their physical labor remains even more undervalued. In conversations and interviews with oBC or dalit female domestic workers, I was told that until the early 1980s they could not enter the employers' homes and only got outside cleaning and washing jobs. They had to wash dishes and clothes downstairs in the open compound of the apartment even if the employer lived on the third or fourth floor. Employers would take back the utensils only after sprinkling water on them.

In the last few decades, especially in cities like Pune, new ways in which caste relationships are negotiated through the work in the household have emerged. Women from lower and ex-untouchable castes are now very much present within homes. Yet, the social relations of caste still exist in a changed manner. The "intimate or "patron-client" relationship changed significantly after the strike but the new "boundaries" are still being shaped and reshaped between women, both employers and the domestic workers. The unionization process limited to the struggle around questions related to wages and social


48 Thatte, "The Progress of Women's Liberation Movement."
within the home by employers in south India. Organizations of domestic work need to theorize this complex interplay of caste, class and gender. Resolving such conflicts is a crucial issue for both the anti-caste/data and the labor movements in India.

Conclusion: The Entanglement of Class, Caste, and Gender

The first strike in Purse in 1980 and subsequent strikes over several decades have significantly changed the relationship between domestic workers and employers. Collective bargaining through unions has made it possible for domestic workers to think of their work in professional terms. Pune and other cities of Maharashtra such as Mumbai and Nagpur are among the very few places in India where domestic workers have put employers under pressure and achieved results long before any legislation was adopted on paid domestic work. The contract between the domestic workers and employer has created certain norms independent of the law. A day off, gratuity and certain other rights are now standard. The Pune workers' struggles have led to the formation of paid domestic workers' organizations in other parts of India, which in turn, has led to increasing the momentum for national legislation.

The anti-caste movement in Maharashtra, the unionization of paid domestic workers, and urbanization have all had an impact on the practice of caste in domestic work. In some of the conversations with workers it emerged that their experience seemed to be based on their caste as well as the kind of work they did. I wonder why some organizations take up issues of gender, specifically of women, but not of caste. In contrast, the group that does address the issue of caste more centrally does not find much use for the trade union model. In the interviews, domestic workers who are members of these organizations often reveal narratives of discrimination by their employers. But in the narratives the work relationship is the primary category. Is it because this allows them to be seen as workers and not only through their caste profiles? Is it possible to argue that it is not that caste is absent, but rather that the arena where caste plays its role is the struggle over the "identity" of a worker and of a professional relationship? The relationship between work and caste still needs more attention if we are to understand the ongoing transformations taking place — both between employers and domestic workers, and among domestic workers themselves.


CHAPTER 10

Ambivalence of Return Home: Revaluing Transnational Trajectories of Filipina Live-In Domestic Workers and Caregivers in Toronto from 1970 to 2010

Yukari Takai with Mary Gene De Guzman

Devina immigrated to Canada from Pangasinan, Philippines, a province located 180 kilometres north of Manila, in order to work as a live-in caregiver in private households other than her own. She left the Philippines to support her family back home. She arrived in Toronto in 1980 with a temporary work visa. She was twenty-six years old. Canada was not her first destination, however. Before coming to Canada, she had worked in Palermo, Italy, from 1977 to 1978 and then in London, UK, from 1978 to 1980. By the time of her arrival in Toronto, Devina had acquired international experience in care work and, being the oldest daughter of her household, she had become the idealized breadwinner of her family and her homeland through the remittance payments she sent back.

As the eldest daughter of six sisters and three brothers, Devina first and foremost identified herself as a daughter and sister who felt obliged to support her family in place of her ailing father. Her migration journey parallels, in part or in whole, the experiences of tens of thousands of Filipina women who travelled across the globe in order to work in Canada since the mid-1970s. This was a crucial time when Filipina nannies, domestic workers and caregivers came to

1 Two groups of Filipina women provided the histories of their migration and domestic work or caregiving in Canada and elsewhere. The first group, family members and a friend of Mary Gene De Guzman, all had worked as live-in caregivers in Canada. De Guzman conducted four in-depth formal interviews of about an hour each and numerous informal interviews of variable length between nu and zoig. The second group, also from the Philippines, consists of personal support workers (PsWs) who care for their, usually elderly, Canadian clients in their homes and accompany them to hospitals in Toronto when they require medical attention. They are no longer under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCp) and thus usually live out.

Methodologically, interviews with family members may be skewed because of the selective nature of stories told and potential distortions. However, a close relationship with the narrators has permitted privileged insight. All participants and places have been assigned pseudonyms.

2 Daiva K. Stasiulis and Abigail B. Bakan, Negotiating Citizenship: Migrant Women in Canada and the Global System (Toronto, 2005), 77.
3 Deirdre McKay, "Filipinas in Canada - De-Skilling as a Push toward Marriage," in Nicola Piper and Mina Roces (eds), Wife or Worker: Asian Women and Migration (Oxford, 2003), z3-52.
4 Stasiulis and Bakan, Negotiating Citizenship, 40.
5 C. Diocson, "Filipino Women's Identity: A Social, Cultural and Economic Segregation in Canada," <http:llpwc.bc.tripod.com/resources/RaceGenlspeech.html>. Cited in Jacqueline Oxman-Martinez, Jill Hanky, and Lash Cheung, "Another Look at the Live-in-Caregivers Program. An Analysis of Action Research Survey Conducted by PINAY, the Quebec Filipino Women's Association with the Centre for Applied Family Studies." Working paper (Montréal, 2004), 6. As part of a structural adjustment of its economy, the Philippine government was also pressured to institute several other reformist policies. This included a devaluation of the peso, the liberalization of an import-export oriented economy, wage control and no-strike measures, cuts in social services and further concessions for encouraging investors abroad. Stasiulis and Bakan, Negotiating Citizenship, 58.
7 Stasiulis and Bakan, Negotiating Citizenship, 76.
longer met this rising demand for care workers in Canada. The Canadian government subsequently developed the Foreign Domestic Movement (FEN) in 1981 and its replacement, the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), in 1992 in order to recruit largely Caribbean women first, and “professionally trained middle-class foreigners” later, “for employment as live-in domestic workers in Canadian households.” A large number of women from the Philippines, who otherwise could not enter Canada, took advantage of and continue to use these programs. As of 2005, Filipina caregivers made up 95 per cent of all live-in caregivers in Canada.

The migration of Filipina domestic workers and caregivers is part of a long history of migration of foreign domestic workers to Canada dating back to the settlement of Nouvelle France. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, domestic workers arrived from initially Great Britain and Ireland, followed by Scandinavian countries. After the Second World War, domestic workers also came to Canada from European Displaced Persons (DP) camps and Germany. A great number of these women obtained Canadian citizenship relatively easily and many left service work as domestics after less than a year (such was the case of German women in the post-WWII era) In stark contrast, the freedom of contemporary Filipina domestic and care workers to leave their employers is much more limited. They also confront greater difficulties in obtaining landed immigrant status, a legal status that would lead to Canadian citizenship under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), of which the LCP is apart.

For transnational Filipina migrant women like Devina, Canada is a destination of choice. This is because under the Live-in Caregiver Program, Canada offers a rare promise of permanent residence (landed immigrant status) after two years of caregiving work within a three-year period. While many, including Devina, have worked in Europe, Asia, and Middle Eastern countries before entering Canada, a leading proportion of Filipinas come directly from the island nation. For these women, the work they perform for children, the elderly, and the disabled in Canada is a new experience into which they are forced due to their lack of other employment opportunities. For others like Devina, it is something in which they have been engaged in other countries and continents before. Those arriving “cross-country” — after having done overseas contract work in other countries before arriving in Canada — tend to be older than Filipinas migrating to work on contract in Japan, Hong Kong, or Singapore, among other places. Consequently, they are more likely to be considered by placement agencies and employers for being more responsible and experienced as well as constrained in their decisions given their family obligations at home.

Scholarship on Filipina transnational families in Canada emphasizes the difficulties of separation from the nuclear family and the coping schemes required by the transnational division of labor. The “trauma” of separation can last between seven and ten years and can be exacerbated if the person first migrated to another country. Exploitation, discrimination and the human

Among a few exceptions, see McKay, "Filipinas in Canada" on the plurality of destinations of Filipina LCP women. McKay does not include Filipinas with work experience in European countries such as the cases of Devina and Mercy.

The oral histories of Devina and her sisters, as well as other Filipina live-in care workers in Toronto, offer us a window through which to examine these questions. Their migration journeys suggest more complex and nuanced meanings of home and family reunification, practices of remittances, changing modes of communication, as well as the importance of days off, than the ones often painted in existing studies. In this essay, I focus on two salient themes that emerge from our in-depth interviews: first, an ambivalence of returning home and second, the extensive transnational mobility of Filipina caregivers.

In introduction, it is necessary to highlight the prevalence of the practice of so-called deploying cross-country. It is a popular strategy among Filipina women who work as domestic workers and caregivers in secondary countries (other than the Philippines or Canada) and who subsequently move on to Canada. As Deirdre McKay notes, for many Filipinas without college education in the home country, it makes economic sense to take up a contract as a domestic worker in Hong Kong, Singapore, or Saudi Arabia first, as it is easier and cheaper to find work there and, subsequently, to apply for or "transfer" to Canada upon gaining work experience. The trajectories of Devina and her friend Mercy resemble this model to some extent but differ in that their first experience as domestic workers outside of the Philippines took place not in Asian or Gulf countries but in Italy, to where it was noticeably more expensive to travel and more difficult to gain entrance. This difference is largely a result of the change that occurred in the destinations of Filipina workers over time.

When asked why she went to Europe rather than to Asian countries, Devina explained that at the time of her departure, she did not hear anything about Asian destinations: "During that time, it's up to Europe all the time. [Macau and Hong Kong] those are just recently. That time, 1976, it's all going to Europe. I didn't hear any of that Hong Kong...because that agency [where Devina applied] they didn't even have that." Only after she began working in Europe did Middle Eastern countries open as an option: "The destinations such as Lebanon, Libya, you know, Saudi Arabia, things like that. But the people are mostly men that are going there. When I start applying [from the Philippines], going to Europe is the one [that is available]," she said.
Ambivalence of Return Home and Malleable Geography of Famil
Reunification

The first reflection from our oral histories revolves around an ambivalence of returning home. Despite its significance, the voluminous literature on Filipina migrant workers pays little attention to this issue. One exception is Rhacel Parreñas who underlines a common tendency among Filipina domestic workers in Los Angeles and Rome not to settle permanently in their employee's country as well as their hesitancy to return home. In both cities, migrants' Filipina domestic workers with legal documentations return home to the Philippines on average only once every four years and when they do so, they stay for no longer than two months. Filipina women's hesitancy is even more striking considering that many long for a return to the Philippines and that they consider it their home no matter where they live and work. However, such reluctance is similar to tendencies among women from Mexico, Sri Lanka, and the Dominican Republic who do not wish to return to their country of origin. The difference between Filipina domestic workers and their counterparts, Rhacel Parreñas argues, is that whereas the latter tend to show a clear preference to settle in the country of destination, Filipina domestic workers wish not to do so permanently. Parreñas calls this an "anomaly of Filipina women's settlement desires," attributing it to class differences that internally divide the Filipino community in Los Angeles, in addition to racialization that, in Rome, is imposed by the broader local society. Coupled with patriarchal gendered norms in the Philippines, Parreñas argues, the double marginalization of Filipinas couched in racial and class terms in the country of employment defines the state of placelessness they inhabit. Ultimately, such a state culminates in a "construction of the Philippines as 'home' but yet rarely return ma home," or what Nicole Constable calls a state of being "at home but not at home."

The Filipina live-in caregivers in our study in Toronto also show an ambivalence of returning home similar to their sisters and cousins who work in Hong Kong, Singapore, Los Angeles and Rome as they return home rarely only to go abroad again in haste. More importantly, however, while some continue to consider the Philippines as home and Canada as abroad, for many, such self-imposed alienation from the country of residence coexists with their intention and indeed, practice to reunite with their Philippine families when others join the daughter, sister, or mother in Canada. In this light, I suggest that such sparse and short visits home may be understood in a different light from the one advanced in existing studies. I argue that their return or the infrequency thereof, is the flip side of a long-term strategy to obtain permanent residency status and to achieve a limited yet nonetheless upward socioeconomic mobility and ultimately, to reunite with their families. From the perspective of Filipina workers abroad, a home does not have to be fixed in the Philippines. Rather, it can be reconstructed elsewhere. The geography of family reunification among Filipina transnational workers is flexible in so far as there is the need and appreciation, however partial and undervalued it might be, for their skill in care work and domestic work in many places around the globe.

Devina's migration experience illustrates such long-term strategies. She left the Philippines in 1977 and went back to the Philippines only twice over the thirty-six years since she left. The first time she returned home was in 1979 when her London employer family gave her round-trip flight tickets as part of her contract. She stayed in the Philippines for three weeks. Her second return was six years later in 1985 when she travelled on vacation from Toronto, paid for with her own money. By then, she had become a landed immigrant and although she remained a domestic worker, she was no longer live-in. "I am already free," she underlined, adding that she found work outside her employer's household through agencies or friends. She even had her own apartment. She stayed in the Philippines for four weeks this time. When asked if she did not miss her family in the Philippines between her infrequent returns or


24 Parreñas, The Force of Domesticity, 89.


whether or not she wanted to go back more often, Devina responded "Not really."27 She explained:

I can't stay [in the Philippines] because I just keep sending [money], So if I keep going back, there's not so much you know, money. [...] It's nice to go home if you have money, but if you have no money [...]. I d[i]n't eve0 go anywhere, you know, any place. I just stay[ed] home.

When she ran out of money after three weeks, she said, "I'm going back (to London) now." Like Devina, other Filipina respondents in our study als made it clear that their decisions to work abroad (in Canada and Italy) were largely driven by the desire for the financial improvement of their families. None stated that it was for their own individual advancement, although such motives can well be a part of the reasons for their departure. They expressed their goals through phrases such as to 'support my family," to attain "a better standard of life for the family [back in the Philippines]." or as one Filipina worker said, to provide "a good future for my children."28 Within such context, sending money home while retaining strong ties to family and homeland is an obligation. Money is clearly an issue for all these workers even while they are on rare "vacations" back home. Because daughters, sisters or mothers during their returns home are not earning wages or making additional financial contributions to the household, their families, who are economically dependent on their wages earned abroad, could not make ends meet as long as they return to stay with them.29 They thus have to leave home hastily in order to continue earning money to send back.

The necessity of financial contributions notwithstanding, the ambivalence of a return home does not stem solely from the need for remittances. Nor is it a mere reflection of the obstacles of racialization or social class in the country of destination, be they Canada, the United States, Italy or elsewhere. A variety of other reasons explain why migrant Filipina domestic workers and caregivers prefer not to return to the Philippines for good. One such factor equally, if not potentially more important than the immediate need for supporting the family, stems from Filipina workers' own perception, enhanced by a gendered

27 See the essay by Majda Hrienjak in this volume on Slovenian women who, like Devina, often could not return from Egypt for decades because their families needed the money to survive.

28 Responses by Nikka, Elena and Lani, personal support workers (Psw) at the Toronto hospital.


30 Davidson, "(Res)sentiment and Practices of Hope. igi.
experiences them anew upon her temporary return. Although Devina did not explain directly why she returned home only sparsely other than that she had "no money," she also expresses a sense of relief or even liberation upon her first departure: "Leaving the Philippines is a big thing because life there is really hard and so, if you get out from there, it's a big relief." However, the sense of liberation that Devina felt contrasted with a deep sense of yearning for her family, at least initially. She was twenty-two years old when she went to Palermo. Prior to that, she had often been away from her hometown of Urdaneta in the province of Pangasinan in order to find work in Manila, but it was easy for her to return by long-distance bus. In sharp contrast, her domestic work in Palermo meant that she had to fly overseas for the first time. The flight, coupled with the distance of the entire trip, made her feel that she had left far, far away "to a place from which she could no longer easily return to her family. She describes visceral feelings of being afloat that she experienced during her first night in her employer's house in Palermo:

So the first night when I was sleeping in that room in Italy, where I was working, I feel like I'm floating. I missed my family. It's like my head is just [...] how do you say this? It's just, too far away now that I cannot go back right away.

Clearly, the ocean and the national borders that separated Devina in Italy from her family in the Philippines posed significant obstacles, in comparison to the relatively short distance that she was used to travelling from Manila to Urdaneta. Surprisingly, however, her feeling of weightlessness lasted only that first night. She quickly learned to adapt, conceding to her familial goal of gaining an improved standard of living. "That's it," she states simply. Her resolution to overcome her fear of separation and to adjust to her new environment is impressive, signalling the extent of will power that she possessed and her capacity to exercise it. At the same time, her determination suggests a distinct sense of identity and responsibility that propelled her to go through such a separation and transition. However, the construction of a new identity as a daughter and as a Filipina national working outside the Philippines may well have been both a conscious and an unconscious process. Devina describes, for instance, how she never missed Filipino food after tasting Italian pasta and bread, which can be understood as an expression of her culinary preferences, as a result of her conscious efforts for survival and adaptation in a new environment.

Altogether, Devina's experience stands in sharp contrast to more familiar narratives which emphasize the pain and the agony experienced by families apart typically between migrant mothers abroad and children left behind. Devina might have derived her adaptability and lack of longing for home at least partly from her status as a single woman without ties to a husband or children when she began her international career. However, one cannot neglect the moments of true pain of separation that Devina also suffered, possibly for longer than just one night, in spite of her own narratives. Nor can one gloss over the importance of parental and extended families for Filipinas and Filipinos in their home country and beyond. Devina's tie to her parents and siblings remained strong despite her quick transition to new environments. Ultimately, she succeeded in both retaining her obligatory ties to her family and her homeland and eventually calling for her five sisters, three brothers, and her mother to join her in Canada.

Far-Reaching Ties of Transnational Mobility: Networks and Agency

Another crucial characteristic that emerges from an in-depth analysis of interviews with Filipina live-in caregivers in Toronto points to their extensive transnational mobility, a mobility that hinges on strong ties to family and friends on the one hand, and strategic capabilities of human capital on the other. The emotional attachment and financial obligation, as well as the strategic use of domestic and caregiving skill to find jobs around the globe wherever needs arise are fundamental to their mobility. To be certain, employment, placement or recruitment agencies play an important role in locating potential employer families to sponsor Filipina workers across the world. The role of these agencies is particularly important when Filipina women are moving out of the country for the first time. Yet, as Devina and her fellow workers recount, one's contacts and connections of kith and kin are equally, if not more, fundamental to successful deployment.

Devina left her native town in northern Philippines for Palermo, Italy, through the intermediary help of her friend Mercy, who was working there as

31 Interview with Devina, 29 February, 2012.
32 Interview with Devina, 29 February 2012.
33 Geraldine Pratt, Families Apart: Migrant Mothers and the Conflicts of Labor and Love (Minneapolis, 2012),
34 Devina has another brother in the Philippines. He has his own family there and has no intention of immigrating to Canada.
a live-in caregiver and who persuaded her employer to find a friend to sponsor Devina. The two had initially applied to an agency in the Philippines in 1976. Devina's preferred destination was London, the most popular destination among Filipina workers at the time. But when the placement agency found that the UK was "closed" to immigration, not issuing permits, it diverted her work application to prospects in Italy. "Italy was open." Devina recounts:

So during that time, I'm [was] working during my vacation — I was in high school — and during the vacation I go to Manila to look for a job. Uh, any thing to do so then I could go back to the province again. I don't really have much money.

Not having enough earnings discouraged Devina from pursuing her application with the agency Mercy, on the other hand, was already working full-time in Manila as a cashier in a little restaurant. This allowed her to pay the agency's fees. When Mercy left for Italy she promised Devina: When I get there, I will help you." That is what she did. The two corresponded with each other during this time as Devina continues:

She got a very good employer. This is [an] old couple. But the woman is sick so that's the one she's looking after. Now this old couple, they have a friend also, two couple, old people — two. So she told me her employer recommended me to their friend also. That's what happened.

When a family was found to sponsor her, Devina and the prospective employer corresponded by letter to arrange a work permit, a plane ticket and even pocket money. "They all send it to me. So that's why I went to Italy like [for] free? In 1977, the employer family hired her "direct" and she did not have any formal interview or training as a domestic worker or caregiver prior to securing the position.

Almost a year later, Devina left Italy for England after finding an English ad in an Italian magazine in the home of the employer of one of her friends. The advertisement offered student visas to au pairs to work in host families' households while receiving allowances to study English. Devina already knew how to speak English as it is part of the educational system in the Philippines. So rather than studying English, she picked up several part-time jobs in England, outside of her employer's home. Once again, she did not have to go through any interviews in order to become an au pair. However, England was still not issuing work visas at the time, as Devina explains, "because immigration in [the] UK is like they open it for a certain time and then they close it again.'

fit the British embassy in Italy, rather than asking for a work permit, Devina implied explained that she wanted to go to England as an au pair in 1978.

The employer family in London wanted her to stay permanently and annually attempted to get her a working permit. She explains:

Maribel Smith (the employer) keeps] on going to the home office to get rve a working permit. Until I was there for like two and half years, 78', 79, 80'... I left 80. [...] It's quite a long years... Three years they [the issuance of work permits] are closed. I don't know if they ever open it. [...] I left London [in] the middle of 1980.

At some point, the employer, Smith, even suggested that she would pay for a paper marriage so that Devina would become a British subject under the condition that Devina would continue to work for her. Devina objected:

She [Smith] said she would pay a British guy to marry me and automatically I would become a British subject. But I told her better not because what if this guy wants to keep me? What will happen to my family?

Devina's move from England to Canada occurred in July 1980 and was again initiated by a friend and fellow caregiver, Perla, who went to Canada first and had found a family in Toronto for Devina. Like Mercy in Italy, Perla asked her employers to find someone who would sponsor Devina. Her decision to move to Canada was prompted by the prospect of a work visa which would promise a more stable employment in the immediate future. In the long term, her decision was further strengthened by the potential for gaining landed status and eventually, citizenship in Canada which would then enable her realization of permanent settlement and family reunification. England was unable to offer any such privileges.

One might be tempted to suggest that in contrast to her initial relocation from the Philippines to Italy, Devina's subsequent moves from Italy to the UK and then to Canada were relatively smooth and painless. However, this was not the case. Her attachment to London society and culture, where she resided for about two and a half years, was so strong that upon landing in Canada she became distressed to a point that she contemplated returning to London. She states that had she been issued a working permit in England, she would have stayed there and would not have left for Canada. During her initial days in Canada, she even cried, turning to her former employer in London for consolation. However, like her first ordeal in Italy, she eventually learned to adapt to a new environment once again:
At the beginning, it's really hard here [in Canada]. When I came her if I only have a paper [permit in London], I [would've] go[ne] back to London. But what can I do [without a permit]? [...] I was calling [my employers] in London. I said, "I'm coming back!" Until eventually I met people... after a year I learned to adapt. It took a year before I got myself used to the place again, and then that's it. I don't miss London anymore.

Like her friends who found employers and sponsors for her, Devina later used her personal connections to find a sponsor in Canada for her sister, Tessie, in the Philippines. At the time, Devina was working as a live-in caregiver for an elderly man, Mr. Edelstein, in Toronto and she had just obtained her landed immigrant status, granting her a margin of autonomy to negotiate for better wages. In addition to a pay raise, she asked her employers, the sons of her elderly client, for time off to pursue driving lessons, and to sponsor her sister to come to Canada as a live-in caregiver. She recounts:

The old man liked me and I got my paper [landed immigrant status] — even went to learn my driving when I'm with [taking care of] him — and then, I am asking them for a little raise, and the son don't like to give it to me. [...] This old man has got two doctor sons but they're so... "tight," stingy... [T]hey want me to stay with the old man, but they don't want to raise the salary. They only give me $500 a month. I'm asking more but they don't want to give it to me. The old man said, "I'm sorry, if it's only me still handling my money, I'll give it to you." [...] So anyways, I told them I'm leaving, but they don't want it. "Oh, would you mind finding someone else?" [They asked me.] [I said]: "Well, if you want to sponsor my sister, Tessie..." That's [when] they sponsored Tessie. They sponsored her because I told them I'm leaving. 36

And so, Devina left Edelstein and Tessie took her place to care for him. Clearly, Devina used her labor as collateral in order to exercise her personal connections to find a sponsor in Canada for her sister, Tessie, in the Philippines. At the time, Devina was working as a live-in caregiver for an elderly man, Mr. Edelstein, in Toronto and she had just obtained her landed immigrant status, granting her a margin of autonomy to negotiate for better wages. In addition to a pay raise, she asked her employers, the sons of her elderly client, for time off to pursue driving lessons, and to sponsor her sister to come to Canada as a live-in caregiver. She recounts:

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People came over here [to Canada] and I heard it's different in Canada. Because there [in Hong Kong and Singapore], they work too hard... Canada [is] much better because the way they uh — the working hours is much better here than compared to Hong Kong and Singapore. Here they can [have] two days off, there [Hong Kong and Singapore], ...only one day off yeah, Sunday. Some people [don't give days off], too. They give [work]

35 Interview with Devina, 29 February 2012 and 28 October 2013. She went on to find full-time employment while Tessie took over her former job as caregiver for Edelstein. Tessie did not stay in Edelstein's employment very long because she got scared at night since the old man, who had trouble sleeping, would always wander around the house.

36 Interview with Devina, 2g February 2012.

37 Stasiulis and Bakan, Negotiating Citizenship, 47.

38 McKay, "Filipinas in Canada, z6; Pratt, Families Apart, 1.
McKay discusses the double isolation of Filipina domestic workers: isolation in the workplace and the segregated labor market as well as the social stigma of being a domestic helper within the Filipino community and within mainstream Canadian society. McKay, "Filipinas in Canada," 38.

Interview with Mercy 17 May 2013.

Mercy's reference to Asian people in her account is rather confusing. Her mention of the Philippines refers to a common and somewhat ironic practice of domestic workers being hired in the Philippines by Filipina migrant caregivers themselves to care for their own children left in the Philippines. An autobiographical film Ifo Ito (2013), a debut feature of Singaporean director Anthony Cheng, illustrates some of the employer-employee difficulties that Mercy refers to regarding Filipina workers in Asian countries.

What further heightens the difficulties of Filipina domestic workers in Asian countries is an overt racial discrimination and class hierarchy that demarcates employer-employee relations, and this despite the fact that Chinese employers are Asians just like Filipina domestics. Mercy narrates:

The Chinese people there [in Hong Kong and Singapore] are different from white people staying [in Canada]. They're like almost the same with the Asian people, especially there like [in the] Philippines you know? but [they think they are] better than white people

Mercy casts employers in Hong Kong or Singapore, many of whom were of Chinese background, in a racial hierarchy in which they see themselves as superior to white employers, for example in Canada, and to Filipina domestic workers and caregivers. As if to confirm this self-perceived superiority, employers in Hong Kong or Singapore treat their domestic workers poorly in comparison to Canadian employers.

Mercy and Devina's experiences underline the strategic use of local and global networks and the capacities of Filipina domestic workers and caregivers to gather information, accumulate knowledge, and compare labor markets across the globe in search of better employment opportunities as well as human and labor rights within an employer's home. Some scholars have argued that such methods of networking can be problematic, however, because they limit domestic workers to careers in caregiving. This interpretation may be true for some but it is clearly not the case for all. Significant variations and subtleties underlie the life and work trajectories of domestic workers and caregivers. Such variations in turn point to the extent of Filipina workers' agency to effectively translate their skills and knowledge to a job market of their choice or preference in order to achieve their own goals.

Mercy, for example, after having earned Canadian citizenship, left care work and began working in the mailroom of the Toronto Star, Canada's highest-circulation daily newspaper. Devina's professional trajectory, on the other hand, might be derogatorily viewed as an occupational impasse, corroborating the familiar interpretation. She continued caregiving and domestic work until she successfully completed the requirements of the FDM and gained landed immigrant status in 1983. She then worked in various nursing homes until gaining full-time employment as a personal support worker (psw) at a long-term elderly care facility which caters to a largely Italian clientele. Yet, as Devina makes clear, her decision to work as a live-in caregiver, then as a live-out, and then at a care facility for the elderly was not for lack of opportunities outside this sector. Rather, her trajectory resulted from her own assessment and strategic use of her human capital which included previous experience in care work, proficiency in the Italian language, and the acquisition of a certificate for healthcare aid. In addition, an important factor to her employment success was a friend, Marleny, who informed her of the position at the nursing home and encouraged her to apply. She did, and for about three months, Devina worked there part-time, becoming a full-time employee in 1987.

Overall, networks of shared identities were fundamental in helping the Filipina women to cross national borders and find jobs in and outside care work. Their mutual support culminated in a chain migration of families. As for Devina, from her landed status obtained in 1983, to her sister Tessie's migration in 1987, the rest of her siblings — five sisters and three brothers — and her mother were able to successively follow to Toronto beginning in 1988 where all currently reside.

Devilla also took night classes for typing at Ryerson University as part of the skills upgrading requirement of the FDM and later even attempted a self-study bookkeeping course. However, she felt that none of these were for her. Of her own initiative, she then went to school and received a certificate for healthcare aid or what is now called 'personal support worker' (psw). This secured her the desired job in care work. Because she already had experience, she found it easy to obtain the certificate from a private institution. To secure a job, she contacted employment agencies which only placed her in part-time positions in different nursing homes. She found the temporariness difficult because she could not get to know well the people she cared for, a criticism comparable to the difficulties experienced by (Registered Practical Nurses) today. This propelled her to seek a full-time position at the nursing home where she continues to work to this day.
Conclusion

The migration trajectories of some Filipina domestic workers and caregivers in Toronto illustrate the extensive transnational mobility and the centrality of human networks, as well as the ambiguity of a desire to return. While many travel directly to Canada, many others move from one continent to another after leaving their island nation in search of work as nannies, domestic workers, and caregivers before arriving in Canada. Over the many years of work and their change from one country to another, they maintain intimate ties to their homeland by sending obligatory remittances; engaging in frequent internet or phone communication with family; and cooking, eating, and spending time outside of work with fellow Filipina domestic caregivers in the community abroad.

Their strong attachments to the country of origin and their ever-present contacts with families and friends in the Philippines notwithstanding, many migrant Filipinas in Toronto and elsewhere nevertheless demonstrate a hesitancy to return. Many clearly long for home which, for them, can only be the Philippines even after decades of living and working abroad, after the completion of family reunification, and even after the formation of a new family in Canada. Yet others, such as Devina, do not ache for a return to the Philippines despite their sustained desire for home and the ties of financial support and affection for their families left behind. Many indeed go home only infrequently and return abroad hastily. The ambiguity of return is a result of several rationales, including the persistent financial needs and sociocultural stigmas attached to the return, an outmoding of their professional qualifications while working abroad, and the opportunity to earn often higher wages than they would as professionals in the Philippines. I emphasize that the ambiguity of a return can also be understood as a product of a desire and strategy to achieve the ultimate goal of reuniting with their families not in the Philippines but abroad. Without neglecting the many obstacles, the promise of permanent status and the possibility of more stable employment opportunities in Canada make family reunification and new family formation a viable option.

Finally, the migration trajectories of Filipina domestic workers and caregivers in Toronto show a very high degree of transnational mobility which underpins their strategic capacities and leverage with regards to labor demands and citizenship. Their extensive transnational mobility is rooted in the networks of family, friends and fellow domestic workers. Women, such as Devina, used their human and social capital to bring over family members from the Philippines and to assert their right to wage increases (albeit unsuccessfully in Devina’s case) in a way that non-organized Brazilian women, as Elizabeth Ilordge-Freeman and Jaira J. Harrington show in this volume, would not dare to attempt. Nevertheless, the positive power of the extensive transnational mobility of Filipina domestic workers should not obscure some of the negative aspects of the phenomenon. For one, the high mobility can also serve as a vehicle of exploitation for employers who benefit from the disposable and replaceable nature of these workers. Furthermore, while the women adapt to the somewhat nomadic or diasporic lifestyle, they express true pains of departure and separation from loved ones. Cases detailing the exploitation, discrimination and threats of deportation experienced abroad abound as do instances of the difficulty in adapting to the culture and society of employers, the agony of deskilling and its resulting labor market disqualifications. How did and do migrant Filipina domestic workers and caregivers live and manage such difficulties? Oral histories and testimonies that we gathered from some of Toronto’s Filipina workers suggest a strong pride in the family and children they care for and the formation of new identities. Both point to a means of coping with or overcoming some of the difficulties. Further research will help us to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the world they created as they traversed international frontiers as daughters, sisters, mothers, workers, and breadwinners.

Lisa M. Davidson also discusses cases of Filipina women who were sponsored by their siblings and their families, already settled in Canada, in order to work for them as live-in caregivers. Many of these Filipinas noted that their experience of the Live-in Caregiver Program via family sponsorship was negative, some describing it as outright "hell." This was because their migration under the LCP did not stem from merely a desire to reunify with family and experience a sense of liberation from parental surveillance but, more frequently, it emphasized the need for caregivers and entailed labor with little pay and limited leisure. For example, Joy migrated as a LCP participant in 1997 under the sponsorship of her sister. She, too, recalled her experience as "Hell! (emphasis in the original)." She expected that having her sister as her employer would mean better treatment but the reality was the opposite. Joy identified, with disgust, her status within her sister’s home as a domestic helper rather than a domestic worker. In contrast, Joy became a marker of prestige and an object of elevated status for her sister and her family in Canada. Davidson, "(Re)sentiment and Practices of Dope," 151-154.

Towards a Global History of Domestic and Caregiving Workers

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BRILL
LEIDEN BOSTON
Domestic Work in the Colonial Context: Race, Color, and Power in the Household
CHAPTER II

Introduction: Domestic Work in the Colonial Context: Race, Color, and Power in the Household

Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk

In recent years, scholarship on the history of empire and imperialism has increased tremendously. This has furthered historical research in many ways, because both the subjects and the approach of imperial history have allowed analyses that transcend the nation-state as the traditional unit of analysis, and for establishing connections in histories that hitherto seemed unrelated. One of the insights recent research has provided, is how important domestic workers have been in colonial encounters, as well as in colonial and post-colonial migration, enabling us to establish imperial connections through space and time.

The present part chooses to have a broad take on “imperialism,” which Paul Kramer has recently defined as “a dimension of power in which asymmetries in the scale of political action, regimes of spatial ordering, and modes of exceptionalizing difference enable and produce relations of hierarchy, discipline, dispossession, extraction, and exploitation.” In this definition, imperialism can serve as an analytical category that goes beyond “empire (building)” and colonialism, but considers a wider range of distinctions through which people, social groups and politicians have constructed power hierarchies — race/ethnicity and gender being the most pronounced in this process. In this sense, imperialism can be in force outside the specific colonial context, and can also function in other polities as an “indeterminate system of domination and consent.” The United States is a case in point: while it has rarely engaged in formal “empire,” imperialist politics have been on its agenda throughout the Republic’s existence.

1 To name only a few, influential studies: Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds), Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World (Berkeley, 1997); Antoinette Burton (ed.), After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation (Durham, Nc, 2003); Frederick Cooper, Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History (Berkeley, 2005). 2 Kramer, “Power and Connection,” 1351.

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Viewed from this angle, all six authors of the articles in this part have studied domestic work in the context of imperialism, colonialism and its legacies. From the very first colonial encounters onwards domestic workers formed the backbone of domestic life in settlers' communities. In the mid-seventeenth century Cape of Good Hope for example, as Shireen Ally so vigorously points out, black and Indian domestic workers and caregivers not only constituted the first intimate connections between the "indigenous" population and the European settlers, but also can be seen as — and indeed are now perceived as — the ancestral mothers of today's South Africa. In most other colonial enterprises too, ranging from Southeast Asia to the Western Frontier of the US, domestic workers were vital to the settlement process of the first (white and predominantly male) colonizers.

In some ways, employing domestic and care workers in white colonial households fortified the ideology as well as the practice of imperialism and white superiority. On the one hand, employing domestic servants marked white households' special privileges and status; on the other hand, local servants were often vital for the survival of settler families in the tropics, as becomes clear from various studies ranging from colonial Java to Tanganyika. Or, as one European settler in colonial Singapore noted about the reliance on Chinese domestic workers: "You are at the mercy of these servants." Often, one of the implicit — and sometimes very explicit — aims of employing or forcing indigenous women (and men!) into domestic work in the colonial project was "domestication." For instance, as Victoria Haskins shows, the late nineteenth/early twentieth-century US "Outing" system, placing young Native American girls to do housework in white families' homes, was seen as nurturing the Indian "desire to live civilized lives." During the period in which Native American girls worked and lived with white American families, they were supposed to absorb the values of domesticity, so that they could play an essential role in the transformation of their communities as future housewives and mothers. Conversely, according to contemporary opinions, white mistresses' attitudes towards their indigenous servants also contributed to maintaining the superiority of the white settlers in the colonies.

The articles in this part clearly show that gender as well as race/ethnicity played significant roles in the "tense and tender ties" — the intimacies of colonial encounters, both in their violent and in their more gentle occurrences — constituting domestic service in the (post)colonial household. First of all, as briefly mentioned above, in most cases the first colonial settlements — whether in Africa, Southeast Asia or on the US Frontier — involved distinctive gendered patterns of migration. Pioneers, sailors and soldiers were usually white men, who were not only in need of people to perform the domestic tasks they as boys had not generally learned at home, but also often felt the desire to engage in sexual relations. The chapters by Ally and Bela Kashyap in this volume show that many domestic servants (or slaves) combined these "personal services," either voluntarily or because they were forced.

Secondly, gender and ethnicity also played a role in the choices made when employing domestic workers. Failed attempts to recruit white women to work as wage earners in frontier settlements and developing cities in the American West, for instance, led to an increasing demand for male Chinese domestic workers who, as Urban shows in his contribution, were very much appreciated and desired for their willingness to do work that whites had stigmatized as un-American. In much of colonial Africa as well, white European households employed black men to cook, clean, wash and serve. The proponents of using men as domestic workers lauded them for their ability to perform heavy manual labor that neither a female domestic servant nor the mistress of the house could do as well. Viewed from the side of the men taking on domestic work, they often preferred this over even harder labor, as was for instance the case in the South-African mines.

Thirdly and closely related to the second point, colonizers consciously utilized gender to designate African or Asian domestic workers as "others." Not only were stereotypical gender roles reversed by employing men for domestic work, but what is more, white men and women called them "houseboys," as in colonial Tanganyika, or depicted them as feminized eunuchs, as in the case of

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4 See the chapter by Ally, this volume.
5 For Java, see Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, "So Close and Yet So Far: The Ambivalence of Dutch Colonial Rhetoric on Javanese Servants in Indonesia, 1828-1942," in Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (eds), Domesticating the Empire. Race, Gender and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism (Charlottesville/London 1998),130-153; For Tanganyika, see the chapter by Pariser in this volume.
6 As quoted in the chapter by Kashyap in this volume.
7 Frances Gouda and Julia Clancy-Smith, "Introduction, in Clancy-Smith and Gouda (eds), Domesticating the Empire, 1-20.
8 See the chapter by Haskins in this volume.
9 See the chapter by Ally in this volume.
male Chinese domestic workers in the Pacific. In all of these cases, the "masculinity" of African and Asian domestic workers was implicitly or explicitly questioned, while at the same time their virility and strength were employed for heavy tasks, as well as feared by white settlers. On the other hand, non-white female domestic workers often experienced gendered and racialized stereotyping of their femininity. Italian colonizers' designation of characteristics such as "female" servility and sexual availability to the "Black Venuses" of colonial Eritrea still resonates in Eritrean female migrant's gendered and racialized self-image as domestic workers in Italy today.

Interestingly, as some of the chapters in this part clearly show, this "othering" did not only concern masters' and mistresses' stereotyping and inferiorizing of their domestic servants, but it could also work the other way around. Colonized or formerly colonized domestic and care workers at times actively juxtaposed their own cultural values and skills, for instance in cleanliness or food-preparation, towards the -- in their eyes -- shiftless attempts at homemaking of their employers or mistresses. A telling example are the Surinamese domestic workers in Marchetti's chapter in this volume who take pride in considering themselves as generally being "cleaner" and more "careful" than Dutch women.

In all of these ways, "indigenous" as well as migrant domestic workers shaped the project of European domesticity, both in the colonies and in the metropolis. Several of the chapters in this part forcefully argue that the specific skills colonized or migrant domestic workers brought with them were very much wanted and in many cases even indispensable to white households in the past as well as today. This is what links the Tanganyika houseboys and the Chinese domestic workers in both the British Empire and the US in the past with the Surinamese and Eritrean housekeepers and caregivers, or the Filipina nannies in white households today. Domestic workers took pride in the fact that they sometimes "knew better," and this rendered them a form of agency that transcends the stereotypical power relations of master-servant and colonizer-colonized. This was perhaps most forcefully illustrated by the quote from a Tanganyika "houseboy" Mzee, when his master told him he had sliced his lemons wrongly: "I know that some people do it that way, but I do it this way."

While "othering" and juxtapositions of black and white, higher and lower class, male and female are thus powerful themes in the history of colonial as well as postcolonial domestic labor relations, all of the chapters also show the ambiguity of the bonds between (white) employers and (non-white) domestic workers. In early colonial South-Africa, for instance, two women employed in the household of Governor van Riebeeck symbolize the very close and complex relations between white families and their colored servants. Probably, van Riebeeck became sexually involved with the first black domestic servant he took on in his home, the Khoena girl named Krotoa, whom he -- probably not intentionally -- renamed "Eva," the first woman on earth. The mutual importance of such emotional ties were also fervently illustrated by the story...
of Mooi Ansela, the formerly enslaved Bengal wet-nurse and nanny of van Riebeeck's children who retained precious memories of her life in the van Riebeeck family until her death. 20

It wasn't only the masters of the house who developed intimate and sometimes sexual relationships with their domestic workers; mistresses too, often developed close ties with their servants. There are examples of American women becoming emotionally involved with their Chinese male servants, as well as British women depending heavily on their Tanzanian "houseboys," which in turn resulted in accusations that the propriety of white female bodies and domestic spaces was being violated. 21 Sometimes, these intimate contacts were indeed very violent, as in the case of Indian domestic workers raping their South African mistresses. At other times, however, relationships were quite gentle and loving. Both types of bonds created anxiety among male as well as female contemporaries, who, consequently, warned against too intimate relationships between white mistresses and their male servants of different race, at times making grotesque depictions of the relationships.

While such representations may have influenced both contemporaries' and historians' take on employers—employees relations, this part aims to show exactly the tensions and ambiguities of working and living in the households of others, where distance and intimacy were and are intrinsically entangled. Take, for example, the case of Filipino migrant women, who often leave their own families at home to work in the US as nannies.22 In the absence of their own children they often transfer their affections onto their employers' children under their daily care, while at the same time this means that they will be torn again by feelings of loss once the professional relationship ends.

Finally, many of the chapters in this part stress that the gendered and racialized representations of domestic workers dating from colonial times still influence present-day relationships between employers and migrant domestics in various ways. This may also explain the different trajectories of experiences of (post)colonial migrants in past and present, as the comparison of Surinamese and Eritrean caregivers (Marchetti, this volume) shows. First of all, colonial heritages still influence the choice of specific migration patterns and possibly also the choice of the particular labor segment in which women migrating today end up, as the chapters by Kashyap and Marchetti in this volume show.

Secondly, and equally important, their colonial past has shaped the countries that received postcolonial migrants, even if—as in the case of the US—all these countries do not typically perceive themselves as imperialistic. Indeed, the tense and tender ties of colonialism are still very much alive today, though perhaps referred to as "globalization" in contemporary rhetoric.

All of the chapters in this part provide their own fascinating insights to the workings of imperialism in domestic work and labor relations. In the following chapter, Shireen Ally asks the question to what extent and how, throughout South African history, masters and servants have shared and shaped their relationships, which she refers to as "a funny kind of love." Ally explores these intimate relations along the lines of three "historical scenes" of South African workers from the seventeenth to the beginning of the twentieth century that were simultaneously shaped by violence and force, subjection and humiliation, as well as by intimacy and genuine affection. The direction of these mixed emotions was often mutual: from master to servant and vice versa. Gender and race both fortified and complicated the feelings and responses of all actors within the domestic sphere. Ally concludes by arguing that these intimate relationships, which go back to the earliest of colonial encounters, should be taken up by global labor historians, and should not be overruled by holistic frameworks of "global" experiences of domestic workers in past and present.

The subsequent chapter by Robyn Pariser further explores the complicated relationships between servants and their masters in colonial Tanganyika. Pariser argues that the domesticity Europeans sought to bring to their colonies was not only created by European women, but that at least in Africa male servants played a critical role in shaping the European domestic domain. By carefully scrutinizing personal correspondence of white European women who had settled in Tanganyika in the beginning of the twentieth century, Pariser unravels the complex relationships they had with their black male domestic workers. Some of the women praised their "houseboys" for their good work, gave them many freedoms, and shared very intimate events with them. Others complained constantly and were harsh or even violent towards their "houseboys" or competed with them on how to run the household. Whatever way these white women chose to respond, it becomes clear in all of their stories how much they were dependent on their male domestic workers. This led to relationships in the home that were "quite slippery and difficult to define," in which power was often covertly or even openly contested.

Power relations—as at the level of the household, in societal debates, and in regard to how migration policies influence the construction of (global) labor relations—are also at the heart of Andrew Urban's contribution which investigates the role of Chinese migrant domestic workers in settler societies in the
Anglophone Pacific at the turn of the twentieth century. The demand for domestic labor in these societies — in the absence of sufficient white women willing to do the job — was met by Chinese men who worked as cooks, cleaners, and launderers in white households. Urban meticulously describes the fierce debates about the appropriateness of male Chinese domestic workers who seemingly contradicted gender norms and expectations in respect to established divisions of labor. Moreover, the discussions were taken to a far more fundamental level about what these white settler societies should look like, and to what degree non-white migrant laborers should have a place in these societies. Urban argues that by accepting Chinese migrants as temporary but valuable contributors to the white settlers' labor markets while refusing to grant them equal economic or political entitlements, the global labor relations we accept today had already been shaped in the context of empire and state formation in the early twentieth-century.

The next chapter by Victoria Haskins scrutinizes the Outing System in the early twentieth-century us that placed Native American girls in white American households as domestic workers. Haskins particularly highlights the issue of the wages the girls received, pointing to the multiple meanings of the Outing wage. First of all, their (modest) wage demarcated the young girls' participation in the labor market and enabled them to discover their (economic) value. Ironically some employers consequently talked about them in terms of their salaries, for instance expressing the desire for a "twelve dollar girl." The system was highly paternalistic, designed to teach Indian girls the values of "domesticity" in white American households and secure their futures as proper housewives and mothers. Thus the wages they received also had an educational purpose, to teach the girls thrift and frugality. As they were seen as unfit to achieve this entirely by themselves, part of their wages was paid directly into a bank account they could only access after years. This relates to the third goal: moral control of the girls who should obviously not be paid too high wages in order to prevent them from spending it carelessly. For the girls themselves the economic worth of the wage stood out, either for helping their families at home, or for their own consumption needs — albeit hampered by the fact that part of their wage was withheld.

The next chapter by Bela Kashyap focuses on domestic work in the long-term colonial history of Southeast Asia. Kashyap chooses to view the region Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore/ Southern China as one culturally as well as economically connected unit, a relationship that preceded European colonialism. She argues that the current migratory flows of domestic workers in the region can be linked to pre-colonial and colonial developments that increased the demand for domestic servants — in both white and indigenous elite households.

According to Kashyap the fact that impressive numbers of young Indonesian women today choose to migrate to work in households in Singapore or Malaysia is not only a sign of their traditional place in the household, one that she believes was reinforced in the colonial period. In addition it can be seen as a way for them to — at least temporarily — break away from binding family and community ties. Kashyap points out however that the strict regimes on the state level (in terms of migration legislation) as well as that of the household (by demanding mistresses) reduce many Indonesian women to a subordinate status that may resemble the colonial ties of the past.

Last, but not least, Sabrina Marchetti also stresses the continuities of colonial heritage in the stereotyping and self-representation of migrant domestic workers. Based on in-depth interviews, Marchetti compares two groups of women who migrated to their former colonizers' countries in the post-wwtw period: Eritrean women in Italy and Afro-Surinamese women in the Netherlands. She has not only interrogated these migrants' work experiences in white households, but also asked them about their encounters with their (former) colonizing countries before they decided to migrate to Europe. Marchetti argues that in both cases the perceived knowledge about the country of destination based on colonial ties was formative, both in their decision to migrate and for the expectations Eritrean and Afro-Surinamese women had beforehand. Furthermore, the self-representation of both groups was very much influenced by what they had learned about historical women's role under colonialism. This turned out to be crucially different for the two groups based on the specificities of their respective colonial pasts.

Like Marchetti's chapter, most of the chapters in this part compellingly show the continuing importance of colonial ties for labor relations in domestic work and care all over the world. We cannot, however, simply equate historical colonialism with present-day globalization, even though some patterns in our current global division of labor may be traced back to imperial times. As the chapters in this part have indicated, it is very important to draw our attention not only to the patterns and commonalities we can trace back in the historical experiences of domestic workers as well as their employers. Moreover, as historians we need to look for the tensions and complexities that the intimate intricacies of living and working together surely brought about. In these complicated relationships, gender, race/ethnicity, class and colonial connections all played a role, but not always to the same degree and not always with similar historical outcomes.
CHAPTER 12

Slavery, Servility, Service: The Cape of Good Hope, the Natal Colony, the Witwatersrand, 1652-1914

Shireen Ally

"A Funny Kind of Love"

In August 2013 the domestic servant and its histories were, yet again, put on public display in the city of Johannesburg? Under the title So, this is desire, commercial advertising photographer Huw Morris staged eleven images as part of an art installation that commented on the sexual tension between masters and their servants in 1970s apartheid South Africa. In one, a uniformed black "maid" is perched suggestively atop a chair dusting a curtain rail. The white "master" of the house sits on the adjacent sofa, his eyes fixed to the slit in her uniform baring her outstretched knee, while the white "madam" is a spectator to this sexualized drama. In another, the black male gardener is washing the family car bare-chested in the backyard, while the "madam" gazes over the sud-soaked scene surreptitiously - and longingly - from behind the curtains.

In the glossy hyper-stylized shots akin to those in consumer magazines, Morris satirizes and spectacularizes the drama of dirt and desire between the mistress and her "houseboy," the master and his "maid," and the nanny and her charge, under conditions of despotic racial segregation. Reflecting on Morris's dramatization of the "forbidden desire in the suburbs," one critic opined: "Apartheid, with all of its Calvinist repression, produced a funny kind of love and it's this desire for the other that Morris takes hostage in his camera lens." This chapter interrogates this question: is modern racialized servitude indeed "a funny kind of love?"

Consider, for instance, a very different rendition of the desire in domestic service in South Africa through these words from the past:

I moved from day to day, stumbling through all the things they wanted me to learn, all the new words I had to listen to. I had to keep to myself those I was never to say. And all the new laws that live in the new words! Meld [maid] - a rule lives in that. Come here - another law that grows from meld [maid]. Clean this - still another law that grows out of meld [maid] and come here. Open up - perhaps the worst law.

These are the imagined words of the actual historical figure, Sila van den Kaap, an enslaved domestic servant at the Cape of Good Hope in the nineteenth century. On 24 December 1822, Sila's mistress asked her to wash some dirty linen. Sila sent her nine-year old son Baro to fetch some lemons to remove the stains. But when Baro returned, he complained of having been badly beaten by his master. The court summarized what happened next:

[Sila] rubbed the child with fat which she [Sila] had scraped from her bread for the purpose, [and then] through heartsore and grief, [Sila] cut the child's throat with a knife.

After having slit Baro's throat, Sila planned to kill herself. Instead, she told the court, she buried Baro beneath a bush and walked off her master's farm, giving herself up to the district's marshal. Sila was convicted of kindermoord (infant murder), and in March 1823, she was sentenced to death by strangulation.

But three years later, Sila was still alive; the sentence had not yet been carried out. An investigation by the Acting Governor revealed that Sila had not been executed because she was pregnant at the time and, under British law, a pregnant woman could not be executed. Moreover, Sila's pregnancy in detention suggested that she was being used as a prison prostitute, as she had not been pregnant at the time of her sentencing. As a result, King George IV himself officially commuted Sila's sentence from death by strangulation to 14 years of hard labor instead. She was transferred to Robben Island, the infamous penal colony where Nelson Mandela would be imprisoned just over a
century later. There, in 1830, on that desolate piece of rock in the midst of the stormy Atlantic Seas, Sila was finally silenced by the archival record.

In the court papers that remain, Sila’s “voice” is entombed in her seclusion, a plea to the powers of the law for salvation. Yvette Christians, a poet and novelist, found Sila’s “voice” in the archive, barely audible, drowned out by the voluminous drama of death, violence, and the law in domestic slavery. In a deliberate overturning of this drama, Christians wrote Unconfessed, a fictionalized account of Sila’s life in which Sila refuses to confess. Christians frees Sila’s voice and Baro’s spirit to haunt the austere interiors of colonial domestic life.

Morris’s images and Sila’s words seem to offer contrasting portraits of carnal desire in domestic service. Morris’s images speculate on the erotic ambiguities of domestic service, yet Sila’s words are an unambiguous critique of the cruelties of carnality in domestic slavery. What they share, nonetheless, is an analysis of domination in domestic service as a species of illicit intimacy: an intimacy coerced, yet deeply saturated in affect, ambivalent affect to be sure, but affective attachment nonetheless. This chapter is an exploration of these dynamics in the histories of domestic service in colonial South Africa: How do relations of cruelty co-exist with those of intimacy in domestic service? How does carnality work as a relation of both familiarity and desire, as well as degradation and estrangement? In other words, do masters and servants indeed share a “funny kind of love”?

To pick at the seams of this question, I select for view three scenes. These scenes are episodic moments in the drama of domestic service, yet they have been deliberately selected for the illustrative overview they provide of the contours of the domestic service relationship in a specific territory (the area today designated South Africa), across three centuries (seventeenth, nineteenth, and twentieth), three regimes of political sovereignty (the Cape Colony, the Natal Colony, and the Transvaal Boer Republic), and three regimes of law and labor (slavery, indentured servitude, and the wage).

I specifically select these three scenes as episodes because they expose the highly mobile circulation of labor, and the extraordinary simultaneity of multiple regimes of labor and law (“free” and “unfree”), in early modern servitude. More so, though, I select these scenes for view because they are suggestive of the ambiguous forms of desire that animate histories of domestic service.

In the cohabitations of cruelty, carnality and care in the relations between masters and servants, carnality worked as cruelty (whether coercive violence by the master, or revenge by the servant), but also as care: the care provided to masters by servants, but also the forms of care extended to servants by masters.

Scene 1: 1652, the Cape of Good Hope

Soon after 6 April 1652, the day Jan van Riebeeck stepped off the flagship Dromedaris of the Dutch East India Company to establish a refreshment station for the VOC as Governor at the Cape of Good Hope, he and his wife Maria took a young indigenous “Khoena” girl named Krotoa into the service of their household. Renamed “Eva” by Van Riebeeck, she was the “first” servant in Jan van Riebeeck’s household, and “Van Riebeeck’s favourite maid.” She would also establish herself as the most important interpreter between the colonizing Dutch and the aboriginal Khoena, securing her status as “the most written about African woman in South African historiography.”

Eva’s notoriety derives directly from her role as a servant. Her intimate involvement with Dutch domesticity was metonymic of her intimacy with the process of European colonization. But her status as a servant provided an

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9 The most serious biographical sketch of Krotoa’s life remains V.C. Malherbe, Krotoa, Called Eva: A Woman between (Cape Town, 1990).
10 Julia Wells, “Eva’s Men: Gender and Power in the Establishment of the Cape of Good Hope,” Journal of African History 39 (1998), 419-437. Wells suggests that Krotoa may have been drafted into service following the first birth at the Dutch settlement in Table Bay on 6 June 1652. She speculates that the Dutch settlers “probably turned to Autshumato first, since he already had a long history of working for Europeans. Perhaps he selected Krotoa because of her status as ward, separated from her biological parents” (419). Wells suggests that Autshumato, chief of the Khoena at Table Bay and Krotoa’s uncle, may have encouraged Krotoa’s service for the Commander as it may have signaled simultaneously trust and friendship, as well as provide the opportunity for the local Khoena to gather intelligence on the Dutch.
12 Julia Wells, Eva’s Men, 419. As a sampling, see also the biographical novel by Trudie Bloem, Krotoa-Eva: The Woman from Robben Island (Cape Town, 1999), and the scholarly articles: Christina Landman, “The Religious Krotoa,” Kronos ardisi (1996), 3-21; Carli Couttee, “Krotoa, the Uncanny Mother,” Paper presented at the Gender and Colonialism Conference, University of the Western Cape, Belleville, 1997.

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7 Ibid.
intimacy of another sort, i.e. with the master himself. Krotoa is now widely agreed to have shared a sexual relationship with van Riebeeck.\textsuperscript{13} The "first" master-servant relationship, so to speak, was thus a carnal and intimate one.\textsuperscript{14} Historian Yvette Abrahams offers a reading about less than mutual affections. "Was Eva raped?" she asks.\textsuperscript{15} It is only a violent trauma, she suggests, that could explain Eva's seemingly inexplicable attachments to van Riebeeck, and to Christianity, as well as her tortured intimacy with Dutch colonial society.

Whether consensual or coerced, this carnal relation of master and servant has sealed Krotoa's status as starnmoeder (ancestral mother) to the descendants of the Dutch settlers in South Africa today. Crucially, Krotoa was not a slave. This was due to a Dutch East India Company law prohibiting local officials from enslaving the indigenous population. Instead, she was contracted to provide a service, which she was free to exit from at her will, and for which she was compensated.\textsuperscript{16}

But another regime of domestic labor existed exactly alongside Krotoa's contracted service, and in the same household. During his first five years as Governor at the Cape, van Riebeeck's home was serviced by at least a half dozen slave servants. Due to the prohibitions of Company law, however, all were imported, and the "first" colonial home was a morley, even cosmopolitan, affair. There were "Arabian girls" from Abyssinia (Ethiopia),\textsuperscript{17} and slaves from modern-day Indonesia, Angola, Madagascar, and Guinea.\textsuperscript{18} But the majority of the slave servants were in fact from Bengal.\textsuperscript{19} The most important of these Indian slave servants was a woman named Angela van Bengalen, i.e. Angela of Bengal (otherwise known as Ansela or Ansiela, which it is speculated comes from the Latin ancilla, meaning maid-servant). Angela was purchased by van Riebeeck in Batavia, and arrived in the Cape on 4 December 1656.

Angela (Ansela) was the most important of the "first" colonial family's household servants. With a legendary beauty that led to the nickname by which the archival record now knows her, Mooi Ansela (beautiful Angela),\textsuperscript{20} was wet-nurse to the van Riebeeck family.\textsuperscript{21} This intimate contact of native and settler child around the erotically charged site of the breast is highly significant.\textsuperscript{22} Scholar Robert Shell argues that the Bengali slave servant was the literal "bosom of the settler family."\textsuperscript{23} Angela/Ansela later married a Dutch man with whom she had a daughter, Anna de Koning, who, through marriage, would become a "lady" of distinction in elite Dutch colonial society at the Cape.

It was the tender memories of her intimate association with van Riebeeck's family, though, that nursed Angela in her old age. In 1710, while en route to the Netherlands, van Riebeeck's granddaughter, the daughter of Abraham van Riebeeck (whom Angela had nursed as a child), stopped at the Cape. Ansela made a point of visiting her: "an old black woman has been to see me who says that she was one of my late grandmother's slaves," van Riebeeck's granddaughter wrote, "and that she had nursed father and all the other children. Her name is Ansela... In her house hang the portraits of our late grandfather and grandmother."\textsuperscript{24}

It is Angela who, decades later, invests in the memory of her nursing of van Riebeeck's young son, and who retains around her the fetishized portraits of her slave-master and -mistress. Imperialism's mythic "family of man," as Anne McClintock has called it,\textsuperscript{25} is sustained here not by the slave master (his granddaughter), but by the slave servant, whose literal nursing of empire is coveted as a memory by herself, and then generations later, by white Afrikaner families who, today, remember Angela of Bengal too as an ancestral mother — symbolically, in part, by virtue of the carnal care of the breast.

\textsuperscript{13} Wells, Eva's Men, 421.
\textsuperscript{14} Mid, 424.
\textsuperscript{16} The exact form of compensation and the amounts Krotoa was "paid" is not known, and requires further investigation. A preliminary examination of Van Riebeeck's journals and other applicable VOC records have not yielded this information.
\textsuperscript{17} Karel Schooman, Early Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1717 (Pretoria, 2007).
\textsuperscript{18} Schooman, Early Slavery.
\textsuperscript{20} Upham, Moog Ansela, part II, 22.
Scene U: 1884, the Natal Colony

In April 1884, in the midst of a so-called "black peril" scare in Natal, a young Indian "kitchen boy" named Muttai attempted to rape his mistress, Mrs. Fotheringham. Three decades prior, the British had annexed the Boer Republic of Natalia, following military confrontations between the Boers (the descendants of the Dutch colonists at the Cape) and the indigenous Africans, known by their ethnicity as "Zulus," in the coastal area. Thousands of British settlers arrived in Natal to take up Government grants of land to settle the annexed territory. But after the 1850s, with the abolition of slavery, there was an acute labor shortage — mostly for the sugar, tea, and coffee plantations that were being established on the coastal plains, but also for the burgeoning domestic colonial settlements. Since African Zulus at this time had militarily held back conquest by the British and could refuse to work for wages, the British officials looked to the rest of the Empire and settled on importing so-called "cookies" from India — under a system of indentured labor. A large proportion of "Indians" brought to Natal to labor under the system of indentured servitude were placed as domestic servants.

The system of indenture was simply the most recent technique for a legal tethering of servants to their masters. Not being allowed to enslave them, they compelled them to work under a legal regime adapted from Dutch law involving apprenticeship — a system of effective indenture for up to 25 years. When the Dutch regime ended after an extensive rebellion by servants on farms from 1799, the British enfolded vagrancy and apprenticeship laws with existing Master and Servant Act. As Martin Chanock has shown in his masterful history of law, labor and property in southern Africa, when the Boers left the British Cape for the interior of South Africa, they took their models of law-in-service with them, and so British

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28 This historical account of Muttai and Mrs Fotheringham is from Prinshah Badassy, "...and My Blood Became Hot!: Crimes of Passion, Crimes of Reason: An Analysis of the Crimes against Masters and Mistresses by their Indian Domestic Servants, Natal 1889-1920" (MA, University of Kwazulu Natal, 2005).


32 Badassy, "...and My Blood Became Hot!," 65.

33 Ibid., 66.

waged employment by systematic forms of colonial dispossession and expropriation. The tropical settler household in Natal was thus one thoroughl
long contracts under the Masters and Servants Act (as opposed to longer fixed-term contracts in mining), black men preferred domestic work over dangerous and single-sex work in the mines.

Yet, as Prinisha Badassy shows, the mutual deployments of degradation and violence amongst indentured Indian servants and their masters in colonial Natal took place along with the cultivation of intimate, indeed genuinely, attentive forms of affection and care. While indentured Indian servants raped, poisoned, and sometimes bludgeoned their masters to death, "the proximity and intimacy within the colonial home," writes Badassy, "allowed for the nurturing of close bonds between settler families and their servants." In other words, masters and servants seemed to share "a funny kind of love."

Scene III: 1912, the Witwatersrand

In 1886, gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, in the interstices of the then Boer Republic. The small mining camp attracted prospectors from around the world in what was to become a rapidly industrializing, urbanizing capitalist economy based on extractive mining. With them came the demand for a reliable supply of domestic labor. Soon, just a decade after the city of Johannesburg was founded, the city sustained a small proletarian army of domestic servants. Immigrant English, Irish, Scottish and German white women servants labored either on bonded contract, or for cash wages as specialist servants—cooks, especially—usually contracted through registry offices that functioned, for a fee, like employment bureaus, while African (Zulu) "houseboys" labored as general servants.

While Zulu men in Natal had managed to stave off their incorporation into the colonial regime of labor, military defeat and the imposition of cash-based taxes combined with "native" registration and other racialized legislation to eventually proletarianize them. They left the countryside for Johannesburg, where racialized restrictions channeled them into waged employment as domestic servants. In fact, though, with higher wages and only one-month long contracts under the Masters and Servants Act (as opposed to longer fixed-term contracts in mining), black men preferred domestic work over dangerous and single-sex work in the mines.

Subject to the colonial capitalists' racial regime of "native" pass laws, and racially segregated residences, they entered the manor houses of the white mining capitalist class as general servants, cooks-general and even as nurse-maids, working alongside immigrant white women specialist servants from Britain and Germany. Unexpectedly, given the rigid racial hierarchy, these black African men and the white British women servants they worked with struck up intimate relations. In 1904, Marcus Matopa and Caroline Dyer who worked together as house-servants in a Johannesburg home, developed a relationship which led to Caroline falling pregnant, after which they left their service and went to live at the "houseboy's kraal" in the countryside. In 1914, a Zulu houseboy and white "nursemaid" were found living together as a couple, intent on getting married, declaring that despite the social and legal restrictions on interracial relationships they shared a deep love.

Of course, at this time, it was not sex between white servants and black houseboys that consumed the public imagination. Rather, it was the illicit carnality between black houseboys and their white mistresses. So-called "black peril" scares the hysteria around imagined rapes of white mistresses by their houseboys recur in nearly every single colonial domestic scene. In Johannesburg, where the panic was manufactured as much as anywhere else, the politics of the peril coincided with militant revolt by houseboys against master-servant relations. From 1906, houseboys on the Witwatersrand coalesced into the Amalaita, a criminal gang consisting of an extensive membership of mostly poor houseboys across the city, and who terrorized the city's residents with their legendary brutality. Charles van Onselen argues the Amalaita "should be seen as the houseboys' liberation army fighting to reassert their decolonized manhood during one of the first major waves of South African proletarianization. And as in all struggles involving the deepest of human emotions, the individual battles could be bloody and brutal."

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38 Martens, Settler Homes.
39 Van Onselen, "Witches of Suburbia."
41 Van Onselen, "Witches of Suburbia."
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid, 273.
periods. In doing so, they suggest the necessity for more historiized accounts of the contemporary transnational character of paid domestic work, as well as more specific analyses of the legal regimes through which paid domestic work is organized. At the same time, all three scenes highlight the ambiguous "co-habitations of violence and intimacy, degradation and care, familiarity and estrangement in modern personalized domestic service. What are the conceptual lessons of these histories of intimacies in domestic service for scholarship on paid domestic work today?

First, these illustrative scenes suggest not only the necessity of anti-national, but also ante-national, histories of modem servitude, i.e. meaning "prior to," in addition to "against!" "Global labor history" represents one potential analytical frame through which to recognize the mobility, circulation and flows of labor (the circulation of labor as bodies, but also the circulation of labor as value) in the early modern world. However, the recognition by "global history" of the cosmopolitanism of early proletarian culture does not deal sufficiently with the problem of the colony and the metropole as specific sites of power for the exchange and consolidation of labor. Decades of scholarship on colonialism have shown how metropolitan and colonial cultures were co-constituted, yet they also nonetheless show that they intersected as "metropole" and "colony," and this was true especially in the production of imperial domesticity, as the age of empire relocated "home," and dispersed "the domestic." These intertwined and interpenetrating histories of the metropole and the colony cannot be collapsed into a singular global narrative of proletarian class-formation and consciousness.

In fact, it has been histories of domestic service that have provided some of the most productive instruction in the interdependencies of metropole and colony as "metropole" and "colony." Anne McClintock's pioneering effort in Imperial Leather to think classed metropolitan and raced colonial servitude in the same analytical frame shows how the labor and capital mobilities of imperial expansion require an analysis that can accommodate the co-production of Victorian civility and colonial servility. Ann Staler offers a similarly

Metropole/Colony in Histories of Domestic Service

Jacklyn Cock's classic Maids and Madams documented not only the distillation of the logics of apartheid in the relations between black maids and white madams. It also documented the distillation of an incredibly multi-colored and legally heterogeneous history of domestic service over at least three centuries into a monochromatic and singular legal-service regime after 1940. What instruction lies in the excavation of these more multiple and textured histories?

As already suggested, all three episodic scenes highlight the mobility and circulation of labor within and across the metropole and colony from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries, and they expose the extraordinary (and simultaneous) heterogeneity of regimes of law and labor during these
compelling portrait of the making of metropolitan bourgeois selves through the colonial anxieties over the carnal intimacies shared by native servants and their settler charges. Global labor histories must be able to account for how the dense mobilities of labor throughout history enforced intimate contact between the subject positions of "settler" and "servant."

Second, what would it mean to suggest that the vicissitudes of modern domestic service are as much a product of the politics of exploitation as of the affects of domination? The cohabitations of violence and intimacy, abuse and affection, degradation and care, illustrated in these episodic scenes in the histories of domestic service are actually archetypal. In her breathtaking analysis of domestic service, Mrs. Woolf and the Servants, Alison Light explores Virginia Woolf's relationship with her long-time servant - and companion - Nellie Boxall. It was not the dismal remuneration, nor the difficult working conditions, nor even the drama of class distinction that defined the relationship between Woolf and Boxall. More than anything, writes Light, "it was the ferocity of the feelings involved." "After all those years of living together," Light continues, "they were like a husband and wife who ought to divorce, but can't; they were deeply hopelessly attached." "Service, in other words, has always been an emotional as well as economic territory," says Light.

Finding the same contradictory collision of care and sexuality, of violence and intimacy, love and estrangement between Woolf and Boxall as we know there existed between van Riebeeck and Krotoa, between Indian indentured servants and their masters, and even between black maids and white madams in apartheid South Africa, Light concludes that "service could be brutalizing and estranging; it could also be affectionate and devoted."

Rebecca Ginsburg shows how apartheid domestic service - amongst the most unlikely places one might find genuine forms of feeling between master and servant - was forced but also intimate, inspiring a contradictory cauldron of affect including "distrust" and "fear" as much as abiding forms of "compassion and love." In some sense, these are the "tense and tender ties" so crucial to Ann Stoler's scintillating efforts to understand domestic service as a intimate relation.

As the most theoretically sophisticated effort yet to understand the relations of carnality in colonial domestic service, Stoler artfully synergizes the relationships between the tense moments of outrage or violation, and the tender ones of care or affection. Kristina Straub's account of the shared intimacies - erotic and violent - between masters and servants in eighteenth century Britain certainly suggest the ways in which metropolitan and colonial service shared an affective architecture despite their location in otherwise dissimilar social systems of difference and domination.

This is where and why we require histories of domestic service that can hold in the same analytical breath Arthur Munby and Hannah Culwick on the one hand, with Jan van Riebeeck and Eva Krotoa, on the other. Or, why we need an historical scholarship on domestic service that can keep in the same frame both Phoebe Beatson, John Murgatroyd and their tale of love and labor in the making of the English working class, with Roma, chief of the Amalita and tormentor of white mistresses, in the making of the South African black proletariat.

To do so requires taking the lessons of the existing scholarship in domestic service and its histories seriously. What is quite striking about historical, sociological, anthropological, and literary scholarship on modern personalized domestic service is that it has consistently revealed that the affects of domination in domestic service - this "funny kind of love" in which cruelty and care, violence and attachment co-exist - are the substrate that recurs in almost every historical structure of law and sovereignty in modern domestic service.

For example, in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in Old Regime France, contractually waged domestic servants continued to work, as Sarah Maza shows, under a regime of "aristocratic paternalism," which organized reciprocal relations of fid"lit" amongst masters and servants - a reciprocal relationship that revolved around notions of responsibility and compassion on both hands. See also Rebecca Ginsburg, At Home with Apartheid: The Hidden Landscapes of Domestic Service in Johannesburg (Charlottesville, 2011).

55 Ibid., 3.
58 Stoler, Carnal Knowledge.
60 McClintock, Imperial Leather.
the part of the master and loyalty on that of the servant, "even in the context of contracted services for a cash wage. Carolyn Steedman's masterful account of eighteenth-century English domestic service rescripts the industrial working class as a project not of the expansion of contract, but its opposite. Nineteenth-century servants lost legal entitlements and contractual relations that eighteenth-century servants enjoyed, Steedman shows. She writes: The eighteenth-century women who wrote astonishingly disrespectful verses about their employers' literary and culinary tastes, or who told their master to dress his own baby, were legal bodies with legal personae, in a way that their nineteenth-century counterparts were not.

Indeed, Steedman explodes presumptions about the relationships between law and benevolence, contract and affect, in domestic service that structures some scholarship and activism today, i.e. in which law and contract come (or must come) to replace, and attenuate, personalization and intimacy. But the structures of law and dependence are much more discontinuous, disjointed, and unruly across the histories of domestic service. In her influential re-theorization of slavery, law and violence, Saidiya Hartman argues that the modern contract of hire — the wage — and its apparent legal protections do not represent a technology of emancipation. In considering the replacement of the laws of chattel slavery with egalitarian ideals of legally regulated waged work, she argues that rights facilitated "relations of domination," and "new forms of bondage [were] enabled by proprietorial notions of self, [that] transformed...the formerly enslaved into rational, acquisitive, and responsible individuals. From this vantage point," she argues, "emancipation appears less the grand event of liberation than a point of transition between modes of servitude and racial subjection." As such, Hartman "examines the forms of violence and domination...licensed by the invocation of rights."

In the same year that Sila van den Kaap was convicted and sentenced to death for killing her son, the first amelioration laws were passed at the Cape. Pamela Scully argues that these did not emancipate servants from slavery, after the amelioration laws "prepare[d] slaves for liberation into an economy based on wage labor." In fact, as Bruce Robbins reminds us in The Servant's Hand, this was Marx's argument too: For Marx, the wage contract did not represent an emancipation from bondage, merely another kind of unfreedom: wage slavery. If for Marx, however, servants were incorporated into wage slavery as a vestigial remnant, for Carolyn Steedman, the literal "hired hand" — the domestic servant — was one of the more significant devices through which capitalism imagined itself; a crucial figure through which capitalist ideas of labor, property, and personhood were formulated. In her exceptional reading of John Locke's eighteenth century treatises on contracted services for a cash wage, Steedman shows that these did not emancipate servants from slavery, indeed, Steedman explodes presumptions about the relationships between law and benevolence, contract and affect, in domestic service that structures some scholarship and activism today, i.e. in which law and contract come (or must come) to replace, and attenuate, personalization and intimacy. But the structures of law and dependence are much more discontinuous, disjointed, and unruly across the histories of domestic service. In her influential re-theorization of slavery, law and violence, Saidiya Hartman argues that the modern contract of hire — the wage — and its apparent legal protections do not represent a technology of emancipation. In considering the replacement of the laws of chattel slavery with egalitarian ideals of legally regulated waged work, she argues that rights facilitated "relations of domination," and "new forms of bondage [were] enabled by proprietorial notions of self, [that] transformed...the formerly enslaved into rational, acquisitive, and responsible individuals. From this vantage point," she argues, "emancipation appears less the grand event of liberation than a point of transition between modes of servitude and racial subjection." As such, Hartman "examines the forms of violence and domination...licensed by the invocation of rights."

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multi-generational families, from the land that was once theirs, and on which they had been converted into laboring servants by colonial force and law.

In Plaatje's tale, the servants protest against the impending eviction, but are crestfallen when the master remains firm. They are not dejected by the cruelty of the master, i.e. by his willingness to eject them from their work and homes without notice. Rather, they are angry because they consider the master's indifference to their plight to be a violation of the unwritten law that binds them and him together, namely, that years of loyal service to the master would assure benevolent protection by him.

Then, something remarkable happens. The boerevrou, the white mistress, intervenes with a decisive display of the good old-fashioned racial paternalism the servants expected from the master, declaring that she will defend the servants on the farm against any attempt by the state to evict them from the land. Instead of explicitly rejecting this necessarily patronizing paternalism, Plaatje offers a more interesting intervention into this archetypal master-servant scene.

The elder domestic servant to the white family, Aunt Mietjie, stands up and willingly accepts the "gift" of the white mistress. Addressing the gathered crowd, she announces that it was her sister who nursed the boerevrou when she (the white mistress) was a child. The intention is clear. Aunt Mietjie wishes to convey to all that it was her sister's carnal care of the white child that is now, years later, the source of the white woman's compassion.

Plaatje positions the black servant's breast against the paternalism of the white master and the boerevrou, as if the intimacy between black maid and white child instilled a sense of humanity into the latter, a humanity otherwise elusive to whiteness, Plaatje also declares — in a deliberate inversion of his own title "Our Indebtedness to White Women" — that the carnal care of the black breast places white masters in a debt to black servants, which the latter come seeking payment on a generation later. Shaped by affect and intimacy, love and degradation, cruelty and compassion, masters and servants enact a script in which domination is not only effective, but affective. Indeed, Plaatje proposes, masters and servants share "a funny kind of love."

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CHAPTER 13

The Servant Problem: African Servants the Making of European Domesticity in Colonial Tanganyika

Robyn Allyce Pariser

Introduction

Maureen Miller was serving as an Administrative Assistant in British colonial Tanganyika Territory when she returned home and found her African houseboy "crouched on the ground in the state of agony, with the African equivalent of a white face, and moaning with pain." Unable to understand what was wrong with the boy, she rushed him to the hospital and hoped that the doctors would be able to save him.

I worried during the night about him — was he having his appendix removed, how long would he have to be there, and, of course, the consequential wonder, would I have to replace him? — for the smooth running of the household, however small, depended on the servants; the cook could not be expected to do his work, and everything would soon grind to a halt. I wonder if other people lived with the worry that haunted me, of not being able to find where the boy kept the Kerosene, the matches, the washing soap, or to use the charcoal iron he used, or to heat the water for baths or washing clothes, all of which were daily chores accomplished without fail till a crisis occurred.

Miller worried about her houseboy's welfare when he fell ill, but it appears that she was even more concerned with how his absence would affect her household. Like other women living in the colonies, she was dependent on her domestic servants and feared that she would not manage to get along without them. She did not know how to accomplish several of the daily tasks her servants performed to keep her home in shipshape every day. She did not even know where her servants stored most of the household tools they used to run her home. Miller's concern that her household would come to a standstill without her head houseboy was a realistic one, and it was a concern shared by
many European employers in Tanganyika. Their servants completely ran their homes. Luckily for Miller and her houseboy, he had only experienced a bout of constipation and was soon back at work.

African domestic servants, who were almost exclusively men, were indispensable to European homes and the larger colonial project. They comprised the single largest occupational group in Tanganyika's colonial capital, Dar es Salaam, and worked in every European household in the Territory. African men provided the domestic labor that enabled Maureen Miller and other colonial administrators to go to work every day — bathed, fed, well-groomed and well-rested — to carry out the daily business of running Tanganyika, Territory. African women worked as domestic servants in the capital and in other parts of the Territory, mostly for other Africans as well as Asians, but throughout the colonial period male servants grossly outnumbered women in Tanganyika and most African colonies. With the exception of ayahs (nanny or child care provider), the vocabulary used to refer to domestic workers was entirely masculine. Employers hired houseboys, garden boys, washermen, and kitchen boys. Cooks were always understood to be men. Employers often called all of their servants "boy" or "boi, no matter their age. Due to the state's assumption that domestic servants were all male, official statistics and estimates of domestic workers completely overlooked women until after World War II. In 1949, however, the Labour Department reported that ninety-seven per cent of the 40,000 domestic servants in Tanganyika were men. These African men not only performed the domestic tasks that reproduced European households in Tanganyika, and thus the local colonial administration, they helped to design the routines and rituals of the everyday that defined European domesticity in the colonies and supported the empire.

What people did in their private lives and how they managed their domestic spaces were both personal and political matters. What clothes a person wore, what food they ate, what language they spoke, how they bathed, and how they raised their children were part of "the choreography of the everyday" that

\[ \text{In 1942, the Labor Office estimated that 6,000 men and 1,000 children worked as domestic servants, representing 47 percent (7,000 or 14,770) of the city's wage-laborers. In addition to working in European households, paid servants worked in Asian and, to a much lesser extent, better-off African households. Tanzania National Archives (TNA) 61/box A/11/595, MIB Molohan, 1942. Labour Office Report, Dar es Salaam Township. Cited in James Bienen, 'Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania' (Athens, 2002), 76. During my research at the TNA, I requested this file several times and never received it. This file appears to be lost.} \]

3 The notable exception being South Africa.


5 The making of the home was deeply entangled with the making of empire, and thus housekeeping was both a personal and political project. The orderly, clean house that well-trained, disciplined African servants created and maintained for their European employers did not just enable the imperial project — it was part of it.

Despite the importance of the domestic sphere, control over the home in the colonies seldom resided solely in the hands of European masters. The few studies dedicated to domestic work in colonial Africa portray the power structure of the home as hierarchical and cast servants as dependent on and controlled by their employers. Yet, power dynamics and relationships between domestic employer and employee were highly complex, fragile, and ripe with contradictions. The distribution of power between them was inherently asymmetrical, with the master of the house retaining the upper hand. As this chapter shows, however, employers' power over their homes and their servants was not absolute. The making of the colonial home and the relationships that formed within it were the consequence of everyday struggles and negotiations between European employers and their African domestic staff. Due to employers' dependence on the labor and knowledge of their staff, coupled with their naiveté, many African servants were quite autonomous and ran the house with little interference or instruction. Rather than European employers teaching their servants how to appropriately run their domestic lives in the colonies, many times their African servants taught them. As Sabrina Marchetti describes in this volume, at times colonial hierarchies were overturned in domestic spaces.

Literature on gender and domesticity in the colonies emphasizes how European women engaged in "the generational and daily reproduction of the

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empire" through their roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers. However, this chapter demonstrates the well-kept homes and model of domesticity Europeans strove to create were not just the product of European women. Male African servants critically shaped the European domestic domain. I argue that through their work, their presence, and the African men helped design the stylized, everyday rituals that defined European domesticity in the colonies and helped to create the categories of colonizer and colonized on which the empire depended. This chapter illustrates that male African servants shaped European homes and explores the complex relationships that formed within them.

On Hiring: Good Help is Hard to Find

With the exception of the settler colonies, until the 1930s European women were largely absent from colonial Africa. Outnumbered by European men by three-to-one, only five hundred twenty-one European women resided in the whole of Tanganyika Territory in 192. The number of women in the Territory increased slightly by 1930, with three hundred forty-one European women living in Dar es Salaam, but men still outnumbered women by nearly the same ratio. Lacking their wives and families, most bachelors relied entirely on male African servants to manage their domestic lives until official attitudes towards European women in the colonies changed. The state eventually encouraged women to accompany their husbands when they realized that European women would have a good influence on the European men living throughout the empire. Women had multiple roles in colonial Tanganyika. After World War II they even worked as Administrative Assistants, Assistant District Officers, and Education Officers. During the interwar period, however, their

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12 After World War II the Colonial Office recruited women to make up for the severe shortage of male officers. Rhodes House Library, MSS AEs 1799, University of Oxford Records Development Project, “Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa”

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10 TNA, AB424 (3041), Annual Report on Tanganyika Territory 1921. In 1921 there were 5,447 Europeans in Tanganyika Territory: 1,083 adult males, 521 adult female, 229 male children, and 214 female children. TNA, Dar es Salaam District Annual Report 1930. The Annual Report indicates that there were 796 European men and 341 European women in the district. Of the district’s British residents, 557 were male and 232 female.

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women. Whereas in England a person could usually manage their own home and did not require full-time servants, in the colonies, Bradley advised, "you cannot do without them in the same way, even temporarily." Fortunately, she explained, European women and men were spared most of the "drudgeries of cooking and housekeeping." Servants are relatively cheap and plentiful, and as much a part of the tropical landscape as palm trees and the heat. So you must come to terms with them," Bradley continued, "and learn the art (all but forgotten in England) of calmly giving orders to people which are obeyed without more ado."

Every European household in Tanganyika employed domestic servants. They were not just a domestic necessity; servants were the "sine qua non of social and economic position." After World War I, domestic service was a dying institution in Britain. Most of those who left Europe for Tanganyika during the interwar period grew up in homes without servants, especially multiple servants, and few had experience as domestic employers themselves. As a result, many newcomers had mixed feelings about the constant presence of African servants in their homes. Some, particularly bachelors and spinsters, noted that they did not feel it necessary to employ servants at all, especially not more than one. Yet, Europeans employed servants, usually several servants, regardless of whether they found them necessary or desirable. Victoria Brennan, who grew up in colonial Tanganyika, explained "there would not have been a debate about the necessity, one had servants." In rare cases, a bachelor or spinster in the city may have employed a single worker to run their entire home. While this became more common towards the end of the interwar era, before WWII single-servant homes would have been relatively rare because of social pressures. Beryl Steele, an administrative officer, recalled that upon arrival in 1956 she was reluctant to employ multiple workers, but it would have been "indecent" for her to employ at least two servants. Similarly, Isabel Poplewell, a spinster living alone, "bowled to conventional pressures (from colleagues and staff)" and employed multiple servants even though she felt they were excessive.

A house of well-trained, disciplined African servants was a sign of status as well as a testament to the civility and respectability of the master of the house. The home and the people inside it were always on display. Hence, trained servants and the fruits of their labor were a domestic, social, and political need. It was critical not just to have servants in the colonies, but to have good servants. A wayward domestic staff and poorly managed home could jeopardize an employer's social position and threaten to erode the boundary between colonizer and colonized. Unfortunately for employers, finding experienced, well-trained or trainable servants could be difficult.

In the 1930 Handbook of Tanganyika, Gerald Sayers warned newcomers that good servants were hard to find. There were often a large number of African men looking for work in domestic service, but there was a constant shortage of trained domestic staff in Tanganyika. Some European women, "who had the patience," would hire untrained men on the cheap and find great pleasure "turn[ing] such raw material into first class servants." Most employers, however, had neither the patience nor the knowledge to train servants themselves. They therefore sought men who were already well adept at their craft. But just as employers were selective of their employees, servants were also selective of their potential employers. Europeans were not entirely in charge of the master-servant employment relationships in their homes, and they knew it. They desperately sought seasoned cooks and experienced houseboys, but the demand for skilled servants was far greater than the supply.

Experienced servants fetched a high price, especially seasoned cooks, and often had their choice of employers. If one employer did not offer them the wages they wanted, they knew that there would likely be another family that would eagerly employ them, especially in large urban areas like Dar es Salaam. Sometimes employers would even try to lure a working cook away from another family with the promise of better pay, shorter working hours, and/or more leave time. Bradley warned incoming wives that prospective employers needed to be on their best behavior to attract these servants. Experienced domestics would size up the employer and give them "marks for steadiness of temper, sweetness of disposition, and sense of humour." Just as employers evaluated the potential of their servants, Bradley cautioned newcomers that

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14 Bradley, Dearest Priscilla, 45.
15 Ibid., 31.
16 Ibid., 45.
17 Hansen, Distant Companion, 2.
18 Victoria Brennan, personal correspondence via email, 15 September 2011.
19 Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.799 (2), Beryl Steele, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa."
20 Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.5.1799 (29), Isabel Poplewell, "Women Administrative Officers in Colonial Africa."
23 Ibid., Dearest Priscilla, 54.
24 This was especially true in the case of cooks who worked for Indian families. Astish Ladwa, personal communication, Dar es Salaam, September 2011.
African servants would also wonder "if you are healthy, energetic and teachable." If an employer came across as bossy or unpleasant many servants would not consider working for them. It was their decision, not the employer's, where they would work.

While experienced servants were in a uniquely powerful position, less skilled and unskilled servants also developed strategies to influence their terms of employment. To the naive European newcomer, servants' salaries, working hours, leave time, and various other working conditions could be difficult to determine. Unless they had consulted a government handbook before arrival, which may have been completely outdated by the time they moved to Tanganyika, newcomers were unfamiliar with local wage and employment standards. The Secretary of the Women's Service League of Tanganyika (wslT), a group of European women who promoted the interests of women in the Territory, explained that the rapidly increasing population of Dar es Salaam largely consisted of "people who have never been to East Africa before, and have no idea of the local customs. There is no doubt that the domestic servant element is exploiting this position. . ." Servants took advantage of newcomers' inexperience by convincing them to pay wages higher than the going rate. The wslT complained that "incompetent and unqualified servants [were] demanding wages far in excess of their capabilities." Sometimes they borrowed one another's chits (letter of recommendation from previous employers) so that an inexperienced worker could find domestic employment, or they simply forged the documents all together. Servants also played one employer against the other, creating bidding wars over their service, to drive up their wages.

Despite the difficulties of finding and hiring staff, for many Europeans entering the colonies the promise of "embarking on a mode of existence in which [they] will be spared the drudgeries of cooking and housekeeping that darken English life" was an exciting allure. Shortly after arriving in Tanganyika for his first tour of service, Francis Dudley Dowsett wrote a letter to his parents explaining that he very much liked "the idea of being waited on hand and foot and having all one's clothing washed and ironed — including the suits — the moment one takes them off." Maureen Miller also welcomed the luxury of servants. Like many other colonial officers, when she first arrived in Tanganyika, Miller lived at Government House before finding her own personal quarters. "I had no servant problems at this stage," she recalled, "and the bliss included being waited upon by silent African houseboys in crisp white kanzus [ . . . ] and having to take no thought for my own well-being. As they soon learned, however, employing servants was a complicated and sometimes stressful endeavor. Servants were not invisible waiters who magically appeared and silently obeyed orders. Obtaining a reliable domestic staff was tricky, but controlling one was even more so.

Designing Domesticity

Servants often had considerable autonomy and control over the design of their employer's domestic domain, especially when working for bachelors. Working bachelors did not have the time or the knowledge to manage their home affairs in the colonies. Before Emily Bradley joined her husband in Northern Rhodesia, Mr. Bradley employed a houseboy who he claimed he would not speak to for days at a time. The boy would "meticulously" and quietly carry out his work while Mr. Bradley "hardly knew he was there." Because they often had little time to supervise their servants and had little knowledge of how to properly perform domestic tasks themselves, European men usually gave very little instruction to their domestic staff. Men were also notoriously less particular about the nuances of their home life. Unless they did something especially displeasing, servants who worked for bachelors carried out their work the ways in which they pleased with little interference from their employers.

European women found that bachelors' servants had "their little peculiarities," notably their problem with discipline. Lorna Hall recalled one instance at a bachelor's dinner party when the host asked his houseboy why he had not put the potatoes on the dinner table with the rest of the meal. The boy explained that he could not serve the potatoes because the cook decided not to prepare them that evening. "Sorry, Bwana, no potatoes," he replied. "Cooks says he is tired of doing potatoes every day so he has not cooked any."

David Brokenshaw fondly remembered that his sixty-five-year-old cook, whom he...

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26 TNA 32744/F54, Secretary of the Women's Service League of Tanganyika to The Member for Education, Labour and Social Welfare, 26 August 1948.
27 TNA 32744/F55, Labour Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, 2 September 1948.
28 Bradley, Dearest Priscilla, 52.
30 Miller, "One W.A.A. in Tanganyika"
31 Bradley, Dearest Priscilla, 48.
32 Rhodes House Library, MSS Afrs. 1834, Lorna Hall, 1932, A Bushwife's Progress: In Eight Stages.
called Mzee, also tended to do things as he saw fit. In one memorable instance he asked Mzee to slice him lemons for his Saturday sundowners and the cook delivered lemons cut into quarters instead. Brokenshaw reminded Mzee that he had asked for sliced, not quartered lemons. Mzee replied, "I know that some people do it that way, but I do it this way." Rather than adapting to the preferences of their employers, Mzee and other cooks carried their habits and preferences with them from house to house. They took pride in having their own ways of doing things. Female employers tried to steer clear of such work when hiring new staff and the wives who later joined their husbands in the colonies infamously had trouble with their husbands' houseboys.

Female employers were much more "hands-on" with their servants; they directed and corrected their servants much more than their male counterparts. While European women were usually more proficient at domestic tasks than men, they were also heavily dependent on their servants to run their household and to teach them the conventions of colonial life. Female employers often did not have the time, nor the desire, to observe every member of their staff throughout the day. Many, particularly housewives living in Dar es Salaam, had quite busy social lives. After World War II, numerous women had careers of their own in Tanganyika. They would usually issue their servants morning orders and then leave it to their staff to run the home for the rest of the day. Mabel Tunstall's houseboy had almost total control over the home after she left for work in the morning:

I always made a new houseboy understand that he was in charge of the house. I told him the way I liked the work done and the very few items of food I did not care for. I only employed well trained and experienced men and explained that I was busy in the office and did not want to come home to a lot of problems or to give detailed orders every day. It was his responsibility to tell me before we ran out of essential supplies. I gave him a "float" to buy fruit and vegetables and eggs from the men who came to the door, and also fish in Dar es Salaam. I liked English cooking, Indian cooking, Greek cooking, anything adapted to local supplies. I tried a lot, it depended on what the cook knew and we both enjoyed ourselves.  

The women who came to the colonies were not all proficient in the domestic arts, and were especially not skilled in how to run a home in Africa. While some gave their servants control over their home out of convenience, others did so out of necessity. In addition to senior wives and other residents, servants helped to acclimate European women to their new homes and provided information about the particulars of housekeeping and local life in general. Tunstall, like many other women in Tanganyika, relied on the experience and knowledge of her staff to make sure that her home was adequately stocked with the necessary supplies, manage the food budget, as well as clean her home, wash her clothes, and cook her meals. As she describes, what she ate largely depended on her cook's knowledge of global cuisine, not on what she taught him. Dorothy Kingdon, the wife of a colonial officer, similarly bragged in a letter to her parents that her cook arrived already trained and was able to cook "succulent meals without any suggestion from me." Women like Tunstall and Kingdon reveled in their servants' expertise and independence, but others had considerable anxiety over their dependency on their staff. Some, like Maureen Miller, felt out of control and worried that they would not be able to get along without their servants. Others even worried that their reliance on servants would make them slaves to their African staff. Emily Bradley warned incoming women that, even though their servants would be performing the domestic labor, it was critical for the woman of the house to have a certain degree of competence: "There is no slavery in the world so abject as the helplessness of a woman who is entirely ignorant or incompetent underlings, whom you can neither help nor direct nor avoid, but only complain of, and abjure."
Bradley’s suggestion that employers would feel like slaves in their own homes may appear absurd. Yet, domestic servants, even if by their mere presence, influenced the behavior of their employers and they often had considerable sway over the home. Servants were almost always present, and the home was a stage on which European women constantly needed to perform the role of the knowledgeable, patient, civilized colonial master in front of their staff. They were the bosses, they were the colonizers, and they should know more than their colonized African servants—or at the very least they needed to act that way. As women, especially European women, they should be better homemakers than African men. They were embarrassed and ashamed that their servants could produce better meals and a cleaner, more organized household than they could create themselves. They felt considerable pressure to present themselves as confident and able; their authority as both employers and colonizers rested on the mirage of their superior knowledge and abilities.

Gilchrist Alexander’s wife went to great lengths to save face in front of her cook after a rather embarrassing attempt to teach him how to prepare a steamed pudding. She told her cook that she would prepare a steamed pudding after he went home for the evening so that in the morning she could show it to him and teach him how to cook the dish. She was up all night, but her steamed pudding was a failure. Not wanting to face “the problem of justifying herself to mpishi [cook],” she hid the remains of her failed dish. When he arrived in the morning, the first thing the cook did was ask to see the steamed pudding. The wife evaded his questions all day and eventually discarded her kitchen experiment outside of the house so that neither the cook nor the other staff members would find it. She desperately wanted to hide the evidence that she was not a paragon of domesticity.

In addition to being under considerable pressure to maintain a respectable home, women were also under pressure to act as examples of patience and grace in front of the staff. Paradoxically, the British memsahib had a horrible reputation “as the most noxious figure in the annals of British imperialism.” British women were known for being intolerant, insensitive, extremely prejudiced towards the colonized, prone to having extra-marital affairs, spreading malicious gossip, and being especially abusive towards servants. In her research on colonial wives, Beverly Gartrell argues there is little factual basis for this reputation. Overbearing and cruel female masters were the exception, not the rule. Most of the European community looked down on these types of men because they were difficult to get along with and set bad examples for their servants. Bradley encouraged European women to be gracious, patient, and humble in front of their servants because these were the qualities they wanted their African servants to adopt. By setting a good example, these women would help to elevate the African race to the civilized standards of European culture and bolster the prestige of the British Empire.

The constant presence of servants in the home sometimes made the atmosphere quite tense and awkward, especially for inexperienced employers. Servants engaged various tactics, both subtle and overt, to test their masters’ patience, knowledge, and power. New employers experienced an initial period of adjustment during which they needed to “learn to cope” with their servants’ presence, and sometimes their resistance. Servants often tried to take advantage of their employers’ ignorance of local customs and difficulty with local languages. Ferdinand Joelson noted that they had two favorite ways of testing their employers’ knowledge of “the local lore,” challenging a European’s prestige, and trying to make a fool of their employers. The first was to walk into the house wearing shoes. The second was to hand something to a white man with the left hand. Servants were supposed to be barefoot in their employer’s home. Wearing shoes in the employer’s home was not only disrespectful, it blurred the social boundaries between master and servant, colonizer and colonized. As Joelson explained, in East Africa it was also exceptionally disrespectful to hand something to someone with the left hand:

In that part of the world this latter action is most impolite, and if it is necessary for the left hand to be employed it should be supported by the right. The reason is that the native, like the Arab, draws a very distinct difference as to the use of the hands; the right is spoken of as the one with which one eats; the left is the one which comes into play when the offices of nature have to be performed.

He warned newcomers, “the settler who allows such affronts to pass unnoticed is storing up for himself a deal of trouble.” Servants readily capitalized on the language barrier between employer and employee by “playing dumb” when their employer asked them to do something they did not want to do. The language barrier between most employers

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41 Ibid.
42 Bradley, Dearest Priscilla, 5z.
and employees was usually quite severe, but most trained servants could decipher their employer's poor Swahili to interpret their wants and needs. "Even a newly-arrived white man, who can barely speak scarcely ten words understood by the black," Joelson marveled, "finds to his astonishment that his wishes are forestalled or his halting, unintelligible commands correctly guessed." Yet, "when the African does not want to understand a question," he warned, "he can be wonderfully dull." Like most Europeans who lived in Tanganyika, Phyllis Tanner studied Swahili before travelling to the Territory, but she still had considerable difficulty communicating with her staff:

My ear was not at all tuned. I couldn't understand a word the servants said to me although they did seem to understand what I said back to them. And this worried me considerably and at the time I would tell them to go away, express it with my hands if necessary, so that I could recover my nerves and have a little think.46

Luckily for Tanner, her servants cooperated with her. Other employers, like Maureen Miller, were not so lucky.

Miller was excited when she finally moved into her own flat, but she recollected that "the idea of coping for myself, shopping, dealing with a houseboy without, as yet, more than a few words of Swahili, and above all getting the flat cleaned, daunted me." She experienced quite a few difficulties in the early stages of adjustment, one of which was her houseboy's inclination and ability to disregard her orders. He would often ignore her instructions, either because he genuinely did not understand her or because he did not acknowledge her authority over him. He cooked what he wanted and Miller ate his food, even when she did not particularly like it, because she did not know what else to do 47. Due to her ignorance of Swahili and inability to cook for herself, her domestic servants were more in control of her home than she was. She had fallen victim to the unfortunate conditions Bradley described in her guidebook.

Although servants found avenues to resist their employers, employers developed strategies to regain control. Miller eventually recognized that "a mastery of Swahili was the main route to authority with Africans." By her second tour, she "gloried in the freedom obtained from fluency in Swahili." She could finally converse with her servants. Not only did she speak with them about the food to prepare and the errands to run, she chatted with them "about things African in general." Her cook counseled her on what to pack for her up-country visits and kept her updated on the progress of the new houseboy she hired 48.

Not everyone in Tanganyika achieved proficiency, or even competence, in Swahili. Most employers, however, figured out how to communicate with their servants. Like Tanner, some utilized hand gestures or physically showed their servants what they wanted them to do. Others resorted to Kitchen Swahili, a mixture of Swahili and English that masters spoke with servants.49 Bradley suggested against using such "bastardized lingoes" with servants; it set a bad example for the servants and forced the employer to adjust to the employee rather than the other way around.50 Unfortunately for many women, they had little choice. They needed to work with their servants and to be able to communicate with them to run an effective home. This usually meant incorporating local languages into the household and their everyday lives.

**Blurred Lines**

The relationships between master and servant in the colonies were personal, professional, and political. Distance and difference, as Karen Hansen argues, were key aspects of the domestic employer-employee relationship; they simultaneously created and reinforced the asymmetrical power relations that bolstered the employer's authority over their employees in the home as well as the racial hierarchy in the territory that supported the imperial project.51 A set of rules, explicit and implicit, created and maintained boundaries and differences between European masters and their African servants. Employers and servants, David Brokenshaw recalled, "knew the rules" and tended to abide by them.52 Most importantly, servants should show their employers respect at all times and employers should not tolerate disrespect. Servants wore a uniform while at work, they were forbidden to wear shoes in their employer's house, they were not allowed to physically touch their employers, and, in general, they

45 Ibid., 158.
46 Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afrs.1597, Tape and Transcript of Interview with J.J. Tawney on 8.2.1972, Interview by Phyllis Tanner.
47 Miller, "One W.A.A. in Tanganyika"
were not permitted to speak unless spoken to. In some homes, employer required their employees to use a designated set of dishes and utensils for themselves and restricted them from being reserved for the employers and guests. Even though servants cooked their employers' meals, they were usually not allowed to eat the foods they served. These conventions created distance, emphasized difference, and reinforced the notion that, while servants worked in their employer's household, they were not part of it. They reminded African servants they were inferior to their employers.

To maintain respect and authority, as well as to ensure their protection, European employers advised one another to abide by rules and social conventions in their homes. Employers should treat servants as servants, not friends. This would maintain the social barrier, preserving the employer's authority and superiority. Memsahibs needed to be firm and authoritative, while simultaneously being respectful and gracious towards their staff. Such courtesy would set a good example for the African servants and foster trust, affection, and respect. Bradley warned her female readership not to be "over-familiar" with their workers or to "wander about lightly clad" in front of their male staffs. Such behavior would lessen the social gap, threaten the prestige and respect of the race, and could potentially provoke sexual advances. "So don't wander about in next to nothing," she cautioned, "no matter how hot it is, thinking, 'It's only the boy.'"

While European women certainly needed to be cautious of potential sexual threats posed by the adult African men who worked in their homes, Bradley encouraged her female readership not to be afraid of them. Do not "get the idea that the minute your husband's back is turned 'they' are waiting for opportunities for robbery, assault, and rape." Fostering good relationships with their staff, both showing respect and earning it from their servants, would serve to protect employers and their families. Growing up in pre-wwi Kenya, Elspeth Huxley learned that respect in the colonies protected officials and settlers who sometimes lived alone and in isolation: "Respect preserved them like an invisible coat of mail, or a form of magic, and seldom failed; but it had to be carefully guarded."

European women, in general, were not afraid of their male servants in Tanganyika. The actual relationships that developed between employers and servants were much more complicated than the relationships officials and settlers described in their guidebooks and memoirs. Both employer and employee blurred social lines and broke the rules. In the process, masters and servants developed very real bonds of trust and affection. As opposed to the "black peril" that swept through South Africa, evidence suggests that most white employers in Tanganyika viewed their servants as protectors and companions rather than threats. In both oral and archival research, I found very little evidence of white women or their husbands feeling sexually or physically threatened by their servants. They were aware that these things could happen, and had heard stories of violent attacks, but these were things that employers in Tanganyika felt happened elsewhere, and would especially not happen to them. In an interview with a British employer, she described that she and her friends never worried about rape in Tanganyika because they did not think their servants would be interested in them. "We are too different," she explained.

Employers were certainly aware of the physical capabilities of their servants, even if they did view them as inferior, simple-minded, and childlike. In fact, having a man at home to watch over his wife and children gave male employers some peace of mind while they were away on safari or at work. Having a man around also made women feel safe. One employer actually fired his houseboy of seven years when he refused to continue to live-in because "the employer's wife was nervous about being left alone when her husband went on safari." Men often went on safari for months at a time and left their wives and children at home with their all-male, African staff. One of the workers was expected to be at home at all times, would escort the memsahib and children to and from outings, and upon return "open the house, and see that all is in order" before allowing them inside. When Darrell Bates was on safari, an African man, "naked except for a scrap of cloth that hung in tatters from his waist" and "his face was covered in sticky streaming blood," entered his home while his wife and young children were home alone with the servants. The wife called the cook, Asumani, to help and then she locked herself and her children in the bedroom. While the incident did not result in a violent confrontation, Asumani grabbed a knife and a stick to defend his employer's family while the other servants ran to the police for help.

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53 This practice was especially common in Asian homes.
54 Hansen, Distant Companions, 65.
55 Bradley, Dearest Priscilla, 56.
56 Ibid.
57 Elspeth Huxley, The Flame Trees of Thika (New York, 54904.
58 Jill Stanley, personal conversation, Dar es Salaam, September son.
59 TNA, ACC460 98140/1V/f84, Senior Labour Officer to Labour Commissioner, so November 1958.
60 Bradley, Dearest Priscilla, 56.
Most parents wholly trusted their servants with their children, although the approach parents took towards their children interacting with the African staff differed significantly from house to house. The colonial authorities and European parents worried about the moral and physical contamination of European children in Tanganyika, just as they did in other colonies. How children were raised and who raised them could jeopardize their safety as well as their ability to "learn" how to be European. Arm Stoler has illustrated that the state in colonial Java took measures to limit the servants' influence over the development of European children in order to ensure that Dutch children grew up culturally Dutch. Officials and parents particularly concerned that their children learned to speak proper Dutch, rather than Malay, since language acquisition was tied to cognitive development and the making of proper Dutch subjects. Parents, at times, expressed anxiety over their children's interactions with African servants in Tanganyika. However, it was significantly less severe and systematic than Stoler describes for colonial Java.

The state and its European residents were skeptical of Africans' abilities to raise European children and were concerned that the potentially subpar physical and sexual health of their employees could contaminate their children. Throughout the colonial era, there was much suspicion that many of the African women who worked as ayahs in Dar es Salaam were ayahs by day and prostitutes by night. To ensure the wellbeing of European families, officials discussed and considered whether or not the state should require domestic servants, particularly ayahs, to undergo medical examination for venereal and other infectious diseases. They ultimately decided that they could not force servants to undergo medical examination, but the WSJT as well as other residents continued to push for voluntary examination. In addition to their health, employers also questioned ayahs' competence. The WSJT's initiative to educate and train African women to be nursemaids in the 1950s was met with some resistance in Dar, especially after news of a European child dying of cot death while in the care of the African ayah.

Despite their reservations, most European parents chose to employ African ayahs and trusted their children in the care of their African staff for large parts of the day. Victoria Brennan recalled that, like most other children growing up in Tanganyika, she and her siblings spent most of the day in the care of their ayahs. Her parents never explicitly encouraged her or her siblings to learn Swahili, but all of the children learned Swahili from communicating with the ayahs and the other domestic servants in Swahili and local vernaculars. Hence, many children of colonial families learned Swahili quickly at young ages. Some children even spoke Swahili as their first language. Rather than being horrified by this "contamination," parents allowed the servants to speak to the children in Swahili to facilitate their language acquisition. William Thomas and his brothers all spoke Swahili growing up in Tanganyika. He does not ever recall his parents telling him or any of his siblings not to speak Swahili. Since few servants spoke English, "it would have been stupid [to discourage it]," he added. His parents, like many others, chose practicality over cultural caution.

Most European children living in Tanganyika had African playmates and commonly played with the children of the African servants who worked in their homes. As a result, European children would sometimes learn inappropriate language. When Lorna Hall's son, John, was four years old she received some irreverent messages from the parents of other children. John, who often played with the children of the local policeman, was teaching the other children "THE most shocking Swahili swear words." Like most children, John spoke with his African playmates in Swahili. As the above anecdote suggests, he and his European playmates spoke to one another in Swahili as well. Rather than being horrified and concerned about her son, Hall seems to have found these incidents fairly amusing.

Most expatriates in Dar es Salaam and throughout the territory were British, but there were white expatriates from all over Europe, particularly Germany and Greece, settling in Tanganyika Territory. White children from different European countries sometimes used Swahili as a sort of lingua franca to communicate with one another. Born to Greek parents in Dar es Salaam in 1933, Stella Mantheakis remembered speaking with other children at nursery school in Swahili. She also recalled, however, that she and her friends would be sure to switch to Greek when adults approached. Even though Stella and the others commonly spoke Swahili in their own homes, the children felt that it was not appropriate to speak it in public.

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62 Stoler, Carnal Knowledge, Chapter 5. See especially 121-130.
63 TNA 30876; TNA 10040; TNA 32744; The Health of the Public, "The Strain of the Settler," February 1929.
64 Hall, "A Bushwife's Progress.
65 Victoria Brennan, personal correspondence via email, 15 September 2011.
66 Interview with Michel Mantheakis, 14 May 2011, Dar es Salaam.
67 William Thomas, personal correspondence via email, 19 September 2011.
68 David Brokenbrow, personal correspondence via email, 12 September 2011.
70 Interview with Stella Mantheakis, August 6, 2011, Dar es Salaam.
Karen Hansen acknowledges that feelings of distance between the white master and the black servant in the colonies were usually in closer and more frequent contact with domestic servants than male employers. It was customary for the *memsahib* to deal with the servants on almost all work related matters, even financial (after first discussing the details with her husband, if she had one), and they often spent a large part of their days interacting with their servants and their children while their husbands were at work. Domestic servants were sometimes the only companions wives had in the colonies, especially in remote bush stations. Scholars have argued that the social distance, difference, and power relations between master and servant prevented real friendships from forming. Gartrell, for instance, suggests that colonial wives could not conceive of companionship with women outside of their own race and background, attributing this to language barriers as well as the more fundamental inhibition of the “We European / others dichotomy characteristic of British colonial attitudes.”

Karen Hansen acknowledges that feelings of trust and affection did develop between master and servant, but argues:

> The distance between the white master and the black servant in the colonial situation remained too wide in class and cultural terms for genuine friendship with equal participation and shared authority to develop. Whether or not one liked a servant, he was a distant companion. He remained a servant and thus inferior.

However, wives did form mutual bonds with both female and male servants. The distribution of power between master and servant was highly skewed, and employers did view their African servants as inferior, but this did not make their affections any less sincere.

Despite initial difficulties in communication, many European men, women, and children learned Swahili and other local languages well enough to have full conversations with their staffs. The desire and ability to learn the languages varied, but those who lived in Tanganyika for several years tended to be quite fluent in Swahili and other local languages. Many employers took the initiative to learn something that they were supposed to do in public. It was a personal necessity, but a potential political liability.

When she eventually had children of her own in Tanganyika, Stella employed six *ayahs* – one to look after each of her six children. She encouraged all of her children to speak Swahili growing up, which they learned from their *ayah* and the children of other members of the domestic staff. She fully trusted her children in their care. Michel, her son, recalls that he thought of his *ayah* as his "second mother" and spent most of the day with her. Stella did not mind when her children went to the servants' quarters to play with the staff's children or have some tea. Both Michel and his mother recall that his *ayah* cared deeply for the children and they developed affections towards her. In fact, she cared so much for Michel that one day she took him to a local *mganga*, or traditional healer, to ensure that he would grow up strong and healthy. The man made three, one and a half inch, horizontal cuts on Michel's upper arm, which he and his *ayah* attempted to hide from his mother. When Stella found out, she was furious and fired the woman. However, due to her long history with the family and the bonds that formed between them, Stella eventually hired her back and she continued to work in their home for many more years. When the children were old enough to no longer need an *ayah*, the family found a place for her as house servant in their home so that she would not become unemployed.

The relationship the Mantheakises had with their servants were quite unusual. The family has been living in the territory since 1890 and passed some of its servants down through generations. One of Stella's cooks worked for her father-in-law before cooking in her kitchen. The cook remained with the family for nearly fifty years and, during that period, he learned to speak Greek. During the colonial era, many of the British officers and settlers were not, nor did they intend to be, permanent residents in Tanganyika. They did not have the same amount of time to develop the relationships with their staffs as the Mantheakises. Moreover, as Greeks and therefore not representatives of the British Empire, the Mantheakises perhaps did not feel subject to the same set of social pressures as British residents. Yet, British officials and residents also crossed social lines, broke social conventions, and formed friendships with their servants that transcended the employer-employee relationship.

Male employers, such as David Brokenshaw, formed bonds with their servants, but these appear much more seldom than between servants and *

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71 Interview with Michel Mantheakis; Interview with Stella Manthealds.

72 The distribution of power between master and servant was highly skewed, and employers did view their African servants as inferior, but this did not make their affections any less sincere.


74 Hansen, *Distant Companions*, 31.
to go beyond learning simple household commands and improved their lan-
guage skills by talking with their servants about things that had nothing to
do with the home. Some servants, like Gilchrist Alexander's dhobi, even served as
language tutors for their employers. To improve their language skills, Alexander's
wife often asked their dhobi, Aly, for help learning how to properly use new
vocabulary and practiced conversing with him.16 Rebecca James' cook
Masanja, actively encouraged her to improve her Swahili. Once she was corri-
fortable with the language she taught him how to read and write in Swahili.
Then she taught him about numbers.16

Willing and able to communicate with their African staff, many women
valued the friendships they cultivated with the men and women who worked
in their homes. In her memoir, Beryl Steele stated that she thought of her
house girl, Fatuma, as more of a companion than a servant.77 Joan Dowsett, the
wife of Francis Dowsett, wrote a letter to her in-laws about how she was quite
distraught when her houseboy died. She said that his death was a "great blow
to us and we miss him sadly, I particularly when I am alone." Mary Wrench,
who accompanied her husband to Nigeria and worked as an administrative
officer, reminisced:

My strongest tie to the Nigerians was the relationship established with
my husband's long-serving Hausa "boys." They and their families became
inextricably bound up with us. [...] When he left Nigeria in 1960 I regret-
ted leaving my boys more than I regretted parting with my European
friends. I felt that I could re-establish contact with the latter or even
replace them. For the "boys" there has never been a substitute.79

Like Wrench and her servants, the lives of employers and their domestic staff
in Tanganyika became intertwined. Mabel Tunstall described how she con-
soled her houseboy when his son died, and he consolated her when her mother
died. He looked after her when she was ill and would often help her around the
house during his off hours, seemingly of his own volition. They bonded over
their love for good coffee and became "connoisseurs" together.80

These accounts are provided by European employers, not their African
employees, and are largely one-sided. While there is little documentation to
directly indicate if the servants reciprocated their employers' sentiments, there is some
evidence of servants' loyalty and affection. Like Asumani, Darrell Bates' cook,
other servants kept watch and defended the homes of their employers while
they were away and looked after the family when they were home. For ex-
ample, Pamela Taylor's cook usually kept watching at night while she was out, but
on a night when he had disappeared on "one of his sprees" (he had a great
reputation for womanizing), Taylor came home to an unexpected surprise.
Mama Tausi, the "tall, elderly, wraith-like woman" who tended her garden, was
sitting on the doorstep. When Taylor asked Mama Tausi what she was doing
there so late, she relied "You don't think that I would leave your house to be
broken into by all the local thugs?" And with that, she went off.81 Employers
described multiple "favors" their servants allegedly performed for them of their
own volition and out of loyalty, such as staying after hours to protect their
homes or caring for them when they were sick. Were servants performing these
favors in their capacity as friends, or were they workers working unpaid over-
time who were merely concerned for their jobs? The peculiar, multifaceted
nature of the relationships between employers and employees makes such a
question difficult to answer.

Conclusion

The relationships between domestic servants and their employers were quite
slippery and difficult to define. At times, they appeared formal and profes-
sional; at others they seemed rather personal. Sometimes employers could
be quite antagonistic and even verbally and physically abusive towards their
servants. While rare in Tanganyika, servants could also be violent towards
their employers.82 The colonial home, as Shireen Ally describes, was a site in
which violence and intimacy, as well as abuse and affection, cohabitated.B

75 Alexander, Red Kanzu, 81.
76 Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (16), Rebecca James, "Women Administrative
Officers in Colonial Africa."
77 Steele, "Women Administrative Officers."
79 Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (46), Sheelagh Mary Wrench, "Women Adminis-
trative Officers in Colonial Africa."
80 Tunstall, "Women Administrative Officers."

Si Rhodes House Library, MSS.Afr.s.1799 (33), Pamela Taylor, "Women Administrative
Officers in Colonial Africa."
82 For violence committed by servants against masters, see the literature on domestic ser-
vice in South Africa. See especially Van Onselen, "Witches of Suburbia"; Prinisha Badassy,
"...and My Blood Became Hot": Crimes of Passion, Crimes of Reason: An Analysis of the
Crimes of Murder and Physical Assault Against Masters and Mistresses by their Indian
Review of Sociology 42 (2011), i-7. z. See also the chapter by Shireen Ally in this volume.
These complex and seemingly contradictory feelings were further complicated by the politics of power and colonial governance. African servants were always servants and the power relations of colonizer and colonized were forever present, but the complex relationships between African servants and the families who employed them may not have always felt complicated to those who experienced them. In moments, for instance, a cook could come to the defense of the woman and children of the household for which he worked out of genuine compassion and concern for their wellbeing. Similarly, rather than being concerned that her child was magically "metamorphosing" into a native, a European mother could simply be amused by the inappropriate Swahili language her young child learned from his African playmates.

While it is difficult to define the relationships that formed between masters and servants, it is plainly evident that these relationships transcended those of employers and employees. Domestic service, Alison Light asserts, "has always been emotional as well as economic territory." Employers often did not see their servants solely as workers and thus did not treat them as such. The negative emotions an employer could harbor towards their servants - such as resentment, disgust, or distrust - had obvious disadvantages for the servants involved, and they often produced rather dysfunctional home/work environments. If a servant found such an environment too much to bear, he could quit. In the first few decades of British rule in Tanganyika, experienced servants would have had various employment options available them.

Most literature portrays African servants in the colonies as exploited, disempowered, and forced to resort to the daily humiliations of domestic work out of desperation. This timeless characterization of servants flattens their lives, oversimplifies the complex relationships formed between master and servant, and overlooks the contributions servants made toward the production of European domesticity in the colonies. Servants often found multiple avenues through which to negotiate and obtain power in the workplace. They sometimes had considerable autonomy, and they were often proud of their work and the households they helped to create. Employers developed strategies to reclaim and exert control over the household, but this was often after a period of adjustment. Power in the home was contested, and it crept into and out of everyday interactions between masters and servants.

84 Ann Stoler demonstrates that in colonial Java "a prominent doctor warned that those Europeans born and bred in the Indies...lived in surroundings that stripped them of their zuivere (pure) European sensibilities, which could easily lead them to metamorphize into Javanese." Stoler, Carnal Knowledge, 96.

85 Alison Light, Mrs. Woolf and the Servants: The Hidden Heart of Domestic Service (London, 2008).

86 In particular see Cock, Maids and Madams. In her study of "the politics of exploitation," Cock argues that domestic servants in South Africa have been subject to "ultra exploitation" (ili.e. argues that the relationship between male servants and honor in Africa was highly complex, but that domestic service significantly undermined male honor). John Iliffe, Honour in African History (Cambridge, 2005), Chapter 16. Also see Buchi Emecheta, The Joys of Motherhood (Portsmouth, 2008); Ferdinand Oyono, Houseboy (Portsmouth, 1990).
CHAPTER 14

Imperial Divisions of Labor: Chinese Servants and Racial Reproduction in the White Settler Societies of California and the Anglophone Pacific, 1870-1907

Andrew Urban

Introduction; 'A Plea for Chinese Labor'

"So exaggerated are the democratic ideas instilled into some of our newly-landed foreigners," Abby Sage Richardson argued in an 1871 article in *Scribner's Monthly*, using the generic moniker given to Irish domestic servants in the United States. "Bridget is sometimes surprised that her American mistress is not willing to lend her best shawl to be worn to 'mass'; and will resent the use of her toothbrush and other toilet materials." Such behavior was to be expected, Richardson explained, since "[u]nder a government which affirms grandly that all are free and equal, it is difficult to make one class understand that equality does not mean level in wit, good-breeding, and culture." The solution to white, European-born servants' internalization of republican attitudes and their transgressions of social boundaries, which in the minds of employers had plagued middle-class residents of the Eastern seaboard since the 1850s, had presented itself in California. There, employers had demonstrated that male Chinese laborers could be trained for domestic service. As Richardson's title, "A Plea for Chinese Labor," suggests, Eastern employers were adamant that this new resource not be consigned to only one region.

Although employing a male servant outside of certain household roles such as butlers, chauffeurs, and gardeners struck many nineteenth-century Americans as taboo, middle-class publications urged employers to discard their prejudices. With a sly wink, for instance, Prentice Mulford observed in *Lippincott's Magazine* that the male Chinese servant "will not outshine his mistress in attire." According to Harriet Elizabeth Prescott Spofford, the average mistress "reads that some of these men are strong enough to carry a weight of four hundred pounds among difficult mountain passes for twenty days together she thinks that is just the strength which she needs in her kitchen and would not be afraid of overworking." Positive accounts of Chinese immigrants, as both a vital workforce for domestic labor and as dedicated practitioners of the various tasks that this work required, were by no means isolated to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The novelty that employers attached to male Chinese servants during this period aside, attempts to reconfigure the gendered division of household labor corresponded structurally to American and British imperial expansion into lands that bordered the Pacific Ocean, regions that are referred to collectively as Anglophone Pacific settler societies in this chapter. A letter to the editor of the Adelaide-based *Southern Australian Advertiser* in June 1875, for instance, chastised members of the Parliament of South Australia for jeering a colleague who had proposed recruiting Chinese migrants as a way to alleviate local labor shortages. Noting that Chinese servants were valued globally, wherever they were employed, the writer praised them for also being "the most tractable servants," whose flexibility made them especially valuable in locales where domestic work could require everything from cooking a formal meal to chopping wood. Since it was "evident that the immigrants from Europe shun these occupations if they can find anything else to do," the author concluded, it was absurd to oppose "the introduction of Chinese."  


3 My use of the term "white Anglophone Pacific settler societies" (and versions thereof) groups the United States, Canada, and Australia, despite their differing sovereign statuses, as communities where white, English-speaking settlers displaced indigenous peoples from regions abutting the Pacific Ocean, and where white inhabitants collectively became concerned with the significance of Asian immigration as a demographic feature that distinguished these places from their respective metropoles. (My focus in this chapter privileges the California experience with domestic labor, although I identify numerous overlapping experiences that have a global resonance.) On Anglophone settler colonialism, and the capital, population, and trade networks that governed the settlement of lands in North America and Australia, see James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-Pacific World* (London, 1992), esp. 49-220. On settler colonialism as a racial and political ideology, which informed white laborers' definition of eligibility for republican citizenship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 76-235, and Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, UK, 2008).

4 G.H. Coombe, "Chinese Immigrants. To the Editor," *Southern Australian Advertiser*, 10 June 1875. White proponents and opponents of Chinese migration disagreed vehemently on the
Expansion and the incorporation of new populations, whether as colonial subjects or resident aliens, enabled new ways to produce domesticity. Between 1850 and 1920, the demand for amenities and services that could be consumed rather than produced by families themselves, increased dramatically in developing Anglophone settler societies, with cities that once had reputations for being outposts of civilization now competing to demonstrate their social and commercial sophistication to new residents, the emerging middle classes, and visitors alike. In settler economies, the introduction of alien Chinese and, slightly later, Japanese labor, allowed Pacific-oriented communities to go beyond traditional limitations on the availability and willingness of white women to enter into these trades.

Many employers looked to their Chinese servants as saviors of the marketplace, who by exchanging labor in the form of services for wages — without placing too many demands on what domestic tasks they would or would not complete — came to the rescue of middle-class homes. Yet the United States and the British settler colonies of Canada and Australia, led by white politicians in the states and provinces that contained significant Chinese populations, all vigorously pursued and ultimately achieved restrictive legislation that barred Chinese laborers — with varying success — from entering these countries. Where legislation failed, white laborers in these societies turned to boycotts and other means of driving Chinese migrants from the labor market.

The employment of Chinese men in domestic service was not peripheral to debates about the influence of Chinese workers on wages and conditions in the "masculine" trades, but targeted as a central and equal concern. Strong and persistent divides existed among whites in Anglophone Pacific settler societies over the possibilities and pitfalls that might accompany efforts to strategically integrate Chinese labor. Traders, planters, and industrialists promoted Chinese laborers’ global economic significance in terms of the competitive advantages they could bring, while also referencing the foreign and diplomatic goodwill that their (relative) acceptance would generate with Chinas Protestant missionaries heralded Chinese migrants as possible converts to Christianity who could prove their worth in religious terms. These missionaries also supported global standards concerning open migration, so that they could pursue their own objectives without obstructions in Asia. Those who floridly praised their Chinese servants belonged to these often overlapping camps, and demonstrate how cultural and economic interests intersected in attempts to enlist Chinese labor migrants as a specifically designated caste of service workers. Chinese servants were frequently stereotyped as innately docile and loyal, characteristics that symbolically stood for the harmony and benefits that could be achieved when non-whites accepted their roles as social inferiors. In this regard, depictions of Chinese servants shared features with representational uses of the black "Mammy" in the United States, and with British depictions of male colonial servants, such as "houseboys," employed in the Straits Settlements and in Africa.

In white settler societies that had long touted their self-sufficiency and independent producer ethos, and where residents prized themselves on their republicanism and purported unwillingness to transform fellow citizens into subservient economic dependents, the reputation for being particularly adept at servile work that the Chinese acquired was met with suspicion. Servants represented a potentially controversial deployment of human capital that could either extend republican labor relationships as a concomitant feature of emancipation (Baltimore, 2006), 76-106. On the use of contracted Chinese labor in the construction of the transcontinental railroads, see Richard White, Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America (New York, 2012), 278-314. On the relationship between "open door" policies and the restriction of Chinese migration, see Michael H. Hunt, The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1979 (New York, 1983), and Delbert McKee, Chinese Exclusion Versus the Open Door Policy (Detroit, 1977).


7 On the commercial, legal, and political deployment of the "Mammy" figure in American culture, see Micki McElya, Clinging to Mammy: The Faithful Slave in Twentieth-Century America (Cambridge, MA, 2007). On the Australian and Strain Settlement contexts of these labor relationships, see Claire Lowrie, "White 'Men' and their Chinese 'Boys': Sexuality, Masculinity and Colonial power in Darwin and Singapore,1880s-1930s," History Australia 10 (2013), 35-57. See the chapter by Robyn Parsons in this volume, for a discussion of the role of male African servants in the construction of British colonial domesticity.
physical expansion, or hinder their growth. The Chinese domestic servant was widely reviled by white organized labor and public figures opposed to stricter Chinese immigration, as a new and radical threat. The introduction of Chinese migrants into lands newly settled by whites could alter the demographic composition of the labor market, and therefore the very way in which labor was divided in developing cities and regions. Chinese labor migrants' danger lay in their alleged willingness— as aliens and sojourners legally barred from more substantive forms of citizenship—to accept the social roles that came with service work. Moreover, as men who would never transition from paid domestic labor to unpaid reproductive and familial labor through marriage, Chinese servants inhibited the ability of white settler colonies to grow their populations.

In important ways, the policy and cultural clashes that surrounded Chinese domestic laborers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century prefigure concerns over the global movement of care and domestic workers in the present. Whereas the white residents of Anglophone Pacific settler societies struggled with the terms by which Chinese laborers were to be included, and whether their segregation in menial and undesirable occupations could be accomplished without causing any larger social damages, the managerial prerogative has both grown in scope and in technological sophistication and efficiency. Today, Australia, Canada, and the United States all privilege the entry of migrants, overwhelmingly women, destined for caregiving and domestic labor. As policy, these nations partake in complicated agreements with developing nations to procure workers for jobs in care and domestic work that remain stigmatized, in the process structuring at a legal level the shape and routes of this global labor market. As this chapter argues, who does which work and under what conditions has long been both a distinctly local concern, and reflective of global movements embedded in imperial relations. Local labor struggles around the role of Chinese servants, whether in the Western United States and Canada, or in the towns and cities of Australia, placed racial demography and the recruitment of white women at the front and center of labor politics. For opponents of Chinese migration, the tensions and struggles of the domestic workplace were preceded by how supply and demand were to be orchestrated.

This chapter proceeds in three sections. The first section attempts to situate the creation of a male, Chinese servant class, within the larger context of state and private efforts in the late nineteenth century to promote the migration of white women to recently settled Anglophone Pacific regions. It argues that white women, despite the allure of high wages and promises of marriage, were reluctant to relocate to remote areas, and wary of entering into art occupation that by the mid-nineteenth century, had been racialized, stigmatized, and judged as work that required the forfeiture of republican citizenship. The next section examines how white laborers in Anglophone Pacific societies paradoxically defended their right to preferential hire in domestic service positions, despite its degraded status. It argues that white opponents of Chinese labor were not satisfied with merely wresting jobs from Chinese competitors, but sought to redefine the meaning of domestic labor altogether, in line with a liberal vision of settler equality that they promoted, and in contrast to what they saw as the colonial exploitation of alien, non-white labor. Finally, the last section addresses the central role that Chinese servants played in the early and prescient attempts of policymakers to devise a system of visas and guest worker subjectivities, which could be applied to migrant laborers who were needed to perform menial labor, but were marked as permanently unas-similable. These early proposals, I argue, solidified a new imperial division of labor, structured by policy and law, which persists until today.

Failed Incentives: Promoting the Migration of White Women Wage Laborers

Although the restriction of Chinese labor migrations has garnered substantial scholarly attention, these policies have rarely been examined in relationship to corresponding interventions designed to promote the relocation of white women to regions that in the second half of the nineteenth century were still peripheral to the Anglophone metropolitan core. The initial white settlers to these regions were drawn by the mineral, timber, and other natural resources that could be extracted, or put to use for agricultural means. Cultivating a reliable supply of wage laborers, and especially women, willing to work in service sector positions, was a process that governments and city boosters argued needed to be incentivized. Despite the sustained efforts of various private and state institutions to facilitate the migration of white women to these regions, ultimately many of the Anglophone Pacific settler societies found Chinese laborers to be a more practical solution to labor shortages.

Migration to the Anglophone settler societies was often cast in the sentimental terms as an imperial adventure, where young, white women, constrained by structural barriers to marriage and land ownership in their native countries or...
regions of birth, could seize upon demographic opportunities that accompa-
nied the opening of new lands. Vere Foster, for instance, an Anglo-Irish philanthropist who helped subsidize and assist the emigration of more than 20,000 young Irish women to Canada and the United States between 1850 and 1890, emphasized in his guides and promotional materials that opportunities for wage labor as servants were endless. Foster confidently boasted that it was "customary" to treat Irish servants, especially in the western states, territories, and provinces, as "daughters, sitting at the same table, dressing as well or better" in comparison to their employers, and that servants were likely to get married sooner than the female children of the ladies who employed them.9

Marriage featured prominently in boosters' materials, which rarely failed to situate domestic wage labor on a progressive continuum toward motherhood. Even "grumpy" Irish girls, Foster joked, found work and "an extensive pick of husbands" in sparsely populated areas of North America, while in the Irish city of Limerick, two females existed for every male suitor.8 Foster cited one western homeowner who claimed to have lost 19 out of 23 servants he had employed over the course of the previous eight years—not because of conflict between capital and labor—but because marriage prospects were so bountiful.

Given their agendas, boosters' utopic descriptions of "new" world opportunities for wage-earning women definitely needed to be assessed with a considerable degree of skepticism. Nonetheless, it is clear that domestic laborers were highly coveted. California, as one of the first Anglophone Pacific settler societies to develop large-scale manufacturing and industry after its Gold Rush, and a growing urban middle class in San Francisco, provides a representative example. For most of the 1860s, domestic servants in San Francisco earned thirty to fifty us dollars per month, compared to four to seven dollars per month in New York, although the expensive trip—in the years preceding the transcontinental railroad—required substantial upfront capital. In 1869, the American consul in Dublin, William West, distributed to office visitors a pamphlet from the California Labor Exchange, which touted its work placing "all the civilized nationalities." Confidently, the pamphlet declared that California was "a paradise for female servants," where due to the shortage of native-born female laborers, high wages were guaranteed. In British Columbia, Canada, among the white population there were two men for every woman between 1870 and 1920. San Francisco maintained similar gender ratios, even as it grew to approximately 150,000 people in 1870.10

In 1870, the Freeman's Journal posted to Irish readers an announcement that an unnamed San Francisco company was offering to pay European women willing to work as servants in the city 150 dollars in gold for a year's work, and—to get around the barrier that most prospective emigrants encountered—pay in full the cost of their passage. American consular offices throughout Europe engaged in similar efforts, although a lack of consistent funding and federal coordination often gave assisted emigration programs an ad hoc feel.13 Florence Baillie-Grohman, the English-born wife of an Austrian noble who tried to develop agricultural land in British Columbia described how upon arriving in the provincial capital of Victoria in the late-1880s, she could count only three families there who employed white servants. White women, she explained to her readers, "had to be imported at their employers' expense from the old country. The white girls thus brought over seldom stayed in their places long, as they quickly married, or left to obtain higher wages.14

Promises of gendered social mobility through marriage, and contracts with large upfront bonuses used to lure young women from afar, sought to

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8 Vere Foster, Work and Wages, or The Penny Emigrant's Guide to the United States and Canada (London, 1855), 15. In the 1850s, the "West" still included newly formed states such as Illinois and Wisconsin—now considered the Midwest—where the railroads needed to move migrants who had just recently arrived.

9 Foster Papers.

10 Foster, Work and Wages, 16.
counteract the reputation that rural settlement had among single-earning women, as lonely and isolating. European women migrating to North America preferred to live among ethnic communities in urban areas. Cities in newly settled regions fared better, with their reputations as cosmopolitan locations where migrants were at least guaranteed access to the company of co-ethnics and other similarly situated individuals. Donald McLellan, the chief agent for the Mission and Pacific Woolen Mills in San Francisco, testified before the United States Congress's Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration in 1876 that during a trip to an employment office in San Francisco, he witnessed the proprietor telling a prospective employer who had come to the city from the California interior that none of the 30 to 40 "girls" on hand would go with him to the country, and that it was a waste of his time to even ask.19

Even during the height of white popular demonstrations against Chinese immigration, when class conflict between whites reached its apex, middle-class employers undertook an effort to reassure laborers that they were cognizant of what constituted the legitimate sources of population growth — the Eastern United States and in this racial formulation Europe — and what represented a temporary demographic fix. George Frederick Seward, who held the position of United States Ambassador to China in the years leading up to the 1882 Restriction Act, predicted that until transportation costs declined, and the "class" of white women likely to work as servants could afford to travel to California and the other Pacific territories, there would invariably be a shortage. "It is to be remembered that the State is not only young," he instructed, "that it is distant from the sources of supply."20 Other commentators were less confident and called into question whether supply-and-demand market dynamics posed the brunt of the problem in finding white women willing to enter into domestic service. Serranus Clinton Hastings, the former chief justice of California's Supreme Court, and, before that, a member of the House of Representatives from Iowa, declared to the Congressional Committee investigating Chinese immigration in 1876, that "[g]irls in Iowa will stay and work for eight and twelve dollars a month in preference to coming to California to be treated as Chinamen."21 Hastings captured in this brief statement how the division of household labor, and the racialization of paid domestic work in the Anglophone Pacific, had, in the minds of white laborers at least, reduced its status, even as wages in California rose to unprecedented levels.

As historian Lisa Chilton notes, no amount of allusions to the exalted position that laborers would assume as white women along Anglophone frontiers could mask that their assisted relocation was an economic directive foremost, and that their bodies — like those of Chinese laborers — could also be rendered as abstract units of human capital.22 The British Emigration Commissioners, in their annual colonization circulars of the period, documented how the demand for female servants — whether in the Australian colony of Victoria or in the Canadian city of that name — was inelastic, and impervious to the economic fluctuations that shaped hiring in other professions. Wages in a city like Melbourne, paralleling the situation that existed between New York and San Francisco, were in excess to those that could be earned in London. Reporting from the chief port of immigration into Canada, Quebec City, in 1871, the agent in charge of promoting migration to the dominion discouraged "females above the grade of domestic servants," since work as teachers and in other gendered occupations could not be assured.23

Even in the 1880s, when assisted emigration came under fire for allegedly allowing poor unions in Ireland and Britain to "dump" paupers on Anglophone colonies and the United States, programs geared at sending female servants continued to win support.24 In 1883, for instance, the American consul in Cork, Ireland, scrutinized Vere Foster as someone who might be burdening the United States with pauperism, but concluded instead that he was managing an "honorable" form of assistance.25 Even when the United States Congress

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16 George Frederick Seward, Chinese Immigration, in Its Social and Economical Aspects (New York, 1869), 125.
18 Lisa Chilton, Agents of Empire: British Female Migration to Canada and Australia, 1860-1930 (Toronto, 2007), 3-16. For the Australian context of assisted female migration, see Jan Gothard, Blue China: Single Female Migration to Colonial Australia (Melbourne, 2001).
19 Her Majesty's Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, Colonization Circular (London, 1871), 24.
21 "Government Emigration from Ireland," J. Piatt, US Consul, Cork, to Secretary of State, July 25, 1883, despatch no. 49, in Despatches from US Consuls in Cork, 1800-1919, reel g. Five years later, the American consul in Liverpool responded to a circular from the State Department inquiring about the extent of assisted and contract emigration from different ports, by answering that "the gentleman" Foster was the only person helping emigrants to depart from Liverpool in this manner, but that due to the "limited scope" of his work and...
extended prohibitions on alien contract labor migration to European immigrants in 1885 under the Foran Act, at the prompting of organized labor, workers contracted for domestic and personal service were exempted from the legislation. Whereas the Foran Act sought to protect native-born laborers’ wages against an indentured labor reserve that industrialists would assume the costs of transporting to American shores, domestic labor — in which workers were automatically understood to be gendered dependents — was not seen as posing the same threat.

In times of economic prosperity white women could avoid entering into domestic service, where opportunities for social mobility through marriage or other occupations prevailed. This was not, however, a rule without exception. When industrial, manufacturing, and public works’ jobs disappeared during “bust” phases, women’s ability to take on wage labor positions in less desirable fields of work such as domestic service again became crucial. Rather than relying on economic downturns to provide them with a steady supply of white domestic laborers, business interests and employers in cities such as San Francisco sought to take matters into their own hands. Anglophone Pacific settlements after all, had access to labor markets in Asia, and it was this unique feature of their political economy, which led commentators to both note their vulnerability to Chinese (and later Japanese) “colonization,” yet also to endorse this as Anglophone Pacific societies’ distinct advantage.

White Servants and Social and Racial Reproduction

Even with chronic labor shortages in Anglophone settler societies, the role that Chinese domestic labor was to play in these communities’ development was fiercely disputed as part of white settlers’ imperial imaginary, and whether the requirement that “the girls have to hold certificates of good character,” there was nothing to be concerned about. Testimony Taken by the Select Committee of the House of Representatives to Inquire into the Alleged Violation of the Laws Prohibiting the Importation of Contract Laborers, Paupers, Convicts, and other Classes, “Both Cong., 1st sess., Misc. Doc. No. 572 (Washington, Dc, 1888), i (second section).

... Anti-Chinese politicians and reformers were especially concerned with the exploitation of Southern and Eastern European immigrants at the end of the nineteenth century, and argued that like Chinese immigrants - who were prohibited from immigrating as contract laborers in 1862 — workers from these regions were racially susceptible to debt bondage and other exploitative schemes that made them a threat to native-born white workers. Gunther Peck, Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West,1880-1910 (Cambridge, SIX, 2000).

demonstrated only that Chinese immigrants were skilled at masking their true habits in order to earn money. "When the Chinese servant leaves employment in an American household he joyfully hastens back to his slum and his burrow, to the grateful luxury of his normal surroundings - vice, filth, and an atmosphere of horror Thirskton's also routinely depicted Chinese servants working in intimate quarters with white women, acting as lecherous bystanders whose willingness to do women's work in the home masked masculine sexual desires. (Figure 14.2)

While historians of the different Chinese exclusion movements have often highlighted the ways in which white laborers and allied politicians sought to racially characterize Chinese men as belonging to a "third sex," in that their gendered traits did not adhere to either masculine or feminine understandings of "biological" roles, it is also clear that critics actively wrestled with whether Chinese men working in domestic service were the modern-day equivalents of eunuchs, or whether their emasculation was over stated? The National Police Gazette, a nineteenth-century American tabloid dedicated to covering murders, abortion, prostitution, and other topics that the bourgeois media considered obscene, weighed in whether their emasculation was over stated? It is also clear that critics actively wrestled with whether Chinese men working in domestic service were the modern-day equivalents of eunuchs, or whether their emasculation was over stated? The National Police Gazette, a nineteenth-century American tabloid dedicated to covering murders, abortion, prostitution, and other topics that the bourgeois media considered obscene, weighed in whether their emasculation was over stated?

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25 San Francisco Board of Supervisors, San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1884-85, ending January 7, 1885 (San Francisco, 1885), 180.
26 "Innocent John," Thirskton's Jolly Giant, 3 November 1877.
29 "Senator Macdonald and Mr. Bunster, and the Chinese," Thirskton's Jolly Giant, 14 November 1879. Senator W.J. Macdonald responded angrily to Bunster's comments by asserting that he...
whereas the development of the settler colony as a whole was putatively at stake, individual women's bodies became the symbolic landscapes upon which he benefits and evils of integrating Chinese servants into the domestic economies of middle-class homes were evaluated. Historian Martha Mabie Gardner notes that during the period, "Stories of white women workers unsuccessfully competing with Chinese workers, finding themselves unemployed, and eventually forced into prostitution, were so common in the labor press as to comprise a virtual genre" — a genre primarily concerned with establishing the privileged right of white women to monopolize certain jobs, without competition. 30

Employers, anti-Chinese activists argued, could escape the practice of degrading servants by adopting a communal mindset that acknowledged the participation of white laborers in the shared projects of reproduction and settlement. In California, as well as in other settler societies, this idea played off the idea of these regions' "newness," and the ways in which society and how labor was to be divided, remained in the minds of white residents a blank slate. Anti-Chinese activists imagined the domestic workplace in familial terms, with the home becoming a microcosm for how social relations more broadly might be structured. "Menial work is not menial at all," H.C. Clement, a lawyer and anti-Chinese advocate optimistically testified to the California State Senate in 1879, "when done for those we love or by those whom we respect." If employers acknowledged whiteness as the grounds for mutual respect, Clement stipulated, white women laborers would readily make themselves available to do such work. "A wife may do the housework and yet retain her husband's love," Clement stated. "Why should his housekeeper not be respected who does the same work?" 31

Other restrictionists in San Francisco claimed that wages alone could not accurately capture the labor contributions of white women, whose real value could be found in their reproductive capacity as mothers. In 1876, for instance, Sophronia Swift testified before the Congressional Committee that had come to San Francisco to investigate Chinese immigration, that the reason white employers preferred Chinese servants (even when they cost more, she somewhat surprisingly acknowledged), was that they wanted a servant, not a laborer.

31 California State Senate, Special Committee on Chinese Immigration, Chinese Immigration: Its Social, Moral, and Political Effect (Sacramento, CA, 1878), 296.
She understood this distinction in title not in terms of wages, but as the difference between what white women wage laborers imagined their use value to be in regions newly settled by whites, as citizens and mothers, versus the use value that employers assigned to laborers who accepted a fixed, socially subordinate status.

It is important to note that Chinese migrants were by no means passive participants in the debates about their economic and social contribution. Chinese domestic laborers and service workers more generally, also took advantage of shortages, ironically benefiting - at least in some instances - from the policies that had targeted them as a threat. Historians of Chinese exclusion have tended to stress how opponents of Chinese immigration fixated on preserving what they considered to be meaningful forms of free labor, where white workers' wages - whether in Australia, Canada, or the United States - received state and private protection from unfair competition. Such initiatives were necessary, white laborers argued, because Chinese immigrants represented a race of laborers whose living standards, combined with their shadowy manipulation by Chinese labor bosses and capital interests, brought down wage levels, and undermined white workers' attempts to establish autonomy over the workplace. In the context of domestic service, however, employers vociferously refuted allegations that their servants were unfree or denied livable wages, and referenced instead the power that Chinese servants had as a result of labor scarcities. In his 1877 book The Chinese in America, the Methodist minister Otis Gibson, for instance, recounted the frequent scenario where white women, after "patiently and carefully" training "green" Chinese servants, saw those same employees strike "for the highest wages his now acceptable wages.

In an anonymous 1902 response to the American Federation of Labor's widely-circulated manifesto, "Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion" (better known by its subtitle, "Meat vs. Rice"), the pamphlet "Truth versus Fiction; Justice versus Prejudice" lauded Chinese service workers for their role in aiding British colonialism in Singapore, and for assisting the recent American

Chinese business leaders in the United States, Canada, and Australia also routinely publicized to white audiences the important role that Chinese labor could play in the growth of newly-settled or colonized regions, as a flexible labor force ready to take on any task (so long as wages were available and just treatment possible). Through such claims, Chinese immigrants participated in their own acts of racial and ethnic formation, and in attempting to fix their value as human capital. Community leaders argued that their proficiencies as workers were features of Chinese culture that had been acquired over generations, and apparent everywhere that members of the diaspora had traveled.

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32 See, most notably, Andrew Gyory, Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act (Chapel Hill, NC, 1938). Gyory argues that white laborers acted against Chinese immigration only when their material interests were directly threatened, and that party politics made restriction the national issue it became. On white republicanism and the racial politics of organized labor in California, see Alexander Saxton, The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California (Berkeley, 1971). Mae Ngai argues that the discourse surrounding the threat posed by Chinese labor differed between Anglophone societies, even if it maintained the common theme of a race struggle that pitted white settlement against alleged Asian encroachment. In Australia, for instance, Chinese labor was seen by white settlers as a danger because of the purportedly illimitable supply of workers that might migrate, whereas in Canada and the United States, restrictionists focused on the widely-held view that Chinese laborers, as "coolies" and racial inferiors" able to live on less, drove down wages. Ngai, "Western History and the Pacific World," The Western Historical Quarterly 43 (2012), 204-240.

33 For example, the pamphlet "Truth versus Fiction; Justice versus Prejudice" quoted Chinese business leaders in the United States, Canada, and Australia also routinely publicized to white audiences the important role that Chinese labor could play in the growth of newly-settled or colonized regions, as a flexible labor force ready to take on any task (so long as wages were available and just treatment possible). Through such claims, Chinese immigrants participated in their own acts of racial and ethnic formation, and in attempting to fix their value as human capital. Community leaders argued that their proficiencies as workers were features of Chinese culture that had been acquired over generations, and apparent everywhere that members of the diaspora had traveled.

34 Otis Gibson, The Chinese in America (Cincinnati, 1877), 70; Grace Greenwood, A Tourist in the Far West, New York Times, February 1878. As Victoria Haskins argues in her essay in this volume, employers, missionaries, and reformers attached multiple values to the performance of domestic service, and often spoke in terms of the civilizing effect that white, middle-class homes had on employees of color. This held true for the employment of Chinese servants as well, although it is also clear that employers accounted for costs and benefits in a more direct manner when pressed.

35 John Bonner, "Labor Question of the Pacific Coast," Californian 1 (1892), 410-419, 434.
colonization of the Philippines. Publications of this nature sought to create a imperial subjectivity for the Chinese, where they functioned as key agents, rather than as inhibitors, of development and economic growth in recently "civilized" regions.\textsuperscript{36} Chinese migrants, they argued, were a more reliable source of labor than colonized natives, who lacked both the aptitude and expe, rience to make trustworthy servants.

With in the continental United States, Chinese laborers attributed their vic- timization to threatened European immigrants, who were unwilling to com- pete on just terms. Lee Chew, a Chinese cook interviewed by the \textit{Independent} in 1903, stated that contrary to the idea that Chinese labor was a last resort in the United States, in his experience: "No one would hire an Irishman, German, Englishman or Italian when he could get a Chinese, because our cownm, en are so much more honest, industrious, steady, sober and painstaking." In his opinion, "Chinese were persecuted, not for their vices, but for their virtues." A letter to the main Chinese-language newspaper in San Francisco, \textit{Chung Sui Yat Po}, from residents of Tonopah, Nevada, who were evicted after a riot in the mining town in 1903, raised similar points. The authors expressed incredulity at the fact that white noters, who had taken advantage of the frugality of Chinese cooks and the cheap meals they provided to boarding houses, hotels, and mining camps, would willingly engage in actions that would ultimately force them to pay more.\textsuperscript{37}

Much in the same way that anti-Chinese discourses and tactics circulated between the United States, Canada, and Australia, so did pro-Chinese argu- ments. Lowe Kong Meng, Cheok Hong Cheong, and Louis Ah Mouy, Chinese merchants who edited \textit{The Chinese Question in Australia}, which was published in Melbourne in 1879, offered their own interpretation of California history, asserting that "Without Chinese labour it would have been impossible to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{The Yellow Peril} and Asian Exclusion in the Americas,
\end{itemize}
immigrating in 1882, 1892, and 1902, restrictionists were confronted with i., 
decree that white women still refused to enter domestic service. In California 
1902, anti-Chinese activists argued that competition with Chinese domestic labor 
had a long-lasting impact on the occupation that could not be easily eradi-
cated. In the 1902 American Federation of Labor publication, "Meat vs. Rice," 
the authors argued that the exploitation of Chinese labor was quite literally 
built into the architectural design of domestic service in the West, and 
remained even when Chinese laborers were gone:

The white domestic servant was expected to live in the room originally 
built for John, generally situated in the cellar and void of all comforts, 
frequently unpainted or unpapered, containing a bedstead and a chair. 
Anything was good enough for John, and the white girl had to be satisfied 
as well. It is any wonder that self-respecting girls refused to take service 
under those conditions?

Acknowledging that the shortage of white servants in San Francisco and other 
Western cities persisted, the authors concluded, "Absolute servility was 
expected from those who took the place of the Chinaman, and it will take years 
to obliterate these traces of inferiority and reestablish the proper relations of 
employer and employee." If white women were unwilling to work as servants, 
they argued, it was because certain features of how servants were treated - 
such as their relegation to spartan, isolated rooms - denoted racialized labor 
relations that were at odds with the basic rights and protections that whites 
believed were part of their social contract. 

Writing in 1902 as well, John Knox McLean, the President of the Pacific Theological Seminary - and one of an increasing number of Protestant ministers who no longer welcomed Chinese immigration on the grounds that they provided souls for conversion - boasted that the last twenty years had seen the increased migration of Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish servants to California. McLean openly admitted that "These girls render no better service than the Chinese men," but offered instead the biological "material for American citizenship." An accurate assessment of white women's value, McLean suggested, existed outside of narrow considerations of the wages or autonomy they demanded relative to Chinese workers, and resided instead in the unpaid labor they produced as mothers. "It is a delight to look at their fair-haired, wholesome children," McLean proclaimed. 

Many of McLean's peers would have disagreed with his comments outright. 
In an ample supply of white women laborers, working side-by-side in egalitarian 
fashion with the white homes that employed them, always appeared as a labor 
solution that existed just beyond the horizon. Though never as vocal as the 
"opposition, a cohort of pro-Chinese immigration advocates pinpointed cul-
tural attitudes about the status of domestic labor, and its association with serv-
ility, as the root of the issue. Rather than waiting for white female laborers to 
adjust their racial attitudes about servile work and with restrictions on the 
open migration of Chinese laborers by 1882 seemingly a foregone conclusion in 
the United States, these politicians and public figures sought to refine exclu-
sionary policies so that they might at least meet capitalist needs halfway.

For many critics of Chinese restriction, the problem was a lack of creativity 
in imagining how Chinese labor could be used productively. They expressed 
frustration about the way Anglophone settler societies approached the ques-
tion of Chinese labor as an all or none scenario, rather than coming up with 
policies that would allow receiving countries to tailor migration to meet both 
consumer and the cultural imperative to maintain white supremacy. The 
Chinese immigrant's privilege for doing work "which no white man in a new 
country will handle," Rudyard Kipling stated wryly after a 1907 trip to Vancouver, 
British Columbia, was to witness a rise in the head tax he had to pay in order to 
to enter Canada from fifty dollars when it was first implemented in 1885, to 
five hundred dollars in 1903. "Strange as it may appear, the Chinaman now 
charges double for his services," Kipling noted sarcastically, "and is scarce at 
that" By making it more difficult for Chinese laborers to enter Canada, the gov-
ernment had not elevated the status of domestic labor and other "degraded" 
occupations, which white women workers avoided, except as emergency or 
temporary work. What the government had achieved was a transfer of the 
costs of the immigrant head tax to employers, who as Kipling described, now 
had to pay increased wages to offset the fee. The absence of servants could be 
seen, Kipling claimed in more ominous tones, in the susceptibility of "over-
worked white women" in Vancouver to "die or go off their heads," and, in 
"blocks of flats being built to minimise the inconveniences of housekeeping 
without help," where, he predicted, "the birth-rate will fall later in exact pro-
portion" to apartment sizes.


42 Rudyard Kipling, Letters of Travel, 1892-1913 (Garden City, NY, 1920), 173.
Kipling's flair for the dramatic aside, he was not alone in striking this chord. The same year he visited Vancouver a group of wealthy women from the city petitioned the Canadian Parliament to eliminate the head tax altogether, citing the absence of servants as a primary reason for doing so. The Vancouver Trades and Labour Council did not sit by idly, stipulating in response to the petition that working-class white women performed their own domestic labor, and that middle- and upper-class women were capable of doing likewise. "If, however, they claim immunity from work," the author argued, "let them pay the price, or modify the conditions of service in such a manner as will secure for them girls of their own race. If, we think, absurd that the working class of Canada should run the risk of having its standard of living degraded to the level of a Chinese coolie merely to gratify the whim of an aristocratic lady for a Chinese servant.\textsuperscript{43}

Writing in 1909, the sociologist and historian Mary Coolidge argued — in one of the first academic works on Chinese immigration to the United States — that the history of general labor in California since about 1886 is the story of efforts to find substitutes for the vanishing Chinese.\textsuperscript{44} She was not incorrect in this assessment. In an article that appeared in the \textit{Methodist Review} in 1892, the San Francisco-based Methodist minister, A.J. Hanson, both praised the Exclusion Act for keeping out "undesirables" from China, while at the same time critiquing the law's role in reducing the number of available Chinese servants to work in white homes. When it came to the debates about the "Chinaman in America," as his article was titled,

\begin{quote}
[his] industry, economy, docility, inoffensiveness, reliability, and, withal, his blood relationship to the common brotherhood of humanity, together with his guaranteed rights and privileges under established treaties, were dwelt upon by his friends until he seemed almost too good to associate with the kind of people among whom his lot was cast in America; while, on the other hand, his ignorance, depravity, curtulishness, heathenism, duplicity, and general worthlessness, together with the impending danger of a Mongolian invasion and the overthrow of American institutions, were delineated by his enemies with such frightfulness of detail that he appeared for the time being a pest of the most virulent type, against which the most radical quarantine measures must at once be taken.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{44} Mary Coolidge, \textit{Chinese Immigration} (New York, 1909), 384.

E.\textsuperscript{45} Hanson, both sides had engaged in heated exaggerations. The Chinese immigrant was not a Christian brother deserving equality, as proponents had made him out to be, but rather a perpetual "alien and foreigner." In response to the "workingmen" (as Hanson referred to them, sarcastically, in quotes), he asserted that any threat of an invasion and full takeover of American social and economic life by Chinese foreigners amounted to hysteria after the 1882 Restriction Act. As a result, rational white Americans could come to appreciate that Chinese immigrant labor could be useful in certain occupations — like domestic service.\textsuperscript{46}

Despite its more general anti-Chinese sentiment, an 1891 investigation on Chinese immigration commissioned by Congress included testimony from families in Portland, Oregon, who claimed that there was no labor market comprised of white servant girls, and that they simply did not exist.\textsuperscript{47} In 1892, Hugo Muench, the national representative of German American ethnic cooperatives, testified before a House committee investigating immigration that in the West it was nearly impossible to hire domestic servants, which, like many before him, he attributed to the reputation of the work. Despite campaigns to reclaim the occupation as one in which white women could be treated equally, in the collective psychology of white workers, domestic labor remained deeply racialized. Muench noted that Westerners frequently referred to domestics as 'kitchen slaves.'\textsuperscript{48} By the first decade of the twentieth century, proponents of Chinese servants grew more confident and vocal. The Chambers of Commerce for Portland and Los Angeles, speaking on behalf of their respective cities' businessmen and families, publically advocated specific visa exemptions to the Exclusion laws and listed domestic service as one occupation where additional labor was absolutely needed.

\textsuperscript{45} A.J. Hanson, "The Chinaman in America," \textit{Methodist Review} 52 (1892), 712-718, 712.
\textsuperscript{47} Muench spoke on behalf of the Thrernbunds, the national association of German American mutual aid clubs. While defending open immigration for all Europeans, Muench briefly noted that his comments did not extend to Chinese immigration. House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, \textit{Immigration Investigation. Report of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization Under the Joint Resolution of Senate and House of January 29, 1892} (Washington, DC, 1892), 785.
The theme of managing Chinese undesirability would provide ample material for policymakers and commentators during the exclusion years, and represents an important background to debates involving how to both utilize the labor of different immigrant groups, while restricting their overall entry, in the years that would follow. Following the passage of the Exclusion Act, employers proposed federally issued visas as a means of creating the state sanctioned importation and contract of labor, for areas of work that were not being filled by white workers. To satisfy restrictionists, work visas would make Chinese immigrants’ right to enter the United States contingent on the type of labor they performed. Such visas would “voluntarily” bind Chinese immigrants to undesirable jobs for the duration of their time in the United States, until their work was no longer needed or they chose to return home.

Hubert Howe Bancroft, the renowned historian of California and the West, argued for this system in forceful terms. Bancroft advocated a vision of American empire at home and abroad that was based on hardened racial and political distinctions, and the unabashed exploitation of non-citizen labor. In 1912, thirty years after the passage of the initial Chinese Exclusion Act, Bancroft published *Retrospection: Political and Personal*, which expressed serious regret about the legislation’s economic, political, and social effects. “A true story of the Asiatics in America,” Bancroft wrote, would emphasize “the amazing gullibility of the American people.” “The white race proposes to control the earth,” Bancroft noted, yet, “[w]hen that time comes the working-man of to-day will want men to work for him; will he employ all white labor or use Asiatics for some things?” A failure to allow for the division of labor among different races was something that had vexed the United States since the end of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. Freed from bondage and granted (at least on paper) equal rights to whites, “Africans” no longer provided a reliable source of labor.

Voicing a view that was common, Bancroft commented that with Africans in the United States, whereas “it was a cruel kindness to enslave him; it was cruelly pure and simple to enfranchise him.” Although millions of European immigrants had arrived in the United States since 1865, their “aspirations” - Bancroft cynically noted - had resulted in labor radicalism and ingratitude. “We want some men in the United States for work alone,” Bancroft emphasized. “We do not need them all for governing or for breeding purposes, least of all low grade foreigners, Asiatic or European.” Bancroft estimated that 100,000 Chinese servants would be needed to adequately satisfy contemporary demand. Bancroft did not propose lifting restrictions on Chinese immigrants, but rather creating instead a "system of passports" so that "needed Asiatic laborers could be admitted as required, and sent away when no longer needed."

In some respects, as articulations of what a "modern" immigration policy might look like, these statements are strikingly prescient in imagining how the regulation of human movement might evolve. Domestic service needs, as they were invoked by the liberal bourgeoisie of Pacific settler colonies such as California, functioned as a major locus of critique against policies that sought to reduce the labor supply of Chinese migrants. Federal immigration policies were targeted for revision, so that they could exist in accordance with employers’ ostensible right to hire alien workers when a native-born class of such laborers was not available. The guest worker visas that individuals like Hanson and Bancroft championed, as an effective means of managing supply and demand without extending the entitlements of citizenship, would become a reality by the mid-part of the twentieth century, albeit for Mexican *míraceros* destined for agricultural labor. As invocations of the state’s role as a technocratic agent in development schemes, where its power was used to both assure white supremacy, yet also to allow for racial spaces of inclusion for those willing to commit to servitude, these plans mapped how migration might be governed in the future.

Conclusion

The sovereignty over economic and political institutions that white settlers claimed as privileged occupants of “white men’s countries,” and their stated desire to construct societies where paid domestic labor did not confer a degraded or alien status upon workers, clashed with the availability of Chinese labor. Employers in Anglophone Pacific settler societies were not willing to concede control over the home as a workplace, nor were they willing to write off certain household services as unnecessary and dispensable. The larger market revolution of the nineteenth century - where the ability to purchase wage labor became linked with the advance of civilization - meant whitesettlers’ desire to self-sufficiency and egalitarian relations between capital and labor would go unheard.

49 Hubert H. Bancroft, *Retrospection: Political and Personal* (New York, 1912), 345-359. Although Bancroft used the phrase "Asiatics" indiscriminately, it is clear that he meant Chinese immigrants specifically. For example, Bancroft distinguished Chinese immigrants from Japanese immigrants, in that the Japanese immigrant “is cautious, chagrined of his rights, and would like to become the equal or superior of the white race.”
Try as they might to transform Chinese servants into a gendered threat, in which the entry of male laborers into the intimate spaces of the home posed grave dangers, this too met with only partial discursive success. Employers defended the merits of male servants able to do more physically demanding forms of work, and the fact that they were less likely to leave for marriage. Or, they dismissed, in racial terms, that Chinese servants had masculine sexual desires that other men had.

Settlers with capital showed a dogged persistence in defending what they understood as their contractual right to hire whomever they wished, including Chinese domestic laborers, and looked to the establishment of new labor markets as a strategy that would help to secure economic advantages for regions where the labor of white women was hard to procure. Finally, by arguing for the selective deployment of Chinese servants and other hired laborers to occupations and industries where the required work had a negative reputation, employers anticipated the changing ways in which migration on a global scale could be governed.

CHAPTER 15

"The Matter of Wages Does Not Seem to be Material": Native American Domestic Workers’ Wages under the Outing System in the United States, 1880s-1930s

Victoria K. Haskins

Introduction

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Native American girls and young women worked as domestic servants in white homes under a government program known as "Outing." Historians of the Outing program have pointed to its simultaneously assimilationist and exploitative nature. The question of the wages paid to the young women "working out" in white homes, however, has not yet received attention. That the wages were low is simply taken for granted, and the assumption that the authorities approved is not problematized in any way. Such oversight may be seen as justified by offhand remarks in the record, such as those of an unnamed senior official in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), who made the dismissive comment upon the 1916 report of an Inspector for the BIA on the Outing program, that the "big thing is for us to see that the girls are protected in these homes and the matter of wages does not seem to me to be material in that connection."

In this chapter, I want to open up that final, rather curt remark for a closer interrogation, in order to more clearly elucidate the significance of the wage rates for the administration and for our understanding of the Outing program. The 1916 Inspector’s report had directly raised the issue of wage rates. Inspector Sweet, reporting on the Outing system as it operated in the American Southwest, had pointed out that the wages received by the young women working as maids in Arizona’s two major cities, Tucson and Phoenix, were relatively high, considerably exceeding those paid to Outing workers elsewhere. Further, Sweet had explained that the superintendent of the Phoenix Indian school expressly disapproved of higher wages, as did the superintendent of the

Sherman Institute at Riverside in California; but the woman who placed the girls at Phoenix, Outing matron Amanda Chingren, had disagreed, declaring that there was "no reason why the Indian woman should not receive the same wages for the same work as a white, negro, German, Swedish or other woman." Sweet himself thought the superintendents' argument (that employers who paid better wages were consequently less willing to exercise moral supervision over the girls) unconvincing. Lower wages must make mistresses less likely to control their workers, he proposed, for fear of losing their ultra-cheap labor. Until the superintendents could "show a more definite relation between lower pay and higher watch-care," Sweet felt that the matron commanded the logic of the case.

Sweet's observations were clearly not welcome, however. The Indian Office official who closed off and filed his report asserted that the wages for Outing workers had no bearing on the priorities of the central administration, namely the restraint ("protection") of young Indian women. As far as the BIA was concerned, he implied, wages could be high, low or non-existent, and there would be no impact on the shape of the program. But while the central office never set any kind of wage scale for Outing rates nor offer explicit advice, leaving the school superintendents or Outing matrons to negotiate wages with employers at the local level, the wage rates were a real and contentious issue for those who actually ran and supervised the Outing programs, as well as for those workers and employers who were subject to them. Closer examination reveals that there was no one, singular, uncontested meaning of the Outing workers' wages. The "matter of wages" certainly was of critical importance, as material economic issues intersected with less tangible, and often conflicting cultural and symbolic imperatives.

The Outing System

The original Outing program had begun in the 1880s over on the East Coast, under Captain Richard Henry Pratt at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. Pratt's program entailed the "placing out" of his pupils in white homes to work, originally during the summer vacations, but soon year-round also, attending public schools. A succession of Indian Affairs Commissioners urged its expansion to the West in the wake of the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887, which had empowered the US Congress and the Office of Indian Affairs to break up the communal reservations! Outing, seen as a way of breaking down racial barriers as well as nurturing the Indian "desire to live civilized lives" by setting them to work within white communities, was considered an ideal way to prepare Indians, and their white neighbours, for the dismantling of the reservations. Various small-scale systems of placing out Indian youths and girls from the newly established boarding schools west of the Mississippi operated in fits and starts from 1889. But during the first decades Outing had shown to be the most promising in the South-western states, particularly in Arizona and California, and a program was starting up in San Francisco's Bay Area, whilst the pre-eminent school for girls' Outing was Phoenix Indian School in Arizona, with numbers of girls working in Tucson under the auspices of the Indian Affairs Office from 1913. As the Outing program took off in the Southwest, it had taken on a distinctive new pattern of gender and geography. Outing in the Southwest was from the beginning dominated by the employment of girls, who worked as maids in middle-class professional suburban households. Virtually all female students were placed out to work in the summers, and numbers worked in white homes year-round, often without even the pretence of attending local public schools. Furthermore, the system was often disarticulated from the off-reservation boarding schools, maintaining only the slenderest of connections, as when

6 For out-reservation boarding schools see Haskins, Matrons and Maids, 30-33; see also Robert A. Trenner, From Carlisle to Phoenix: The Rise and Fall of the Indian Outing System, 1878-1930, Pacific Historical Review 52 (August 1983), 267-291. For Tucson, see Haskins, Matrons and Maids, 35-106.
girls from the Colorado River reservation in Arizona were sent to work in Los Angeles under the ostensible supervision of the Sherman Institute, although they never set foot on the school grounds. As a matter of course, on graduation female pupils often found places to work, on a more or less permanent basis.

In 1928, the authors of a major critical report on the administration of Indian affairs (known as the Meriam report) drew a connection between the payment of wages and the shift of the Outing system from its original ideal, asserting that at Carlisle the girls had not been "paid for their work," whereas under the current system, the "girls work for wages." Thus, the current system operated "not so much a preparation for homemaking as an apprenticeship for domestic service." By 1928 the Carlisle school had been closed for a decade and there was nobody to tell the authors that the Carlisle Outing girls had, as we shall see, actually received wages for their labor, but the claim itself makes explicit the way in which the payment of a wage could signify in itself a specific meaning and purpose of the Outing program for girls.

Scholarly analysis of Outing has tended to locate the system within histories of education, rather than of labor. Historians of Native American labor highlight how trenchant notions of the iconic white male industrial worker and class identity derived from the industrial shop floor have excluded and obscured the working histories of both women and Indigenous people. Equally immovable stereotypes about what constitutes authentic "Indianness," and a longstanding unwillingness to acknowledge the contribution of Native Americans to the economy (and that there is more to the experience of invasion beyond the fact of dispossession), has meant that the engagement of Indian people in the wider capitalist economy as wage laborers has been a somewhat marginal subject in the field of Native American studies.\footnote{7} Nevertheless a small but vibrant scholarship centralizing the Native American labor experience, led by historians like Martha Knack and Colleen O'Neill, has shown how participation in a "modern" capitalist economy, as a strategy of survival, goes back to the earliest contact periods, in some regions predating the engagement of their white American neighbors. Wage labor insured not only physical survival, but also enabled the cultural survival of communities who were able to utilize the sale of labor to maintain dependent families and to move about, preserving cultural, ceremonial and socio-economic obligations. Creative contestation over the labor process and a determination to manage incorporation into the broader economy on their own terms in the face of dramatic inequities resulted in a dynamic Native American labor history, the contours of which can be traced to the present day.\footnote{8}

However, the Outing system sits somewhat ambiguously within such histories of wage labor, if it appears at all. Recent attention to the ways in which Outing workers and their families responded to the system, and the importance of Outing girls' earnings to local Indian economies,\footnote{9} has yet to be integrated into the broader study of Indian labor history. Likewise the history of Outing, and Native American domestic service more generally, has not been located in wider histories of domestic labor in the United States, even where, as for example the essay by Andrew Urban in this volume points out, the significance of colonialism for the racialization of domestic service is understood.\footnote{10}

Most scholars who refer to the Outing system typically regard it as being, in the words of one of the leading historians of Outing, in essence "a method of supplying cheap labor to white employers hi the guise of work training."\footnote{11} Alice Littlefield argued that federal education policy effectively channelled Native Americans into the wage labor force, positing Outing and the related placement services for graduates as evidence "that gainful employment of Indian people was a significant goal of the system," even if "the outcomes were not always the

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\footnote{7} Lewis Meriam et al., The Problem of Indian Administration (Baltimore, MD, 1928), 627-628.
\footnote{9} See Martha C. Knack, "Nineteenth-Century Great Basin Indian Wage Labor," in Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack (eds), Native Americans and Wage Labor, 144-176; O'Neill, Working the Navajo Way; Janne Lahti, "Colonized Labor: Apaches and Pawnees as Army Workers," Western Historical Quarterly 39, no. 3 (Autumn 2008), 283-302. It should be noted here that efforts to apply the theoretical approaches from Latin American scholarship to analyses of Indian labor history in the 1960s and 1970s, via the "internal colonialism" model, failed to gain traction and the model itself abandoned as too totalizing and victimizing: for discussion see O'Neill, Working the Navajo Way, 54-56.
\footnote{10} Trenner, "From Carlisle to Phoenix," 283.
ones intended," and concluding that federal Indian policy towards Indians was one of "proletarianization." Using a political economy framework, Littlefield focused on the way that the Outing system reflected the changing demands of the American ruling class for cheap labor. In this formulation, the "low" wages paid to Outing workers are taken as a given. While some have problematized this representation of the Outing program as driven by an economic, as opposed to a political/ideological, rationale, and others have noted the economic and social opportunities utilized by Outing workers, the level of wages itself has not been interrogated. However, a focus on the contestation around the wage rates highlights that Outing, for girls in particular, was underpinned by complex and often contradictory motivations and purposes, and reveals the conflicts and fissures within the administrative regime.

### Outing Wages

When first visiting Tucson in southern Arizona in June 1916, Inspector Sweet had registered his "surprise" on learning of the wages received by girls and young women employed in that town: here wages ranged between $4 to $8 a week, the largest group earning $20 a month. As Sweet regarded these as high, there is no doubt that wage rates for female Outing workers were low in the absolute sense.

Determining what the standard or normal rates were is not simple, because no scales were ever set down; instead, information must be gleaned from scattered correspondences and ledger records. Inexperienced 13-year-old girls from Colorado River's reservation boarding school placed out in Los Angeles during 1923 earned between $2 and $3 a week, while in 1915 girls from the Sherman school could earn somewhat more, between $15 and $18 a month. By 1919 the majority of girls working out in Los Angeles had joined the Arizona


15 See KSianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln, NE: NE], 1999), 85-86.

16 Whalen, "Laboring Learning: The Outing Program," in *Employees and Masters,* 161.

17 As it is very difficult to find any information on the wages earned in such employment. It appears that by the late nineteenth century the indenturing of orphan children to service was almost obsolete in the United States and while children "placed out" were expected to work in the families that took them, they were not bound by any contract nor did they receive wages: see Tim Hacsi, *From indenture to family foster care: A brief history of child placing,* *Child Welfare* 74, no. 1 (January 1995), 162-180. It was still standard practice in the early twentieth century, for unmarried working-class mothers to be placed out to service from maternity homes after giving birth, but I have found no details of the wages they earned: Regina K. Kuczyk, *F vehicles, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890-1930,* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1993), 34, 100-101. There is some limited information on African-American girls placed out on "parole" from Industrial Schools, to work in white or African-American homes as servants, in the early twentieth century. In Virginia, each girl so employed was required to remit $2 of her contracted earnings back to her home school, but there is no detail on the actual wages set: Wilma Perrine-Wilkins, *Jamie Potter Burrell and the Virginia Industrial School..."
When it comes to unskilled occupations other than service available for working-class women at the time, the Outing girls may have had an advantage. "Mangle girls," for instance, the lowest-paid workers in laundries, earned $8.50 a week at San Francisco in California in 1916, 21 out of which they presumably had to pay their own board and lodgings if they lived out of the family home. David Katzman has shown that factory work, increasingly preferred by working-class women from 1910 and into the 1920s but not typically available to Outing girls, 22 in fact paid only marginally better—and often less—than domestic work, once room and board were taken into account. 23

It does seem possible that the outing workers' wages weren't all that much lower than live-in domestic workers' wages generally. The wages earned by non-Outing domestic workers are even more difficult to establish, given that an array of factors made domestic wages widely variable, and no single national wage standard for domestic workers can be discerned with certainty. However, a "typical" weekly wage for domestic servants in the us in 1916 has been estimated as $5, 24 which we might compare to Sweet's finding that the largest group of Indian Outing workers in Arizona that year were earning $4. I have not been able to find any reliable estimates myself for non-Indian domestic wages in the 1920s to compare with the Outing rates at that time, which were $6 a month at the very lowest, $80 at the very highest extreme, although monthly wages of between $15 to $25 seemed to be the norm and hardly anyone ever earned more than $40. Margaret Jacobs found that the wages earned by Outing workers in the San Francisco Bay area in the 1920s, between $50 to $65 a month, were "within the national range of fifty-five to sixty-three dollars a month; although as the average domestic servant wage in that region was considerably higher than anywhere else in the us, she suggests they were actually being paid much less than non-Indian domestic workers there. In the 1930s Indian domestic workers' wages in the Bay area averaged $20 a month, according to Jacobs, "well below" the national average of $38 a month. 25 Indeed, wages for Outing girls plummeted everywhere during the Depression to below $5 a week, 26 but they may have been doing no worse than other non-Indian, non-white, domestic workers: in 1933, Mexican domestic workers at El Paso, Mexico, historically famous for its "cheap maids," pressed unsuccessfully for wages of $3 a week ($15 a month). 27 By 1936 a minimum wage for live-in domestic servants of $35 a month was being advocated by labor activists, yet even at that time, wages of $10—$15 a month were still common, although considered deplorably low. 28 Overall, it seems safe to say that female Outing wages were at the low end of the wage scale for domestic workers generally, but not off the scale altogether.

A basic supply—demand theory of wages might partly explain why wages were on the low side. As a leading historian of domestic service in the us, David Katzman, put it, in his explanation of why domestic wages were considered deplorably low and often less than non-Indian domestic work, once room and board were taken into account. 24 Overall, it seems safe to say that female Outing wages were at the low end of the wage scale for domestic workers generally, but not off the scale altogether.

21 Department of Labor, Union Scale of Wages and Hours of Labor, 166, 156, 161.
22 There is minimal evidence of Outing girls being found positions in factories of any kind. A rare instance concerned a young woman who graduated from Sherman and tried to secure employment in a Pasadenan cannery. The superintendent provided her with a letter stating that she had been a pupil at the school but that she is now at liberty to engage in any work or accept any position that she may desire or that may be offered her: us National Archives and Records Administration, Riverside, ca, RG75 Central Classified Files/866-59 [hereafter RG75 Sacr]; Sherman Institute, Records of the Superintendent, Letters Sent 1902-48, Box 58, H Hallo to A Oceana, June 20, 1907; H Hallo to Whom It May Concern, June 20, 1907. That such a letter was necessary suggests the obstacles for Indian girls, at least those in the schools, in securing such work.
Marxian outlook on domestic service employment — that by not creating much in the way of "surplus value" and thus profit for the employer, this "anachronistic use of labor attracted only the most marginal sectors of the labor force" [31] (such as the coerced labor of Native American school girls) — might also be explained for upon the employer to explain the low wages. But whatever their merit, economic determinist theories don't take us very far in understanding the significance of wages to the authorities, nor, indeed, why there was ever any discussion at all over whether the wages negotiated for outing workers were "too high."

To understand why the wages issue arose in the first place, and to grasp how the issue was linked to the issue of employers' moral control of Indian outing workers, we must look beyond the material, to the symbolic.

The Symbolic Importance of Wages

Inspector Sweet's report is interesting, not only because it controverts the assumption that Outing workers' wages were always and inevitably as low as they could be, but because it highlights the multiple and conflicting meanings of the wages the time. Wages, as economic sociologist Viviana Zelizer has explained for monies of all kinds, are inherently imbued with and determined by cultural values and thereby invested with a symbolic weight and meaning. As such the Outing workers' wages carried meanings that were negotiable by those who were in charge of running the system, and therefore contentious and open to argument. Wages, it seems, meant different things to different actors in the Outing system.

As there were multiple and distinct symbolic dimensions of Outing wages, it is possible to outline and define them. Some thought they should be subject to and representative of market forces; some believed it mattered that the Outing girls were paid a reasonable wage; and others argued that wages needed to be supplemented with moral training and restraint when it came to young Indian women. All of these meanings revolved around the relative value of Indian girls' domestic labor, and all pointed towards the "central question — what was the purpose of placing American Indian girls in service?"

Wages and Economic Participation

The first meaning of wages might be described as signalling that the Outing girls were taking their place in the broader economy. The payment of a small wage had started in 1882, at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, in the second year of the Outing program's operation there. "[P]aid direct to the pupils and adding to the womanliness and manliness of the recipients," the wage they received "according to their ability" represented a "clear saving" to the Government for their support, as promoted by Carlisle's Captain Pratt, the architect of the Outing system. [33] For Pratt the wage was also a way of demonstrating the worth of Indian labor (and more broadly, Indian people) to the public: thus "during vacation our boys and girls, 'lazy, good-for-nothing Indians,' as they are called, instead of idling away their time, as so many youth of our own race do under like circumstances, are working hard and earning money for themselves. [34] One of Pratt's admirers and promoters, George Bird Grinnell, reported that while Carlisle girls generally earned between $1 and $8 a month in service, one girl had in January 1900 been offered $10 or $12 a month. "This is probably quite as much as white maidservants commonly receive in the country," he commented approvingly. [35] Less positively, the superintendent of Haskell school in Lawrence, Kansas, site of the earliest extension of the Outing system to the western schools, remarked in 1910 that employers expected "to get more work for his money" than the Outing pupils were used to doing at school, and that frequently pupils were returning to the school saying that the Outing girls were paid a reasonable wage; and others argued that wages needed to be supplemented with moral training and restraint when they did not want to go Outing again. In his view the true educational value of

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Outing was "to make the children understand their relative value among other wage earners."  

This sense of wages indicating economic participation continued as the system was extended. Those delegated to manage new Outing programs in the Southwest and California were cautious and set female wages at very low levels initially, to avoid having to deal with complaints from employers about the girls' inexperience, lack of training, and general reticence. Despite some complaints anyway, the evidence showed that there was a very high demand for these young Indian domestic workers, and employers who weren't happy with the one they had been allotted were generally hasty to request a replacement. In response to this demand, wherever Outing for girls became established, a system of staggered wages quickly emerged, with girls being rewarded for compliance by having their wages raised in small increments year to year, while employers were given to understand that they would have to pay more for experienced workers. One indirect effect of this system was that the Outing worker's identity became fused with the wage as a measure of her value. For instance, a Mrs. L. Jacobs of Pasadena was told that Superintendent Hall at Sherman Institute in California would be able to send her "a twelve dollar girl" in place of the individual person she wanted and whom she had employed the previous year: this nomenclature was common in Hall's correspondence and implied that the girls were interchangeable units of labor value.

Then there was a further gradation of wages as those in Outing positions completed their term of school enrolment and decided to stay on working. This began happening at a very early point and increasingly, they were joined by other young women coming directly from local reservations to work, and networks between workers and employers developed. Hall explained these older workers wanted to find that they could "make better bargains" than he could, and chose to find work for themselves if they could. To encourage such older workers to stay under supervision by availing themselves of the Outing program, wages had to be higher; but even the independent attaining of higher wages was viewed positively. Higher wages that were clearly tied to the market were seen as being an incentive to the Indian girls, as well as signifying the successful integration of Indian women into the domestic labor market economy.

The second, and related meaning of wages for authorities consisted in their importance for educating American Indian girls in financial and economic management. Pratt had argued, the Outing system enabled the young men and women to earn and save "considerable sums of money...a most excellent influence." For his friend Grinnell, the "earning of money" through the Outing system enabled the pupils to be "taught something as to the value of money and the importance of saving it — in other words, the lesson of thrift. The money earned by a child during his outing belongs to him absolutely, yet he is not free to spend it as he wishes." At the outset at Carlisle there had been an effort to encourage Outing students to bank part of their wages with the school, in order to learn the habits of saving and thrift deemed so central to assimilation. This goal was endorsed in the direction from the central BIA to school superintendents in 1905, that Outing was for "the purpose of teaching the pupils the relative value of work, habits of economic expenditure, saving of money, etc." The practice of insisting that employers remit a proportion of the wages, to be banked on behalf of the students, was rapidly established as the norm in the twentieth century. Employers of Outing girls were obliged to send through checks representing between one-half to two-thirds — more usually — of the Outing worker's wage to the school or reservation superintendent, or the designated Outing matron, and warned they would liable for any advance payments, "loans," or extra "pocket-money" they might offer their worker. The Outing girls could then access their earnings on application to the superintendent or matron, who would "advise" them on how they spent their money, and send them back a check. Savings accrued were transferred back to their agency superintendents when they graduated from school.

This practice necessarily involved direct interference with the market system. For one thing, it obstructed the employer in what was a common strategy

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37 RAB RG75 CCF, General Services 31975-10-824, H. Fiske to Commissioner, July 13, 1910.
38 NAK RG75 CCF, Sherman Institute, Records of the Superintendent, Box 5g, H. Hall to H. Schwannecke, May 26, 1908; also H. Hall to M Upton, May 26, 1908.
39 RAB RG75 CCF, Sherman Institute, Records of the Superintendent, Letters Sent 1902-48, Box 58, H. Hall to J. Richery, August 16, 1906.
41 Grinnell, "The Indians and the Outing System," 172. Grinnell described how employers were expected to advance money to their Outing workers as needed, reporting to the school on such advances and purposes, as well as the establishment of 700 bank accounts for the Outing workers.
42 in National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Bureau of Indian Affairs RG75 Office of the Commissioner [hereafter, NAB RG75], Letters Received 1881-1907, Box 2840, 54677-1905, L. Hardin to Commissioner, July 1, 1905. See also NAB RG75, Letters Received 1881-1907, Box 2840, 54655-1905, H. Edwards to Commissioner, July 11, 1905.
in "free" domestic service, of paying workers in kind rather than cash, or simply forgetting to pay them. Wages had to be set at a minimum rate to permit some portion at least to be banked. Importantly, it prevented the Outing worker from spending her money when and how she chose. She also had little opportunity to manage cash. This control of the Outing wages conflicted with the first meaning of wages as full economic participation. It meant that the Outing girls had less access to their earnings than other workers, and made a symbolic statement about their inability, as Indian girls, to be entrusted with their own finances.

In June 1922 the wording of a request for advice on wage rates by the Outing matron in Los Angeles points to another symbolic effect of wage withholding. Matron Matilda Ewing had asked the superintendent of the Colorado River Indian School in Arizona if he could let her know "the amount" the girls coming from his school to work "were to receive this year." Otherwise, she would have to use her own judgment "as to prices." The superintendent replied only to emphasize that she had to make sure all of the employers sent two-thirds of the girls' wages to his office.43 Ewing's characterization of the girls' wages as their "prices" bore strong connotations of slavery and the auction block, with the implication that employers purchased the girls' labor, even the girls themselves, from the Indian Office or its representatives. Because they were required to pay those authorities rather than the workers themselves, it is unsurprising that this impression should form.

There was also the implication in the wage withholding system, that those who employed Indian workers required some kind of surveillance to ensure they did not exploit them. While this may well have been the case (it was certainly never stated so explicitly, although there were numerous examples of the authorities being obliged to pursue defaulting employers), the message sent tended, like the slavery images it evoked, to conflict somewhat with the assimilationist intent of Outing. Furthermore, it undermined the third meaning of Outing wages, as connected to the moral protection employers were willing and able to provide.

Wages and Moral Control

This third meaning of the wages was the one that came to the fore in Sweet's report. That was that the wages were only part of the equation, and not the

43 NAR RG75 Oc Letters Received 1881-1907, Box 1582, 43688-1898, A. Wright, Report, The Outing System, enclosed with A. Wright to Commissioner, September 24, 1898.
44 A. Wright to Commissioner, September 24, 1898.
45 NAR RG75 Oc Letters Received 1881-1907, Box 1582, 43688-1898, A. Wright, Report, The Outing System, enclosed with A. Wright to Commissioner, September 24, 1898.
46 NAR RG75 Oc Letters Received 1881-1907, Box 1582, 43688-1898, A. Wright, Report, The Outing System, enclosed with A. Wright to Commissioner, September 24, 1898.
47 A. Wright to Commissioner, September 24, 1898.
that was intended to signal to the employer that they were, in fact, being cotta.

Employers may have regarded the payment of a higher wage as signifying the Outing worker's ability to perform housework, and her ability to take care of herself. "Many times I ask a lady to watch over her girl," the Tucson Outing matron complained in 1925, "she tells me very plainly that she doesn't want that kind of a girl that she has to be responsible for her actions." *59*

Higher wages could also be perceived to be detrimental to the aims of the Outing program, in terms of their supposed corrupting and demoralizing impact upon the young women receiving such wages. Three years later (in 1919) Sweet lodged another report that again stressed the high wages being paid in Arizona.*54* This resulted in a lengthy BIA memo that expressed concern about the practice of placing girls to work in large urban centers:

> The wage received by the outing pupils is of small consequence compared to the value of the training in home economics and cultivating the judgment. Earnings in town are spent in amusement and apparel to compete with the appearance of those about them, thus they acquire tastes which their earning capacity will not enable them to gratify; the lure of the town with its constant entertainment, and often questionable companions stimulates their desire for mediocrate entertainment and after a brief residence breeds unrest [...] It is not the amount earned that counts. A small salary in a rural community where the girl may save something of her earnings, with [an] occupation that will enhance her efficiency and develops initiative, is of greater value than a large salary when all is spent for amusement.*51*

The Commissioner then drafted a circular to send out to school and agency superintendents, directing that it was "inadvisable to send Indian girls to cities," where girls developed "a taste for luxuries and a desire for constant entertainment," but making no direct mention of wages.*52* As ever, the central authorities shied away from giving explicit directions about setting down wage rates.

### Wages and the Outing Matrons

In contrast to this reticence the Outing matrons themselves detailed with pride the wages that girls under their supervision could command. They emphasized wherever possible that the wages were similar to those earned by domestic workers of other ethnicities. Amanda Chingren at Phoenix, for instance, took pains to point out to the Indian Office in 1912 that those employed under the Outing system were paid "very much on the same scale" as white and other non-Indian domestic help in the city.*53* Outing matron Janette Woodruff, noting the very high demand for girls in Tucson in 1916, remarked with satisfaction that employers "prefer them to the Mexican help."*54* Although it is unclear whether that preference extended to paying higher wages to secure their services, the Outing matrons saw their charges in competition with workers of other races and being able to demand higher wages was a potent signifier of their value. As Sweet's report had shown, Chingren was fervent in her belief that Outing girls should be paid no less than women of any other racial or ethnic group.

Being sole earners themselves, usually single women or widows, the matrons certainly developed a degree of sympathy to the needs of young Indian women, and admired those who could work well and demand good wages. Note, too, that they themselves typically came from immigrant or rural working-class backgrounds where domestic service was regarded as a suitable occupation for young women and one they themselves may have considered, or even worked in prior to working as a matron. Phoenix's Outing matron Amanda Chingren is an interesting example. She was born in Sweden, coming to the us as a child with her family. At that time, Swedish and other European migrant women often sought domestic service positions, the occupation being viewed positively, as a useful and viable employment option in the United States. In this they were supported by their own ethnic community, with reasonable wages and conditions being considered "important aspects of the job."*55*
Despite such sympathetic predispositions, however, the Outing matrons were limited in the degree to which they would support the girls’ economic independence. They encouraged and championed higher wages, but they also tended to dissuade employers and Outing workers from entering into arrangements where the girls received more generous “pocket-money” allowances into their own hands; and they often maintained a very tight grasp on the bank accounts they held on behalf of the Outing girls. Furthermore, they expressed strong disapproval when Outing workers left the positions which they had found them, to take better-paid work elsewhere.

In actuality, the Outing matrons came to see wages primarily as a reflection of their own skills as negotiators; as a sign that their own labor was valued. This is clear from the tone of the reports sent in by them to the central Office or their superintendents. The greater the collective earnings received (and, importantly, banked, by those under their supervision), the more successful the Outing matrons evidently considered themselves to be. At the same time, diminishing wages could be used as an argument for the importance of retaining their own jobs. Thus during the Depression, when the Outing girls’ wages fell dramatically, the Outing matrons at Tucson and Phoenix (where the total earnings of Indian workers had virtually halved) argued that it would be a false economy to abolish the Outing program, as it was only by their mediation with white employers that the girls and women could secure work at all, to keep themselves and their families off the ration rolls. And when the economy improved, such officials could make a case for their value in helping the young women attain better wages.

This particular symbolic dimension of wages was about the Outing matrons’ labor, not that of the Outing workers. Invested with this meaning, the wages functioned to endorse the power of the Outing matrons as much as the Outing system overall. However, it also clashed with the expectations and outlook of the central authorities, and Outing matrons generally found little endorsement from them in their role as advocates for better wages, as the response to Sweet’s report demonstrated.

Native American Views of the Outing Wages

For the Indian Outing girls and their families we might ask the same question: did the wages also have a symbolic significance, as opposed to a simply material one? Discerning their perspectives on the matter of wages is rather more of a challenge, but documents written by Outing workers to their superintendents and matrons do offer some insight into their understanding of the symbolic meaning of wages insofar as they believed the authorities would respond positively to them.

Better wage rates could mitigate grievances about being over-worked and being compelled to stay where they were. There was Lupa H. of Colorado River Agency, whose superintendent had insisted she remain where she was, although she had indicated she was unhappy there because her mistress made her work too hard. In September 1919 Lupa wrote to him again telling him that she was fine and dandy as she was now getting $20 a month and while she sometimes have to work hard but they [her employers] give me extra so I like them very much. Similarly, Lyda, another girl from the same reservation, working in Riverside some seven years earlier, had decided to stay in a position once she had learned that her wages were relatively high. Having asked to return to her family for a visit, the reservation superintendent had replied to Lyda saying that her current employer was prepared to pay her $15 a month for the next year if she would stay on and not go home. He told her “I do not think you will be able to do better,” and declared that “the aim of all the girls who were out at work was to be able to buy goods for their homes when they eventually returned to the reservation. Finally, he held out the inducement of increased wages in the future: “We have been trying to show you how to earn the money and now that you have learned some of it, I think it would be best for you to stay until you have learned more and are able to earn the best wages paid for that class of work.” Lyda did decide to stay on, explaining to Superintendent Babcock that she had received a letter from another Outing girl who had wanted her to come and take a position near her, “but I dont think I will [be] going because my lady give good wage so I dont think I will live [leave] her — and I heard that Ida M. is getting just $10.00 month yet and I got $15.00 month.”

Soon after this Lyda decided against returning home altogether, because her current employer had raised her wages not once, but twice, in the time she had been there, and she asked Babcock to explain to her father she wouldn’t be coming home. In this instance wage rates were clearly being read by the Outing worker as representing the relative value of her labor, and as such a
The following year when she decided it was time to return home, Babcock tried to persuade her to enrol in the Sherman school and go on the Outing system during the summers. You already have saved up quite a bit of money,” he told her. “This will all be that you will need while going to school and then during the vacations you can earn more and get a wider experience. This will help you get better positions, better treatment, and above all, help you to be more aid to your people.” He called upon the notion of the fair wage as a kind of financial education for young Indian people: “every one of the boys and girls that have been out among the white people and have learned how to do business like the white people do, will be bound to see that their people are not robbed and made poor.

We cannot know how (or if) Lyda responded to this argument, as there is no further correspondence from her on file. However, many of the young women in Outing positions evidently considered their wages as signifying, in a very material sense: the contribution they made to their families. The wages in the school girls’ accounts were, in theory, supposed to be used to draw upon to purchase their own clothing, and many did use them for this purpose, but it was at least as common for the Outing girls to ask for money to send to their families as it was to use it to buy items for their own personal use. This was actively encouraged by the Outing matrons. In a typical report, for 1912, Amanda Chingren commented approvingly that the money the girls earned was “not all spent on themselves,” and that while many of the girls had managed to put aside savings, they “respond generously to the needs at home and in the case of many, this dependence of their people upon them makes savings for themselves impossible.” Elsewhere, Outing girls often applied for money from their bank accounts to assist their families on the reservations.

Earning a wage was, quite clearly, the main reason that the girls and young women engaged in the Outing system (theoretically, their participation was voluntary), although there were other reasons too, like getting away from the reservation and seeing something of urban life, and being with their friends and siblings who were working out. The money earned by the Outing girls and women probably did represent a certain amount of independence and modernity for the girls themselves, their allowances allowing them to buy “pretty clothes,” jewellery, and hair ornaments to wear out dancing with their friends, as Frances Manuel, who worked in Tucson in the late 1920s, Cecalled. Manuel suggests that there may have been some community disapproval of such behavior. Similarly, a Sioux teacher at Haskell reflected in the early 1920s that older women on the reservations looked askance at the young women who had had some experience of “the standards of modern Christian girlhood” in the towns where they worked, and were “not willing to submit to such oversight and careful chaperoning as they themselves had.” However, in terms of the notion that there was some kind of index between the wage rates and the degree of “protection” that employers were prepared to provide, there is absolutely no evidence that any of the Outing workers subscribed to this. Indian parents and community leaders were indeed concerned about sexual and moral dangers for the girls in service, but did not make any explicit connection to wages when expressing such concerns. In this regard at least, they seem to have been in accord with the central Indian Office.

Although I have yet to see anything in the records where the girls themselves compared the wages they earned to those non-Indian domestic workers were getting, they did express their sense that the wages they received were their entitlements, due for the exchange of their labor. This typically surfaced in situations where employers had reneged on their payments. Thus, a young woman working in the San Francisco Bay area complained to the Outing matron there in 1934 that her employer was refusing to pay $10 of her $12 monthly wage on the pretext that she had stolen things, stating, “I need the money terribly and I earned it, more than earned it so please make her pay me.” In this case the Outing worker was clearly keeping a watchful eye on the wages that were going into her account.

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61 NAR RG75 GRASP; Outing Correspondence 1913, Box 208, O. Babcock to L. B., c. September 8, 1912.
62 NAB RG75 CCF, General Services 8887-24-g171, “Sherman Institute Outing,” January 24, 1924.
63 NAB RG75 CCF, Phoenix 4732-1912-9171, E. Newton to Commissioner, May 4, 1912.
64 Frances Manuel and Deborah Neff, Desert Indian Woman: Stories and Dreams (Tucson, 2008), 19.
The system of withholding the wages undoubtedly had a major impact on the meaning of those wages for the Outing workers. There was the occasion (unsuccesful) request that they be allowed to receive their earnings from their employer in their entirety; Clara L., for instance, had asked the Sherman superintendent, with the support of her employer, that "all her salary be given her."67 The wages that the young women earned were retained well into the adulthood and long after they left employment, causing understandable resentment. In 1921 Vesta J., who had worked for many years previously and was continuously obliged to apply for money from her account in dribs and drabs, wrote, "Why shouldn't I have my own money? I have asked for money since June 19th, have waited all this time."68 It is also evident that many girls were uncertain how much money they had to their credit in their bank accounts. Some tried to sidestep the system by frugally saving the small portion of the wage they received directly. In 1916, the Los Angeles employer of one such girl querulously reported to the school superintendent that her Outing worker had done this and was "planning to spend all before her return. Is she to be allowed perfect freedom?"69 Ironically, this particular young woman was characterized by her superintendent as "a spendthrift" and would face resistance and obstruction for years from the authorities in accessing her account monies.

The wage withholding system meant that earning wages, far from signifying independence and adulthood, represented a lack of control over their own lives in the most powerful way. By the late 1920s there was growing dissatisfaction amongst the Outing workers about the wage withholding, which erupted into a minor confrontation in 1930, when the secretary of the activist group, the Indian Defense Association of Central and Northern California based in San Francisco, wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs concerning "several complaints" they had received from Indian girls working in the Bay district, that the Outing matron there "arbitrarily takes away their earnings and doles them out to them as what money she thinks they should have. These girls want to know what their rights are in the matter."70 Their complaints were dismissed by the Outing matron under investigation, who ascribed them to "outside influence" aimed at "discrediting" her administration.71 Arguably, it was not the wage rates themselves but the practice of wage withholding that seemed to have the most impact on the Outing girls. Higher wage rates meant little in material or symbolic terms, if the workers could not access them.

For the Outing matrons, wages could hardly be "too high" because what employers were prepared to pay for the girls' labor was an index of their own success. Indian girls, unsurprisingly, never complained of their wages being too high. But for others Outing wages could be, indeed, "too high." "Too high" may have meant that the Indian girls' wages were level with, or even above, the wages earned by other young women in domestic service, not under the control of the state; or it could have meant that the wages, even if still relatively low, were above those that Indian girls and young women should be receiving in the eyes of those who condemned them. The implication was that those administering the system were somehow failing to artificially repress the Outing wages. This dissension complicates an understanding of the political economy of Native American Outing as simply supplying a demand for cheap labor.

There was clearly more to the issue of wages, and indeed of Outing itself, than just economics. I have traced four key and conflicting symbolic meanings that wages for Outing girls carried in the eyes of those in charge: as economic participation; as education; as an index of moral control; and as an index of the matrons' achievements. The wages were symbolic and complex, with multiple meanings that aligned to various imperatives around assimilation and control of Indian women. These meanings were negotiated and contested amongst the authorities who managed the Outing system, and their dissension reflects the ambiguities and conflicts about the purpose of Outing. The symbolic meaning of the wages for the girls and young women actually earning is less surely grasped; but we may be certain that the material significance of the wage rates was not lost upon them.

67 NAK RG75 CCF, Sherman Institute, Records of the Superintendent, Letters Sent 1902-48, Box 59, H. Hall to L. J. August 3, 1908; H Hall to C. L. August 3, 1908.
68 NAR RG75 CRASF, Outing & Transferred Students #1, Box x08, v J. to S. Haygood, October 24, 1921.
69 NAR RG75 CRASF, Outing & Transferred Students #3, Box 208, 0 Baldwin to A Duclos, September 1, 1916.
70 NAR RG75 CRASF, Outing & Transferred Students #2, Box x08, A. Coe to Mr. Duclos, November 8, 1915.
71 NAB RG75 CCF, General Services 51277-30-824, R. Barker to C. Rhodes, September 26, 1930.
72 NAB RG75 CCF, General Services 51277-30-824, B. Royce to C. Rhodes, October 20, 1930.
CHAPTER 16

Who's in Charge, The Government, the Mistress, or the Maid? Tracing the History of Domestic Workers in Southeast Asia

Bela Kashyap

Introduction

In 2009, an unexpected avalanche of news reports occurred in Malaysia. Local employers made the headlines time and again in what seemed an endless stream of cases of abuse, and debates on migrant domestic labor dominated the local newspapers. These problems were not new, as indicated by an open letter penned in 2006 by Human Rights Watch (HRW), addressed to both the Indonesian and Malaysian governments. The letter was written in a period of bilateral negotiations leading up to a Memorandum of Understanding between the two nations, scheduled to take place in April of that year. The letter advocated that both governments take substantive action on behalf of the migrant domestic workers coming from Indonesia.

The atmosphere was politically charged with the potential for serious repercussions. Official reports in Malaysia cited 50 cases of abuse of domestic workers annually, a number challenged by social rights' organizations that estimated much larger numbers. The Indonesian government demanded comprehensive and sustained governmental action by Malaysia, to regulate and reform the employment practices and the conditions faced by Indonesian citizens already present in the country. A failure, they stated, would result in a moratorium in the availability of Indonesian women coming to Malaysia to work in the domestic sector. As expected, these demands remained unmet, and the moratorium on domestic workers was imposed. It took two years of negotiations between these two nations for the moratorium to be lifted in 2011. The pent-up demand for domestic workers immediately drew approximately 50,000 Indonesian women to Malaysia. 1

The current chapter explores this particular regional movement of women, who seeks to place it in the historical context of these multicultural societies, as well as their colonial pasts. To do so, it examines each of the actors in this international drama, the domestic worker or maid, the mistresses for whom they work, and the governments in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore that are responsible for their welfare. 2 All three nations were formerly occupied by colonial powers. Indonesia was first under the Portuguese and then predominantly Dutch rule until European control was interrupted by the arrival of the Japanese during the Second World War. 3 Malaysia and Singapore, on the other hand, together formed part of the vast British Empire until the territory jointly known as Malaya won its independence from Britain in 1957.

This chapter argues that Southeast Asian society changed considerably under colonial rule. Gender roles were dramatically altered in a manner uniquely suited to local culture as well as individual circumstances. The contemporary phenomenon of migrant domestic workers originated in the colonial era and contributed to these changes. These adaptations were compounded in the post-colonial period and still remain visible today. Women in the region today remain bound domestically, even as they take on new financial responsibilities for their families by working outside the home. It is the manner in which women in the region fulfill these two conflicting roles that is significant. The choices they make and the actions they take are firmly dependent on their nation, its history, and the class to which they belong.

In order to understand this contemporary migration, we need to trace the changes that occurred within these societies by looking into their pasts. What were the gender roles in the region prior to the nineteenth century and the settlement of Europeans in Southeast Asia? Did women work outside the home, and did their roles differ within the various ethnic communities in the region, or in different geographical locations? Did they change in any significant manner as local societies came in contact with Europeans new to the region? Equally importantly, was European culture in these settlements altered as they built new communities in Southeast Asia? There are few sources today that help cast light on the participation of women in the workplace from earlier periods. We do know that large families, as well as class divides, were intrinsic to Asian societies. Both cultural norms and established gender roles


2 Lim Wey Wen. '50,000 Indonesian Maids to Arrive for Mid January,' The Star November 25, 2011

3 Responsibility for servants most often fell on the mistresses of the household unless none were present. Under those circumstances, servants reported to the man of the household.

4 The British under the leadership of Sir Stamford Raffles seized an opportunity to intervene in Indonesia in 1811, returning the colony to the Dutch state in 1816 when the cost of retaining the territory appeared too high.
within these largely patriarchal societies kept most Asian women domestically bound, with only the privileged elite employing servants or domestic workers to help in their homes. Most women led restricted lives in these Southeast Asian societies, traditionally marked by class and social stratification.

In order to trace any changes that may have occurred, it is essential to consider this Southeast Asian region as a whole, as it existed before the advent of the modern nation state and the creation of the independent nations of Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. This expansion of the geographical scope of inquiry beyond national borders and boundaries is necessary, for the peoples of this region did not live in isolation from each other. Trade, migration, and other interactions between them had been a reality and a significant influence among them for centuries. As many scholars have already convincingly illustrated, transnational connections between peoples and places throughout the world are not a modern phenomenon.

My attempt here is to weave these multifaceted interactions within Southeast Asia into a coherent whole, recognizing both the limitations of such an expanded framework, and the difficulties inherent in drawing an artificial boundary between Southeast Asia and the rest of the world. It is this very problem that pushes me to acknowledge from the outset the importance of the southern coastal regions of China in this particular narrative. China too had its part to play if not within, then at least in association with the British Empire, and is thus partly included in my narrative. I do, however, rely on contemporary national boundaries for narrative clarity, referring to these geographical locations in the region in the manner by which they are known to us today.

Disparate Histories

Contemporary research suggests that few women ventured to work for pay outside the home in Indonesia before the Dutch presence, unless they found it economically necessary for their families or for their communities at large. There were exceptions. In some parts of the archipelago, rice cultivation and food production were among activities considered more suitable for women workers than men, and they drew poor women to work outside the home in significant numbers.6 Domestic work, one of only a few options historically always available to women, was generally believed to be an unpopular occupation. Even in 1930, when the European presence in Indonesia was at its summit, still only two per cent of the female population of employable age worked as a domestic servant, and there are no reasons to believe that this share was higher in earlier periods.7 The geographical proximity to the Malayan peninsula suggests that peoples living there may have shared a similar culture.

Things were slightly different across the seas in the southern coasts of China. On the Pearl River delta in the Guangdong province, much more independent-minded women rebelling against patriarchy and traditional lives were known to actively seek employment in the thriving Chinese silk industry.8 Women and girls of lesser means also found employment as domestic workers in wealthy households, a cultural pattern confirmed by the Chinese practice of mui tsai. An ancient and traditional cultural practice, the "mui tsai," which is literally translated to mean little sister, were young girls from rural or impoverished families who were placed in wealthy homes by their families in exchange for their board and lodging. The girls did household chores and their families were given a small fee in return.9 Most women in the Southeast Asian region, however, remained largely confined to the domestic sphere prior to the

6 Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, Women and the Colonial State: Essays on gender and Modernity in the Netherlands Indies 1790-1942 (Amsterdam, 2000), 57-62. Women are believed to have always been active in rice cultivation, a practice attributable to Indonesia's rice goddess, Dewi Sri. Jean Gelman Taylor, Indonesia: Peoples and Histories (New Haven, London, 2003), 133. Women were involved in the harvesting of spices after the arrival of European traders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Siddharth Chandra, 'The Role of Female Industrial Labor in the Late Colonial Netherlands Indies,' Indonesia 74 (2005), 103-135.

7 Locher-Scholten, Women and the Colonial State, 91.

8 Kenneth Gaw, Superior Servants: The Legendary Cantonese Amahs of the Far East (Singapore, 1988). Many scholars have referenced this particular community of women in China who were members of an active anti-marriage movement in the early twentieth century.

9 Susan Pedersen, "The Maternalist Movement in British Colonial Policy: The Controversy over 'Child Slavery' in Hong Kong 1917-1941," Past & Present 171 (2001), 171-202. The mui tsai were a controversial issue in early twentieth century Britain as well within British colonial territories with sizeable Chinese populations. Considered by traditionalists as an early form of social welfare, these girls were often seen as being "rescued" from infanticide in an impoverished society with a culture placing a premium on the birth of sons. Westerners, however, believed differently and narratives of child slavery became the hegemonic discourse until the practice was declared illegal by British authorities. See also the chapter by Magaly Rodriguez Garcia in this volume.

5 Philip D. Curtin, Alison Games and others have clearly demonstrated the impact of contact between people across the globe as knowledge and ideas were shared. Philip D. Curtin, Cross Cultural Trade in World History (Cambridge, 1984); Alison Games, The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660 (Oxford, 2008).
Western presence in the region, as cultural dictates and their large families required the undivided attention of most women in the household.

Things changed with the arrival of Europeans in Southeast Asia. We can trace first the Portuguese and then the Dutch presence in the region back to the fifteenth century, although few records from this era have survived. Although the European involvement with the region began with trade, settlement in the Indies quickly followed. The consolidation of the Dutch hold in Indonesia was complete by the end of the nineteenth century. European migration was initially gender-specific. Dutch authorities were concerned about the cost of maintaining European standards of living in the tropics and discouraged Dutch women from migrating to the region. Dutch men, on the other hand, were encouraged to build new lives and households with local Indonesian women. Native women selected for this role became concubines and were expected to aid Dutch settlement efforts by helping the men acquire native language skills and facilitate adaptation to local conditions. Cultural mixing was the natural result. The creation of new and hybrid cultural forms, where Dutch men adopted elements of Javanese culture was a logical outcome, as these households were, in effect, intimate frontier zones. Concerns about race notwithstanding, this process of acculturation and hybridization continued unabated even as white Dutch women began to arrive in Indonesia, with their numbers growing steadily in the first half of the twentieth century.

A New Colonial Society

Some Javanese traditions proved immensely attractive to the new arrivals. Dutch men in increasing numbers chose to build lives in which poor local women were hired to serve as domestic workers. The use of domestic workers, more commonly called domestic servants or servants, over time became increasingly essential as a marker of power and privilege for Europeans.

Indonesian women elevated to the position of mistress in the household through their relationships with Dutch men were granted a new kind of status in these mixed-race households. They gained positions of authority over other women, the domestic servants in their employ, establishing a new social and hierarchical structure in the region. Most colonial households employed an average of between four and seven servants, many, although not all of them, women. These mixed-race households were not alone. Imagination being the highest form of admiration, the use of domestic servants as a marker of wealth and social standing proved equally attractive to all other households of means throughout the Indies in the Dutch era. The use of domestic workers had, in fact, become an important and clearly visible element of colonial culture throughout the East.

Wealthy Indonesian women of privilege who were granted education in newly established schools were also drawn to ideals of domesticity that prevailed among European settler households. Encouraged by Dutch colonial authorities, increasing numbers of elite women chose to adopt these domestic ideals as symbols of status. A markedly different trend can be found for poor women of lesser means. Amongst the impoverished, more and more women were drawn into domestic service. It was indeed ironic that hiring servants had become an expression of status and prestige in elite Indonesian society influenced by the West, as the elites simultaneously increasingly represented and reinforced indigenous traditions, which were in turn adopted by European residents in the tropics.

A Society of Migrants

It is clear that, in Indonesia at least, domestic work was increasingly perceived as an acceptable occupation throughout the colonial era, if only for women
of lesser means. That does not in itself explain the migration patterns so visible in the region today. To understand this, we have to challenge so long-held assumptions. It is sometimes believed that Europeans introduced a phenomenon in Southeast Asia. Millions have been recorded on the move in the region for centuries and certainly in the more recent past. Many travelled to distant shores as merchants or settlers, while others migrated under various work arrangements, be it wage labor or some form of trade and profit sharing.16

Like Europeans, other communities settling in Southeast Asia during this period chose not to bring their women. Most migrants were men, many of them Chinese. Women would only come later. Women became a slowly but steadily increasing segment of this moving stream of humans through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Like Dutch colonists, many other migrants, including significant numbers of Chinese merchants and traders who came to the region in earlier centuries stayed on, building lives with local women just as European men did. These Chinese migrants, too, formed new communities unique to the area with cultural characteristics drawn both from Chinese as well as local cultural traditions.17

Many of these Chinese migrants came and settled on the Malaysian peninsula, while others settled on the small island of Singapore. Singapore at the turn of the nineteenth century was a small trading community of only regional importance, and remained that way until the arrival of the British in the region. The British presence in Singapore officially dates back to 1819, when Britain's Sir Stamford Raffles was granted permission by the Sultan of Johor to establish a settlement on the strategically placed island, south of the Malaysian peninsula. The development of the island as a modern port city rapidly followed and required the presence of a sizeable number of British officials. It also required the importation of large numbers of Chinese coolies to create the infrastructure so necessary for a modern port. Except for the migration of a very small number of women coming to the island to serve as prostitutes, Chinese women did not arrive on the island in sizeable numbers until the latter years of the nineteenth century. Singapore was a British settlement and grew rapidly as the region was integrated into the global economy. It did not take long for local society and culture to change considerably.18

17 New communities born of immigrant Chinese and local Indonesian or Malay women have made their mark in the region, the Peranakan or Nonya culture, distinct.

...Within the Privacy of the Home

Elite households on the Malay peninsula were not much different from those in Indonesia and shared in the culture of employing poor women as domestic servants. In the nineteenth century, most servants were native Malays. There were, however, a few migrant domestic servants already present at the tip of the peninsula, in the British settlement of Singapore. Some servants were Indo-Portuguese and presumably came from the Indian subcontinent. There were also Javanese, Buginese and Boyanese servants, all of them hailing from the Indonesian archipelago. Others working in wealthy homes were Chinese.19 A correspondent for a local newspaper suggested that there were 6,000 domestic servants in Singapore in 1859, out of which 5,000 were Chinese.20 The numbers of servants employed in households swelled over the following decades as the settlement grew in size and in importance. By 1891, despite the presence of thousands of Chinese and Javanese domestic servants, it was clear that insufficient native labor was available to meet the local demand for domestic servants and a systematic means of recruitment from other places was becoming increasingly necessary.21

As demand for domestic servants outstripped the numbers available, relationships between wealthy householders and their poor domestic servants became increasingly strained. Domestic servants were of critical importance in the colonies and no wealthy household was complete without them, but many householders, both men and women alike, complained vehemently about their servants. A resident European remarked, You are at the mercy of these servants. They not only think, but do as they like, and lay down their own terms and unless you yield to these, their native rights, they will do all they can to prevent other servants from taking service under you.22 Although the Chinese were not alone in providing domestic services, they were often perceived as a problem causing innumerable headaches and some European residents, in Singapore at least, called Chinese servants "an intolerable nuisance."23 The solution to the problems facing householders, according to many disgruntled employers, was to "fight the Chinese on their own terms...by getting out Indian servants from Calcutta or Madras." There were inconveniences and additional fees incurred to recruit domestic servants through a local agent in

22 “Our Boys,” *The Straits Advocate* 4 May 1889.
Calcutta or Madras, but Indian servants were considered "cheaper and better servants," and recruitment from India was portrayed as a viable and attractive solution for those who could afford the added cost.\textsuperscript{23}

It remains unclear whether or not such exhortations were acted upon, but such sentiments are indicative of the fluidity of recruitment and migration in the region throughout the colonial era. Labor migration certainly had a significant role to play in British imperial designs for all its colonial holdings. Multiple official channels were established for the recruitment of the labor necessary for plantation work and construction in Southeast Asia, and thousands of coolies were recruited from China, from India, and in more limited numbers, from Indonesia. Most of the recruits were men. These recruitment channels were heavily scrutinized and regulated by the Indian government, the British Colonial Offices and the governing authorities in the Straits Settlements, all three in consultation and negotiation with each other about this labor migration. Scholars have examined the structural components of these migration corridors that slowly took shape over the course of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{24}

Much Chinese migration to Singapore occurred without any government intervention. Kinship networks and other bonds forged the links and connections that provided migrant Chinese the resources they considered so necessary in a foreign country.\textsuperscript{25} It does not appear that domestic workers were recruited using officially established channels, although some minor overlap between these disparate recruitment networks may have existed. Domestic servants were excluded from the many labor laws and other regulations that governed the official recruitment of workers from overseas. More work remains to be done to understand the structure of all of the unofficial channels used by women migrants who came to do domestic work in wealthy households, as well as the role these networks may have played in the development of the region.

\textbf{Black and White Amahs}

Servants were clearly a difficult but necessary feature within colonial cultures so dependent on them for the performance of chores and as markers of social prestige. Tensions between wealthy employers and their poor domestic servants, especially in Singapore were fast coming to a head by the early twentieth century. This was the milieu into which an increasing number of new women migrants from China arrived.

British census data suggests that after the collapse of China's silk industry, 0,000 women migrated to Britain's colonial holdings in the region between 1933 and 1938 alone. Many of them were single women escaping restrictive cultural traditions, especially the limited traditional lives and marriages that they faced in China. Migration to the region was an attractive alternative, and countless women came seeking independence through employment. Although domestic service was not the only option available to them, for many of them the independence they sought meant working in the homes of the wealthy.\textsuperscript{26}

By 1931, census data suggests that women considered domestic work to be the most desirable occupation available to them outside the home. The number of women who reported to serve as domestic workers had more than doubled a decade and a half later, as noted in the census of 1947. With this new popularity came professionalization of domestic work, with Chinese women demonstrating new attitudes of pride in both their financial independence and their work. This professionalization of the occupation was a visible change. The Chinese "amahs" were especially well regarded by their British employers, most of the women uniformed, clad in their trademark white shirts and black pants.\textsuperscript{27}

The amahs were a tight-knit community and legendary in colonial society. British colonists and wealthy Chinese merchants residing in Singapore were the primary employers of these migrant domestic workers. In time they were joined by others, as Singapore's increasingly important place in the global economy swelled the ranks of the wealthy in local society. All were eager to demonstrate their increased wealth and stature by employing poor women of lesser means for household work. The same pattern is discernable in other parts of the British colonies on the Malayan peninsula, although at least in Perak and Selangor the development of both the agricultural and mining industries offered opportunities other than domestic work for women choosing to work outside the home.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{23} "Domestic Servants ordinance," Straits Eurasian Advocate 31 March 1888, 2-4.
\textsuperscript{24} Amarjit Kaur, "Labour Brokers in Migration: Understanding Historical and Contemporary Transnational Migration Regimes in Malaya/Malaysia," International Review of Social History 57, Sao (2012), 225.
\textsuperscript{25} Kaur, "Labour Brokers in Migration," 229.
\textsuperscript{26} Christina B. N. Chin, In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian Modernity Project (New York, 1998), 38-39. Chinese women migrants were also known to accept jobs in the rubber, tin, and construction industries.
\textsuperscript{27} Gw, Superior Servants, 79.
\textsuperscript{28} Raffaella Sarti, this volume.
\textsuperscript{29} Gw, Superior Servants, 79.
Networks of Recruitment

It is clear that the use of domestic workers within the home grew in popularity, with in the region through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as more and more women of lesser means found domestic service in wealthy homes a convenient and socially acceptable means of supplementing personal or family income. Their presence in affluent homes remained a sign of prosperity and privilege, symbols of status that became more and more appealing in a colonial society always conscious of class.

What remains less clear is the manner in which such domestic workers were recruited. How did elite households find these women of lesser means to work in their homes when class distinctions and ethnic or social divides kept interactions between these disparate communities to a bare minimum? How were they vetted before being accepted into the intimate spaces of wealthy homes, where they were charged with keeping house, and even helping with the care and raising of children? Elisabeth Locher-Scholten’s work helps illustrate the mechanisms involved in this recruitment process. Word-of-mouth and personal recommendations within both the wealthy community and the less wealthy ones encouraged networks that became the key to linking employers to employees. Village and kin networks also worked through word-of-mouth, providing information to women seeking work in their villages. With the passage of time, this informal process of recruitment gave way to one increasingly professionalized.

The earliest examples we have of this increased professionalization are the Offices for Servants set up by the Dutch authorities. These offices were charged with aiding Dutch women who arrived in the Indies for the first time in increasing numbers, many of them in need of help in establishing their households. These official resources were supplemented by others of a more informal nature, established by European women already present and active in the community. Their associations served the same purpose. Organizations such as the Association for Housewives in the Indies, which was established in Java in 1931, became a conduit of information for the recruitment of servants as well as a forum of support and aid for colonial women.

The difficulties associated with the recruitment of women to serve as domestic workers were not limited to the Dutch Indies. Wealthy households in Singapore faced the same problems in finding trustworthy servants.

30 Locher-Scholten, Women and the Colonial State, 57, 62.
31 Gaw, Superior Servants, 106.
32 Locher-Scholten, Women and the Colonial State, 98.
33 Chin, In Service and Servitude, 74.
34 ‘T.W. Smith, Registrar, Servants Registry Office and General Labor Mart,” The Straits Times, 19 November 1859.
35 Gaw, Superior Servants, 195-196.
36 Ibid, 84.
A Changed Society

The departure of the British from Southeast Asia in the mid-twentieth century changed local dynamics and many amahs chose to retire or return to China, as many of them had always preferred to work in European rather than Asian homes. Growing industrialization in China and the increased availability of factory jobs simultaneously reduced the interest single, independent-minded women had in migrating to the Southeast Asian region, thus reversing a historic trend. The need for domestic workers in the former British colonial possessions in Southeast Asia, however, remained unchanged as the swelling ranks of the middle class joined the wealthy in wanting to hire poor women of lesser means to work in their homes. The British departure simultaneously ushered in a new phase in the development of the region, with new nations, new borders and immigration controls emerging in its wake. Available jobs for domestic workers were now increasingly filled by women migrants from other nations in the region, many of them being filled by rural women from Indonesia, despite the hurdles set by new national boundaries.

Southeast Asia changed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Growing urbanization was certainly the most visible sign of this change, but obscured beneath this obvious physical development were profound transformations in the social fabric of local communities. Gender roles had changed dramatically. Traditional society in the region had always been patriarchal, both class and gender roles being well-defined and women generally restricted to the domestic realm. Colonial rule triggered major shifts within local society. Colonial authorities invested very little in actively educating their colonial subjects, but local society changed nonetheless. Traditional extended families with shared burdens of domestic labor morphed into newer forms seen as more desirable, nuclear families increasingly becoming the norm in the region. Women now had a new part to play that went beyond their traditional role as care providers. Nuclear families and independent households required that growing numbers of women be assigned new responsibilities as wage earners as well.

For the poor, women's financial contributions to the family income had become crucial, and seen by many as a path to a middle class life. This process of change accelerated with the region's growing integration into the global economy. The end of the colonial period did not alter these local dynamics, with local social structures continuing to evolve and change even under newly independent post-colonial governments. For the new states in the region striving for an economic viability to ensure a long-term survival, all citizens, both men and women, now had a role to play.

Strong cultural assumptions in the region still ascribed the domestic realm to women. I contend that it was a role inherited from the past that remained intact, a woman's responsibility remaining completely unchanged but sometimes, for the upper and middle-classes, expressed through the control of a surrogate in the domestic sphere. Both wealthy employers and poor domestic workers in Asia shouldered these responsibilities. Each in their own domestic realms outsourced caring tasks to other women. Domestic workers who left their homes for work overseas took on obligations to their kin networks, leaving them behind to shoulder their domestic responsibilities on their behalf during their absence. Women from the upper classes, on the other hand, purchased the services of another, the maid in their employ.

There can be no doubt that postcolonial governments, too, had an active part to play in changing the fabric of local societies. Continuing the processes initiated by colonial governance in the region, the newly independent governments of Malaysia and Singapore initiated national economic and immigration policies and introduced legislations renewing these mechanisms of change.

The new Singapore government, concerned about the tiny island's limited national resources and long-term economic viability, recognized the still dormant potential of the nation's women. It pushed for more education and encouraged the participation of Singapore's women in the broader national economy. Cultural norms of domesticity and the accompanying lifestyle of leisure for the upper classes were, however, harder to overcome. The solution seemed simple for the government: it turned to legislation. Recognizing the significance of a woman's focus on the household, the state opted to support women trying to fulfill their domestic roles and responsibilities. The 1978 Foreign Maid Scheme passed by the government opened up new possibilities for women. Foreign domestic workers could now come to Singapore on short-term visas of two years. Managing a household in Singapore had suddenly become easier, local domestic responsibilities now being outsourced to foreign women willing to serve in that capacity. This legislation was followed by another one in 1989 with even more incentives for working women. The government was now offering a tax reduction to all married women, permitting the deduction of all wages paid to a domestic worker employed by her, provided such wages were paid from a woman's own earned income. These incentives worked as planned. Singaporean women in increasing numbers chose to pursue higher education and employment, whilst hiring maids to manage their homes and households. The government in turn benefited from additional taxes and dues imposed on this migrant labor flow. A maid levy

37 Ibid, 165-166.
enacted on all mistresses in Singapore employing a foreign maid generated a new revenue stream of approximately US$4 million annually for the government coffers.38

These state efforts were extremely successful. The numbers of women in Singapore pursuing college degrees increased considerably and their participation in the labor force rose significantly in the post-colonial years, a sizeable majority choosing to work outside the home. New problems now developed. The numbers of Singapore's highly educated women remaining unmarried grew as well, prompting government concerns about this new trend. Worried about declining population growth in the island nation, the government sought both explanations and solutions. Its conclusion was a gendered one. According to the government, Southeast Asia's traditional and still patriarchal society was clearly to blame. It was apparent that Asian men preferred submissive wives. This belief found expression in the highest offices of government, including the office of the Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, never a man to mince words. To government officials, it seemed obvious that Singapore's men preferred to marry down, to marry women clear about their role in the household, women who generally had not pursued college degrees. New government policies were again an understandable solution. The new trend pushed the government into establishing a new and official, Social Development Unit, to serve as a matchmaking service for college graduates.39

Reflected in the context of Singapore's Great Marriage Debate, these government policies in 1983 served as a lightning rod for public discussion. Culture and tradition had their dictates and gender roles were changing, but certainly not without some resistance. Patriarchy was deeply rooted in local society, but development and the dictates of the national political economy demanded change. Migrant domestic workers now had an even larger role to play in local society than ever before.

Malaysia followed a similar pathway after it gained its independence from Britain in 1957. The new post-colonial state emphasized accelerated national industrial development to foster increased participation in the global economy. This resulted in steady domestic economic growth and encouraged the broad participation of Malaysian women in the nation's emerging manufacturing sector. The emphasis on economic advancement simultaneously led to growing urbanization and peasants with limited education and few skills quickly populated Malaysia's rapidly growing towns in ever enlarging numbers. Enticing new possibilities of finding factory work in the cities encouraged increasing numbers of peasant women to relocate from interior villages in rural areas into the country's growing metropolitan centers. Industrialization, however, lagged behind urban development. Growing numbers of women from the countryside were pushed into accepting jobs as domestic servants. Rising opportunities for factory work through the next decade, however, would pull expanding numbers of poor Malaysian women away from the home and on to factory floors and migrants from Indonesia quickly took their place in the home.40

Communal problems in the broadly multiethnic country were quick to arise. National economic and social development in Malaysia was complicated by both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic rivalries within the country. Race riots in 1969 resulted in the launch of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971. The NEP was a broad-based affirmative action development program privileging the native Malay population. Not all Malays seemed to benefit equally from it. Rising public anger about the unequal distribution of opportunity and wealth took many forms and the government's policies shifted to meet these new challenges.40 Some of the social unrest found expression as a religious revival seemingly triggered by societal concerns over declining standards of female morality in the workplace. The Malaysian government under new leadership worked to placate a restless public and resorted to encouraging older and more traditional norms of gendered behavior. In a surprising turn, a National Population Policy emerged in 1984 in response to this public pressure. Offering an explanation, Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohammed encouraged upper middle-class women to stay at home and raise large families in service of their nation. The declining population growth, he argued, was detrimental to the nation's future economic needs. More legislation was soon to follow quickly becoming an effective governmental tool to deal with the country's social problems. New tax and employment laws followed in support of the government's efforts encouraging Malaysian family life.41

38 Noor Abdul Rahman, Brenda S. A. Yeoh and Shirlena Huang, "Dignity Overdue; Transnational Domestic Workers in Singapore," in Shirlena Huang et al. (eds), Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers (Singapore, 2006), 233.
40 Chin, In Service and Sacrifice, 79-81.
41 Ibid, 58-62. Chin outlines for us the complexity of Malaysian political development, which was impacted by national, regional as well as global forces.
New state policies for development, economic growth and the broad-based solution to chronic national unemployment. Indonesian women became a national asset, their value now calculated through the remittances they provided to the national economy. Remittances by Indonesian migrant workers grew from US$10 million in 1983 to a staggering US$7.2 billion in 2012. New state policies for development, economic growth and the service of Indonesia’s international debt now consistently and increasingly depended on increased flows of female migrant labor working overseas and the remittances they contributed to the national budget.

The complexity of the problem thus becomes quite apparent, the global South leave behind the security of their families and kinship networks. Poor women from rural areas in Indonesia as well as other countries in the Global South leave behind the security of their families and kinship networks for a chance to break out of the old and domesticated. It accords them a new personal autonomy, limited though it is by their place within their borders and boundaries.

Such use of immigration and economic policy to satisfy domestic needs was not limited to Singapore and Malaysia. Indonesia faced chronic unemployment within its borders and the Indonesian state under President Suharto first encouraged women to retain local culture and tradition and remain domesticated. It would only take a few years before Indonesia recognized the untapped economic potential of the nation’s millions of women. Faced with continued low literacy rates and limited resources to be invested in education.

Despite the problems associated with this movement of women, there is a silver lining to be found. It is important to recognize that there is still agency and an element of choice at work. Despite tradition and the pressures of patriarchy, individual women still make the decisions that determine the role they wish to play in the world. For these women, migration for work offers tremendous advantages. Reminiscent of the perspectives expressed by the Cantonese amahs of the early twentieth century, employment as a domestic worker overseas today gives these women a chance to break out of the old and ashamedly familiar patriarchal structures that they see as restricting their lives. It accords them a new personal autonomy, limited though it is by their placement in a globalized domestic sphere subject to the control of others. In fact, these women willingly leave behind their security and kinship networks for

43 Aid. 56-57.
44 Christina B. N. Chin, "Neither at Work, nor at Home: Asian Transnational Domestic Workers in Malaysia," in Shirlena Huang et al. (eds), Asian Women as Transnational Domestic Workers (Singapore 2005), 26.
45 Aid. 86-87.
46 M. Rajah, "When Sweeping is a Burden, The Star 17 September 2003.
such work overseas because these jobs offer them an upward mobility and a potential to jump to a middle class status in their villages on their return.

The personal choice or independence they exercise both in their decision to seek these jobs, and in their performance at work, are expressions of a new and much desired modernity that they crave for in leaving behind their traditional lives. Working abroad is seen as exciting, cities they apply to offering a new enjoyment, an alternative way of life. For Indonesian women, this opportunity starts with jobs in Malaysia, a country with a shared language and religion, which offers them the chance to work for better payment than they could expect to earn within their own country. For these poor rural women, improved skills acquired in these jobs are rewarded with even better possibilities: jobs in Singapore with even better prospects in their quest for an upward mobility.

For wealthy mistresses, the concerns are different. Beyond the pressures of their work outside of the home, their role is expanded past caring for and protecting their own families and now includes their nation writ large. Public concerns about the strangers in their midst requires that they also police migrant women, the poor maids they employ. National governments have delegated their responsibility to police national borders. These responsibilities are now assigned to wealthy women employing servants. Mistresses in the nation pay security bonds into national coffers and this money is forfeited should a migrant domestic worker fail to leave after expiration of their two-year work permit. Pregnant maids are another problem. Migrant women found to be pregnant are required to leave immediately. With maids seeking excitement and a new life, the struggle between mistresses and maids for power and control are a natural and obvious outcome.

Conclusion

The latest reports suggest that the Indonesian government is preparing to ban the migration of Indonesian women for domestic work overseas in 2017 unless specific conditions for their protection abroad are met. This new development is of serious concern to the mistresses they serve. As is noted in a recent editorial in a Malaysian newspaper, for Malaysians, life without maids means having to knock down to a more domesticated life — putting the office in its place by leaving for home on time; going home to cook and eat as a family and spending weekends doing household chores. In short, an ordinary life... so

As I have shown, domestic service in wealthy households in the region became increasingly popular in the late colonial period, reinforcing older hierarchical structures and deepening cleavages within local societies. These differences within society, between wealthy and poor women, were acerbated, the economic development policies of post-colonial national governments were focused on national progress and development.

A cessation of migration of Indonesian women for domestic service in Malaysia may prove to be the end of the influences of the colonial era. It might even suggest the end of the adopted symbols of status, such symbols of wealth and privilege slowly drawing to a close in the region approximately half a century after the British Empire officially pulled out and the Union Jack was lowered for the last time. It remains to be seen, however, if the public accepts such changes, if such benefits and privileges are indeed ceded by those who enjoy them most or if new pressures will be brought to bear on the governments of the region to continue these practices.

As is true of all transnational history, much of the history of this region has been studied in isolation, but there are intricacies of interactions and influences across time and across national boundaries that offer us greater insight when viewed as a whole. This chapter is an attempt to understand the roles women play in Southeast Asia in the countries of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia as both mistresses and maids and examines their antecedents and the complexities that bind them. It traces societal changes through the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, addressing the region's colonial past, ongoing development efforts and their legacies. Despite the introduction of ideas from the West through the colonial period and the integration of the region into the larger global economy, gender roles have proven surprisingly resistant to significant change. Women have indeed taken on additional responsibilities in the workplace and to their nations, some poor women even relinquishing the protections due to them by working overseas. We can certainly applaud their progressively indispensable contributions to their nations but we must pay greater attention to their needs, migrant domestic workers becoming more and more visible around the world as they traverse the globe in ever growing numbers.
CHAPTER 17

Migrant Domestic Work through the Lens of "Coloniality": Narratives from Eritrean Afro-Surinamese Women

Sabrina Marchetti

Introduction

In the current debate on the international division of reproductive labor,4 little attention has been devoted so far to the way historical legacies, especially in relation to colonialism, nurture the representations of migrant domestic workers. This chapter aims to take up this issue by embracing a "coloniality of power" perspective.5 By focusing on migrant workers from countries that are former European colonies, I argue that images and values inherited from colonial times still shape how the performance of paid domestic work is constructed in a crucial way. In order to study this, two case studies have been selected, one of Surinamese women who migrated to the Netherlands and one of Eritrean women who moved to Italy. In both cases, women migrated to the country that was their homeland's former colonizer in order to work in the domestic sector - mainly taking up jobs such as cleaning, cooking, care of the elderly and childcare in private homes.

This chapter is based on thirty in-depth interviews with women who migrated from Eritrea to Italy and from Suriname to the Netherlands during the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, I compare their narratives about their dissimilar relationships with their former colonizers before and after their migrations. In this comparison significant differences emerge, which - I argue - can be connected with the distinct manner in which the interactions between the colonizers and the colonized had taken shape in Eritrea and Suriname. Moreover, I aim to show how the Afro-Surinamese and Eritrean interviewees "use" colonial ties in their narratives in different ways in order to...

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4 Grosfoguel, Colonial Subjects, 187.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
In this perspective, the present study contributes to the debate on the inter-
national division of reproductive labor which has thus far primarily dem-
strated how paid domestic work performed by migrants is embedded in a 
system of labor division grounded on gendered and ethnicized assumptions. 
Scholars such as Raquel Salazar Parreñas, Bridget Anderson, Pei Chia Lan and 
Nicole Constable have convincingly shown how gender and ethnicity affect 
the formation of domestic work as a labor opportunity for Filipinas on a global 
scale. Along the same lines, Barbara Ehrenreich has argued that this system 
has brought migrant women to be seen as people who embody traditional gendered skills. Others have shown how the interconnection between gender and migration shapes the experience of workers in this specific labor sector, in Europe and beyond. Concerning Italy, major work has been done along similar lines, amongst others by Jaqueline Andall, Lena Ndre and Francesca Scrinzi. In the Netherlands, Sarah Van Walsum and Sjoukje Batman have provided groundbreaking analyses of migrant domestic work.


My intention is to complement this debate with an awareness of the colonial roots of the gendered and ethnicized assumptions that are attached to migrant women in domestic work. In order to accomplish this, it is of the greatest importance to look at the reality of domestic work during colonial times. Some important research has been done on the experience of servants who worked in colonial households in Bengal, Zambia, the Philippines and British Australia. The work of Victoria Haskins on the employment of "boriginal women by white families is also of particular relevance for the case of Australia," as is the chapter by Robyn Allyce Pariser in this volume about domestic servants in colonial Tanganyika.

With regards to Dutch colonialism in Indonesia, the key studies by Ann Stoler and Elsbeth Locher-Scholten discuss the experience of indigenous servants in Indonesia. Mainly using archival and literary sources, Locher-Scholten shows the importance of psychological and ideological separation strategies between masters and their servants in order to strengthen the prestige and superiority of the Dutch colonizers. In a similar vein, Ann Stoler, together with Karen Strassler, conducted several interviews with Indonesians who worked in Dutch colonial homes between the 1920s and the 1950s. To my knowledge, however, a study on colonial domestic servants has not been performed regarding Eritrea and Suriname. However, the related literature shows the great importance of black women in the reproduction of the colonial household, and explores the different ways in which they were incorporated in it.

Colonial Suriname's economy was largely based on the cultivation of sugar, coffee, cocoa and cotton, which was carried out on plantations by slaves.


17 Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, Women and the Colonial State: Essays on Gender and Modernity in the Netherlands Indies, 1800-1942 (Amsterdam, 2000).

brought by the Dutch themselves from West Africa. At the same time, domestic slaves, especially women, were employed in the Dutch masters' houses, to help the few white (or light-skinned) mistresses with domestic chores or the care of the families. Various stories are told and still circulate in Afro-Surinamese communities, many of them regarding enslaved women. One of them, for example, is the story of Slavin Alida, a domestic slave famous for her endurance of her mistress's tortures, usually taken as an example of the fierce character of Afro-Surinamese women. Equally prominent in the collective memory is her mistress Maria Susanna du Plessis, who is represented as extraordinarily cruel.

For Eritrea, feminist historians have concentrated on a form of concubinage called "madamato," through which Eritrean women were used by Italian men for both domestic and sexual services. This type of relationship was partially accepted by the local population because traditional marriage in Eritrea was similarly based on informal agreements. Through this madamato arrangement, Italian men could "informally" unite with Eritrean girls, finding in them devoted spouses. It is also very relevant that the colonization of Eritrea did not involve a plantation economy and forced slavery. This enabled Italians to portray their colonial enterprise as "poor and human," and it was often defined as "tramp colonialism" (colonialismo straccione). This form of colonialism corresponded with a representation of Italians as "good fellows" (brava gente), always in friendly relationships with the locals. Only in recent years has this image been challenged by scholars demonstrating that the Italian presence in Eritrea was characterized by a high level of oppression of the local population, inflicted along sexual and racial lines.

In conclusion, the stories and representations that still circulate today about Surinamese slaves and Eritrean concubines differ in the various ways in which local women were incorporated into the social structure of the colonies, following different patterns of sexualization and domestication of the colonized subjects.

Empirical Data

As mentioned, this research is based on interviews with Eritrean women living in Rome and Afro-Surinamese women in Rotterdam. From February 2007 to December 2008, I undertook several rounds of fieldwork through which I collected a total of 30 in-depth interviews (15 in Rome and 15 in Rotterdam), which form the basis of my analysis. I also partook in conversations with gatekeepers, key informants, and in some cases conducted participant observations during women's gatherings. My main aim was to reach people in multiple venues in order to maximize my sample variety. This variety of venues was achieved by a combination of the snowballing method, and a multiplication of gatekeepers and meeting places.

The fundamental principles shaping the definition of my sample of interviewees are the time of their migration, which I strictly limited up to and including 1980, and the fact that these women at some point in their lives worked in the care or domestic sector. Another fundamental criterion was that these women were primary migrants, people who migrated "alone" as adolescents or adults, i.e. children or teenagers travelling with their families were excluded. I considered this criterion critical in order to focus on women who were possibly in need of work for their self-sustainment.

21 However, these Italo-Eritrean relationships had a painful fate after the promulgation of the Fascist Racial Laws (1937) which prohibited Italians from having intimate and sexual relationships with colonized populations.
22 Concerning the sexual and racial policies of the Italian colonialism in Eritrea, see amongst others Giulia Barrera, Dangerous Liaisons.

23 The main references on sexuality and domestication in colonial settings are Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context (London/New York, 1995) and Stolen, Race and the Education of Desire.
Eventually, my sample turned out to be predominantly composed of women who were born before 1946 in both fieldwork locations. The oldest interviewees were born in 1930 in both groups (the Surinamese Elfriede and the Eritrean Anna), while the youngest amongst the Eritreans was born in 1962 (Luisa) and amongst the Surinamese in 1956 (Cynthia). Their ages on arrival turned out to be substantially different between the two groups: for the Afro-Surinamese it tended to be between 26 and 32 years, while for Eritreans the range was broader. The sample was also predominantly composed of women without children, in the Eritrean case amounting to eleven women (all single) and in the Surinamese case to nine (five single and four married). The level of education received before departure varied greatly between the two groups; amongst the Surinamese, ten had a secondary school diploma and two even had a higher level qualification, while the majority of Eritreans only had a primary school education and a few were illiterate (three people). Regarding religion, the Eritreans were evenly distributed between Catholics and Coptics, while the Afro-Surinamese were predominantly Protestants and in a smaller proportion Catholic.

Finally, with regard to the wider framework of migration, the contexts differed significantly between the cities of Rome and Rotterdam. At the moment of starting the fieldwork, the number of Surinamese women living in Rotterdam was 16,942, which corresponded to 27% of the non-western foreign women living in the city.20 In Rome, instead, the number of Eritrean women was only 1,163.21 Although this means that almost one-third (30%) of the 3,926 Eritrean women living in Italy were in Rome, they represented only 1% of the entire female migrant population in the city (110,356 women).

Surinamese and Eritrean migrants to their former colonizers’ countries thus have very distinctive characteristics. I have shown above that their national histories, their educational level and their religion make them two very distinct social groups in the receiving countries, both in qualitative and in quantitative terms. Another important dissimilarity concerns the period and the character of their historical colonial domination. While Dutch rule in Suriname lasted for several centuries (1667–1975), Italy’s domination of Eritrea lasted less than one century (1869–1941) and had less of an economic-cultural impact than the Dutch in Suriname.22 Another important disparity concerns citizenship status: all of the Afro-Surinamese who migrated before 1980 already had Dutch citizenship on arrival, while the Eritreans never had access to Italian citizenship before their migration, a crucial difference that strongly influenced the circumstances of their arrival.

The two groups, however, also have many similarities. First of all, once in Europe both the Afro-Surinamese and the Eritrean interviewees were channelled into jobs as domestics and caretakers, which have a negative reputation both in the Netherlands and in Italy. This put them in the subordinate position of female “subaltern others.” Second, both groups came from countries with troublesome political and socio-economic backgrounds. Moreover, despite the positive political and diplomatic relationships of both Eritrea and Suriname with their former colonizers, as their independence was not due to a struggle but rather to consensual agreement, both migrant groups encountered racism, difficult integration, and scarcity of job opportunities in the country of settlement. Finally, the fact that the period of migration of the two groups overlaps is also important, and the year 1975 was crucial in both cases, as I will show in the next paragraph.

A Comparison between Surinamese and Eritrean "Postcolonial Migrations"

At first sight, one might be puzzled by the great differences between the profiles of my interviewees. However, the more I explored the backgrounds of the two groups, in particular in relation to the history of their decolonization and of their migration towards Europe, the more I became convinced that one could find interesting points of comparison between the two. On a general level, their migration can be seen as part of a wider movement of migrants from Africa and the Caribbean towards their former colonizing countries in Europe, which is generally referred to as “postcolonial migration.”

25 All names are pseudonyms.

26 This number includes all the Surinamese ethnic groups (Afro-Surinamese, Hindustani, Chinese and Javanese) among which, however, the Afro-Surinamese are the majority.

27 Mies van Nieker, ‘De krekel en de mier’: Façons et faits sur la construction des identités de la Creoolse en Hindoestaanse Surinaamers in Nederland (Amsterdam, 2000).

28 For a history of Dutch colonialism in Suriname, see Eveline Bakker et al., Geschiedenis van Suriname: Van slaven tot staat (Zutphen, 1989); Sandew Ha, Van prijs tot en met de Koe (De geschiedenis van het vee in Suriname, 1667–1894) (Rotterdam, 1982). For the Italian history in Eritrea, see Tesfaye Negash, Italian Colonialism in Eritrea, 1882–1941: Policies, Praxis and Impact (Uppsala, 1987); and Angelo Del Boca, Gli italiani in Africa Orientale: La caduta dell’impero: la conquista dell’impero (Milano, 1992).

29 For a list of interviews, see Mies van Nieker, ‘De krekel en de mier’: Façons et faits sur la construction des identités de la Creoolse en Hindoestaanse Surinaamers in Nederland (Amsterdam, 1994).
From a postcolonial perspective, I should emphasize that for both groups it was important to choose their former colonizer as their first country of destination. In fact, I suggest that this choice was based on the "bond" which existed with these countries due to decades - even centuries in the case of the Surinamese - of cultural and economic predominance in their lands. My analysis of the narratives of the Surinamese and Eritrean domestic workers focuses on this shared aspect of the migratory history of these two groups by looking at the way this bond has impacted on how migrants make sense of their personal and working trajectories.

Before going into this analysis, I will first provide a periodization of Surinamese/Eritrean migrations towards the Netherlands/Italy. For both groups, the year 1975 turned out to be a crucial turning point in their national histories. In 1975 the Surinamese people in Paramaribo declared their independence from the Dutch Kingdom, while the Eritrean-Ethiopian war exploded in Asmara in the same year. Consequently, in both cases the year 1975 inaugurated decades of political tension, civil war and economic impoverishment.

In relation to this, the pace of the migrations from these two countries was strikingly similar. In both cases, there was a small but significant group of people - both men and women - who left between the late 1950s and early 1970s. They seem to have been pushed by a general desire to travel and work abroad, maybe for a short time, with the prospect that they would be returning to their country within a few years. However, most of them ended up "trapped" in Italy/the Netherlands due to the sudden change of political and socioeconomic conditions in their home countries, forcing them to postpone their return, which in the end actually never took place. Amongst my interviewees, this particular group of migrants is better represented amongst the Surinamese, with nine women arriving between 1962 and 1972, while amongst the Eritreans there are six interviews who arrived between 1960 and 1973.

The numbers of Eritrean/Surinamese migrants increased in the years 1974–1975, and one can see a peak in the number of departures in clear correspondence with the threat of the above-mentioned political events in 1975.

30 On the history of Surinamese migration towards the Netherlands, see Lucassen and Penninx, Nieuwkomers, nakomelingen, Nederlanders and Theo J.M. Reubsaet, J.A. Kropman and L.M. Van Muller, Surinaamse migranten in Nederland: De positie van Surinamers in de Nederlandse samenleving, dec (Nijmegen, 1982). On Eritrean migration to Italy, it is difficult to find a comprehensive account, yet the following can be useful references as the earliest studies: Alessandra Aminchi, "La comunità eritrea," Dossier Europa Emigrazione XII (1987); and Francesca Scialzo, "Stranieri in Italia: La comunità eritrea a marocchina nell'area romana attraverso ricorrenze biografiche, Dossier Europa Emigrazione IX (1984).

Pre-migratory Phase: Growing Up in the Colonies

In this section I do something which may be unusual for a study on paid domestic work: I look into the interviewees' narratives by starting in the period before they had acquired their common identity as care and domestic workers in Europe. This analysis shows that they already had much in common: as young girls they grew up in the cultural hegemony of a European country that later turned out to be their country of migration and settlement. I will show that during their youth, their imagination and cultural upbringing was already directed towards Italy and the Netherlands. These girls had familiarized themselves with the Italians and Dutch who lived in Asmara and Paramaribo. This shows the importance of the colonized people's investment in their colonizers' cultural identity, a phenomenon which is extremely relevant in the experience of migrant domestic workers as postcolonial subjects.

However there are important differences in these processes of identity formation between the Surinamese case and the Eritrean one. Throughout the long domination of Suriname by the Dutch, great emphasis was put on school and religious education as a way to create a commonality between the citizens and colonial subjects of the Dutch Kingdom. In the case of Suriname, this has been described as a process of Netherlandization, which...
targeted Afro-Surinamese children and youngsters in particular.\textsuperscript{32} The results of this intervention are well illustrated by one interviewee, Georgina who stated:

Look, in Suriname you were raised as Dutch. Your language is Dutch, your school is Dutch. You know, you know some places in the Netherlands. The Hague, Amsterdam, Utrecht. You learn about them. You learn how they dress. [...] We were black and this [the Netherlands] was the white part...and only a "river," the sea, divided us from each other. But exactly the same education that you had there, you had it here, So, you are a "black Dutch." Only, you are born in Suriname, South-America, GEORGINA, born in 1940, arrived in Italy in 1969.

With these words, Georgina provides an image of Suriname and the Netherlands as an "imagined community" living under the same flag, speaking the same language, reading the same books \textit{et cetera}, and thus sharing the same national identity.\textsuperscript{33} In this context, she refers to the hybrid of "the Black Dutch": people that have absorbed the culture, the language and the knowledge related to "being Dutch," and yet maintain their skin color as a sign of their difference, as a symbol of their geographical and cultural roots. Moreover, Georgina refers to the image of the "river" (which stands for the Atlantic Ocean) cutting the Netherlands in two parts, a white and a black one. This was a common trope in the Surinamese rhetoric of the last decades, used to emphasize the bond and connection as well as the divide between contemporary Suriname and the Netherlands since independence in 1975\textsuperscript{34}

On the other hand, there is the Eritreans' relationship with Italy. It is vital to know that during much of their presence in Eritrea, and in contrast with many other colonizers, the Italians forbade access to schools and education to most local children. Eritrea was mainly conquered for the purpose of military expansion. The main forms of incorporation of Eritreans into the colonizers' society were through forced recruitment of \textit{askari} soldiers (for further expansion towards Ethiopia and Libya) for men, and through the \textit{madamato}, which has already been described, for women. It is in this context that the Italian rhetoric, especially during Fascism, tended to create a bond between colonizers and colonized. The connection was not based on a supposed equality, but rather on a hierarchical relationship in which Italians "favoured" Eritreans among others, praising their superiority in comparison to other Africans and their trustworthy attitude towards them.\textsuperscript{35} It was a rhetoric fundamentally based on the idea of \textit{privileged bond} and on the image of Eritrea as Italy's "first-born colony" (\textit{colonia primogenita}). This historical bond still manifests itself today in Eritrean migrants' expectations of benevolent treatment in Italy - although it must be noted that these expectations are also colored by the Eritreans' need to come to terms with past oppressions. One of the interviewees explains these intricate feelings by saying:

Our parents always spoke well about Italy: what [Italians] did during the domination, how they entered Eritrea... [...] These are bad stories, a bit. But [our parents] did not tell them. They don't tell bad things. [...] My uncles and my father fought in Libya, they were \textit{askaris} [...] So, they always told us good things about Italians. But if you have a look at history, [...] there are many [Eritreans] that suffered. Eritreans suffered. [...] Now Eritreans should have been, not [only] now, "privileged," a bit.

OLGA, born in 1951, arrived in Italy in 1971.

In these few lines, we find the importance of the "filtering" of information. The older generation clearly aimed to give a positive depiction of Italians, and in so doing revealed a conciliatory attitude when it came to historical transmission between generations.\textsuperscript{36} This also needs to be contextualized within the specific political conditions of Eritrea under British domination in the 1950s, when the ties with Italy were emphasized for the purpose of propaganda against the new occupiers. Olga is also making use of self-victimizing representations, such as those of Eritreans enduring suffering and submission. However, from these feelings she concludes that Italy must acknowledge a "privileged status" for the Eritreans of today, recognizing the sacrifice of their ancestors who fought as \textit{askaris} for Italians.

\textsuperscript{32} Lila Gobardhan-Rambocus, \textit{Onderwijs als sleutel tot maatschappelijke vooruitgang: een taal-onderwijsgeschiedenis van Suriname}, 76-95 (Zutphen, 2001).


\textsuperscript{34} Guno Jones, \textit{Tussen onderdanen, rifksgenoten en Nederlanders: Nederlandse politici over burgers uit Oost & West en Nederland} (7945-2005) (Amsterdam, 2007).

\textsuperscript{35} Giampaolo Calchi Novati, "National" Identities as By-product of Italian Colonialism: A Comparison of Eritrea and Somalia," in Andall and Duncan (eds), \textit{Italian Colonialism}, 47-74.

In conclusion, in the case of the Surinamese women one can observe a conception of the relationship with the colonizers as belonging to the same "imagined community". The majority of Afro-Surinamese interviewees tended to depict themselves as Dutch "like the others," the only difference from the white Dutch being the color of their skin. In the case of the Eritreans, the relationship is repeatedly articulated, in all the interviews, around the hierarchical view of a privileged "bond," rather than around the idea of equality. These differences have, of course, a practical realization in the fact that while the Afro-Surinamese were entitled to Dutch citizenship in 1954, the Eritreans have always remained "subjects" under Italian colonial rules.

These differences between the narratives of the two groups will resurface in the discussion in the following sections, as they are reflected in the different conceptualizations of relationships with the colonizers and the Dutch upon the arrival of the migrants in the countries of their former colonizers.

After Migration: Entry into Domestic Work

After having migrated, all the interviewees — some for a few years, others for all their lives — performed paid domestic work. This mainly consisted of cleaning, cooking, and caring for old people and children in the private houses of Italian Dutch families. However, it is important to note that the mechanisms for entry in this labor sector were significantly different in the cases of the Afro-Surinamese in the Netherlands and of the Eritreans in Italy. Indeed, while in the Eritrean case first employment was found predominantly through personal contacts in order to organize work in advance from Eritrea, the Afro-Surinamese found their first jobs only after their arrival in the destination country and mainly through agencies. An important explanation for this difference is that Eritreans mentioned employment in the domestic sector more directly as the motivation for their migration, while the Afro-Surinamese presented a variety of motivations for their choice to emigrate: a general improvement of their socio-economic conditions (yet not directly linked to any specific job opportunity) or reunion with a husband or fiancé who had left Suriname some time earlier. Indeed, the Afro-Surinamese interviewees often started this work only after previous working experiences in factories or offices, or after a period of unemployment.

However, there are strong commonalities in the influence of the colonizer-onized relationship in characterizing the interviewees' entry to the sector at the level of representation and identity formation. These show the impact of the "coloniality of power" on the international division of reproductive labor, due to the relevance of historical roots in shaping gendered and ethnicized assumptions, which play a crucial role. In this light, it is essential to look at the colonial legacies at work at the level of the representations that accompanied the entry of the Afro-Surinamese and Eritrean interviewees in their specific labor sector. Looking at these narratives is a fundamental step, in my view, to understanding how individual subjects "make sense" of their personal lives and working trajectories and how external forces and historical contingencies have pushed them in one direction rather than in another. In other words, "understanding how migrant workers "made sense" of their trajectories means comprehending their process of coming to an awareness of their specific subordinate position and role in the host society.

There is one important difference in how the two groups remember their entry into the sector. While the Eritreans saw themselves as "substitutes" of the working-class Italian women that previously occupied the same sector, the Afro-Surinamese migrants saw themselves as contributing to the expansion of a labor sector that was instead previously almost non-existent. This difference carries some important implications, which I will later illustrate.

Let us first see how the Eritreans express the belief that they were simply "taking the place" of those Italians who did not want to do paid domestic work any longer. This is the way in which Anna puts it:

> When [Italians] got pissed off, [Eritreans] came to take their place, they came in this way. Eh no... I say... What Italians left, [Eritreans] took. [...] What Italians didn't want to do. [...] There were all those domestics in Italy... [but] it was no longer well looked upon as a job for Italian people... Then it came easy for them to ask, for little money, the girls from Eritrea! [...] The Italians knew that we were good at working, because they were there! ANNA, born in 1930, arrived in Italy in 1967

Thus, "the girls from Eritrea" were the best candidates for solving "the problem" of caring and cleaning in Italian households, which during the 1960s-1970s slowly started to recruit women from Cape Verde, the Philippines, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Of all these foreigners, the Eritrean interviewees said they were

37 Jones, Tussen onderdanen, riijkgenoten en Nederlandsers.
38 Marongiu Bonaiuti, Politico e religioni nel colonialismo italiano (1882-1940) (Roma, 1982).
preferred on the basis of the colonial ties that made it possible for Italian
parents to appreciate those qualities that I have mentioned above. They describe Eritrean
women as possessing the gendered and ethnicized characteristics (traditional
nurture, docility, endurance of sacrifice) that, as I will show in the next para-

Around the same time, Dutch people seemed to have also started to employ
foreigners, especially Caribbean and Surinamese women, in the private home
careservice sector for the elderly. In the Netherlands, this sector was already
somewhat bureaucratized with several agencies being in charge of most of the
job placements. Several interviewees remember that these agencies were often
run by other Surinamese or Caribbean migrants, who were particularly keen
on finding more co-nationals. Raurette explains:

It all started with the Surinamese...and the big part at the beginning, in
the 60s, was done by Surinamese women. It was a Surinamese or Antillean
woman who started the agency. 'Cause she came here...and she said:
"In Suriname our elderly...we care for them! There aren't nursing homes,'
[...] This was private. So it went through word-of-mouth.

RAURETTE, born in 1941, arrived in the Netherlands in 1965

This quote contains in a nutshell a recurrent idea regarding the association
between Surinamese women and caring skills. It revolves around the gendered
and ethnicized representation of Afro-Surinamese women as ever-nurturing,
which is embedded in the view of Suriname as a traditional society. What is
relevant here is that this essentialist move supports the interviewees in seeing
their contribution to the care sector in the Netherlands as highly important
and worthwhile.

Before going into a discussion of the impact of colonial times on the
migrants' views on their skills in the next section, it is important to consider
how the entry of the Eritrean and Surinamese interviewees in their labor
sectors was understood in two very different ways. Both ways broadly refer to a
process of "ethnic niching," 40 within which I identify two modalities: one is at
play when a "new" group takes over a niche previously occupied by another
group; the other when newcomer migrants introduce a new type of work,
selling new products or offering new services which were previously rare or
unknown in the society of settlement. I suggest that while the Eritreans see

themselves as belonging more to the first alternative, the Afro-Surinamese
portray themselves rather as having brought about an expansion of a home-
care

job. But let us see what skills were considered crucial for employment in
this sector.

Competition or Privilege: "Coloniality" in Domestic Workers' Skills

In making sense of their experience in this specific labor sector, the interview-
ees tend to represent their working skills as "ethnicized," i.e. pertaining to
people with their specific ethnic background rather than to others. With this, I
refer to their identification with "being Eritrean" or "being Surinamese" as an
identification that descends from a complex historical and cultural process,
which typically especially happens in the cases of former colonized people
for whom the formation of a national identity has been crucially shaped by
a history of domination. It relates to what I call the "ethnicization of care
and domestic skills" and which is based on the belief that specific caring and
domestic skills belong more to one ethnicized group than to others. Such a
belief is taken as an explanation for the specific performance of each group
in this labor sector, in which pre-migratory experiences are described as func-
tional to the same performance. When, as in this case, it takes place in the

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40 Suzanne Model, "The Ethnic Niche and the Structure of Opportunity: Immigrants and
Minorities in New York City," in M. Katz (ed.) The Underclass Debate: Views from History


42 Anderson, Doing the Dirty Work?
We have already seen how Afro-Surinamese migrants emphasize the relevance of their nurturing qualities to their work experience: they are a gift, depository of traditional values in relation to domesticity and care for older generations. What is interesting in comparison with the Eritreans is that the Afro-Surinamese see their skills in caring and cleaning as an element of competition with the Dutch when accomplishing the same domestic tasks. In so doing, they seem to reverse the hierarchy with the former colonizers, thanks to being "cleaner" and more "careful" with the elderly than the Dutch. Let us see what Cynthia tells us about cleaning, in comparison to some of the Dutch she met after her arrival:

They [the Dutch] took the cloth to wipe the table with and then they clean the floor with it. This is something very dirty 'for us'! [...] I say, there is one thing I don't want to lose [for being here]: cleanliness. That's the way I've been raised and that's the way I want to stay.

CYNTHIA, born in 1946, in the Netherlands since 1976

From a postcolonial perspective, this view is quite unusual since colonizers are usually thought of as those who brought "superior standards" concerning hygiene, health and sanitation to the colonized. However, Cynthia overturns these standard colonial hierarchies: the Afro-Surinamese ("us") complain of the dirtiness of the Dutch ("they"). This inversion is very interesting, since here one can see a Surinamese woman's attempt to dismantle the superiority of her white counterparts and uplift her own ethnicized origin. Cynthia indeed sees the difference between "clean" and "dirty" behavior as a difference between "us" and "them" — something she is not going to sacrifice in the name of her integration in the Netherlands.

Regarding the ethnicization of the Surinamese's skill when assisting old people, in an interview with another woman we find that:

Surinamese people care with love, to help a person, to put the person at ease. [...] The majority [of Surinamese women] "love" home care. 'Cause they like caring for the elderly, to care for children. It's without a doubt. [...] It comes from our situation. You must care for your parents.

Quijano, "Coloniality of Power."

McClintock, Imperial Leather.

Here again we find a statement justifying why Surinamese are predominantly employed in these jobs in the Netherlands and, in doing so, what makes the skills that they "offer" to Dutch society unique. Franciscas refers to a traditional presentation of her home society that has "travelled" (in Quijano's terms) with her and other Afro-Surinamese women and, once in the Netherlands, makes it "enjoyable" for them to take up jobs in this sector. Here again, we find the tendency to compete with the Dutch by showing how the fact of being 'different' from them is an added value to their labor performance.

This is very different from what happens with the Eritreans. During the interviews, Eritreans repeatedly stressed their capacity to understand Italians' wishes, grounded in the familiarity with Italian customs that they acquired during the colonial times. This kind of narrative is powerfully at play when the Eritrean interviewees talk about "the way Italians see them." For example, Anna told me how, in her opinion, Italians thought of Eritreans:

...they are intelligent. Especially because of this "bond" with Italians, between Eritreans and Italians, they had more trust. Really. Because [in Eritrea] Italy is well known, Italians are well known.

ANNA, born in 1930, in Italy since 1967

The present contribution of Eritrean women to Italian families is a direct result of their colonization. This view brings us back to stereotypical representations about Eritreans that, as I have previously discussed, are related to the histories of askaris and madamas; men and women who, in different ways, were "domesticated" by the Italian colonizers. It is interesting to see how Eritreans found the opportunity for self-representations which emphasize their being "good and reliable" workers with such gendered and ethnicized qualities. Along these lines is the depiction offered by Semira as she positively remembers one of her employers. In order to exemplify the great appreciation that this employer expressed about her, Semira tells that once:

I heard that she advised her friends, "You shouldn't tell them: do this, do that, because they are very responsible, the Eritrean women." She used to say: "They are very reliable and they do everything without saying a word."

I heard her saying so to one of her friends.

SEMIRA, born in 1941, in Italy since 1973
The connotation of Eritreans as trustworthy and submissive ("they do everything without saying a word") brings us back to the colonial past and the central role of the idea of the "first-born colony" in the Italian-Eritrean relationship. In my view, Semira is "using" these colonial legacies in order to describe the gendered and ethnicized skills that, in her opinion, positively characterize the performance of Eritreans. This is an example of, as Jenny Sharpe argues, subjugated women being able to tactically use representations associated with domestic slavery and concubinage for the improvement of their status.  

In conclusion, the Afro-Surinamese and Eritrean interviewees "utilize" their historical bond with their former colonizers in different ways. On one side, the Afro-Surinamese portray themselves as "Black Dutch," competing with their white counterparts in order to challenge the hierarchy between them. They understand their new labor position in the host society as being based on their "difference" from Dutch women, believing that they have brought a contribution to Dutch society by filling the gaps with qualities not readily available before (e.g., cleanliness and care for the elderly). On the other side, the Eritreans emphasize instead a privileged bond based on a benevolent hierarchical relationship between Eritrean and Italian people, which recuperates and idealizes colonial servitude and domesticity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an analysis of the narratives offered by some of the Eritrean and Afro-Surinamese women who arrived in the Netherlands and Italy during the 1960s and 1970s and found employment in the domestic sector. My purpose has been to identify what is in their view the influence of colonial ties in their personal and labor experience.

I have shown that for both groups it is very relevant to take into account the gendered and ethnicized self-representations that took shape in the colonial contexts from which they came. Colonial discourses still shape the way they see their relationship with the Italians/Dutch, revealing a general continuity in this respect between the time before and after their migration. With reference to the framework of "coloniality of power" one could thus rightly say that there is a correspondence between the images and values shaped during the colonial time and those that are attached to migrant workers coming from former colonies, even after the end of colonialism as a historical event.

However, I have also shown how "coloniality" enters in the international division of reproductive labor. Not all migrant women are employed in the domestic labor sector. And those who are, are not necessarily there on the basis of the same gendered and ethnicized assumptions. The case given here is of two groups that have both been channelled into this sector, but on the basis of two very different sets of representations. The differences between them lie in the dissimilarities in the historical relationship between their country of origin and the one of destination as it was shaped during colonial times. While the Afro-Surinamese interviewees entered a more straightforwardly quasi-competitive relationship with the Dutch (in cleaning and caring), but also claiming their belonging to the same nation, the same did not happen with the Eritreans. The latter seem to have more naturally taken up a self-representation as easily domesticated subjects, as the Italians prefer, which is rooted in the rhetoric of the colonial time and in the specific form of sexualization of Eritrean women as "black Venuses" as I have illustrated. This is a very different repertoire from the Surinamese one, in which enslaved women are portrayed as rebelling against their oppressors.

In other terms, for domestic workers migrating from a former colony into the former colonizers' country, the gendered and ethnicized patterns that normally characterize this sector are strongly affected by symbolic and material historical legacies. The specific articulation of these legacies is nurtured by the inheritance of colonial discourses which survive in the imaginations of both the former colonizers and the formerly colonized, and which have metaphorically travelled from the periphery to the centre of the former empire.

From the point of view of the process of subjectification which accompanies migratory experiences, the cases of Eritrean and Afro-Surinamese domestic workers show us the capacity of migrants to take up and incorporate in their narratives certain kinds of representations. These are the representations that support them in "making sense" of their lives and labor experiences as they have been shaped by external forces and historical contingencies. Images and stereotypes such as those of the rebelling woman slave for the Surinamese vs. the docile madama for the Eritreans can eventually turn into powerful tools to express their awareness of the social position and of the role they fill in their host society.

PART 3
From Servitude to Domestic Service: The Role of International Bodies, States, and Elites for the Changing Conditions in Domestic Work between the 19th and 20th Century
Throughout the 20th century discussions about domestic work have focused on the need to endow it with the same rights and the same protection as any other form of paid employment. International bodies, especially the ILO, and many governments have played an important role in implementing labor movement demands for setting standards and improving working conditions. As Eileen Boris and Jennifer Fish show in their contribution, although domestic work was sometimes mentioned in no debates, it always remained an exception until recently. The adoption of ILO convention 189 in 2011 was a milestone not only in the history of domestic work but also in the history of the ILO. It was the first time work in other people’s households became the heart of an ILO convention for decent work. This can be regarded as a response to growing numbers of domestic workers worldwide and the revival of domestic work in the Global North. It was also very much the result of the struggle by a newly established transnational network of domestics and their alliances with internationally active labor organizations.

Despite the fact that domestics continue to be counted among the workers with the lowest wages, the longest working hours and the least social protection, the terms of domestic work have shifted significantly since the beginning of the 20th century. Until the mid-19th century the household had been the main work place for a large share of the world’s population. This changed...
during industrialization when more and more people moved to workplaces outside households. The historical period covered in this section also covers significant shifts in domestic work: the replacement of a personal relationship between servant and master/mistress; and whether it was a form of forced labor, adoption or paid employment with an employer-employee relation.

These were not rapid nor abrupt changes. Rather, as the contribution in this section shows, overlapping structures of both forced and free labor and older forms of domestic labor coexisted with new ones. Newly adopted laws could remain without effect, or application might be difficult because specific institutions of the legal apparatus had different definitions of domestic work in the workplace or domestic workers. Powerful elites were able to maintain life styles built on the work of household slaves or adopted children despite the formal abolition of forced labor and despite changes in legislation.

Today domestic service has become a growing market as a result of increasing global differences in income, feminization of the labor force in the Global North and beyond, privatizations in the public sector, followed by demands for increased flexibility and the growing numbers of families who prioritize their own free time. Migrant domestic workers enable dual breadwinner families to solve the life puzzle despite the decline or lack of welfare states in the Global North.

The contributions in this section deal with these changes and continuities in Morocco, Cyprus, China, Hong Kong, Malaya, Austria, Chile, and Yemen - and assess how they were handled by international bodies such as the ILO and the League of Nations. They cover a range of different conditions of domestic work: forced labor in the case of the slaves; child domestic workers between adoption, slavery and prostitution; and employed domestic workers.

All contributions point to the interwar period as a turning point in debates about the relationship between employers and domestics. Eileen Boris and Jennifer Fish rightly point out that the regulation and recognition of domestic work after the Second World War was unfinished business from the interwar years. From the interwar decades on, the end of slavery, restrictions of child labor and demands for recognition of domestic work as an ordinary form of employment were addressed by international bodies, unions, different social movements and representatives of welfare states, but also by individual domestics in courts. Also, in this period domestic work became increasingly feminized and domestics started to organize in unions for women only. As a consequence, the movement had to face the challenge of organizing and alliance building separately from other organizations in the labor or the women's movement. At the same time domestic work became the object of attempts to professionalize it through research institutes, the emergence of home economics and, after the Second World War, the inclusion of home economics in basic education. Sometimes professionalization was mirrored in the change of names of domestic servants, in the Swedish case from servant (piga) to hemöräde or from maids to domestic workers as recently in South Africa.

In the interwar years an increase in women's work in factories and in service occurred in many regions. Although women have always worked and were often registered by the authorities because they were working in other's households, they were often left out of national employment statistics - especially those women working on their own farms and in domestic service whose work was sometimes deliberately ignored when the aim of national employment statistics shifted at the turn of the 20th century. According to leading statisticians at the time they did not contribute to the gross national product so there was no reason to count them as workers. In parts of Northern Europe this changed during the interwar years. Debates about protecting working women

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5 Anna Gavanas at al., Rensa hem på småisiga ställen: Hushållsförster, migration och globalisering (Göteborg [etc.], 2013).

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7 See the contribution by Dimitris Kalantzopoulos in this volume. For a Swedish example see Yvonne Hindman, dem socialistiska hemmofru och andra kvinnohistorier (Stockholm, 1992); Joy Parr has written about this from the perspective of the development of household appliances after the Second World War in Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral and the Economic in the Postwar Years (Toronto [etc.], 1999). A similar development can be discerned for the former German colonies with the establishment of the Deutsche Frauenkolonialschule in Rendsburg which educated women as domestic workers for the former colonies.

8 This has been pointed out by Yvonne Svantström in her final comment during the 49th ITH conference in September 2013. Changing legal position of domestic workers in South Africa is analyzed brilliantly in Shahen Ally's book From Servants to Workers: South African Workers in the Democratic State (Jhucia [etc.], 2009).

9 Ariadne Schmidt and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk have analyzed the Dutch case in a long term perspective. Their results show that women's work was often recorded early because they were working in others households and because households were the common unit of analysis for a long time. See their "Reconsidering The 'First Male-Breadwinner Economy': Women's Labor Force Participation in the Netherlands, 1600-1900," Feminist Economics, 18:4 (2012), 69-96. Analyses of statistics in Germany, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland show that domestic workers were excluded at the turn to the 20th century when the household was no longer the main unit of analysis, see Hege RolHansen Arbeid og forsørge for.
and mothers probably also contributed to the interest in studying women's working conditions in other areas of women's work beyond that of women in factories. It seems that the interest in women's working conditions in "formal employment" may have simply "spilled over" to domestic service. However, it is more likely that union activists and labor inspectors played an important role in adapting international standards. Another factor may have been that the demand for domestic workers outstripped supply as women began to prefer factory work, as was the case in Sweden. This gave domestic power to negotiate their working conditions — a process which only became codified in a new law long afterwards.

The contributions in this section show that the struggle for improved working conditions and the demand for recognition as part of the formal economy is neither new nor a history of instant changes. Rather it is a sustained history about attempts to improve the working conditions that failed over a long period of time. This section picks up the thread from Dirk Hoerder's historical survey in this volume and deals with the development of the conditions of domestic workers during the 19th century. The contributions analyze the consequences of socio-economic change for domestic workers, their active role in the struggle for better working conditions and the consequences for masters and employers.

The authors highlight the importance of international organizations, states, emerging welfare institutions and the role of activists in transforming servants to workers but they also show the role elites played in maintaining personal relationships despite new laws.

The End of Child and Slave Work? Forms of Forced Labor

Throughout history domestic work has been carried out by the poorer strata all over the world. Social and economic changes have affected who is working for whom and under what circumstances. The terms of domestic work have varied from different types of forced labor such as slavery and child labor tied to families, and more or less official adoptions. These forms of forced labor could involve sexual abuse of women and children and their trafficking. These circumstances caught the attention of international organizations such as the International Labour Organization and the League of Nations and their subcommittees during the interwar period. They became part of a strategy to end child labor, but with an exception for domestic work. The combination of local traditions, colonial interference and international politics did not always lead to an improvement of the situation of the most exploited groups of domestics.

The official abolition of slavery in Morocco during the French protectorate in the 1920s is one example of international interest that did not lead to fundamental changes. Unlike the situation in West Africa, most slaves in Morocco were working in the households of the elites. As David Goodman shows in his contribution on Fes more slaves were freed through the death of their owner or through the official recognition of a child fathered by the owner than through legislation. French administrators intended to maintain rather than to reorganize traditional Moroccan households. And although the public slave market was closed due to international pressure, the trade continued as an exchange among the elites. That the monarchy was one of the largest slave owners is yet another illustration of the fact that the everyday practice of using slaves in domestic work outweighed colonial policies and decrees from the same monarch. Goodman shows that one of the reasons behind the slow decline of slavery was the desperate economic situation of the rural poor, who kept selling their children as slaves to the urban elites of Fes so that the children and their families could survive. The cultural impact of slaves as social status markers among the elite was another reason. The elites' need to have and display slaves only changed when they lost their traditional base of power and had to adopt a new lifestyle. But former slaves needed to find jobs and accommodations just like live-in domestics and many former slaves in Fes became employees of their former owners, working as caretakers or in other jobs.

In many societies children were customarily sold as temporary bound workers or slaves or were given up to work in others' households in either formal or informal adoptions. Adoption often meant that birth parents received money for their children. The attack on child labor at the end of the 19th century

11 See also the chapter by Dirk Hoerder in this volume.
12 In former colonies colonizer representations of domestic work still continue to influence the relationship between employer and employee. See the introduction by Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk to Section 3 and the contributions in this volume by Cooper, Kashyap and Marchetti.
affected this practice, but did not necessarily lead to a change in the practice.

International organizations, such as the League of Nations and the ILO, defined the problems of adopted children working in other household servants. This became evident in the ways the *mui tsai* system, a practice of poorer parents to give their children up for adoption and for work in the households of the elites in Hong Kong and Malaya, was handled. According to Magaly Rodríguez García the League of Nations did not include this system when discussing slavery while the ILO Advisory committee on the traffic in women and children saw it as trafficking and prostitution, and the Anti-slavery committee regarded it as child slavery. From the end of the 1930s, definitions of the problem were rephrased as a matter of child welfare by both the British government and international organizations. One of the challenges was that the *mui tsai* system did not exist in legal terms but constituted a tradition of official adoption in return for a sum of money given to the parents. Such girls could end up somewhere in the hierarchy between biological children and concubines, but unlike hired household workers they were not paid. Interpretations of the *mui tsai* system ranged from Hong Kong elites calling it philanthropy to different groups of activists in Britain and China calling it the exploitation of children as sex slaves. The *mui tsai* system resembled other cases of children and young people working in other people’s households where their work was regarded as an apprenticeship for married life rather than as (temporary) exploitation.

As with the Moroccan case above and the Cypriote case analyzed in Dimitris Kalantzopoulos’ contribution in this volume, British and French colonial authorities did not want to interfere with local traditions and they did not want international organizations to interfere in the domestic issues of those they colonized. In the imperial context the absence of laws and the strong presence of traditions among the elites of regarding the *mui tsai* system as an important way to guide and discipline these girls were regarded as more important than their freedom. These arguments paved the way for the continuity of traditional forms of exploitation of children in domestic work despite investigations of international organizations and the criticism of the international community.

The close relationship between domestic work, adoption, prostitution and slavery also framed the debates and the conditions of domestic work in Cyprus during British colonial rule. In 1933 more than 90 per cent of adopted children worked in other people’s households without pay. As with *mui tsai* and Moroccan domestic slavery, poor parents sold their children into service — but they were officially adopted in exchange for a payment that was supposed to be saved for the girl’s dowry. But even local authorities described the system as child slavery. The British colonial rulers did not manage to impose a minimum need for income. According to Cypriote law domestics under the age of eighteen were servants by definition, paid or unpaid. They had to be registered — though not to protect these working children but rather to keep track of them as many ran away from harsh working conditions and sexual abuse. Many ended up in prostitution. And as with the debates about the *mui tsai* system, legislation and social programs in Cyprus were aimed at child welfare and did not consider the conditions of domestic work.

In their petitions to the Cyprus parliament in the 1940s organized domestics demanded legislation concerning maximum working hours, minimum wages, annual leave and the prohibition of heavy work for underage workers — as well as a minimum age. Domestic workers over the age of 18 had been left totally unprotected by the servant law of 1939. In 1944 a Cyprus labor inspector was sent to investigate the situation of servants, but the legal system remained fundamentally unchanged right through the end of the British colonial period. New legislation on domestic work did regulate working hours and raised the minimum working age for both boys and girls to thirteen, but these provisions were never implemented. Kalantzopoulos shows that the system of child adoption was not only important to the local economy, for both the poor and the elites, but also for the British Empire in a broader sense. As in other regions in the world in this period the introduction of home economics curricula, first in Britain and then in the colonies, was an attempt to spread knowledge about domestic work but also to give it a more professional touch. British colonial officials regarded home economics as an important part of the education for colonial girls. A training center was never established in Cyprus, but Cypriote children remained part of the labor supply for the British colonizers — they worked in the British official’s houses and were recruited for other segments of the Empire. Despite British membership in the ILO the legal system remained unchanged until independence in the 1950s.

Who is working for whom, and where, not only shapes definitions of domestic work but also reflects social hierarchies in different contexts. The case of the Moroccan elite’s use of slaves, the Hong Kong elite’s use of *mui tsai* and the British colonial administrators’ employment of adopted Cypriote girls all show that the employment of domestics was at the core of an elite lifestyle. The same holds true for the growing numbers of middle-class families who employ migrant domestic workers to combine a socially active lifestyle with a dual breadwinner system.

Marina de Regt shows how the rising middle class in urban Yemen has socially constructed hierarchies among migrant women domestics by reshaping social distinctiveness. Traditionally, Yemen has been a hierarchic society...
with a religious aristocracy on the top and servants and slaves on the bot-

Although slavery was officially abolished by the British colonial authori-
ties in 1938 it continued to exist to the 1960s and only in 1970 were status differ-
ences officially abolished. From being a worker exporting country until a cri-

in Saudi Arabia’s economy in the 1980s reduced demand, Yemen has become a
labor receiving country as a result of political developments in Somalia and
Etiopia and their resulting population displacement at the beginning of th-

1990s. De Regt shows how new social hierarchies that were built on economi-

c position, gender and migration background continue to structure the differ-
ences.

Regulating Domestic Work Outside the Formal Economy

Domestic service in other people’s households has been regulated for a long
game. In their contribution to this volume Marta Kindler and Anna Ko
dasiewitz show that domestic service regulations existed in Polish territori-
es back in the 16th century. Of course these regulations mainly protected the inter-
est of employers and public order, the protection of servant’s rights was secondary.
The regulations were concerned with servants changing positions and required
servants to show a certificate from their previous employer before they could
be employed. Under increasing state control this changed during the 19th cen-
tury towards a more equal relationship between servant and employer. The
jury of control, however, varied between regimes with the highest level of
control in Russian Poland and the lowest in Austrian. In

in interwar Poland and several other states attempts were made to incorpo-
rate domestic work into labor codes and to recognize it as formally equal to
factory work. These attempts to transform it from a personal relationship
between servant and master/mistress to formal employment on a legal basis
equal to other wage work were rarely successful. In most labor codes domestic
work remained an exception. The changing regulation of work was closely
connected to the effects of industrialization, and especially to democratiza-
tion with its emphasis on citizens’ rights. Welfare state institutions tried to put
an end to child labor and improved working conditions for employees in gen-
eral. Thus the recognition of domestic work as formal employment rested as
much on the introduction of welfare benefits as on demands for the standard-
ization of working conditions.

In this context, Austria was among the first countries to end the personal
dependency of domestic servants when it did so in 1928. Wages, accommoda-
tions, holidays, and termination of employment were all regulated — and after
1921 health insurance also became mandatory for live-in domestic workers,
although they continued to be excluded from unemployment insurance.
Although this was a clear improvement, legislation remained ambivalent and
was insufficiently implemented as Jessica Richter shows in her contribution.

Austrian legislation allowed contesting interpretations and categorizations
of domestic work, depending on the type of employment. Definitions did not
rely on the work itself but mainly on the triangular relationship between who
is working for whom and where. Austrian domestic workers’ unions took up another aspect of the struggle when they wanted to define private homes as workplaces. The social-democratic union movement’s journal *Einigkeit* published articles on domestics’ working conditions and shed light on the difficult situation in private homes. The union’s main goal was to define domestic work as formal employment since, despite the improvements provided by labor legislation and social citizenship, working conditions continued to depend on the relationship between the employer and the employee - especially for live-in domestics.

The connection between democratization and the introduction of welfare legislation is also the focus of Elizabeth Quai Hutchison’s contribution. In Chile, too, domestics remained excluded from labor legislation in the 1920s. Domestic workers’ union leaders and state officials protested against this. As a result the Chilean parliament granted domestics the status of salaried workers and included them in the welfare system, but it still excluded them from other key provisions that regulated labor in other sectors. While the situation of Chile’s domestics resembled conditions elsewhere in many ways - including mass migration of the poor to urban areas, feminization of domestic work, and harsh working conditions - the emerging importance of social medical services and social work in Chile provided scientific evidence for regulation of the sector. Their investigations showed alarming rates of infant mortality, venereal disease, tuberculosis, heart disease and abortion. Publicizing this led to strong support for including domestic work in the labor code. Officials of the labor office made regular visits to private homes and generally attempted to improve conditions.

Unions lobbied against the exclusion of domestics from the laws through a narrow definition that exempted part-time workers and those who worked for several employers. Chile’s domestic workers’ union grew quickly from 100 members in the 1920s to more than 10,000 at the end of the 1930s. The union built alliances through close connections with the labor inspectors and women’s groups of the popular front era, and they had a strong representation in the Chilean worker’s confederation. With the support of these organizations, the union managed to alert the public to the traditional constructions of household labor as a problem in Chilean labor relations in general and demanded advocacy, scientific studies and state intervention.

**Recognition and Regulation Through International Standards in the 21st Century**

As emphasized at the beginning of this introduction, domestics have recently - finally - received recognition through the ILO, supported by international federations and social movements. As with the cases of Chile and Austria analyzed in this volume, the ILO had been concerned with the situation of domestic workers in the interwar period. Several attempts were made to regulate their working conditions along with industrial work. While decisions were postponed for a variety of reasons, the underlying consensus was that domestic work did not conform to what was called the factory model. The ILO’s founding structure reflected the factory model of labor relations, or as one of the employer representatives at an international labor conference said, employers were at the ILO to represent the interests of industry. When the Committee of Experts on Women’s Questions launched the topic again after the Second World War it lacked institutional power, and according to Eileen Boris and Jennifer Fish topics such as equal pay for women in non-domestic service and industry were given priority. Although the ILO continued to investigate the conditions of domestic service from its beginnings to the present, steps towards a formal agreement on the subject were only taken when domestic workers started to organize in transnational networks and created alliances with organizations that could support them with funds, research resources and experience on how to work within the ILO.

The impact of ILO agreements does not arise from their being enforced in specific countries, but from their setting global norms. By March 2015 seventeen countries had ratified the convention on domestic labor. How much difference the convention’s recognition and regulation will make for individual domestic workers in the intimacy of households is something that still needs to be investigated. Convention 189 has turned old demands by domestic workers into global standards and it shows the power of the transnational organization of workers who are frequently isolated in workplaces closed off by the walls of private homes.

Reconfiguring Household Slavery in Twentieth Century Fes, Morocco

R David Goodman

In the early twentieth century, domestic slavery was practiced throughout Morocco. Domestic slave labor sustained basic features of daily life in Fes, its then most powerful and populous city. For over a millennium household slaves were integral to the functioning of this dense and complex North African medina, famed for its concentration of religious and political authorities who lived and worked cheek by jowl beside the characters and activities of an international center of crafts production, trade and commerce. 

This chapter uses "household" and "domestic" slavery as interchangeable terms. Portions of the chapter have been excerpted and revised from the author's following articles: 'Demystifying Islamic Slavery': Using Legal Practices to Reconstruct the End of Slavery in Fes, Morocco" in History in Africa 39 (2012), 143-174; and 'Expediency, Ambivalence and Inaction: The French Protectorate and Domestic Slavery in Morocco 1912-1956,' journal q Social History 47 (2014), 3-31.

1 This conception has been employed by Nicolas Michel, Une économie de subsistances. Le Maroc précolonial (Fés, 1978). For similar work, see Larbi Kninah, L'Évaluation des Structures Économiques Sociales et Politiques du Maroc (Fés: L'Ouverture au Marché Mondial et ses Consequences (Fés, 2000). It remains difficult to accurately estimate the number of slaves in Fes, or Morocco as a whole, at this time. In 1900 Fes had approximately 100,000 inhabitants and some 5,000 households. It has been suggested that as much as two-thirds of its male population worked for wages in this period, see Stacy Holden, The Politics of Food in Modern Morocco (Gainesville, 2009). 2. Holden cites research presented by Louis Massignon, who concludes that earnings from 9,000 artisans supported half the total population of Fes. "Enquetes sur les Corporations Musulmanes d'Artsains et de Commerçants au Maroc," Revue de Monde Musulman 58 (1929): 1-13. Even if this offers a premise that one-third of Fasli households used slave labor, we are still left without a systematic basis to account for or verify the numbers of slaves within households. Considering all available sources, including the legal records and oral history gathered in my research, it stands that there were well over 6,000 domestic slaves in Fasli households in 1900. Additionally, it is estimated that there were several thousand palace slaves and slave soldiers in the early part of the century, see Tharaud and Tharaud, Fes et les boul geus, 38. Including Dar Makhzan slaves, as much as ten percent of the total Fasli population was enslaved at this time.

3. See the classic study by Roger le Tourneux, Fes avant le Protectorat: Etude Economique et Sociale d'une Ville de l'Occident Musulman (Casablanca, 1949), and the more recent work of wealthy and privileged Fasi notables made the medina emblematic throughout the region for the powerful families and luxurious homes they maintained. Domestic slave owners emulated and networked among each other and the extended administration of the monarchy (Dar Makhzan), using and exchanging slaves as social and political currency to validate and circulate their prestige. The gradual and extensive twentieth century social changes experienced within influential Fasi households and across widely dispersed Fasi families were deeply embedded with those occurring throughout Morocco.

During the French Protectorate over Morocco (1912-1956) the Moroccan elite continued to own and use domestic slaves, and the largest slave owner was the Dar Makhzan. Colonial policies and royal decrees proclaimed that slavery had ended, but these statements, such as a 1923 Protectorate Circular and several Moroccan Dahirs (decrees) of that era, were limited by design and remained unenforced. French authorities maintained a position of prohibiting the public sale of slaves while not interfering within Moroccan households. Ending the ongoing clandestine trade became no one's priority, and slavery was redefined by administrators and slave owners as a "voluntary" condition. Yet despite durable realities and no meaningful official acknowledgment of

See for example Eugene Aubin, Le Maroc d'aujourd'hui (Paris, 1904); Gabriel Veyre, Au Maroc. Dans l'intimité du Sultam (Paris, 1905); G. Saint-Rene Taillandier, Les origines du Maroc français. Recit d'une mission 1903-1906 (Paris, 1930); Jérôme Tharaud et al., Fes ou les bourgeois de l'Islam (Paris, 1930). It remains difficult to accurately estimate the number of slaves in Fes, or Morocco as a whole, at this time. In 1900 Fes had approximately 100,000 inhabitants and some 5,000 households. It has been suggested that as much as two-thirds of its male population worked for wages in this period, see Stacy Holden, The Politics of Food in Modern Morocco (Gainesville, 2009). 2. Holden cites research presented by Louis Massignon, who concludes that earnings from 9,000 artisans supported half the total population of Fes. "Enq""et""es sur les Corporations Musulmanes d'Artsains et de Commerçants au Maroc," Revue de Monde Musulman 58 (1929): 1-13. Even if this offers a premise that one-third of Fasli households used slave labor, we are still left without a systematic basis to account for or verify the numbers of slaves within households. Considering all available sources, including the legal records and oral history gathered in my research, it stands that there were well over 6,000 domestic slaves in Fasli households in 1900. Additionally, it is estimated that there were several thousand palace slaves and slave soldiers in the early part of the century, see Tharaud and Tharaud, Fes et les boul geus, 38. Including Dar Makhzan slaves, as much as ten percent of the total Fasli population was enslaved at this time.

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abolition through states or legal systems, this defining institution of social inequity slowly transformed into an anomaly in the decades following lude-
mestic slave’s work reproduced the daily realities of social status, and serv-
dependence. The specific historical details of social changes and continuities more of a consummation of political and aristocratic power than as a aterial basis of economic power or state structures. In this key sense, the West African prevalence of peasant slave ownership and the European impe-
toward legitimate commerce are quite distinct from, and not fully compara-
tible with the contours of emancipation in Morocco. French occupations of Timbuktu in 1894 and Touat in 1900 influenced the decline in slaves from West Africa, but did not lessen Moroccan demand for


and usage of slaves. Instead, there was a shift of emphasis in slave origins by the route to manumission and assimilation was not always guaranteed or certain that we can often see slave women in Moroccan howls, who have absolutely nothing to do with the Sudan and whose origins everyone knows are from the souss or berber tribes.

Though few specific regions were cited in rare Protectorate reports concerning the public sale of slaves, ongoing references to the widespread clandestine trade reveal administrator's awareness and limitations of the Protectorate's role. The majority of oral historical informants of slave descendants in Fes had family origins in the Sous and Sahara. An important element of continuity throughout the twentieth century reconfiguration of domestic slavery was the maternal "black and female". A seminal cultural representation of this reality was the maternal "Djadig" figure - analogous to Mammy in North America and Mele Preta in Brazil. In the legal principals of shari'a (the governing school of Islamic law in Morocco), slavery was not related to color or ethnicity, and in the multifaceted realities of Moroccan slavery, light-skinned Berber female slaves were numerous. It is key to note that Fasi Arab elites' capacity to paternalistically claim and directly assimilate their children with non-Arab and enslaved women was integral to their historic identity and unity. This ideal

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Seghir's house where she was held. At this point Gouraud judged that he could not allow the return of Mohammed Seghir's slave, now in the refuge of a French officer. After noting that such events had become more frequent he writes,

In December of 1913 [...] Through the Pacha I ordered the closure of all houses which sell slaves, limiting myself to this sole measure to not sinumer discontent in the spirit of the Fasis. You know then that there is slavery here[...]; the slaves, for the most part born in Morocco, are in general very well treated; the negresses, in particular, live in the intimacy of their masters and, being concubines in general, are treated on the same level as legitimate women. It is certain that if they were offered the choice between their liberty and the status quo, very few among them would abandon their masters who provide for all their needs and treat them with kindness.

In this situation it is indispensable to find a formula which permits reconciling the actual state of things with French legislation, in order to act with prudence and not disturb our conciliatory politics and appeasement, or create a general malcontent which might lead to more grave events. In waiting for your instructions on this subject, I will continue to recommend to my officers not to intervene officially in any affairs which relate to the question of slavery.

This direction seems to me for the instant, a sufficient solution to this question, but if, it should become that the desertions of negresses take an epidemic character, it might be necessary to move the Senegalese from urban barracks where they are at this time a refuge and a center of attraction for negresses of cities.

Lyautéy's response on June 4, 1914 further reveals the early priorities of the Protectorate administration:

In answer to your letter I have the honor to make known to you that I estimate with you that it is necessary to prohibit in an absolute way the open sale of slaves. This measure, as well as the refusal of a French authority to lend support when complaints are directed against slaves who flee the house of their masters will prove sufficiently that we reject slavery. An intervention more direct on our part in the repression of this trade would have, at present, serious disadvantages from the political point of view.

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22 See Seering, God Alone is King,147; Klein, Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa; Lovejoy et al, Slow Death for Slavery; Suzanne Miers et al. (eds), The End of Slavery in Africa (Madison, 1988).
23 See Paul Pascon, Capitalism and Agriculture in the Haouz of Marrakesh (New York, 1986).
24 See Pennell, Morocco since 1830,132-134,147-148; Paul Pascon et al., Les paysans sans terre au Maroc (Casablanca, 1986), 23.
population, the tarib fell as a great burden upon Moroccan farmer. Agricultural modernization was accompanied by forced land redistribution through which Europeans and a minuscule Moroccan elite, among which p families consistently played a disproportionate role, held complete control, water rights, the best lands, and access to a growing abundance of rural labor for poorly regulated subsistence wages. Such conditions readily contributed to the ongoing kidnapping and sale of unfortunate children of the rural poor and dispossessed.

Islamic Legal Practice and the Decline of Domestic Slavery

Though law and legal status concerning slavery solicit expectations of clear and singular official evidence and outcomes, the historical realities of law and slavery in twentieth century Fes present another phenomenon. Beginning in 1912 the Protectorate implemented a French administrative umbrella over Moroccan Muslim judicial organization and initiated legal reforms that observed careful limitations. A Ministry of Justice was created with the interest of unifying the responsibilities for all institutions related to sharī'a. An immediate primary aim - which can be interpreted as a longer term and larger scale imperial tactic - was to clarify and define Moroccan legal authority. A component of these reforms fortunate for our available historical evidence was the mandate for the increased standardization of notarized documents and their record in court registers.

At the beginning of the Protectorate depositories of legal records were established for each court of the two gadis of Fes el-Bali: Mahkama Reif and Mahkama Smat. These records of Fes medina revealed a near complete omission of references to slave sales. This absence is in itself worth consideration. While it is clear that the trade in Fes continued, the extremely rare exceptions to this legal silence offer a further source of corroboration, and far more important, suggest the social normalization of its extra-legal character.

By the time of the 1905 public market closure, those in Fes directly and indirectly concerned with reproducing slavery had participated in an adaptation of the trade. This entailed members of the Fasi elite closing ranks among themselves and controlling how and what they legally represented concerning slavery and slaves. While in other Moroccan locations slaves continued to be purchased through legal authorities with formal documentation, a consequence of these arrangements in Fes meant that slave purchases would take place outside of well-established legal protections with recourse for buyers and slaves. It seems that the strong customary practices of Fasi business culture were substituted for earlier norms and legal guarantees.

Official state declarations and explicit legal proclamations do not document or help interpret the end of slavery in Fes. In fact, legal references to slaves continued throughout the Protectorate and after Moroccan independence within many forms of legal documents. Rather than the futile search for an official certification of a clear historical moment producing abolition, here we plot the course of minor and mundane individual legal actions in which slaves appear. Fasi family matters requiring notarized Islamic legal documents (such as bequests, inventories, guard-ianships, personal declarations etc.) consistently reveal slaves within snapshots of the social historical realities of twentieth century slave owning households and families. With some important exceptions, these documents were not typically contexts which highlighted transitional moments for the interpretation of "voices" and "agency" of individual litigants. Yet once pieced together this extended series of miniature legal portraits of Fasi norms depicts remarkable changes and continuities of domestic slavery across several generations.

The common references of abd (pl. abid), literally meaning slave, and khádím, literally meaning servant (although the term was also used to refer to slaves and carries a strong connotation of blackness), appear with other legal

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26 See Ben Miih, Structures Politiques du Maroc Colonial, 133-137; Macrione, Le Maroc Contemporain, 146-170.
27 See Alan Scham, Labour in Morocco: Protectorate Administration, 7912-1925 (Berkeley, 1970), 177-186.
28 See Le Tourmeaud, Fès sous le Protectorat. Mahkama Reif and Mahkama Smat are hereafter noted as Reif and Smat. In addition to Fes el-Bali, Fes Jdid maintained a separate municipal administration with its own legal records.
30 The last known legal record of a slave purchase in Morocco was created in 1928. For broader relevant discussions see Benjamin N. Lawrance et al., Trafficking in Slavery's Wake: Law and the Experience of Women and Children (Athens: Ohio, 2012).
references to slaves such as *umma, maamalih* (a), and less often *was or* and *nabih*. "Mustawilda" appears as another common reference, signifying a female slave who is recognized as having given birth to her owner's child. Other important forms of references are: *nufudayja* (a), a former slave who has been immediately freed, and a *nudhbir* (a), who has been freed upon the death of his or her owner. After being freed, these former slaves continue to be referred to in legal documents as having been freed with acknowledgement of the person by whom they were freed. Even after a former slave's marriage, she would remain legally known as *zawja mustawilda* or *zawja nufuda* of her former owner, which often referred to another owner rather than her husband.

The documents which would seem of most direct importance for the end of slavery are *fitn* or acts of emancipation (see Figures 19.1 and 19.2). Reif and Smat records revealed only seventy-three total immediate emancipations and emancipations upon an owner's death, the earliest of which was 1913, and the latest 1952. The fact that there were very few legal emancipations of either variety should help dispel expectations that legal emancipations were a significant factor in ending domestic slavery in this context. It can be suggested that a frequency of retention increased in the historical contexts in which slavery was ending. However, at present without similar data from the nineteenth century or prior, informed comparisons with previous rates of emancipation cannot be made. For the same reason, the issue of whether there were generally more immediate emancipations (41) than emancipations upon death (32), as seen within this period, remains uncertain.

In looking at the general shape of the decline in these references there appears to have been a pause in emancipations around the period of instabilities during the era of the Second World War. Also earlier on, immediate emancipations seem to have risen from three during 1919-1922 to thirteen during 1923-1926. This peak among relatively minor figures reveals that only a small handful of Fasi slave owners freed their slaves in the period following the 1923 circular and demonstrates the lack of any clear social trend prompted by official anti-slavery legal actions. Otherwise, the emancipations across this long period of decline reveal no relation to specific historical legislation.

Scholars differ over the basic facts of relevant Moroccan legal history concerning the end of slavery and no satisfactory analysis of law and the end of

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34 Often referred to as *umma al-wusal* (mother of children), this term signifies that a child of a female slave by her owner was recognized and born free, and that the female slave mother would be freed upon the death of her owner. As noted by Joseph Schacht, "*umma al-walad* is in contrast to *umma al-hanin* (mother of sons) as the name for a free woman: Joseph Schacht, "*Umm al-Walid*" *Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1966—).

35 *Zawja* here means wife.
slavery has been advanced. Features of the problem have been noted by several scholars. Aouad-Badoual questions any formal abolition of the legal status of slavery. In contrast, Ahmad Alawad Sikainga points to the prece- dent of a 1925 law "explicitly prohibiting slavery," in which "all clauses recognizing servitude were removed from the personal matters code." Protectorate reports cite Moroccan penal code articles 267, 282, and 289 as indirect refer- ences to the end of slavery. Roger Botte holds that slavery in Morocco was ended de facto by the Fundamental Law of the Kingdom of Morocco in 1961, and the Moroccan Constitution in 196240 Mohammed Ennaji maintains that "(f)rom a purely judicial point of view, no law ever abolished slavery on and for all" and redirects our consideration of early twentieth-century policies to an 1863 official decree from Sultan Mohammed b. Abd al-Rahman in which the state offered refuge to slaves who sought it. The actual impact of this precursor to French policy by half a century was of little if any real consequence, as Ennaji acknowledges. His conclusion about the impact of the 1923 circular deserves further consideration: "However profound the effects of these measures, they did not absolutely prohibit slavery, which continued to exist as a legal institution; the law did not abolish it."41 The provocative notion that 'law' failed to abolish the legality of the institution underscores a decisive lack of legal accountability within the end, and transform-ation of this institution.

Scholars' differences and their collective vagueness all stem from a common source — the enduring legal legitimacy of slave status and slavery. Rather than Protectorate colonial era attention to slavery undermining the accepted basis of Moroccan legal authority, consequential changes in the legal legitimacy of slavery emerged among shifts and continuities in the lived generational real-ities and relations comprising slavery within Moroccan households and families.42 The intentionally weak official positions against slavery confirm that the extent of disinterest in ending the slave trade was exceeded by a deeper and broader lack of political will to directly confront practices of domestic slavery. Legal contradictions of this situation abound and are best explained by reemphasizing that the imperatives of the Protectorate, and the Moroccan Muslim legal system, concerning slavery were fully dominated by broad accommoda-tions for slave holding elites. The reality that Fasi slaves were being legally man-umitted, long after they were ostensibly freed by the Protectorate, demonstrates that in this context lawmaking was not an effective instrument of abolitionist social change.

In contrast to the near complete absence of references to slave sales and the paucity of manumissions, abundant references to slaves are found within various other kinds of Fasi family legal documents, particularly including documents concerning inheritance and child custody. In working with this abundant evidence, an ultimate overall tendency of under-recording should be anticipated, meaning that these total numbers of references reflect the lower-bounds of the entire enslaved population. Examination of a variety of notarized family legal documents from 1913 to 1971 in the two Moroccan controlled courts of Fes al-Bali shows a decline across a total of 1,340 references to slaves and former slaves (See Figure 19.3). Despite expectations, legal refer-ences to slaves do not reveal a simple long slow course of decline across the Protectorate years. Following the initial eight year period of 1913-1920 the fig-ures show an increase of references between 1921 and 1930. Though there is a decline of around fifty references for each ten year period after 1921-1930, the period 1941-1950 shows that after over thirty years into the Protectorate there were nearly as many references to legal slaves as when these depositories and the Protectorate itself began. By far the sharpest decline in references to slaves occurred in the final years of the Protectorate and the decade thereafter, call-ing into question the relevant influences upon the end of slavery. It is also important to consider that in contrast to the assumption that domestic slavery simply disappeared during the Protectorate period due to slaves not being replaced by other slaves when they died, remarkably few of these references involve slave or former slave deaths. Rather than an historical shift in legal principals mandating the enforcement of law, Fasi slave owner's usage of legal

37 See Aouad-Badoual, "Esclavage."
38 Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, "Slavery and Muslim Jurisprudence in Morocco, in Martin A. Klein et al. (eds), Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa (Portland, OR, 1999) 57-72, 65.
39 A vague effort in the twilight of the Protectorate to consolidate such codes can be found in a "Note from Direction des Affaires Chrétiennes," Rabat, 7 December 1955 (ADN).
41 Ennaji, Seeing the Master, at.
42 Ennaji, Seeing the Master, n.4.

44 In 1957, one year after Moroccan Independence, the Rciif holdings of legal records were merged with those of Smat.

194-208. Wael B. Hallaq's interpretations of Islamic legal change and accommodation are broadly suggestive here. See his Authority, Continuity, and Change in Islamic Law (New York, 2001) and The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law (New York, 2005).
FIGURE 19.4 References to former slave wives and concubines (Smat and Rrif Courts, Fes)

In spite of powerful social identities and cultural meanings surrounding concubines, as a Fasi legal category the common reference precisely signified a female slave's recognition of having given birth to her owner's child (mustawlida). In marketplace discourse and within elite Fasi household life "slaves of the bed," were female slaves sold and bought expressly to serve as sexual slaves. However unless legally freed, or recognized to be freed, their legal status would remain the same as "slaves of the kitchen" or "slaves of the house." As there was no form of legal prohibition against a male owner having sex with any of his female slaves, a female slave's future was not...
solely determined by an ostensible pre-purpose for which she or her ancestors, be they immediate or multigenerational, were bought. Commonplace sexual relationships with slave women across the range of domestic functions could blur any lines between slaves and concubines, and produced many *mustawliyas* and children.

The principal formal legal route through which a slave could be freed for having served as a concubine would be through a recognized child's legal recognition within the total references to Former Slave Wives (85%) than within the total references to Concubines (46.5%) (See Figure 19.5). According to the ideal, all references to *mustawliyas* were by definition legal recognitions of motherhood, and it could thus be postulated that these discrepancies are due to the non-comprehensive available recorded data for every recognized child of a *mustawliya* in Fes medina within Smat and Reif documents during this period. However, these figures stand as highly suggestive, even emblematic, of the familial and social politics of recognition and broader household and social challenges confronted by Fasi slaves, former slaves and their children. In a total of 214 cases, sometimes within the same documents as references to the children of former slave wives or concubines, the maternity of legally recognized children was given the oblique signification—"from another." Thus in more instances than the total of recognized children of former slave wives (191), there was an unclear reference, which might have represented divorced or deceased wives. Yet, Fasi notaries generally were meticulous, and the total incidence of these references did not result from random sloth. Rather, they suggest a simple and effective legal device representing the realities of family arrangements in which children were far more readily entitled to familial, legal, and social recognition than their slave or former slave mothers.

There were also larger lived implications for the inheritance, as well as the social and familial standing of these children. Due to the potential familial conflicts that arose concerning recognition of the children of slaves and former slaves, some Fasi slave owning fathers used a notary for the expressed purpose of officially recording their declaration of guardianship over their own children. An important form of recognition that included the children of slaves and former slaves was an *ihdi* which legally designated their guardianship (and protected their inheritance), following their father's death, until legal recognition of their majority (*nushd*). These arrangements would ostensibly provide the children of slaves and former slaves with formal substitute "protectors." However *ihdi* as with other legal sources reveal very mixed lived realities.

Lived Patterns of Ambiguous Freedom

A prevalent historical schema of the end of slavery posits an anti-slavery struggle featuring notable figures, acts and movements advocating universal principles and societal ideals; an official declaration of abolition clearly demarcating a legal periodization and induction into international conventions rejecting slavery; and a legal context of mandated state intervention and enforced adherence to new standards of freedom and equality of former slaves and their descendants. In our context of domestic slave labor, and in very many others, this state-centered historical schema is misconceived and misleading.

Histories of emancipation in Africa have often given central attention to the dynamics of colonial economies. Main themes have included disruptions in

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48 Also in certain cases pregnancies of concubines were formally recognized and recorded.

49 Sometimes children from another (min ghayrihid) were specified in number but not by name, as found in for example in Ref 25 Ramad al 1351 / 2.2 January 1933, and Ref 1 Rabi‘ a-Awal 1309 / 21 December 1949.

50 As in one example noting the guardianship of children from a slave, Smat 13 Mu‘ alaam 1336 / 29 August 1917.

51 See Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya*, 78 (New Haven, 1980); Paul E. Lovejoy et al., *Slow...*
the supply and control of labor, the shift to free labor, and responses of sl...

was evident in the increased presence of light-skinned daughters of sharecroppers (kmans) given to landowning Fasi families as servants. This limited but important form of migration emerged with the growth and uninmization of a rural proletariat amid Fasi families' ongoing historical domination of regional landownership. In generalized periods and individual circumstances of crisis, these arrangements were typically and ostensibly made in an effort to ensure children's basic needs. Other situations often entailed an element of calculated interest on the part of poor rural families from the greater opportunity of a solidified channel of alliance through their daughter's possible marriage into and recognized children within an important Fasi family. These household additions often arrived as very young girls who grew up working and socialized alongside slaves within their functions, relations, and heritage, yet remained very clearly distinguished from slaves in legal terms. The concurrent increased presence of the rural poor (particularly children and women) who could fulfill many of the roles of slaves, including those given to Fasi households by their own families to work for room and board, enabled a major shift. Second, during and after the Protectorate period, the national economic and political center of Moroccan life — and related elite paradigms and lifestyles — gradually moved away from Fes and its traditional basis of power. While Fasi-origin businessmen became leading players and beneficiaries in the rapid growth and modernization of Atlantic coastal cities Casablanca and Rabat-Sale, Fes retained great cultural and political influence, as evidenced by the
of domestic slavery in Fes, details lived responses to these socio-economic forces and movements, revealing a dominant pattern of an awkward status for the children of slaves. Though its periodization was related to individual personal and family histories and not a singularly identifiable social historical moment, the cumulative picture derived from all sources.


57 Pennell, Morocco since 7839, 59.


59 See Halmoudi, Master and Disciple.

60 See note 57.

61 Interview with Said (Fes, 15 January 2004).

62 Interview with Azouz and Karima (Fes, 25 March 2004), Interview with Kanata (Fes, March 16, 2004).

63 Interview with Khadja Sbai (Fes, 5 June 2004).

64 Interview with Rachida (Fes, 3 January 2004).
family functions outside of Fes. In some situations slaves and their child who had remained in Fes were no longer in contact with the current owner, "now there are only their grandsons who have studied and live far from here."\(^{423}\) Now the house is empty and closed [. . .] The old ones died and the you ones who took over the responsibilities did nothing."\(^{422}\) Elite efforts to sell former traditional family homes and break from earlier ways of life, along with remaining household members of slave descent, could result in complex responses and situations. One daughter of slaves explained lingering connections with her parents owner's family, "the majority of them are abroad [. . .] the old ones have died and Dar Makaren, the house was bought by Ben Jalloun to make a building, but the Makarens forbade him [. . .]," and when asked if contacts were maintained among with the children of slaves from the household, she affirmed, "Yes, I still meet them, they are married too, and Allah is merciful and generous."\(^{421}\)

Changes in values and attitudes across generations formed another major theme within oral histories addressing how household reorganizations were negotiated by domestic slaves and their children. When an owner died his son might offer his father's slaves their freedom, or the chiel of slave owning parents might be found to be "less violent and insulting."\(^{420}\) The continuities within these changes should be emphasized. The social distances of domestic slavery were generally described as having been preserved during this transition. One informant gave her impression of meeting and serving the modernized wives of nephews who inherited control of the house her slave mother and her live-in, "[. . .] those who had that arrogance and that pride of origin [. . .] No one can touch her [. . .] Cigarettes, elegance, and pride. A very high style. If you want to greet them you can't touch their faces only their hands."\(^{424}\) Another woman explained how the transformations affected her family life,

... those old rich people died. Their nephews became modern people so they didn't want the abid and the young girls anymore [. . .] They used to laugh at us, they used to tell from time to time you have to go to Rabat you have to go to Casablanca [. . .] You have to work with these people [. . .] My grandmother and mother had become old and I was pregnant so we left that house and took our gold with us. At that time the gold didn't have a big importance for us, we sold it all and spent all of it [. . .] We made no future for our lives [. . .] She (her daughter) is khddim of some people of that family. They took her. I have no money for her to study. Better to give her as khddim than to be lost, both her and me, in the street [. . .]."\(^{427}\)

In another situation a slave decided to continue living in her master's house, when Hadj Mokri died then his sons offered to help us get married [. . .] I told him that I didn't want to get married and so I remained jär is with his son [. . .] We were in Rabat or Tanga or in Fes. We had food. We used to laugh to enjoy ourselves thanks to Allah. I was never in need until this day. They died, there only remains me [. . .] I'm waiting for my hour [. . .]."\(^{421}\)

Generational changes among slaves were directly consequential as well. A slave's son challenged the limitations of his father's life,

I ran away because I wanted to be free and see the beauty of the world around me. I did not like to grow old there like them, I mean not to know anything about what is happening in the streets even what they looked like. Like my father for example, who had not seen Boujloud in four years because he went out only to do some shopping.\(^{423}\)

When the man noted above (who lost his mother after having fled), was asked which he resented more his suffering following slavery or his life with the son of his parents owner, he responded, "I could bear the hardships of the street but not of El Iraqi. I hated him because he burnt and beat me. I was rudely controlled."\(^{424}\) With generational changes parent's lives were not always static, and could change beyond previous limitations as well. In one case the daughter of a slave married into the elite Fasi family next door and requested that her mother be allowed to live with her. Using the opportunity to pursue her own life, the mother left either family and rented a small room eventually becoming a professional midwife, healer, and washer of dead bodies, it was said that, she was better off alone because she did no house work, no washing, no hardship, no cooking, or making bread, she ate what she gained, in the peace of Allah.\(^{425}\)

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\(^{422}\) Interview with Ma Mahjouba (Fes, 23 January 2004).
\(^{423}\) Interview with Mimouna and Fatima (Fes, 25 March 2004).
\(^{424}\) Interview with Rakiah (Fes, 1 January 2004).
\(^{425}\) Interview with Anouz and Karima (Fes, 27 March 2004).
\(^{426}\) Interview with Fatima (Fes, 8 February 2004).

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\(^{420}\) Interview with Ma Mahjouba (Fes, 23 January 2004).
\(^{421}\) Interview with Mimouna and Fatima (Fes, 25 March 2004).
\(^{422}\) Interview with Rakiah (Fes, 1 January 2004).
\(^{423}\) Interview with Anouz and Karima (Fes, 27 March 2004).
\(^{424}\) Interview with Fatima (Fes, 8 February 2004).
Pairing oral historical and Islamic legal data consistently delineates the social institution of domestic slavery as long as possible. An elderly slave interviewed while living in an *omara* (a legal grant of housing and income) in Par Mokri emphasized this point. When asked what she thought about the differences between slaves and servants she began by qualifying her comments with the fact that she had never seen a servant. \(^{76}\)

In a rare example, constructing this end and reconfiguration of slavery is inseparable from historicizing its legacy and problematizing freedom. The decline of legal enrollments simultaneous with the persistence or rise of trafficking and internal reorganizations of families and households. The values and practices that supported domestic slavery in Fes and throughout Morocco continued in its aftermath, contributing to a resilient though contested heritage of status and power. In this context slavery, emancipation and post-emancipation recurred simultaneously over several generations. This change most directly included the social extremes of the marginal poor and elite, but also influenced and reflected national dimensions of household and family life. A major source of ambiguity came from the reframing and adapting of domestic slave labor into what was tolerable on intimate, national and international levels. \(^{76}\) The historic rise in trafficking and the usage of *petites bonnes* coincide with the updating of the sources of national elite power, and the meanings of domestic slavery being gradually re-inscribed into other collective labor, household, and family arrangements. \(^{84}\) Because Moroccan citizenship offered a limited register of freedom or belonging for former slaves, the difficulties of examining their conditions through which slaves were freed, it was held that many families let their slaves go in the 1950s and 1960s when they lacked the means to support them. \(^{78}\) Interviews with women from Fes and Marrakesh, and in the Moroccan-Spanish border area, have revealed that many Fasi households were gradually reorganized through one means or another, for many this meant continuing the traditional forms and functions of a social institution of domestic slavery as long as possible. An elderly slave asked about the conditions through which slaves were freed, it was held that all Fasi households were gradually reorganized through one means or another, for many this meant continuing the traditional forms and functions of a social institution of domestic slavery as long as possible. An elderly slave asked about the conditions through which slaves were freed, it was held that all Fasi households were gradually reorganized through one means or another, for many this meant continuing the traditional forms and functions of a social institution of domestic slavery as long as possible.

Long prior to Independence increasing numbers of Fasi slave owning families of lesser prominence and wealth began to reformulate their prestige through the use of servants, modeled and organized alongside slavery. Though some elite informants assert the view that most slaves (as well as the rural and urban poor by many accounts), offered their children to work without wages for the opportunity of serving important Fasi masters, this historical image was incomplete and misleading. \(^{77}\) One current head of a Fasi household suggested that many families let their slaves go in the 1950s and 1960s when they lacked the means to support them. \(^{78}\) A local example that, "if the Basha felt pity on you he would tell you goodbye," \(^{77}\) In a rare example, within this research an elite Fasi woman noted a slave who had been freed following *hajj*. \(^{77}\)

Also the children of slaves repeatedly noted that prominent Fasi families who sought out the best "help," enlisted their slaves in recruiting former slave cooks. For example a "khidim hadya" (skillful servant slave) could be solicited directly through communications initiated by slaves, to work in the house of an impressed household guest. \(^{78}\) In this context the impoverished daughter of a slave who is now a grandmother and legal custodian of her grandson recounted her apprehensions:

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\text{[...]} \text{nowadays some people ask me for my grandson. They tell me, "Give him to me just to play with our son in the garden." This is the way they adopt nowadays, to take him and destroying his health by hardship, and he's still young, only thirteen years old. I ask them, "For what did I endure, did I suffer for a long time?"} \]
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\(^{75}\) Interview with Abdennalik (Fes, 18 January 2004).

\(^{76}\) Interview with Mimouna and Fatima (Fes, 25 March 2004).

\(^{77}\) Interview with Fatima Bezzat (Fes, 24 May 2004). Also, concerning the *madrasa* for slaves were recalled as being freed after pilgrimage, Interview with Halima (Fes, 27 January 2004).

\(^{78}\) Interview with Khadifa Shui (Fes, 3 June 2004).

\(^{79}\) Interview with Fasel Shafie (Fes, 24 June 2004).

\(^{80}\) Interview with L’hsan (Fes, 24 March 2004). Interview with Mimouna and Fatima (Fes, 23 March 2004).

\(^{81}\) Interview with Mimouna and Fatima (Fes, 25 March 2004).

\(^{82}\) Interview with Om Kalthum Mokri (Fes, 19 April 2004). The term used was *matalma*.


their freedom proved closely bound to the challenges of understanding how slavery was absorbed into further modes of exploitation and vulnerability esit confronting the alien authoritarian Protectorate colonial order, or within the boundaries of postcolonial monarchical subjecthood, there were ongoing shifts of and for masters. Freedom resonated with the largest ambiguities of the entire modern kingdom. In this sense the transformation of domestic slavery presents an essential historical background for understanding the inherited legacies and social tensions among contemporary formations of the Moroccan underclass and elite.

Finally, the imperfect freedom from domestic slavery in twentieth century Morocco entailed multiple gendered tensions, and was part of a larger body of competing claims. Domestic slave labor transformed within a conjuncture of forces also disrupting the vast established patriarchal order of household, marriage, family, sexuality, childcare and the care of elder and needy family members. For most Moroccan women, promises of free labor, or enhanced citizenship, were not the only important lens for understanding and consuming the personal or national dimensions of this ambiguous end. These shifting values and experiences within Fasi households, families and lives outline reconfigurations of the Moroccan domestic sphere. This ambiguous

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85 In their comparative examination of post emancipation societies Cooper et al. note that "...freedom is neither past nor elsewhere; it is the historical terrain we currently inhabit, the system that governs our lives, our livelihoods, and our consciousness." This otherwise vague conceptualization finds concrete elaboration through their attention to difficult transitions into citizenship. Cooper et al., Beyond Slavery, 3. Within our context, and many others, citizenship has historically offered a limited and frustrating form of belonging or meaningful freedom. Further combinations and registers of desired forms of belonging have to be considered to advance our study of post emancipation from domestic slavery, alongside attention to where and how slavery is being "...replaced and absorbed by other forms of exploitation," Martin A. Klein (ed.), Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage, and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989). Also see Henriece Altink, Destined For a Life of Service: Defining African-Jamaican Womanhood 1865-1938 (New York, 1998); Klein (ed.), Breaking the Chains; Barry Gaspar et al. (eds), More than Chattel- Black Women and Slavery in the Americas (Bloomington, 1996); Pamela Scully et al., "Introduction: Gender and Slave Emancipation in Comparative Perspective," in Pamela Scully et al. (eds), Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World (Durham, N.C., 2005), 1-35.

86 See for example Bruce Muddy-Weitman, "Women, Islam, and the Moroccan State: The Struggle over the Personal Status Law," Middle East Journal 59, 3 (2005), 393-410; and Zakia Salime, Between Feminism and Islam: Human Rights and Sharia Law in Morocco (Minneapolis, 2005).

87 Probing the moral economy of the domestic sphere has been proposed by Emily Burnet et al., in Emily Burnet et al. (eds), Domestic Violence and the Law in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa (Athens, Ohio, 2010), 17-18. Historians of slavery have frequently been attracted to the notion of systemic exploitative relationships being accepted in exchange for securing basic needs, as well as the expectations, manipulations, and contention integral to these power relations. See Hilary Beckles, Natural Rebels: a Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados (New Brunswick, N.J., 1989); Klein (ed.), Breaking the Chains; Barry Gaspar et al. (eds), More than Chattel- Black Women and Slavery in the Americas (Bloomington, 1996); Pamela Scully et al., "Introduction: Gender and Slave Emancipation in Comparative Perspective," in Pamela Scully et al. (eds), Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World (Durham, N.C., 2005), 1-35.

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CHAPTER 20

Child Slavery, Sex Trafficking or Domestic Work?
The League of Nations and Its Analysis of the Mui Tsai System

Magaly Rodriguez Garcia

This chapter analyses the efforts of the League of Nations to abolish the mui tsai system, a custom in existence in China, Hong Kong and Malaya until the first half of the twentieth century. Mui tsai, which means "little younger sister" in Cantonese, describes the process of transferring girls from poor homes to do domestic work in the houses of rich families, in exchange for financial compensation to the girls' parents, plus board, lodging and clothing for the girls. Inspired by British activists and international organizations calling for the abolition of the practice, various bodies and committees of the League took an interest in the matter but they approached it from differing angles.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) viewed the mui tsai system as a matter of working conditions. The League's Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children wished to protect girls from trafficking and recruitment into prostitution; whilst the anti-slavery committees saw the system as child slavery Chinese elites and colonial authorities in Hong Kong for their part insisted that the mui tsai system did not constitute slavery but was in fact a special system under which girls could be fostered in welcoming families, similar to adoption. A detailed reading of archive materials and publications by the relevant organizations will be used to clarify debates, initiatives, limitations and interactions between the various League's bodies and between the League and international non-governmental organizations interested in the mui tsai system.

1 My thanks go to Jacques Oberson and Lee Robertson of the League of Nations Archives (hereinafter referred to as LNA) at the United Nations Office in Geneva for their friendly and professional assistance in consulting the primary sources used for this study. I am grateful to Silke Neuhauser as well for her useful comments and to Marcus Ferley for his language corrections.

2 The Temporary Slavery Commission (1924-1926), and the Committee of Experts on Slavery (1931-1934) preceded the Advisory Committee of Experts on Slavery (1934-1939).


against the transfer of girls; second, an overview of the anti-mui tsai campaign in the 1920s and the League's involvement in it; and third, a review of the call for child protection in the 1930s.

The Mui Tsai Girl

The practice of acquiring very young girls as domestic workers, known in southern China and Hong Kong by the Cantonese term mui tsai, existed throughout China but under different names. In other parts of the country the terms pei-nu (little slave) or yuetou (slave girl) were used. Chinese authorities never used the term mui tsai in their own official documentation although they did so in their communications with the League. Sir George Macwell, British member and secretary of the League's slavery committee in the 1930s, translated pei-nu without reference to gender and it is therefore difficult to establish whether "little slave" referred both to girls and boys. As will be seen in the next pages, confusion arose from time to time over the use of the various expressions.

A girl was considered to be mui tsai when her parents placed her with a rich family because they could no longer keep her themselves. The new family undertook to feed, clothe and house the girl until she reached the age of majority and was ready for marriage; indeed finding a husband was usually the responsibility of the adoptive family. The agreement between the two families was very often verbal but might be formalized by an "act of presentation" that consisted of the girl being transferred in exchange for some payment. She had neither the right nor of course the maturity either to consent to or to reject the contract. The parents tacitly gave up their rights to the girl, but distance permitting, they were allowed to visit her and could express their opinions about potential husbands; close family members were also allowed to make sure a girl was being treated well. The custom included the right for parents to redeem their daughters as long as they were able to repay the amount initially paid to a surrogate family, but in practice most girls lost contact with their natural families if their new family lived at any great distance away. Unsurprisingly, since poverty was usually the main reason for the transfer, few parents were in a position to retrieve their daughters.

A mui tsai girl would be employed in her new home to carry out domestic chores, which might range from attending to some of the women in the family to carrying out hard domestic labour in homes with less money and fewer servants. In either case, the life of a mui tsai revolved mainly around other women and she was subsumed into a strict female hierarchy: main wife, concubines, daughters of the father of the house, employees and other mui tsai. As Maria Jaschok, Suzanne Miers, and Susan Pedersen have shown in their studies, it is essential to remind the reader that usually the main beneficiaries of the work carried out by the mui tsai were other women, who might very well have been their greatest oppressors too.

Mui tsai received no pay. Despite being given food, lodging, occasional gifts and, if she was lucky, a little education and the good fortune of being treated as a member of the family, it was far better for a girl to be a paid domestic worker who could break the contract at any time. However, it appears that in social terms the position of the mui tsai was superior to that of the concubine, who retained her state of subordination and her pariah status for life. Considering the precarious economic situation of her natural parents, some authors speculate that mui tsai probably had more opportunities and a better quality of life in their adoptive families.

However, the relationship between the mui tsai and her new family was not the same as that of an adopted child. In certain Chinese regions adoption meant that a childless man chose a boy among his agnates, although in other areas there were more liberal rules for adoption. Generally, though, there was always a distinction between adopted children depending on the presence or absence of blood ties. Girls — in a similar vein — were commonly adopted to prepare them to be the wives of one of the family's sons. Defenders of the mui tsai system insisted that it was a custom similar to adoption, because in principle the mui tsai was considered to be a member of the family, albeit of an

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10 Miners, Hong Kong under Imperial Rule, 174.
12 Miners, Hong Kong under Imperial Rule, 174; Watson, "Wives, Concubines and Maids, 188-189.
inferior status, and as such could expect to receive better treatment than would a domestic employee. In practice, the fate of the mui tsai depended entirely on the treatment meted out to her by her superiors. The same was app\sently true in cases of slave children — likewise working unpaid — such as the girls/de\tsmai of the Ottoman Empire, the eunuchs of China or the slave girls of the Abb\d Caliphate.

Similarly, the cases presented in this book by Dimitris Kalantzopoulos and Jaira Harrington and Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman of temporary Brazil, point to analogies with the mui tsai system. Indeed, the working and living conditions of the mui tsai seem to have been very similar to those of adult domestic workers and of children, whether slaves or adopted, who did domestic chores in various places around the world and who often established a quasi-familial bond with their employers and their employers' children but whose status was inferior to that of consanguineous family members. There is then no doubt that the legal position of these girls and women was (and remains) of the utmost importance in ensuring that their rights were respected and that they were protected in the event of maltreatment.

In legal terms, mui tsai did not exist, so that in theory at least they were free to leave, unlike slaves, who belonged to their master or mistress. However, little girls ignorant of their rights, scared of the outside world and brought up with the notion that they had a filial duty to accept their fate, were unlikely to seize any chance to leave that might present itself. Jackson, Miers and Miners have pointed out that under a patriarchal system in China which viewed as quite normal the trading of family members as spouses, concubines or servants, a concept was firmly inculcated into the mui tsai around the world and who often established a quasi-familial bond with their employers and their employers' children but whose status was inferior to that of consanguineous family members. There is then no doubt that the legal position of these girls and women was (and remains) of the utmost importance in ensuring that their rights were respected and that they were protected in the event of maltreatment.

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12 Jackson and Miers, "Introduction," 14; Miers, Hong Kong under Imperial Rule, 155; Maxwell, The "MM Tsai" system, 2.


15 Jackson and Miers, "Introduction," 5-6, 2.1, 18; Miers, Hong Kong under Imperial Rule, 155-156.

16 Miers, Slavery in the Twentieth Century, 157-158; Samuels, "A Human Rights Campaign?" 364. For more information on the role played by Po Leung Kuk in protecting girls and children, see: Pauline Pui-Ting Poon, "The Well-Being of Purchased Female Domestic Servants (Mui Tsai) in Hong Kong in the Early Twentieth Century," in Miers (ed.), Slavery in the Twentieth Century, 152-165.
the inclusion of Chinese activists who were founding members of the Anti Mui Tsai Society (1921) lent more credibility to the abolitionist campaign.17

The original controversy surrounding the mui tsai system along with the militancy of anti-mui tsai activists soon attracted the attention of the new international organizations based in Geneva, while for their part non-governmental bodies continued attempts to place the issue on the League’s agenda.

From China to Switzerland

The post-war internationalist spirit, along with the various perspectives from which the mui tsai system was examined, aroused the interest of the League governmental and non-governmental representatives. The matters connected to mui tsai—slavery, traffic in children and child labour— together became the focus of the attention of the League’s advisory committees and specialized bodies which had been set up with the express aim of making recommendations to the Assembly and Council on urgent international questions. A short time after the League’s foundation in 1919 and during the course of the 1920s and 1930s, the ILO, the anti-traffic and slavery committees all took an active interest in the mui tsai issue.

Unlike the ILO and the anti-traffic committee which included government representatives and non-governmental advisors, the slavery committees were made up only of experts on slavery, and an ILO representative. The ILO viewed slavery as an integral part of the world of labour, and its tripartite structure prescribed representation by governments, employers and workers, whilst the anti-traffic committee was made up of official delegates and representatives of private organizations dedicated to the fight against trafficking. Despite having been elected in joint deliberations with governments represented in the League, experts on those slavery committees could, in theory at least, adopt a more independent line than could official representatives within the ILO and the anti-traffic committee. As will become clear below, that was not always the case.19

The Covenant of the League of Nations did not recognize racial equality, nor did it include a formal declaration on human rights or slavery. Nevertheless, its

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18 LNA, C.I.F./2nd Session/PV17, Minutes of the Temporary Slavery Commission, second session, 22 July 1925, 6.
19 Mien, Slavery in the Twentieth Century 102-103, 286.
mui tsai did not exist. It banned not only any acquisition of girls as mui tsar in the future, but also made illegal the transfer of minors and the employment of their employees and reaffirmed the right of any worker to leave his or her work in the event of dissatisfaction. However, the most significant section of the ordinance, the part ordering the registration of mui tsai, the payment of wages and inspection of working conditions, was withheld, and because of that the ordinance, apart from somewhat diluting the anti-mui tsai campaign, was practically ineffective.  

According to Suzanne Miers, neither the British public nor Lugard knew about the limitation of the 1923 ordinance, which is probably why the slavery commission was unaware of the true situation with regard to the mui tsar system in Hong Kong. In her meticulous study of the controversy surrounding slavery within British colonial territories, Susan Pedersen confirms that the Colonial Office did not accurately inform the Anti-Slavery Society about the reality of the ordinance. Pedersen explains that while Colonial Office officials had not actually led to the Anti-Slavery Society they had certainly misled it in that the ordinance had had good results and that the number of mui tsai was decreasing.

In 1925, during the second session of the Temporary Slavery Commission, Lugard insisted on the need to include covert adoptions in existence in various African and Asian countries, especially in Liberia and China. Lugard emphasized that the mui tsai system was still prevalent in China, with the full awareness of the government there. The Chinese authorities insisted that slavery was not legal in China and acknowledged that the practice of covert adoption was immoral. However, the transfer of girls continued and the Chinese government had only recently begun to analyse the situation. Lugard and Grimshaw wished to include that information in their report, but other members reiterated that it was not possible to confirm the existence of slavery in a country if that country denied it. It was clear, states Miers, that most of the committee’s experts wished to avoid contradicting governments. The report concluded that the trafficking of slaves still existed in Ethiopia, the British protectorate of Aden, some Muslim states and "possibly" China and Liberia.

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24 Maxwell, The "Mui Tsai" System, 8.
25 Mien, Slavery in the Twentieth Century, 139.
27 LNA, CTE/2nd Session/PV12, Minutes of the Temporary Slavery Commission, second session, 18 July 1925.1-4; Mien, Slavery in the Twentieth Century, 109–110.
1919, the ILO had been concerned mainly with protecting salaried industrial workers and general working conditions in industrialized countries and regions. The Treaty of Versailles, under which the ILO was established, set out universal labour principles and called on signatories to focus on abolishing child labour and ensuring that children continued their education, and protecting children’s healthy physical development. The Constitution of the ILO made no mention of banning child labour, although in the preamble there was a reference to the protection of children, young persons and workers engaged in the type of work because of its concealed nature and the young age of the workers, many of them women, the ILO thought it inappropriate and impractical to carry out labour inspections in the privacy of the home.

However, from its first session in 1919 and throughout the 1920s the ILO signed up to various agreements setting minimum ages in different labour sectors. During the 1930s, two minimum age conventions for non-industrial work were approved but they excluded domestic work performed by family members. That vague formulation created a grey area for (semi-) adopted children or those who were described as being “part of the family” but who were regularly engaged in domestic chores.

During the decades following the 1920s, the ILO continued to pass resolutions and recommendations on minimum working ages and protecting children against the worst forms of child labour. However, in spite of the efforts made by women’s organizations and some workers’ delegates to place the matter on the ILO agenda during the 1930s and in the post-war years 36 domestic work continued to be one of the exceptions to the international labour standards until 2011, when the ILO Convention (C189) was passed. According to Marianne Dahlén, the exceptions were made in order to respect family integrity, which did not permit state interference. Despite being aware of the risks involved in the type of work because of its concealed nature and the young age of the workers, many of them women, the ILO thought it inappropriate and impractical to carry out labour inspections in the privacy of the home.

For that reason the ILO limited itself to making notes and disseminating information about the situation of the mui tsai system in China. In its 1924 publication on working conditions and labour regulations there the ILO outlined the situation in the industrial sector, mainly in more advanced areas such as Shanghai, but it also noted the problem of the employment of children in various areas of the economy. Basing itself on information obtained by the Shanghai municipal authorities, the ILO concluded that the mui tsai system was only one of many forms of child labour. A committee charged with investigating the scale and problems of child labour in Shanghai emphasized that making children work as soon as they were able to carry out simple tasks was a very common practice in China and usually had socio-economic causes — low income and poor education of the parents. Members of the committee surmised that despite the scarcity of reliable information on working conditions, the employment of girls in domestic service gave rise to much abuse. According to the committee and to the ILO that echoed its conclusions, there was evidence to suggest that many mui tsai girls were being taken into brothels and trained up as prostitutes.

References to the trafficking of minors grabbed the attention of the League’s anti-trafficking committee, and at the start of the 1930s it made plans for an enquiry to be carried out in Asian countries. Information provided by the anti-trafficking committee, the ILO and the new slavery commission changed the perspective of analyses on the mui tsai system both within and outside the League.

Protection of Children

The Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children was set up in 1921 to investigate the trafficking of people into prostitution and advise the League’s Council and Assembly about existing legal measures to combat it. In 1923, the American delegate Grace Abbott proposed a thorough investigation into the...
nature of trafficking and the League passed her proposal. A Special Body of Experts was nominated made up of some members of the anti-trafficking committee, plus the director of the American Social Hygiene Association, the US organization that would supply the human and financial resources for the field investigation. Secret agents employed by them travelled to 112 cities and districts in Europe, Northern Africa and the American continent to gather official and unofficial data on traffic for prostitution. Passing themselves off as procurers, they allegedly interviewed some five thousand people active in the sex industry, and the results of their investigations were summarized by the Special Body of Experts and published in 1927 in a two-volume final report.

Towards the end of the 1920s the anti-trafficking committee deemed it necessary to pursue their investigation in Asian countries. Bascom Johnson, legal director of the American Social Hygiene Association and director of secret investigations in the Special Body of Experts, suggested using the same methods as were employed for the first study on the traffic in women and children: compiling data from official, non-governmental, and secret sources - which last source of information naturally involved the use of clandestine agents. Johnson insisted that the information obtained from traffickers via secret agents would be of great value to the investigation since it would not only confirm and shed light on the data given by public institutions, private organizations and people involved in the fight against the traffic in women and children, but would also complement them with first-hand witness statements on the routes, networks, methods and the very scale of the problem.

However, various members of the committee were loath to use surreptitious methods. The use of clandestine investigators during the first field study had already caused protests from governments, which complained about the impossibility of checking the information obtained from secret sources, the lack of language skills of the undercover agents and the unrepresentativeness of the persons interviewed. According to the British representative, even with the good will of the governments involved, local conditions and cultural differences would not allow European or American investigators to obtain precise information. Perhaps more important was the refusal of colonial powers to allow international organizations to interfere in domestic matters. The blockage of undercover agents was facilitated by the replacement of the Americans (from the Social Hygiene Association) by the French, who were appointed by the League's Council to oversee the project.

After much insistence, Bascom dropped the idea of using secret agents to gather information on the main people involved in the traffic in women and children. The League's Council approved the setting up of a commission to investigate the traffic in the East and nominated a travelling committee to visit countries in the Middle East, Near and Far East. In each country visited, governments were invited to nominate an official representative to be charged with welcoming and assisting the work of the travelling committee. Committee members organized interviews with local police forces, health departments and social welfare bodies, and ministers for labour and education. They also obtained information from lawyers, barristers, doctors, social workers, missionaries and representatives from the various religious communities. The annual report emphasized that the investigation was limited to studying international trafficking, thereby avoiding any interference in domestic matters. Close cooperation with officials and preoccupations about not judging "local customs" too severely resulted in an incomplete, if not distorted, view of the situation and spared governments from humiliating questions at the
Christian Henriot argues that "many of the [government's] replies were total fabrications" and proves convincingly that the travelling committee adopted official views quite uncritically.44

Unlike the slavery commission of the 1920s, the investigators of the anti-traffic committee did not consider mui tsai girls to represent an exceptional case of child exploitation, but viewed the system rather as an accepted form of guardianship of girls.45 The committee noted the various opinions (for and against) in China and the other areas of Asia where mui tsai persisted and concluded that inasmuch as the tradition was carried out for social assistance purposes it could not be considered a supply source for prostitution. They then underlined differences between the average mui tsai girl and a slave girl. A slave girl would have lost all contact with her birth family, might be sold to third parties and could easily fall into the hands of prostitution intermediaries and traffickers.46 At that point, the committee most probably made an error when it drew a false distinction between the Chinese terms "mui tsai" and "yatou" (see above), somewhat idealizing the first condition and according victim status only to the second. In any event, the committee's work helped to situate the mui tsai within the much larger subject of the transfer of girls, and their solution to that problem was a registration scheme for all girls fostered outside their own families.

While the ILO and the slavery commission focused on the matter from a child labour point of view, the anti-traffic committee focused on the relationship between the individual girls and their adoptive families. The committee emphasized that a girl's parents would leave her in the hands of people with good intentions and that despite having to carry out domestic tasks, the mui tsai was treated as a "minor member of the family." However, the committee was informed of the potential dangers of the mui tsai system and about the measures that had been taken to tackle them. In 1927 and 1932 respectively the provincial authorities of first Canton and then Nanking passed laws prohibiting new purchases of mui tsai, protecting existing mui tsai, and ordering the use of the term "adopted daughters" instead of "mui tsai." General provisions in Chapter XVI of the new 1928 Chinese Penal Code could also be used to protect children against potential abuses of Chinese customs, such as the transfer of guardianship of minors - although no mention was made of the mui tsai system as such.47 In reality the various governments of China, embroiled as they were during the 1930s in a civil war and subject to threats from Japan, did not really focus on introducing adequate regulation and inspection systems to protect girls in the mui tsai system.

Revelations by the Hong Kong Anti Mui Tsai Society about the ongoing abuse of mui tsai girls again aroused the interest of international observers. Driven by militants keen on reviving the slavery commission towards the end of the 1920s, and with the backing of the British Foreign Affairs minister Sir John Simon, anti-mui tsai activists managed to cause the subject to resonate once again in Geneva.48 Despite its initial lack of interest, the no publicized subject during the 1930 in its International Labour Review and in its weekly publication, Industrial and Labour Information. In 1931, for example, the ILO highlighted deficiencies in the regulation of the mui tsai system in Hong Kong. Quoting Sir John Simon, the ILO concluded that despite the 1929 and 1931 amendments that provided for the application of the third part of the 1923 ordinance regarding the registration, payment and inspection of working conditions for mui tsai girls, the abuse of minors continued to be a cause for great concern. After all, no efforts had been made to disseminate the information about the amendments among mui tsai girls themselves.49 Moreover, Sir John Harris, secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, insisted that he knew of the existence of severe mistreatment of mui tsai girls, and called on the League to condemn such behaviour.50

The secretary of the Advisory Committee of Experts on Slavery, Sir George Maxwell, ensured that the mui tsai system became one of the most discussed subjects by the new League's body. Maxwell argued that in the strictest sense, and unless regulated and properly controlled, the mui tsai system constituted a form of slavery in accordance with the definition set out in Article 1 of the 1926 Slavery Convention. After all, the monetary transaction, the dependence of the mui tsai girl on her adoptive family, her unpaid labour and the possibility of her being sold to third parties meant that ownership rights were inherent in the system.

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45 Investigators identified other types of transferring of girls such as informal adoptions, transfer to theatre troupes, and sale or unconditional transfer of guardianship.
46 Enquiry into Traffic of Women and Children in the East,(4.3).
49 The Mui-Tsai System in Hong Kong," Industrial and Labour Information, 39:3 (July 1931), 92-93; Miners, Hong Kong under Imperial Rule, 176-178.
50 LNA CE East Session p.6, Minutes of the Committee of Experts on Slavery, First session, 6 May 1932,1-45.
51 Maxwell, The "Mui Tsai" system, 2-3.
Chinese representatives in Geneva, as well as the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities and elites, insisted that the practice of keeping mui tsai was very different from child slavery, although they acknowledged that it was an anomaly in the social structure, which was why various legal measures had been passed to regulate the system and to protect girls from abuse. However, all of these measures of extreme maltreatment within Chinese families were invariably refuted. The dependency of the mui tsai on their new family was indeed a complete matter, since the fact that they were underage restricted their freedom in any case. For that reason, the Chinese barrister Dr Seen-wan Tso argued that "Mui Tsai — like other children — need not 'freedom' but guidance and discipline." Neither could the involvement of quasi-family members in simple domestic tasks be equated with slavery. Such arguments led the Chinese representatives to the League to demand a transfer of this matter to the committee charged with child wellbeing.

Maxwell too appeared to develop a similar line of thought. Throughout 1934 and 1935 he attempted to introduce a shift in the definition of the term 'slavery' within the slavery committee. The distinction between "absolute slavery" and "modified slavery" highlighted the difference between slaves who lacked any right to freedom and people — including children — held in forced labour or child labour systems, who at some predetermined point would be entirely free. Mui tsai was therefore an example of modified slavery, a reclassification which would assist in the study and abolition of the worst form of human exploitation, absolute slavery; and which with the collaboration of other Geneva bodies such as the Commission for the Protection of Children and Young People (which included the anti-traffic and child welfare committees) and the influential no would help to establish measures to improve the lives and working conditions of people caught up in modified slavery too. Even so, Maxwell's ideas attracted severe criticism from other experts within the slavery committee, because they were perceived as a censure of the work carried out by the previous committees and the Anti-Slavery Society, which had wanted to include all types of human abuse within the definition of slavery.

Maxwell however did not believe in the possibility or even the advisability of abolishing the system abruptly and thought that the existing abuses could be suppressed by means of legislation and an adequate inspection system, with the support of local and national authorities. In his 1935 essays on the mui tsai system, he insisted that it was not the abuses, but the system itself that needed attention, and that as had been demonstrated in Hong Kong it could be regulated and inspected by means of registration of the girls transferred as mui tsai. The main objective of any legislation on mui tsai had to be the immediate protection of the girls. Maxwell also underlined that there were enough reasons to believe that a similar system existed for little boys. Without referring to the employment of children in Chinese industrial sectors, a topic that had already been investigated by the ILO during the 1920s, Maxwell made reference to the transfer of boys to carry out domestic chores, a phenomenon that also required investigation.

However, Maxwell's view of the mui tsai system changed over time. In March 1935 he supported the Hong Kong government's policy of combating the abuse of mui tsai girls through legislation and a registration system. In his opinion, that would lead to a gradual decline in and eventual abolition of the practice — although the registration of 4,368 girls was well below the estimate of 10,000 given by the Anti-Mui Tsai Society. In December of the same year, in response to a report drawn up by a committee nominated by the Hong Kong government which concluded that any government action aimed at abolishing the system should be rejected, Maxwell suggested introducing a new ordinance for the protection of all female domestic employees of any nationality younger than twenty-one years of age. The aim of the new ordinance was to protect all minors and young women, including those within the mui tsai system, but without actually mentioning the pejorative term "mui tsai" itself.

Maxwell's new analysis of the mui tsai system, references to the existence of a similar practice for boys, and the results of the investigation into the traffic of women and children in Asia all therefore exerted an influence on international anti-mui tsai movements. Since the mid-1930s the mui tsai question had lost its feminist perspective and become a more generalized campaign for the...
Committee on Social Questions. Unlike previous anti-traffic and child welfare committees, the social questions committee included only government representatives, which certainly weakened any attempt to criticize so-called traditional practices such as the retention of *mui tsai* in China. Dr Hoo Chi Tsai, Chinese delegate to the new committee, was glad that the *mui tsai* system would not henceforth be treated as a child-slavery matter.

To the delight of Maxwell, Picton-Turbervill and other activists involved in the protection of minors, the results of the minority report were accepted by the Governor of the Straits Settlements. In 1937, the registration was ordered of any transfer of any girl under fourteen years of age. The British colonial office tried to put pressure on the Hong Kong authorities to accept the idea of overarching protection but the government accepted the registration of adopted girls only. However, Maxwell’s and Picton-Turbervill’s desire to end the stigma of the *mui tsai* by means of a registration process that made no reference to the term did not come to fruition. Both in the Straits Settlements and in Hong Kong, *mui tsai* girls were registered separately from other transferred minors, as authorities feared that the abolition of the separate *mui tsai* register might lead to the revival of domestic slavery under a new name.

The vision of Maxwell and Picton-Turbervill influenced social policy in China, too. In 1937, the Shanghai Municipal Authority approved the nomination of Eleanor Hinder as supervisor for the protection of *mui tsai*. Her view implied that efforts to define *mui tsai* status should be abandoned and that a unified registration for all wards and transferred children should be brought in to replace it.

Picton-Turbervill’s proposal coincided with Maxwell’s ideas. Both called for an overall protection system, set up by a new ordinance, to protect any girl transferred — whether for money or not. During the 1937 session of the slavery commission, Maxwell presented the results of the Woods Committee and reiterated his assertion that the *mui tsai* system should be viewed as a matter of child welfare. According to Maxwell, the issue could not be dealt with alongside the problem of the sale or transfer of minors for immoral purposes, which fell within the competence of the Advisory Committee on Social Questions. Unlike previous anti-traffic and child welfare committees, the social questions committee included only government representatives, which certainly weakened any attempt to criticize so-called traditional practices such as the retention of *mui tsai* in China. Dr Hoo Chi Tsai, Chinese delegate to the new committee, was glad that the *mui tsai* system would not henceforth be treated as a child-slavery matter.

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from "Protection of the Mui Tsai" to something more general such as the "Child Protection Service." 64

Towards the end of the 1930s the colonial government of the British Empire began to send reports both to the slavery and the social questions committee. In 1939, the Chinese delegate requested that matters be transferred to the social questions committee, which granted his request but stipulated that these matters should be dealt with by the slavery committee in the event of evidence of serious abuse, and by the no for a study of the situation from a labour perspective. The ILO representative on the slavery committee promised to make efforts to give the subject more importance within the labour organization. However, the Second World War put an end to these initiatives in Geneva; and the 1949 revolution in China would bring about, at least in theory, an end to the subordination and sale of women. 65

Conclusion

League of Nation's activities relating to the mui tsai system may be viewed as effective in the sense that they contributed to a large extent to the campaign for the abolition, and at the very least to the questioning of a practice that allowed the transfer of Chinese girls — whether in exchange for money or not. The nomination of new members to the slavery committee at the start of the 19305, and contributions by the anti-traffic committee and the ILO that viewed mui tsai girls as being part of bigger things — the transfer of the guardianship of minors and child labour — all enabled the development of an alternative and more overarching analysis. The results of Edith Picton Turbervill's investigations were important in placing the mui tsai system into its wider context, and to the development of mechanisms to protect all girls and young people who were removed from their birth families. Despite their orientalist approach, paternalistic and maternalistic tendencies, and despite evidence of imperialist feminism and the possibly exaggerated reporting of the suffering of mui tsai girls, the international organizations and British authorities helped to rekindle interest in the issues of the transfer of minors, child labour abuses and the general wellbeing of children.

The effect of the new legislation on the lives of girls who had been transferred in China, Hong Kong and Malaya is difficult to assess. After all, the passing of laws does not mean that they will be implemented. Anthropological data such as those included in Maria Jaschok's work indicate that none of the girls interviewed who had been sold or transferred during the 1920s and 1930s was aware of the existence of protective legislation, and that only one was registered. As Susan Pedersen concludes, "at most, the new welfare legislation provided, as did such Chinese institutions as the Po Leung Kuk, some recourse for a particularly enterprising or fortunate child." Legislation in itself could not radically transform the mui tsai system, much less abolish it. Some mui tsai girls were found in Hong Kong villages after the Second World War, which indicates that only post-war political and economic conditions would bring about a gradual weakening of the practice of transferring girls. According to Norman Miners, there were several reasons for the gradual disappearance of the system in the 1950s: changing attitudes in Chinese society towards the sale or transfer of children, a rising standard of living and the decrease of Chinese emigration. 66

It is also difficult to appreciate the real scale of the problem of the transfer of girls in China and neighbouring countries. Despite the insistence of activists both within and outside the League, it is not clear whether girls were more likely than boys to be transferred or sold. As Ruby Watson argues, due to the lack of an exhaustive study of the history of slavery in China it is difficult to establish the true situation of girls and women held in systems of servitude. However, in the case of domestic service in some parts of China, there appears to be enough evidence to suggest that girls from poor homes were more likely to be sold or forced to carry out unpaid work than were boys of similar socio-economic statuses.

From a more theoretical point of view, the League's handling of the mui tsai system also reflects the difficulties inherent in campaigning for so-called universalist causes, when activists are confronted with conflicting cultural and socio-economic realities and different interpretations of concepts such as "freedom," "slavery" "adoption," "childhood"67 or "tradition"; as well as with

64 "Position of Young Women Workers in China. The Problem of Mui Tsai in Shanghai," Industrial and Labour Information, 69 (March 1939), 31-34.
66 Jaschok, Concubines and Bondslaves, 74-75.
69 In the introduction to Children in Slavery through the Ages, the editors demonstrate the difficulty of agreeing on a definition of what constitutes "a child" or "childhood." Campbell, Miller and Mien, "Editor's Introduction," 3.
CHAPTER 21

Domestic Work in Cyprus, 1925-1955: Motivations, Working Conditions and the Colonial Legal Framework

Dimitris Kalantzopoulos

This chapter focuses on the economic and social factors which shaped domestic work in Cyprus, as well as the institutional framework adopted by the British colonial government. It explores the reasons to seek work in households of others and the power relations which structured domestic servants' living and working conditions during and after employment. The chapter focuses on the close relation between adoption, slavery, prostitution and domestic service and attempts to highlight how gender and class defined social norms which set the context of domestic work for different strata of Cypriot society. An understanding of the multiple and complex factors which shaped the very nature of the phenomenon requires a scrutiny of the initial stages of becoming a domestic servant. To understand why a young girl or woman works in someone else's household it is necessary to analyse the social norms of society as a whole. To understand who was accepted as domestic worker and how such decisions were made requires an analysis of the legal framework.

In this chapter, legislative interventions on domestic service are analysed through laws passed by Cyprus' British colonial government, accompanying minutes, and dispatches by governmental officials and committees to London, as well as through the regulatory framework suggested by supranational organizations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Regulation of work and regulations as to who would be allowed to work as domestic servant appear as being of equal importance for the colonial administration. What was the logic and goals set by the government? Whose problems did the legal framework try to solve — those of the employers, the workers, or both? How did this legislation come into being? To what extent did Cyprus' government comply with its obligations deriving from Britain's membership in the ILO?

Domestic work has been neglected in the history of Cyprus and this chapter attempts to fill this gap and place Cyprus' case in a global history of domestic work.

Adoption, Unwaged Domestic Work and the Female Domestic Servants Law

Throughout British colonial (1878-1960) rule, child labour was common practice and constituted an important part of the local economy. During the first half of the 20th century, employers in the majority of cases did not declare employment of children, and the prevalence of the systems of adoption and of apprenticeship coupled with low levels of wages, secured the maximisation of employers' advantages. In addition to its economic significance, child labour had an important position in the social structure. The system of male apprenticeship was mostly practiced within family contexts to secure succession in craft and technical occupations. Domestic work involved mainly girls, employed as servants in the homes of the bourgeoisie. Most were sent by their families for a specific period with the aim of supporting the family financially and of covering the costs of their own dowry. Many poor families, in particular, peasant families who did not want their daughters, sent them into lifetime domestic service, in which case, according to Proini (Morning Standard), adoption was the most usual practice.

In early- and mid-twentieth century a woman older than twenty-one years could not find a husband unless she was financially secure, as even men of the poorest class expected a dowry of 10 to 50 pounds. Thus, poor girls had to either find a dowry or remain single. Often domestic service was the only means of financing a dowry and girls had to start working early to have enough savings at the age of marriage.

In theory, the system could fulfill its purpose. The master or mistress would deposit a small wage in a savings bank in the name of the child, would take care of its health, and would help it to find a husband. Usually, however, the only remuneration was food, shelter, and scant clothing. Moreover, girls were often seduced by male members of the household and many parents sent their daughters' wages. Therefore, in consequence, many cases domestic servants preferred to run away and sometimes even to try to make a living from prostitution.

In 1926 a delegation of the British Social Hygiene Council visited Cyprus, to report on the conditions of social hygiene, and made recommendations for improvement. The exact number of domestic workers in 1926 is unknown but the 1931 census indicates that domestic servants — not including adoption cases — represented 4.5 percent of the total labor force and that the average age of registered servants was under 13 years. Records suggest that some girls in domestic service were as young as between 6 and 8, in a few cases even as young as three years.

Despite the enactment of two laws pertaining to child labour and domestic service in 1928, the colonial government failed to impose a minimum age. According to the Employment of Young Persons and Children Law, children and young persons could work in industrial undertakings only if they were members of the family of the proprietor. This law also established maximum working hours and decreed health protection. It further defined as 'child' any person under the age of twelve years and as 'young person' any employee older than twelve and under the age of sixteen years. Employers were required to register all those employed. Similarly, the Female Domestic Servants Law defined "female domestic servant" as a girl under eighteen employed in a household — whether remunerated or not, or employed under the title of adopted child. Employers had to register their servants and report any termination of an employment.

The main object of the Female Domestic Servants Law was, to register all female servants and to enable the police, in case of termination of employment, to take charge of the girls and convey them to special hostels. This hitherto the task of the Social Hygiene Council, was intended to minimize the risk of a girl drifting into prostitution. The government expected registration to facilitate the efforts of the various welfare committees under the auspices of the Social Hygiene Council to keep in touch with and protect domestic servants.

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1 Pantelis Vamvakas, Η παράδοση της ζωής μας (Fighting for life) (Nicosia, 1990), 13, 40.
3 Cyprus State Archives, Secretariat Archives: SA1/1494/27/2, A Law alleges for the Protection of Females in Domestic Service, Commissioner of Famagusta to the Colonial Secretary, 16 October 1936.
4 SA1/1494/27/1, A Law alleges for the Protection of Females in Domestic Service, Attorney General's Legal Report 'The Protection of Female Domestic Servants Law, 1928,' 30 April 1928; SA1/1494/27/2, Commissioner of Limassol's dispatch to the Colonial Secretary 4 September 1936.
5 SA1/1494/27/1, Commissioner of Famagusta to the Colonial Secretary, 16 October 1936.
servants. In 1928 a Hostel for Girls was established for female domestic servants who had left employment in the towns.

The shortcomings of this legislation became apparent quickly. In the early 1930s articles in the press and governmental reports stressed the miserable working conditions of domestic servants, the fact that child labour produced recruits for prostitution, and that the majority of prostitutes had previously served as domestic servants. According to The Cyprus News female domestic servants were treated shamefully and were made to work unconscionable long hours. The paper reported cases of more than 17 working hours per day throughout the year which induced many girls to run away from their masters and, often, resort to prostitution for a living. In 1934, Proini described this very process:

[... ] A poor village girl abandons the conservative family home, arrives in the town and becomes a servant. Her boss, the son of the boss, the chauffeur, the one...enthusiast with slaves, the idle one [...] or the upstart one who prefers the tight stuff [...] etc. smell the new snack. Attack in a thousand ways. The slave gives in, having in mind that it has secured its future, loses its honour, gets abandoned, gets dismissed from the house for being dishonest, then goes to another boss, gets again dismissed and finally falls into the hands of the mediator; it ends up in the house of the sold pleasure [...]. All examples [... turn around two axes [...] need — economic and psychological.]

The government, in defence of its law, instead attributed the phenomenon to the social conditions and the moral rules of Cypriot society and not at all to working conditions. According to Acting Governor Henniker-Heaton, the delegation of 1926 found that promiscuous sexual intercourse was widely accepted as inevitable. Pupils were taught in medical terms that for a boy after the age of 17 continence was undesirable and against the interest of his health and virility. The highest standard of honour recognised by unmarried men was that they should not "deflower a virgin," since any suspicion against a girl's virginity would deprive her of all hopes of an honourable marriage. To support his view, the Acting Governor stressed that according to the Orthodox Ecclesiastical Law — which regulated the marriage of Greek-Cypriots — a husband could not "dulidate his marriage if he found that his bride was not a virgin. As most Cypriots recognized a responsibility for the moral welfare of their maidservants, they, in consequence, did not permit them to leave the house or stay in it alone. Henniker-Heaton commented that under such conditions it was not surprising that some of the servants imagined the comparative freedom of the brothel to be preferable.

In 1933 the government asked the Social Hygiene Council to appoint a committee to consider the questions of child adoption and the employment of female children as domestic servants. According to the findings, in 1934 there were 549 adopted children — 259 of age 1-12 and the others of age 12-18 —, of whom 91 percent worked as unpaid domestic servants. Recommendations by some committee members to improve the situation were, however, not adopted due to a lack of government funds. Amongst the recommendations were a contract or other legal form to be signed by foster parents under supervision of the Commissioner of the District and a stipulation that an agent of the government or the municipality should ascertain that adopted children were not overworked and received normal care. At the same time, unwanted children without relatives, who would take care of them, should be placed in the care of suitable foster parents who would receive a monthly grant for the care of from government funds. These children should be subject to periodical inspection by a government agent?

Interestingly, while the inadequacy of the Female Domestic Servants Law was stressed by some of the committee's members, the Employment of Young Persons and Children Law was criticized by the same persons for being stricter than needed and therefore disruptive of the prevailing economic and social conditions. In his dispatch to the Colonial Secretary, Dimosthenis Sevens, member of the Social Hygiene Council Committee and of the Legislative Council, stated:

Many employers were forced to dismiss many apprentices, resulting in the moral and material damage of minor apprentices [...]. [Law's] provisions should be limited to cases that work is indeed heavy or disproportionate to the age of the employees, such as in mines.

14 SA1/1494/27/1, ibid.
15 Ibid, Acting Governor to the Secretary of State, 3 July 1931.
16 SA1/1494/27/1, Extract from The Cyprus News, 7 March 1931.
17 Proini, "Ot yuvafxec t'vo 7'vo xi vosE mro (oipote)" (The women that rot in the filth), 22 July 1934.
Adoption and unwaged domestic work persisted throughout the 1930s and according to the colonial District Commissioners’ reports, the system remained popular both among parents and employers. In the majority of cases, wages were paid and seduction by male household members remained frequent. The Advisory Council also criticized the 1928 law and suggested its amendment. In any case, the government's position not to expend funds for this purpose prevented any change of the legislative framework. The Secretary of State observed that in other colonies living and working conditions of domestic servants were improved through refuge homes for girls in danger of ill-treatment. In Cyprus, however, the Hostel for Girls failed to offer any protection: After news broke that it had been partially run as a brothel, it was closed in 1932, a mere four years after its establishment.

In 1937 an article in Esperini (Evening Standard) described the situation which most domestic servants faced and illustrated their perception by local society:

[...] there is another occupation. That of the servant, or better the slave, as we got used to say in Cyprus. Indeed, it is not an occupation, it is real slavery. We talk about a servant as if we talk about a dirty thing. We talk about them with contempt and disgust. They are not people, they are animals, they are slaves. We cannot find a more severe insult than "slave hunter." [...] From a young age they will say farewell to their village in order to go to the towns as slaves at their eighteen years. And at their eighteen years they will get promoted. From slaves they will become prostitutes. [...]. In how many houses will you find servants of eight and six years of age. Small and skinny little girls who would need to be taken care of, take themselves care of their masters’ spoiled children which are much older than them. How many do go to bed unfed and wake up with punches [...]. And when they reach their eighteen years of age most of them will offer their body to make a living.

The 1928 Law was amended in 1939 with provisions for the working conditions of employed or adopted domestic servants between twelve and eighteen years. Under the new law, the Commissioner, as registering authority, had the right to call either the employer or the servant before him and question him or her about the terms and conditions of employment. He was also granted discretion to refuse registration and to cancel any registration if the employer did not follow the terms and conditions of employment as entered in the register. The Commissioner was vested with power to enforce the terms of employment on behalf of the servant against the employer and to inspect the servant’s housing and living conditions. Finally, the law stipulated a minimum age of twelve unless the servant was registered under the provisions of both the 1928 and 1939 laws.

While the 1939 law provided that the employer had to supply food, housing and, in the case of illness, to take care of the servant, it retained the practice of "payment in kind" and did not include any provision for servants under twelve. A social worker and the Commissioner of Nicosia regarded this as child slavery. The amended law received serious criticism from both government officials and the press. The Director of Education demanded that no girls should be registered as domestic servants if they are attending or are entitled to attend elementary school. This proposal was meant to ensure that domestic servants should, in future, possess a minimum of education sufficient to make them literate. Attending school, however, was not obligatory and it seems

23 Esperini, “H Κάρπα. Ο σμούθη ληωτόν [Almoxíba — Oi Saxíla] — Οι [orrois]. — Ελληνικός Σωστός (The Working People), A. Ziartides during the war years. According to this position the system of apprenticeship and a less strict legislative framework should be applied until the establishment of technical education. SA1/1495/1927/3, "The Employment of Children and Young Persons." Ziartides' dispatch to the Colonial Secretary, 25 January 1944.
24 SA1/1494/27/2, Commissioner of Larnaca to the Colonial Secretary, 20 July 1936.
25 Ibid, Commissioner of Limassol to the Colonial Secretary, 4 September 1936.
26 Ibid, Commissioner of Famagusta to the Colonial Secretary, 16 October 1936.
27 SA1/1495/1927/4, A Law for the Protection of Females in Domestic Services (No 18 of 1928), (No 11 of 1939), Regulations under the above Law, Commissioner of Labour’s minute, 23 December 1943.
29 Esperini, "H Kárpas. Ο σμούθη ληωτόν [Almoxíba — Oi Saxíla] — Οι [orrois]. — Ελληνικός Σωστός (The Working People), A. Ziartides during the war years. According to this position the system of apprenticeship and a less strict legislative framework should be applied until the establishment of technical education. SA1/1495/1927/3, "The Employment of Children and Young Persons." Ziartides’ dispatch to the Colonial Secretary, 25 January 1944.
30 Cyprus Gazette, 1939, Law no. 11, the "Employment of Female Domestic Servants Law'
31 Neos Kypriakos Philes (New Cypriot Guardian), "Novoon ftoúr feúch ooo λευκόπλαλε ενάπλευρεν λευκόπλαλε (Bill Providing for the Registration of Servants)," 26 February 1939.
32 SA1/1494/27/2, Social Worker to the Colonial Secretary, 27 February 1939; Commissioner of Nicosia to the Colonial Secretary, 24 March 1939.
33 Ibid, Director of Education's memorandum, 6 March 1939.
that many parents continued to withdraw their daughters from school early, saving for a dowry. A few months later, Mrs. Seaman, who carried out philanthropic work in Kyrenia, informed the Colonial Secretary about the continuation of the practice of child adoption, amounting to selling of children, and about the fact that slavery often led to prostitution. Mrs. Seaman stated that she was told by a government official that "anybody who had shown any intention of going further in the matter had been officially warned not to do so." Similarly, in a dispatch to the Colonial Secretary, the Commissioner of Labour highlighted cases in most of the island's districts of prosecutions for keeping registered domestic servants, for failure to pay wages, for unsatisfactory living conditions, and for failure to notify termination of appointment. The Commissioner warned the government that this could cause a scandal and called on the government to provide sufficient personnel for effective inspections.

Legislative Inefficiency and Colonial Priorities

In the early 1940s, harsh working conditions as well as ineffective laws induced numerous domestic servants to petition the government for protective legislation. As an integral aspect of the demands of the growing labour movement, such efforts intensified during the Second World War. In 1942, the Unions of Working Women, affiliated to the newly created Progressive Party for the Working People (AKEL), demanded legal provision for maximum working hours; minimum wages tied to the official Cost of Living Index; no discharge without reasonable cause; compensation proportionate to the years of employment; and protection of working children (boys). The law must provide also for the working children [boys].

By 1940, the government had become aware of the issue. On 3 March 1939, the Commissioner of Famagusta's dispatch to the Colonial Secretary highlighted cases in which contracts between parents of a servant and the employer stipulated that the servant's wages would be paid to the mother or father at the end of each month or year rather than being paid to the servant. In January 1940, the Commissioner of Nicosia and Kyrenia notified the Colonial Secretary about cases in which contracts between parents of a servant and the employer stipulated that the servant's wages would be paid to the mother or father at the end of each month or year rather than being paid to the servant.

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of service in case of discharge; annual leave with full wages; and no heavy work for underaged servants.

Despite the Commissioner of Labour's recognition of the necessity to re-direct, fine the legal protection of domestic servants and the government merely appointed Lella Cacoyannis as a full-time Inspector for Domestic Service late in 1944. Within six months she submitted a report requesting several measures and to finally implement the Female Domestic Servants Law of 1939. The Union of Working Women reacted strongly when the government did not appoint any representative from one of the servants' trade unions.

The system of domestic service was of vital importance not only to the local economy but also to the British Empire in general. To maintain it, it had to remain under the direct control of the colonial government. The Inspector for Domestic Service explicitly noted that the courts did not enforce the law, that in cases of abuse they did not hand out sufficient punishment, and that the indifference of parents prevented some employers from registering a servant without delay. The Commissioner of Labour even hesitated to deal with suggestions from concerned parties, since any proposal requiring funding by the colonial government was bound to be rejected. Mrs. Seaman's call for a domestic service school was disregarded. The demand to replace volunteer inspectors by appointment of a salaried female inspector of homes employing servants was rejected, as was the proposal to employ part-time women welfare workers in each town.

The regulatory framework of domestic service in the colonies would not have been acceptable in the core of the empire. In the words of the Commissioner of Famagusta, "[the] form of child labour is no more justifiable in Cyprus [...] than it was in England two years ago." The Governor of Cyprus, Sir Richmond Palmer, in 1936 demonstrated the colonizer logic with its disregard for human rights, which were debated by the League of Nations in these years. Referring to the Report of the League of Nations' Advisory Committee on Experts on Slavery in regard to the system of domestic service in Cyprus, he commented:

[transmitting the information to the Advisory Committee] might give the impression that the system described had in it something akin to slavery [...]. In reality, nothing more serious is involved than a change of tutelage from the parents to some other party, a change which in most cases is clearly to the advantage of the child. The system is the outcome of the oriental idea that a girl must have a dowry before she can marry, coupled with the prejudice against females undertaking any kind of work other than domestic service. With the spread of education and the gradual advance from a primitive to a more civilised state of society these ideas are beginning to undergo a radical change and, as a result, the system will in course of time disappear.

Contrary to the Governor, the Colonial Secretary recognized that the system of child adoption for domestic service was a matter which needed the attention of the government:

[...] the system of child adoption described in the report is, after due allowance has been made for local circumstances, open to obvious objections. It appears in fact to be akin to systems of child adoption which elsewhere in the Dependencies have attracted a considerable amount of criticism. [...] It seems clearly desirable that the Government should work towards the establishment of a system of close supervision, and that remedial measures should be taken for dealing with any problems which may be brought to light. I appreciate [...] the difficulty, particularly in present circumstances, of providing the necessary funds, but I hope as soon as the financial situation improves [...] be possible for steps to be taken to [...] a system of direct inspection by Government, [...] ensure that effective measures will be adopted with a view to removing any ground for reasonable criticism to which the practice of child adoption may [...]".

However, any legislative intervention to improve the social conditions of service had to be aligned with overall British policy, since domestic service had a

45 SA1/10/77/3, Petition by 30 domestic servants in Famagusta to the Commissioner of Labour, 26 March 1942.
46 Ibid, Commissioner of Labour's dispatch to the Colonial Secretary, 24 April 1942.
47 SA1/10/77/4, Governor's telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 8 August 1944.
48 Ibid, Limassol Union of Working Women, 30 November 1944.
49 Ibid, Continents on Inspector's report.
50 SA1/10/77/2, Commissioner of Famagusta to the Colonial Secretary, 16 October 1936.
vital role in the imperial economy. In 1937, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Ormsby Gore, requested that a survey be conducted in the colonies to determine governmental attitudes regarding domestic science posts. This reflected developments in the United Kingdom, where in 1937 domestic science, dietetics, and housework were taught in seventeen universities or colleges, polytechnics, and other institutions. The British government expected an expansion of domestic science teaching to increase the number of domestic servants in the colonies educated in the United Kingdom. The Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies emphasized that several aspects of the application of domestic science were of particular importance in the colonies: Firstly, local authorities should give domestic science high status in the curricula of Native education to attract qualified teachers from this country. Secondly, the government should publicize the possibilities of a professional career as a teacher of domestic science in the colonies. Thirdly, co-operation between the training colleges in the United Kingdom and scientific experts in the colonies to secure up-to-date information on tropical hygiene and the preparation of tropical foods was demanded so that students destined for a career in the colonies could be properly trained. Fourthly, it was demanded to establish instruction courses for women going to the colonies, such as wives of colonial officers.

In 1944 Cyprus’ colonial government did discuss the possibility of establishing a domestic economy training centre with compulsory attendance, but for fear of criticism from the metropole and the lack of funds this, once again, was never put into practice. A compulsory domestic service training school for girls would have constituted a scandal in Cypriot society, given that no other kind of schooling was compulsory.

Although no training centre was established, Cyprus did contribute to the imperial regime of domestic service system. Cypriot servants were part of the imperial system of supply of servants in Britain and in the colonies, in particular in houses of colonial administrative officials. In 1939, a private employment bureau in Britain asked the Cyprus colonial government for a "supply" of male and female domestic servants, and, in 1949, the Secretary of State considered Cyprus a suitable source of supply for cooks, butlers, and maids for Israel and elsewhere. Servants in Israel were, in the Colonial Secretary's words, "either unobtainable or unsuitable for employment by us,"

Conclusion

The legal framework in British-ruled Cyprus remained unchanged to the early 1950s, despite Britain’s ILO membership and despite trade unions’ demands for an amendment to the 1939 law or, at least, for inclusion of domestic servants into the provisions of the 1942 Workmen’s Compensation Law. When, in 1952, under the pressure of the labour movement, the colonial government finally amended the law of 1939, this failed to satisfy the servants’ demands. The new regulations involved: (a) administration of the provisions by the Commissioner of Labour instead of the previous Commissioners; (b) raising of the minimum age for domestic servants from twelve to thirteen years; (c) extending the definition of "domestic servant" to include male persons under the age of fourteen and part-time domestic servants who also held employment outside the household. Most importantly, the amendment (d) broadened the definition of "parent" to include the person with whom the domestic servant boarded out and (e) made provision for the maximum number of hours of work for part-time domestic servants. Moreover, a prohibition of potentially injurious heavy work was introduced; parents of a domestic servant were obliged to supply information about the age of the child and the conditions of employment; the Commissioner or an inspector could obtain a warrant from a District Court judge to enter any home suspected of violating the law; the charge and care of domestic servants could in certain cases be entrusted to the Senior Welfare Officer instead of the Commissioner as before. Finally, one of the last laws enacted before the end of colonial rule was the Domestic Servants (Employment of Children and Young Persons) Law of 1959, which amended the 1952 provisions slightly.

54 SA1/90937, Teaching of Domestic Science in England and its application to work in the Colonies. Memorandum on, Secretary of the State for the Colonies' despatch to the Officer Administering the Government of [Cyprus], 21 April 1937.
55 Ibid, Memorandum on the teaching of Domestic Science in England and its application to work in the Colonies.
56 Secretary of the State for the Colonies' despatch to the Officer Administering the Government of [Cyprus], 21 April 1937.
57 Secretary, "Domestic Economy Training Centre. Proposed establishment of," Commissioner of Labour’s dispatch to the Colonial Secretary, 2 March 1944.
58 SA1/224429, "Domestic Servants. Demand for — in England and elsewhere," letter from the Registry Office, April 17, 1939, Commissioner of Labour's dispatch to the Colonial Secretary, 2 June 1939.
59 Ibid, Secretary of State's telegram to the Governor of Cyprus, 3 March 1949.
60 Cyprus Gazette, 1952.
61 Cyprus Gazette, 1949, law No. 23.
Despite these laws and regulations, the domestic service system, based on unpaid, low-paid, or adopted child labour, continued as authorities never enforced application of the laws sufficiently. The system would change only after the end of colonial rule in 1960, when the Cyprus government enacted a new legislative framework, and when social and economic conditions in Cyprus gradually began to change.

As shown in other contributions in this volume, the relation between the adoption practice, slavery, prostitution, and domestic work appears in different historical and cultural contexts and regions. Similar to Cyprus was the mui tsai system in China and in colonial Hong Kong and Malaya under British rule. This, the international anti-slavery committees regarded as child slavery and committees such as the Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children called for the protection of girls from recruitment for prostitution.

Maintaining an almost identical position as the governor of Cyprus, colonial authorities in Hong Kong denied any characterisation of the mui tsai system as slavery and suggested that it was merely a system for girls to be adopted by welcoming families.

The colonial state hid its reluctance to take effective measures to end the system by attributing lack of change to the local societies’ backward or pre-modern social norms. Despite this Orientalist view, some policies to change the exploitative regime of child and adolescents’ domestic labour were finally passed, differing according to the respective society's circumstances, but in all cases only upon mobilisation of support networks for reform either at the local or the international level. In the case of Cyprus, despite demands by the labour movement as early as 1942, a somewhat more protective legal framework was enacted only during the last decade of colonial rule in the 1950s. As shown in the case of the mui tsai system, discussed by Magaly Rodriguez Garcia in this volume, the mobilisation of international organisations such as the ILO in support of protective legislation could be more effective when achieved in the early phases of the struggle. However, both in Hong Kong and in Cyprus, enactment of laws did not mean that they were implemented. In the case of Cyprus a radical change would occur only after the end of colonial rule when the state, according to the departing colonial administrators’ opinion, backward society could emancipate itself from British interests.

1 This chapter is largely based on an article that was published in Herovia: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World 6 (2008), 125-128.

2 See Gabriele vom Bruck. The Imagined ‘Consumer Democracy’ and Elite (Re)production in Yemen. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 16 (2010), 263.

62 See Magaly Rodriguez Garcia’s contribution in this volume.

63 Ibid
In order to substantiate this argument, I will analyse the employment and the jurisdic- tion, people of tribal status cultivated land, and people of low social status were engaged in manual labour. I will discuss Yemen's system of social stratification and the way in which it is complemented by other hierarchical systems. I will explain why relatively few Yemeni women are employed as domestics. In the second part I discuss the public debate about the employment of migrant domestic workers which took place during my fieldwork, and I explain why relatively few Yemeni women are employed as domestics. In the second part I discuss the public debate about the employment of migrant domestic workers which took place during my fieldwork, and in particular, focus on the different ways in which Yemeni women's domesticity was debated in the 2000s. Yet, whereas notions about gender, class and labour are changing, this does not necessarily mean that social inequalities disappeared. Differences based on gender, class and race continue to be important identity markers structuring Yemeni society, although the forms in which these inequalities manifest themselves have altered.

The article is based on ten months of anthropological fieldwork in the cities of Sanaa and Hodeidah during the period 2003—2005. The main data collection methods were informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with domestic workers and employers, topical life stories of domestic workers and observations in employers' households and in the homes of domestic workers. In addition, informal conversations with a wide range of people, from taxi drivers to storekeepers, and interviews with government officials, embassy personnel, journalists and representatives of non-governmental organizations were important sources of information.

Class and Social Distinction in Yemen

In the past, there was a close link between people's social status and the work they performed. In general, people of high social status worked in the administration and the jurisdiction, people of tribal status cultivated land, and people of low social status were engaged in manual labour and service activities. The fact that service professions have a low social status in Yemen is a result of the former hierarchical system of social stratification and has kept its importance until today. According to this system the Yemeni population can be roughly divided into five status groups, based on notions of descent and maintained through endogamous marriage patterns.

The first group, the sada (m. sing. sayyid) are the elite or religious aristocracy who claim status on the basis of direct descent from Prophet Mohammed. Families of judges, the qida (m. sing. qadi) form the second group. The third group are the tribes, the guba'il (m. sing. gabil), the status group owning land, claiming a noble lineage and economic and political autonomy. The fourth group are the landless who work as manual workers and in services. The group of service providers carries different names in different areas, such as muzazzayin, nabat al-bioms, and anadil, and is sub-divided according to the work they perform. Craftsmen in general have a higher social status than those working with human or animal bodies, such as butchers, tanners, barbers and blood-letter. In Yemen, as in other parts of the world, various beliefs exist around bodily fluids, linked to notions of purity and impurity. The fifth group are the abid (lit. slaves) and the akhdam (lit. servants), two distinct ethnic groups with presumed African roots. The abid are considered to be the descendants of slaves brought from Africa until the early twentieth century. Slavery was officially abolished in 1934, in a treaty between the British government and...
the Yemeni authorities, yet a number of families continued to maintain this system of slavery until the early 1960s. The akhdam are believed to be descendents of Ethiopian occupiers who ruled Yemen during the fourth and the sixth century, although their exact origins are not clear. Servants mentions that the akhdam may have pre-dated the Arab population on the Peninsula. The status of the akhdam was, and is, much lower than that of the abid. Whereas the abid had specific jobs and sometimes lived with families of higher social status, the akhdam were, and still are, treated as social outcasts and excluded from regular social life. They live outside villages and towns and earn their living doing low-status work, such as street sweeping, collecting refuse and carrying goods.

Status differentials were officially abolished in the constitutions of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1967 and the Yemen Arab Republic in 1970, yet this does not mean that the hierarchical system of social stratification has disappeared. Status differentials based on descent and occupation are still present in many parts of Yemen. However, social status is no longer a guarant need of economic success because it has increasingly been replaced by other forms of social distinction. One of the most important reasons for the rapid changes that have taken place in Yemeni society was the large-scale migration to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States in the 1970s and 1980s. The sudden rise in oil prices resulted in a high demand for (unskilled) labour and large numbers of Yemenis of different social backgrounds migrated. This led to a growth in the Yemeni economy and enriched people regardless of their social status. People of lower social backgrounds could gain economic status, while people from sada, qida and gaba'il families sometimes lost economic power.

In the second half of the 1980s oil prices crashed after years of stagnation and led to a crisis in the Saudi economy. Some Yemeni workers lost their jobs and returned home, others accepted lower wages. The decline of remittances — Yemen's most important sources of income — had a large effect on the economy and subsequently on individual families. In addition, the state, especially after the discovery of oil in 1984, had an impact on the power basis of former elite families. Carapico and Myntti describe the way in which two Yemeni families in former North Yemen occupying very different positions in the old social hierarchy, one an urban family of sada background and the other a rural family of landowners (ra'raya), were affected by the changes that took place between 1977 and 1989. Neither family possessed the prerequisites for success or even security in this new economy political connections (or 'backing'), and money.
The rapid social, economic and political changes that have taken place in Yemeni society in the past fifty years have had major implications for women, especially for women in urban areas. Even though the large majority of the Yemeni population is still living in rural areas, urbanization rates are high. For a number of Yemeni women migration to the city meant a lighter workload replacing agricultural work with domestic work and childcare. Urbanization has often resulted in changing family structures, with nuclear families replacing extended families due to separate housing. The number of nuclear families has not only increased because some family members remain in rural areas while others have migrated to the city, but also due to the importance of changing notions of family relations and married life. Bushra, an elite family in Hodeidah, explained:

In the past, families were not broken up, the way they are now. You would find the father and the mother and a number of children. They would marry the boys and they would give each one of them a room to live in. Nowadays it is the opposite, when a girl marries she asks for a house of her own, being her own property, which she can take care of herself, she does not want her mother-in-law to tell her what is right, and say: 'Why did you do that? She wants to do everything in her own way, so that she feels that she is the boss.

With the breakup of extended families, domestic tasks are no longer divided between the adult women living in the same household. Earlier the youngest women did the heaviest work, but now the only woman in the household has to do the whole job. In addition, due to the increased school enrolment of girls in urban areas, daughters are no longer automatically available for household chores. Moreover, a growing number of urban women have become engaged in voluntary work or have taken up professional work in education, health care, administration and other employment sectors. For these women combining their activities in and outside the home is a challenge for which employing domestic workers may offer a solution.

Already in 1979 Makhlof, who did research among elite women in Sana'a, mentioned that "Those among my informants who were studying and working could not be at home when housework was to be done. [...] Therefore, they had to delegate their domestic responsibilities either to a female relative if they lived in an extended household or to a maid." And she continued "housework is no longer seen as an inevitable part of the woman's condition, but only one among other activities, sometimes even an obligation to reduce to a minimum." Women who study or who are employed live in nuclear families and cannot delegate housework to a female relative. "In the daily schedule of modernizing Yemeni women, domestic duties must be fitted in with the school..."
the hospital or the office, and in some cases they no longer take priority over outside activities. 31

Whether women are able to afford paid domestic labour depends to a large extent on their financial means. Many working women told me that they would like to employ domestic workers on a part-time basis, but cannot afford it because of their family's low income. Due to the deteriorating economic situation in Yemen many families have difficulties making ends meet. In fact, employing domestic labour is only affordable for families not seriously affected by the economic and political crisis, such as families of businessmen and government officials. These families live in villas and multi-story houses that require a lot of housework, and they often have an active social life, visiting relatives and friends and receiving guests at home. 32 Some families employ live-in domestic workers, leaving all the housekeeping including the cooking to them, whereas other women employ part-time domestic workers for particular household tasks. Amongst other tasks cleaning, washing and ironing are activities that might be left to domestic workers whereas their female employers continue to cook. 33 In addition, elite families might employ a number of live-in domestic workers, while other families might employ one domestic worker on a part-time basis.

In the past, it was relatively common in rural and urban areas alike, to allocate domestic tasks. The most common form were people of the service groups occasionally assisting families of higher social status with particular domestic tasks, paid for in kind or in money. Secondly, elite families in the cities often had permanent servants. This could be village women whom they had brought to the city at a young age and who stayed with the family until they married. M Latifa, a middle-aged woman who grew up in the old city of Sana'a, told me that her family had a baz ya who helped her mother with all kinds of domestic tasks. "She brought water from the well, she went outside to get things and she assisted my mother with everything." A third, less common, form of domestic labour was the use of abid. As mentioned before, slavery was officially abolished in 1914, 34 but some families continued to enslave abid and only released them after the establishment of the Yemen Arab Republic in 1862. Bushra told me:

Before the revolution we had a lot of servants working for us. Some only came during the day, others lived with us permanently. Those were abid. They did not get a salary but they were housed, fed and clothed by us. We had two women and one man. One of the women was responsible for the kitchen, one for washing and ironing, and the man was responsible for fetching water and taking the garbage outside. [...] Immediately after the revolution they announced that it was forbidden to have slaves. We had already sold one of the women before the revolution and we released the other two. But the man continued to work for us because he had nowhere else to go.

Bushra was one of the few women willing to talk about the use of abid in the past. The strong discourse on equality, which the republican governments in both North and South Yemen promoted, has had a major impact on the Yemeni population. People prefer not to speak about slavery and also deny that there are still differences between people of different social status groups.

There were, and still are, many regional differences between who is doing which kind of domestic labour. In her paper on the emergence of a domestic labour market in Sana'a Destremau describes how akhdam were not allowed to work inside the house because of their presumed impurity. 35 In contrast, according to Meneley, domestic labour in the Tihama town of Zabid was only performed by akhdam. 36 Dahlgren mentions that in Aden in the mid-twentieth century mainly young Somali women worked in domestic

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31 Makhlouf, Changing Veils, 75.
32 Yemeni women have an extensive culture of paying afternoon visits to each other, and the ability to be hospitable is crucial for a family's reputation and social standing. See Makhlouf, Changing Veils; Anne Meneley, Tournaments of Value: Sociability and Hierarchy in a Yemeni Town (Toronto, 1996).
33 According to Maclagan (1994), food is the key idiom and instrument for the definition and maintenance of gender obligations in Yemen: men have to buy it and women have to prepare it. Women's control over food preparation gives them some kind of leverage over their husbands, and in particular over men's ability to offer hospitality, which is often expressed through food.
34 See Destremau "L'Emergence, 331.
35 There are very few studies done about the history of slavery in Yemen. Exceptions are Al-Amri, "Slaves and Mamelukes" and C.G. Brouwer, "Die Madagaskar-Connection: Holländische Beiträge zur Erforschung der jemenitischen Sklavengeschichte," in Geert Jan van Gelder and Ed de Moor (eds), Orientations: The Middle East and Europe: Encounters and Exchanges (Amsterdam, 1992), 56-86. I am grateful to C.G. Brouwer for his assistance with this matter.
employment but that also young boys from the Protectorates and from North Yemen were sometimes employed as domestic servants. 35

Although the demand for paid domestic labour has increased since the 1970s, few Yemeni women are employed as domestic workers 39 Only in the city of Hodeidah, one of the poorest cities in Yemen, the majority of domestic workers are Yemeni women. 36 Already from the 1970s onwards mawallad, Yemeni women with a non Yemeni, and in most cases Ethiopian or Eritrean mother, 40 were employed as domestics. The fact that mawallad are not of pure Yemeni descent affects their social status negatively. 41 Mawallad often functioned as pioneers, taking up paid work not yet culturally acceptable for Yemeni women, such as e.g. in health care. 42 Since the 1990s, mainly female migrants who had returned to Yemen during the Gulf crisis (mughtarbat) living in the squatter areas around the city were employed as domestic workers. During my fieldwork numerous pick-up trucks went every morning from the squatter areas to the wealthier areas of Hodeidah bringing women to the houses of their employers. The socio-economic status of the returned migrants was low and it was particularly difficult for male family members to find paid work. Paid domestic labour was one of the ways in which women and girls could earn an income. They were employed as live-out domestic workers for cleaning tasks but never for cooking.

In Sana’a a small number of elite families still employ Yemeni live-in domestics, and some families employ women of the service groups for particular tasks such as baking bread or cleaning water pipes, but the majority of domestic workers are foreign women. The low social status of domestic work, the fear of being stigmatized, and practices of gender segregation affect

the employment of Yemeni women as domestic workers. “I prefer begging over working as a domestic,” a poor Yemeni woman in Sana’a told me. A number of local non-governmental organizations have developed training courses in domestic work for Yemeni women of low social classes, and, in particular, akhdam women. Yet, while every course delivered a group of trained domestic workers, very few of them found work in private houses. Most of those trained worked as cleaners in offices. The women themselves often preferred work in public spaces over working in houses, as they felt more protected in the public area than in private households. But Yemeni families were not interested in employing trained Yemeni domestic workers. “Yemeni domestics are not clean” was an answer I often received when asking why employers did not employ a Yemeni woman. They explained that Yemeni domestic workers are not familiar with modern cleaning equipment such as irons, vacuum cleaners and washing machines. In some cases employers also referred to physical “dirtiness”: “She had a very strong body smell,” or “She never changed her clothes.” This refers to the old status hierarchy in which people carrying out service professions were of lower social background and therefore not “clean.” In addition, the old hierarchical system of social differentials between people was clear and well established. With the social and economic changes taking place in Yemen since the 1970s, social boundaries between people of different social classes have become blurred. The new middle classes are afraid of blurring class boundaries and prefer not to employ Yemeni women as domestics. 43

African and Asian Domestic Workers in Yemen

The growing demand for paid domestic labour in Yemen coincided with the influx of growing numbers of migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa, among whom are many women. Since the end of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia and the outbreak of civil war in Somalia after the fall of Siad Barre in 1991, the numbers of migrants and refugees arriving in Yemen has been growing exponentially. Somali refugees come to Yemen via smuggling boats.

38 Dahlgren, Contesting Realities, 49–50.
39 See also Lackner, “Women and Development,” 89.
40 In Hodeidah attitudes towards paid domestic labour are less negative than in Sana’a and other parts of Yemen’s highland. One of the reasons for this is that the system of social stratification is less strict.
41 The large group of muwalladeen is a result of the numerous contacts between Yemen and other parts of the world, through migration and trade relations. Mawallad can have a variety of backgrounds. In North Yemen the age-long contacts with East Africa have resulted in a large group of people born from a Yemeni father and an African mother, whereas the majority of muwalladeen in South Yemen have mixed Asian parentage, due to the migration of Yemenis to Southeast Asia.
42 The status of muwalladin is, however, also dependent on the social status of their Yemeni father. If the father came from a high status family, the mawallad will have a higher status than one whose father came from a low status family.
43 See De Regt, Pioneers or Yemen? 186–230.
44 The relationship between social status and cleanliness has been discussed extensively by Douglas (1989), who pointed out that persons and groups that reside at the margins of society are often seen as the carriers of pollution and disorder and therefore should be avoided.
45 See Marinus De Regt, “Preferences and Prejudices.”
46 The trip by boat from Somalia to Yemen is arranged by smugglers. The trip takes two days and two nights and stories of people who drowned appear regularly in Yemeni newspapers.
and often intend to travel on to richer countries in the region, or if possible, to
the United States, Canada or Europe. Yemen is the only country of the Arabian
Peninsula that has ratified the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of
Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Somali refugees are accepted on a prima facie,
basis provided that they left Somalia after the outbreak of the 1991 civil war and
that they originate from Mogadishu or the south of Somalia. In 2012 there
were approximately 200,000 Somali refugees registered in Yemen, but the
actual number is much higher because many are not registered. While job
opportunities for refugee men are very limited, the large majority of Somali
women are employed as domestic workers. Their salaries are affordable for
the middle classes (around U.S. $50 per month). They rarely live with their
employers’ families, but are employed on a part-time or full-time basis for
cleaning tasks.

The second largest group of domestic workers were Ethiopian women. After
the fall of Ethiopia’s President Mengistu in 1991, it became easier to obtain a
passport and many women migrated to the Middle East to take up paid domestic
work. The geographic closeness and the presence of relatives or friends
facilitated migration to Yemen. In addition, the negative stories women heard
about other Arab countries, such as Lebanon and the Gulf States, where
Ethiopian women’s human rights are often violated, have become increasingly
publicized. The Somali government regularly installs a ban on migration to
countries in the Middle East. At the time of my fieldwork the majority of
Somali domestic workers in Yemen were unmarried and most of them had
attended secondary education. They came via employment agents or via rela-
tives or friends who were already residing in Yemen. Those who came via
recruitment agents were always employed as live-in domestic workers, while
those who came via relatives or friends could also be employed while living
elsewhere. They worked mainly as cleaners, cooks, and nannies for middle
class and upper class families and earned higher salaries than Somali women,
between 50 and 150 U.S. The difference in salaries between Ethiopian and
Somali women was related to their availability; there were more Somali women

seeking work, and compared to Ethiopian women they were less sought after,
specially for live-in domestic work.

Also Asian women worked as domestics in Yemen. The largest groups of
Asian domestic workers were Filipinas and Indonesians but in addition there
were Indian and some Sri Lankan women. Filipinas also came to Yemen via
relatives or friends or through recruitment agencies. They mainly worked as
live-in domestics and were employed as cleaners, cooks and nannies. A number
of Filipinas did full-time domestic work for ambassadors or expatriates. They
earned between U.S. $200 and $500 per month and were considered at the top of
the hierarchy of domestic workers. The number of Filipinas working as
domestics has decreased since the civil war of 1994 when many of them left.
The increasing inflation rate affected the purchasing power of upper-middle-class
families; subsequently it has become more expensive to employ Filipinas.
Most Filipinas were married, had left their families back home, had attained
higher levels of education and spoke English.

In the years the number of Indonesian domestic workers rapidly increased.
Reliable statistics were lacking because Indonesian women often came to
Yemen on tourist visas via illegal recruitment agencies, and were not registered
at the labour offices. The deteriorating economic situation at home made
Indonesian women willing to go abroad and work in a Muslim country. Brokers
in Indonesia convinced women from rural areas that it was easier to get visas
for Yemen than for Saudi Arabia or the Gulf States. Though some of them had
previously worked in one of the oil-rich countries, others Yemen was their
first overseas experience. Indonesian women mainly worked as cleaners, cooks
and nannies for upper class families, and earned around U.S. $200 per month.
Indonesian domestic workers had often not completed primary education,
and in most cases did not speak English.

There was, and still is, a clear hierarchy between domestic workers, and this
hierarchy coincides to some extent with the class position of their employers.
Asian women were employed by the upper classes. Ethiopian women occupied
a middle position in the hierarchy of domestic workers. They were mainly

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47 Neha H. Hughes, Report on the Situation of Refugees in Yemen: Findings of a one-month
Exploratory Study (Cairo, 2002), 7.
48 See Bina Fernandez, “Cheap and Disposable? The Impact of the Global Economic Crisis
on the Migration of Ethiopian Women Domestic Workers to the Gulf,” Gender &
Development 18 (2010), 249-262, and Marina de Regt, “Ways to Come, Ways to Leave:
Gender, Mobility and Illegality Among Ethiopian Domestic Workers in Yemen,” Gender &
49 In the period May-July 1994 Yemen experienced a short civil war, mainly between the
armies of former North Yemen and former South Yemen. The majority of expatriates
working in Yemen left the country. The political events that have taken place in Yemen
since con, in which Ali Abdullah Saleh was forced to step down, have impacted upon
women’s migration as domestics to Yemen.
50 There is no bilateral agreement that regulates labour migration between Indonesia and
Yemen and the Indonesian government does not support migration to Yemen because it
is not seen as a desirable destination due to the relatively low wages.
employed by the upper middle and middle classes. Somali women, less valuable than Asian and Ethiopian women, were the predominant group of domestic workers for middle-class families.

Yemeni Women’s Domesticity Debated

In contrast with other countries of the Arabian Peninsula, where the employment of migrant domestic workers is highly debated in the media, there was hardly any public debate in Yemen about the increased presence of migrant domestic workers. When I told Yemenis about my research topic people often responded that I should study this phenomenon in the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia, where the problems with migrant domestic workers are much bigger than in Yemen. "Only a small percentage of the Yemeni population uses domestic workers" and "Yemenis treat their domestics well" were common replies. Yet, women who employed domestic workers often answered that my research topic was very important because of the difficulties they have finding "good domestics,"s’

However in July 2003 the headline of an article in the weekly supplement Al-Umsa (The Family) of the Yemeni government newspaper Al Thuwarawritten by the Yemeni journalist Aref al-Atem, reads: "The Servant: Symbol of Wealth or of the Laziness of Housewives?" I had just started my research and was happily surprised to come across this article because it was a sign that the employment of migrant domestic workers was a phenomenon that had caught the interest of journalists, underlining the slow but steady changes taking place in urban Yemen. In this article male journalist Aref al-Atem presents the opinions of employers, domestic workers, a recruitment agent, government officials and a psychologist about the employment of domestic workers. His main argument is that employing migrant domestic workers causes problems for everybody. Women who employ domestic staff have to deal with workers who are lazy; who do not do their work properly; who are too curious, steal or start a relationship with their employers' husbands. Domestic workers may be exploited, badly paid, suffering from a heavy workload, beaten or otherwise maltreated. According to al-Atem, the best solution would be Yemeni women going back to their main responsibilities such as housekeeping and childcare.

Is it a shame that someone helps a woman with her household responsibilities, especially when there are many children and she has a heavy workload? Absolutely not, because the circumstances are determinant, but is this an excuse to leave everything to the servant and let her do everything in the house, with the result that the woman forgets that she is in the first instance housewife and that the servant becomes closer to the children than their mother? The mother has done away with her basic tasks and core tasks of motherhood and has put the responsibility on the shoulders of the servant. She gradually starts to lose her basic role in a desperate attempt to prove herself outside the domain of being a mother, a wife and a housewife, and loses all her true merits and the only thing that remains is the name Urs (mother).

When I showed the article to two Yemeni friends, both employing part-time domestic workers, they shrugged their shoulders and said: "These problems happen when you have live-in domestics, but we only employ domestics for cleaning tasks on a part-time basis." Yet, I also met Yemenis, men as well as women, who confirmed the views expressed in the article. During a gats’ session I attended in the house of a well-to-do family employing two Ethiopian domestic workers in Hadda, a wealthy neighbourhood in Sana’a, the large variety of opinions on employing domestic staff came to the fore. When I told the women that I studied domestic workers (shaghodes),51 one of them answered that she was a shaghada in her own house, because she had so many household tasks and could not afford to employ a domestic worker. This caused a somewhat hilarious situation in which some women agreed with her and pointed to the few women in the room who did employ domestic staff, arguing that they were lazy and spoilt because they did not have paid jobs outside their homes. Khadija, who is married with a child and employs a full-time Somali domestic worker, defended her self saying that she wanted to relax ("ashti aruuh") and have time for other things.

Nazima, a young woman from a well-to-do family, explained to me:

Women from wealthy families want to spend their time on other things than housekeeping. They pay a lot of attention to their appearance and to

51 See de Regt, "Preferences and Prejudices."
social contacts. I, for example, go often to the hairdresser and I spend time on my skin because I don't want to have pimples. I also often go shopping. Women visit each other a lot and chew qat together. Or they watch television until late at night. They go to bed late and they sleep in. That is why we employ domestic workers.

Nazima openly explained the reasons why women employ domestic workers, herself and her mother included, without making any moral judgments, but many women I met were defensive about their domestic staff. I was often asked why I was interested in migrant domestic workers, and why I didn't conduct research about Yemeni women, who still had many problems themselves. This defensive attitude is a clear sign that the employment of foreign domestic workers is not unproblematic, even though it is a phenomenon that does not receive a lot of attention in the media in Yemen.

As mentioned before, there is a clear hierarchy of domestic workers based on nationality. The preferences of employers are based on availability and the height of salaries as well as views on cleanliness and reliability. This hierarchy has led to competition between employers. Bushra, whose family made use of abid in the past but who does not employ domestic workers anymore, said:

The problem is that there is competition. If I bring for example a Filipina, because I have improved my income and I can afford it, my friend will say: Oh, she brought someone from the Philippines, why don't I bring someone who is better than hers? So there is a sort of competition, which I think is an unhealthy sign.

In addition, some women were employing domestic workers although they could not afford to pay them. An increasing number of middle-class families employed domestic workers, even though they lived in apartments that did not need a lot of housework. Some women argued that only women who are 'lazy' and who want to show that they belong to a certain social and economic class employed domestic workers, while they could do the work themselves. They particularly referred to women who were not employed and therefore should have time to do their household duties. Thus employing domestic workers was mainly seen as an important status symbol. Nadia, an educated journalist who I met at a wedding, was fiercely against the employment of domestic workers:

Seventy per cent of the families that employ domestics only do that out of prestige, as a status symbol. They don't really need them. Employing domestics has negative consequences, especially if the domestic takes care of the children. Sometimes the children love their domestics more than their mothers. Language is also a problem, and more diseases have entered because foreign women, especially Somali women, sleep with men easily for money and they don't know how to protect themselves against AIDS. I often discuss these negative aspects with my friends but they always wave my objections away.

And Latifa, a woman of a family of quda from the old city of Sana'a, told me that all her friends employed domestic workers but that she was against it:

In the past women knew what their role was. Nowadays they think they are equal to men and they can study and work, but they neglect their house and family. Women are working outside the house and girls go to school but as a consequence they don't know any more what is good housekeeping. And there are also women who are not employed but who chew qat every day and sleep in the morning or are phoning their friends and don't pay attention to their house and family anymore. They employ domestics who they treat badly. If I ask them why they don't let their domestics eat with them they say that they are unclean, but if they are unclean why do they let them clean their houses?

In Latifa's view, women in the past were always at home and only on special occasions went outside to weddings, engagement parties or mourning gatherings, while nowadays women are continuously visiting each other, to chew qat together. In addition, women of the higher social classes, such as the sada and the quda, used to teach their children the Quran and other essential aspects of their religion and culture before they started attending school. But nowadays women do not pay attention to the upbringing of their children anymore and often neglect them. They allow them to watch television the whole day and leave them to the care of domestic workers. Latifa's idealizing of the past, in which women were in her view only responsible for housekeeping and childcare, is a very typical moral judgment about the changes that have taken place in women's lives in the past fifty years. Especially women from families...
with high status, such as the sada and quda, tended to cherish the past. These women did not always reject the employment of migrant domestic workers, as Latifa did, but they sometimes had strong opinions about how domestic workers should be treated. Many former elite families were proud of the way in which they treated domestic staff, in the present and in the past. Their main line of argument was that the "new rich," families from lower social classes, did not know how to treat domestic workers because their families did not have domestic staff in the past. Ilham, an educated woman of a family of quda from the old city of Sana'a, said:

We have always had domestics at home. For every task and for every person there was a domestic. They came from the countryside and they lived with us. We treated them as part of the family. There is still a young woman living with my mother and taking care of her. But there are many people who do not know how to treat their domestics. Only Sana'ni families who are used to having domestics know how to treat them, they are part of the family.

The expression to treat domestic workers as part of the family is very common all over the world and disguises the structural inequalities that form the basis of paid domestic labour. In Yemen, families of the traditional elite used this phrase to distinguish themselves from the new upper classes, to which also families of lower social classes belonged. Whereas the employment of migrant domestic workers has become a new form of social distinction for the new upper classes, the old elite attempts to distinguish themselves by emphasizing that they treat their domestic workers better than the "new" employers of domestics.

Conclusion

In the 1990s and 2000s employing migrant and refugee women as domestic workers became a growing phenomenon among the middle and upper middle classes in urban Yemen. While there has been no public debate about this phenomenon in the media, attitudes towards the increase of migrant domestic workers differed and almost everybody in the main cities had an opinion about it. These different attitudes and discourses, ranging from sheer denial of the phenomenon to explicit disapproval of employment of domestic workers, show that cultural notions on gender, class, and labour were highly debated. A result of the rapid changes that have taken place in the past fifty years, in particular in urban areas, Yemen's system of social stratification has undergone many changes. Whereas social status used to be based on an honourable lineage and the work performed, and boundaries between social status groups were clear and well-defined, new forms of social distinction have gained importance. Labor migration, the increased dependence on the cash economy, the growing influence of the state and the importance of having the right contacts (and money to pay them when necessary), have all affected Yemen's social structure.

A positive result is that some people of lower social status groups have been able to improve their social and economic status, yet this does not automatically mean that social inequalities have diminished. The increased employment of migrant domestic workers in urban areas in the 1990s and 2000s is an example of the fact that new inequalities have made their entry in Yemeni society. Despite the increased levels of poverty, Yemeni women of the lower social classes were reluctant to do domestic work because of the low status of manual and service professions. Yemeni families were also not interested in employing local women. Employing migrant domestic workers has many practical advantages, such as their availability, the fact that they are not part of the local community and have no family responsibilities and it has become a new form of social distinction. Even families who did not need a domestic worker were employing migrants because it facilitated a particular lifestyle. Most of the women employed as domestic workers are women of colour, which shows a clear sign of persisting systems of inequality.
CHAPTER 23

What is "Domestic Service" Anyway? Producing Household Labourers in Austria (1918-1938)

Jessica Richter

The adoption of ILO Convention 189 in 2011 has a history of reluctance and resistance of state and supra-state bodies to formalize domestic and caregiving work — and this is merely the most recent episode of the conflicts concerning the nature and status of such work spanning the last several centuries. This chapter deals with struggles to normalize gainful domestic work in the history of interwar Austria. Like in many other European countries, skilled, formalized employment was increasingly established as the most legitimate way to make a living since the last decades of the nineteenth century. However, diverse sources of livelihoods continued to co-exist and perceptions of "work" remained controversial? As much as "work" in general, the definition of gainful domestic work was highly contested. Whether it should be considered as wage labour, as part of family life or as a kind of work different from others, was an important question of the interwar period. A multitude of agents were involved in these struggles: domestic workers' organizations, politicians and state institutions, employers and their organizations, charities, and domestics themselves. Depending on the perspective, ideas and practices to shape domestic work differed considerably from each other.

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1 In the German-speaking context, the Beruf (especially in the sense of skilled, long-term employment ideally corresponding to one's aptitudes and abilities) became a benchmark for all other livelihoods. See Thomas Buchner, Alexander Mejstrik and Sigrid Wadauer, "Editorial: Die Erschaffung des Berufes" [hereafter, "Editorial"], Austrian Journal of Historical Studies [hereafter, 8zG], 24 (2013) 1, 5-62; hina Vana, "Gebrauchswesen der öffentlichen Arbeitsvermittlung: Österreich 1889-1938" (Diss, University of Vienna, 2013), 394-407; Sigrid Wadauer, "Immer nur Arbeit? Überlegungen zur Historisierung von Arbeit und Lebensunterhaltung," in Jörn Leonhard and Willibald Steinmetz (eds), Semantik von "Arbeit" im internationalen Vergleich (Vienna [etc.], forthcoming).

2 One of the few studies examining these struggles is Phyllis Palmer, Domesticity and Dirt. Housewives and Domestic Servants in the United States, 1920-7945 (Philadelphia, 1989), ix-xiv. See also Mareike Winkowski, Arbeit ohne Ansehen der Frauenberuf? Hausaufgaben in Deutschland 1918-1960erjahrzei, Münster (etc.), 2009, 59-79, 63-64 in Germany.


So far, conflicting perceptions and practices have not been sufficiently examined. Researchers have done a great deal to investigate domestic's inferior working and living conditions such as their hard work, long working hours, permanent availability to masters and mistresses, poor nutrition and accommodation, or legislation stipulating relationships of dependency. In this context, relationships between domestics and their masters and mistresses as well as the impact of status and power differences on domestics have been discussed. However, the transformations of gainful domestic work in the context of such struggles still require more research.

In my contribution, I will contrast several facets of the debates and practices regarding household labour in interwar Austria. The legislature, courts and administrative authorities engaged in a prolonged effort to codify gainful domestic work as a specific but well-defined form of making a living. Parity in parallel but frequently at cross-purposes with them, the organized representatives of domestics, the trade union Einigkeit, pushed for the transformation of such work into formalized employment. The visions of both sides, however, were often quite distant from the narrated experiences of those concerned, as

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I will show using domestics' own accounts. The outcome of these conflicts was one largely to the benefit of employers and the disadvantage of domestics, in that regulation and formalization were made to reinforce the positioning of their work on a distinct—and low—rank of a hierarchy of different livelihoods.

Domestic Work in the Households of Others in Interwar Austria

The establishment of formalized employment was linked to the development of the welfare state and of public institutions such as labour offices. This officially recognized status of being employed meant entitlement to benefits from the social insurance systems and to work-related rights and legal protection. However, it was not accessible to all of those making or seeking a living in the new Austrian republic. For example, with the Inlandarbeitererschützgesetz of 1925, legislation to "protect" the domestic labour market from migrant labourers by restricting their employment opportunities was introduced. It was declared that this would remain in force for "the duration of exceptional unemployment" which, however, was constantly high throughout the interwar years. The non-Austrian citizens targeted by the law included those who had received the citizenship of other successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Women were also particularly affected. Since the 19th century, perceptions of men and women as being fundamentally different in respect to their "natural" characteristics and abilities had become widely accepted. In accordance with this, women were to be responsible for domestic and caregiving work in private family households. Such activities were commonly assessed as an expression of "love" rather than as work. Men, in contrast, were supposed to be gainfully employed to be breadwinners for their families. Imaginary

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5 Shifts in the perceptions of gainful domestic work were also reflected in contemporary terminology. I use the term "service" with quotation marks as an equivalent to the German word Dienst by far the most frequent term for describing gainful domestic work. Domestic work in both, agricultural and household service.

6 Buchner et al., "Editorial," 7f.

7 BGBl., 1925, vol. 1 (457), 51.
8 Ernst Bendmüller, Sozialgeschichte Österreichs (Munich, 2001), 402.
12 Klöthe Leichter, Frauenarbeit und Arbeitsumweltschutz, 17.
13 Ibid., 38.
14 Bundesamt für Statistik (hereafter, BfS) (ed.): Die Entstehung der österreichischen Völkerwanderung: 1822-1971. Bandzweiter Teil, Bundesamt für Statistik (Vienna, 1975), 169. The most common category was "farmer," "farm servant" was second. The Volkszählung Bundesamt, 164.

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16 The shift of "DOMESTIC SERVICE" ANYWAY? ---
WHAT IS "DOMESTIC SERVICE" ANYWAY?

positions in private households. Besides, fewer households employed persons after the war; households with numerous domestics became comparatively rare. Yet, despite the tight job situation domestics changed their positions frequently and also alternated between different kinds of work: other employment as well as helping out in their own families. Gainful domestic work nonetheless, remained one of the comparatively few opportunities to make living for women of lower social strata. In 1934, almost exactly half of Austria's 133,175 non-agricultural domestics worked in Vienna (66,252). The majority of these had migrated from rural areas of Austria. Beside them, as Reinhard Sieder estimates, about ten percent of the domestics in Vienna originated from Bohemia and Moravia until well into the nineteen-twenties. These former Austro-Hungarian crown lands were part of Czechoslovakia after World War I. In times of economic crisis, Austrian women also migrated to work abroad as domestics. According to Traude Bollauf, England was an important destination country given that there was a constant lack of domestic staff there. From the mid-1920s, Austrian authorities started to support emigration as a way to reduce unemployment. Bollauf describes how the English domestic work permit became an important possibility of escape for those women categorized as Jewish by the Nuremberg laws. Between 1938, when Austria was a part of National-Socialist Germany, and the beginning of World War II, thousands of women (and a few men) emigrated to England as domestics.

The beginning of the 1920s brought about some profound changes to the legal situation of domestic workers. The Austria-wide Domestic Help Act of 1920 partly assimilated gainful domestic work to contractual employment. It replaced servant laws (Gesinderegelung) that had stipulated personal dependency of servants on their masters. At the end of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, twenty-four such laws of regional and municipal validity had co-existed in the Western part of the empire alone. The new legislation abolished police jurisdiction — previously, the police rather than courts had been in charge of conflicts between "servants" and masters or mistresses and it did away with Dienstbücher, official documents containing information about a servant's previous positions, their duration, and often still descriptions of his/her behaviour. It regulated payment, domestics' accommodation, and paid holidays, and the termination of employment. This gave domestic workers a share in what had been achieved by the labour movement.

However, in comparison to other categories of employment, the Domestic Help Act remained vague, ambivalent and exclusive: For example, instead of explicitly restricting working hours, the law stipulated daily rest periods of time compensation and additional breaks after night work. But after all, such stipulations still allowed thirteen hours of work a day. These were often exceeded since the implementation of the law was not controlled. According to a study by Kathe Leichter, head of the Unit for Women's Work of the Viennese Chamber of Labour, 52.1 per cent of the interviewees worked longer than fourteen hours, almost ten per cent of them even longer than sixteen hours a day.

The same ambivalence also characterized the integration of domestics into social insurance schemes: Since 1922 live-in domestics were included in compulsory health insurance for workers, but remained excluded from other elements of the social security system, such as unemployment insurance. 24

References:


21 Platzer, "Die Hausangestellten," 159; Rigler, Frauenbildung in Österreich, 1935, 146.


23 Bollauf, Dienstmädchen-Emigration, 60–64, 73.


25 Bollauf, Dienstmädchen-Emigration, 24f.

26 Ibid., 25. The Domestic Help Act gave district courts (Bezirksgerichte) jurisdiction over disputes between employers and domestics. From October 1929 on, domestic help were included in the purview of industrial courts, which consisted of a judge and representatives of employers and employees alike. N.N., "Dienstbucheintragungen," Die Haushaltszeitschrift, 17 (1929), 1, 1; N.N., "Dienstbucheintragungen," Die Haushaltszeitschrift, 17 (1929), 10, 6, 6.

27 SGBI, 1930, vol. 37 (id), 47.


29 Hannes Stekl, "Soziale Sicherheit für Hausangestellte," in Ernst Druckmüller, Roman Sandgruber and Hannes Stekl (eds), Soziale Sicherheit im Arbeitshofverfahren. Die
Demands for assimilating gainful domestic work to "regular" (formalized) employment, however, were scarcely new. From its foundation in 1890, the Einigkeit had campaigned for changes later enacted by the Domestic Help Act such as rest periods and the abolishment of police jurisdiction over Diensthäuser.\(^6\)

In 1910, Social Democratic representatives formulated similar demands when the regional parliament of Lower Austria debated a reform of the servant's law for Vienna.\(^31\) Karl Renner, subsequently Austrian Chancellor of the early Republic (1918-1920), pled for a codification of gainful domestic work as contractual labour:

> We are well advised not to ask of the employee anything else than a strictly defined performance and not to demand of the employer anything that he cannot supply, not care and protection, which he is not capable of providing because he belongs to another class of society, but just a clear, plain monetary payment and a certain duty of care by public institutions. In a word, service has increasingly transformed into employment.\(^32\)

Renner unsuccessfully demanded the integration of servants into trade law, instead of subjecting them to special legislation.\(^33\)

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\(^31\) The new regional law was passed one year later on 28 October 1911, see LGBl (Österreich unter der Enns,19u), vol. 24 (a8).


\(^33\) Ibid., 274.
Domestic Help or Something Else? Courts and Administrative Authorities in Trouble

The Domestic Help Act added to the ensemble of laws that regulated working relationships and social insurance provisions. Legislation distinguished categories of workers, such as "domestic help," "commercial workers," 38 or "agricultural workers," and granted each one a different level of protection and entitlements. For example, like the eight-hour working day, full Sunday rest's was established among commercial workers but could not be claimed by domestics. Moreover, commercial labour often implied a better inclusion into social insurance schemes, such as compulsory unemployment insurance.

However, legislation allowed for different interpretations of what exactly domestic help (Hausgehilfe) was supposed to be and of how to distinguish them from other workers like commercial workers. Furthermore, a naivety of practices of making a living and of employing someone co-existed that often did not match legal definitions. Controversial cases could not always clearly be assigned to one or another category. This included workers, for example, who performed domestic work as much as farm work or commercial labour, or those in positions that comprised elements of gainful domestic work as well as other categories, like cleaning in companies or public institutions. Such lack of clarity could result in disputes e.g. between employers and workers or between employers and state institutions. Sometimes, legal action was taken and courts had to deal with these cases. When cases concerned workers' protection and entitlements, usually domestics themselves claimed rights, often after they had left the position in question. Other cases concerned employers' complaints about certain social insurance contributions, fees etc. Decisions were based on investigations, particularly testifies of involved parties and potential witnesses.

The records produced by institutions handling such cases provide valuable insights into how remunerated domestic work and other gainful activities were delimited against each other in increasing detail. Such drawing of boundaries was not completed when laws were passed. Courts and authorities sought to establish order by clarifying the criteria stipulated by legislation and by conceptualizing clearer categories of contexts and workers through the classification of controversial cases. In the following, I will refer to three kinds of sources: (a) decisions of the Higher Administrative Court, (b) court decisions on different levels of jurisdiction relating to the Domestic Help Act and (c) files from public authorities dealing with claims upon unemployment insurance. The Higher Administrative Court was responsible to annul or confirm decisions taken by public authorities. Courts (district as well as industrial courts) were in charge of disputes between employers and employees e.g. when such conflicts concerned "service" and labour legislation. In respect to unemployment insurance, public labour offices and, in contested cases, administrative authorities were authorized to decide on the basis of existing legislation.

A number of decisions by the Higher Administrative Court concerned the employment of washerwomen, door women, servants, sacristans and other staff of religious societies and convents. It had to determine, for example, if and under which conditions staff was to be integrated into the compulsory unemployment or health insurance and if fees for staff were due. The decisions were based on a categorization of work contexts. The court determined that only those working in private households for employers who were persons instead of legal entities could be classified as domestic help. To justify its decision it interpreted the term Haushaltung (household economy), Hausstand (a term to describe the ensemble of members in the household) and Haushaftgemeinschaft (household community) as used in §2 (i) Domestic Help Act related to the "service contract" of domestic helps.


42 I would like to thank Irina Vana for pointing out these sources to me.
43 The following decisions are similar in respect to the limitation of the term "domestic help" to interpersonal services and private households: A. 268123 (24 April 1924, No.13.526 (A.)); A. 386124 (20 March 1925, No.13.794 (A.)); A. 341/26 (7 June 1927, No.14.829 (A.)).
Act. This paragraph determined which kind of employment was regulated by the law:

The provisions of this law apply to the employment of persons who are charged with services for the household economy of the employer or for members of the household ["Hausstand"] and who are integrated in the employer's household community.45

Thus, in order to be legally regarded as a domestic help a person had to work in a private household for other persons who were part of that household. The limitation to live-in domestics only (that is what was meant by integration into the household community) was compensated for in §28 and 29, which extended the coverage of a number of the act's provisions to at least some live-out domestics and persons in so-called "higher services."46

In accordance with these provisions, the court argued in 1927 that the term "domestic help" by its very nature could only refer to "[...] interpersonal services [...] that would solely be imaginable as [ones] from person to person and that would therefore only be possible in relation to a person [instead of an institution or corporation] [...]".47 The household was not regarded as a workplace like any other but as a context characterized by personal relationships which also structured the way "service" was performed. This becomes obvious in the case of the Catholic Karitas Association contesting the obligation of two of its convents to pay for unemployment insurance for their staff. Explaining why these workers could not be defined as domestic help on a legal basis, the court explained:

The domestic economy is contrary to the economy of an enterprise. In the present case, employees dedicate their services to convents, the economic organism of which certainly is not a 'domestic economy' in the sense of the Domestic Help Act, and that do not possess a Hausstand: [...] Underlying the term 'domestic help' is a specific, close relationship between employer and employee, which is based on the private domestic economy.5

Consequently, cooks, maids, or washerwomen in private households and those in convents belonged to different categories of workers according to this legal practice. Their work was classified in regard to their respective employer (person or legal entity) and context (private household, institution or enterprise) instead of basing decisions on actual tasks performed. The industrial and the district courts of Leoben used similar arguments when classifying the position of a cook in a communal home for the elderly who was struggling for overtime compensation in 1937. Since industrial courts did not have jurisdiction over all forms of employment, the first question needing to be settled was which court was competent. Both courts made clear that like convents, public welfare institutions could, from a legal perspective, not be employers of domestic help. The industrial court argued that even if some staff of public or religious institutions performed tasks resembling those of domestic help, this was not sufficient to qualify them as domestic help. Since the cook was not employed in a commercial enterprise but in a communal home, she was not a commercial worker either. The Appellate Court confirmed this decision and added that from a legal perspective the term "enterprise" needed to involve the aim of accumulating "earnings."50

The Higher Administrative Court localized domestic help in private households and defined the boundaries between what was to be understood as household and non-household, as "private," commercial or institutional. Thereby, it limited the scope of the category "domestic help" and distinguished domestics and other workers along the categorization of contexts. Yet, the "private household" was a category that embraced entities which in practice differed considerably from each other. When determining in 1925 whether an employer with domiciles in two different places was obliged to pay fees for her doorman in her Vienna property during her absence, the court explicated:

45 StGB, 1920, vol. 37 (60), §1 (1).
46 StGB, 1920, vol. 37 (60), §28, §29. Included were all persons who performed services for the employer's household (or, concerning "higher services; e.g. of tutors, also for members of the Hausstand), and who were completely or primarily for their staff engaged in this employment. They were, however, not defined as domestic help. §27, moreover, formulated special provisions for persons in "higher services? See also Ludwig Nedjela, Hausgehilfengesetz. GesetzesentwurfmitErläuterungen (Vienna,1930), 67–79; Richard Pokorny, Desgewerbliche and hauslicheArbeitsrecht (part 4, 5th edn, Leipzig [etc.],1935), 25-29.
47 Decision A. 341/26 (7 June 1927, No.14.829 (A.)), 490. The court refers in its statement to its previous decision A. 268/23 (8 April 1924, No. 3, §26 (A.)).
48 Decision A. 386/24 (20 March 1925, No.13.794 (A.)),130.
49 The court actually discusses the two German terms Betrieb and Unternehmung. Both translate as 'enterprise' but do not mean exactly the same.
50 The cook had originally made her claim at the industrial court but was referred to the ordinary court in the end. BMII, Sammlung arbeitsrechtlicherEntscheidungen, 15 (1937), 245-248 (No. 4822).
What is to be understood as domestic economy will have to be assessed concerning the circumstances of the respective case. The household may be large or small, its economic organism may be directed at meeting an extensive or narrow ensemble of needs. While in one case only vital necessities come into question, a range of luxury needs are added in another case. The responsibilities of [...] the domestic personnel will adapt to these circumstances.31

Thus, such variations resulted, at least to some degree, in vague definitions of private households. This also affected definitions of domestic help and other categories of workers. Domestic workers, moreover, were not assigned a clear set of tasks but their work was characterized as variable depending on the specific household.

How much an individual assessment of cases seemed necessary and how difficult it often proved to be becomes particularly obvious in respect to cases of "domestics" in business households. Frequently they were charged with tasks for family members as well as for customers and other staff, and had to work in the private parts of the house as well as in business premises. In these cases, courts and administrative authorities investigated which tasks particular workers were entrusted with and whether these activities could be assigned to households or enterprises. In doing so, they often also needed to determine whether recipients of services or premises were associated with the business or household.

A butcher's cook, for example, claimed overtime compensation at the Innsbruck Industrial Court without success and appealed to the Tyrolean Regional Court in Innsbruck in 1936. She perceived herself as a commercial worker because she had been responsible for catering for twenty-one employees (workers and saleswomen) of the butcher as well as his family consisting of five persons plus two additional domestics. Since the employees were accommodated in the butcher's household, the cook was charged with tidying some of their rooms and on Sundays and bank holidays, apparently, she cleaned the butchery. The courts sought to decide whether the cook was a domestic help or a commercial worker — and both categorized her as a domestic help in the end, for whom the eight-hour working day did not apply.52

The criterion for this decision was to which context tasks could be assigned. The courts argued that her work did not have anything to do with her master's business since she did not work regularly in the butchery. Exceptions formulated in trade law such as cleaning works referred only to business premises and did not include caring for the staff. Furthermore, the numerical relation between employees and family members she cared for was not relevant according to the courts, since their numbers might change and therefore could not be regarded as relevant for the decision. Moreover, the Industrial Court viewed the employees — in that they were persons being accommodated and fed in the house — not as part of the business but of the household economy. "The domestic economy of the defendant, therefore, comprises not only the members of his family but also workers and employees living with him and being catered for." The Appellate Court added that commercial employees and workers receiving food and accommodation in their employer's household were common cases.

Thus, the cook was declared a domestic help since her work was assessed as relating to the household instead of the business. While accommodating and providing food for employees, although it was payment in kind for their labour, was excepted from the "business" in this context, that was never the case in respect to customers e.g. of guesthouses and inns paying for similar services. Again, the same activities could be commercial or domestic in different cases. Moreover, according to the courts, the composition of households as well as businesses were not a reliable criterion, and the integration of non-family members into households could not count as a feature distinguishing domestic help from other employees.

In the case of the butcher's cook, "domestic" activities were easily separated from those of other employees. Many other cases were even less clear because "domestics" could be charged with a multiplicity of tasks in various contexts. In business households activities often included both, those officially considered as related to the household and those assessed as commercial. This could create great difficulties for authorities attempting to assign a person's work to one sphere or the other. These are illustrated by the case of a "domestic" who had been employed for four months by a married couple running an inn and guest house. After being dismissed, she asserted that she was eligible for unemployment support.

was not even eligible to overtime compensation granted by the Domestic Help Act. StGbI, 1920, vol. 37 (ii), §28.

32 BMfJ, Sammlung arbeitsrechtlicher Entscheidungen, 14 (1936), 228-230 (No. 4700). Since the first court referred to §28 Domestic Help Act (p. 229), she seemed to be a live-out. In the strict sense of the law, she was no domestic help (see n 46). And as a live-out, she...
The worker argued that she had mainly been a commercial worker since her duties such as tidying up guest rooms, collecting room fares, serving dishes to customers, and kitchen chores concerned the inn but not the private household. Her former employers alleged the opposite and pointed to her tasks in the household such as cleaning floors, looking after the employers' children, or washing clothes as well as to her agricultural work. Both parties depended on which official assessment they aimed at — focused on one kind of work while denying or downplaying the other. However, some activities related to both areas and the authorities investigated the purpose of that work — whether dishes washed had been used by customers or whether the room cleaned belonged to the business — and they sought indications for the amount of time spent on the different tasks to estimate the relation of business and household-related activities.

The proceedings in this case dragged on from 1926 to 1931 and involved the labour office in Kufstein as well as administrative bodies on all levels, from the district authority (Bezirksverwaltungsamt) to the Federal Ministry of Social Administration. All of these institutions to a great extent depended on the statements of the people involved, and since the testimonies of the conflicting parties differed fundamentally, additional witnesses like the former waitress in the inn were questioned. In the end, the worker was classified as a domestic help since it seemed unlikely to the authorities that she had been predominantly employed in the business. However, even the employers and the waitress confirmed in the course of the hearings that the worker had made contributions to the business at least to a smaller extent. The waitress explained: "[The worker] was maid-of-all-work and had to help everywhere!"

When workers were responsible for both commercial and household-related tasks, courts and authorities needed clear-cut criteria to categorize them. Depending on whether the cases were related to social insurance legislation or "service" and labour legislation different criteria were applied. In disputed cases concerning social insurance, authorities asked about the worker's main activity, or in other words: which category of tasks outweighed the other in respect to the time spent on them. In cases of disputes regarding "service" and labour legislation, courts had to decide if the Domestic Help Act or trade law was applicable and whether economic activities other than domestic work were performed regularly. The Domestic Help Act did not cover "[...persons... do also perform[ed] services for the agricultural or commercial enterprise of the employee"

Thus, each set of legislation defined domestic help differently. Trade law included some of those workers that social insurance legislation defined as domestic help: A commercial worker also working for the master’s business on a regular basis was according to the law a commercial worker even when domestic duties outweighed commercial ones. However, the Domestic Help Act did not fully exclude business-related activities from the definition of "domestic help." Employers were at least occasionally permitted to charge their domestics with business-related tasks without "risking" the enhancement of their rights.

The differences between these definitions may seem odd, but they were part of a system of classification based on the different types of legislation. Courts and authorities delineated domestic help, commercial workers, and other workers in relation to each other and constructed them as distinguishable categories. Domestic help was defined in close connection to the household and thus, as a category of work outside employment. This reaffirmed hierarchies between workers, albeit on the basis of partly new criteria. Those identified as domestics were excluded from the eight-hour working day, unemployment insurance and other advantages. However, courts and administrative authorities had to deal with a wide multiple variety of working arrangements which resisted the ready application of the basic definitions. Staff could be — to
various degrees and in different ways — both domestic help and commercial workers at the same time. Reducing these grey areas required both the introduction of supplementary criteria and detailed investigation of individual circumstances — a process which proved extremely difficult and time-consuming.

Differences and Similarities in Domestic Workers' Life Stories

The efforts of authorities to categorize gainful activities were just one aspect of the struggles over definitions and the organization of domestic work in the households of others. The Social Democratic trade union Einigkeit took a position very different from the ones examined above. The majority of its members were live-in domestics. During the interwar period the union also organized governesses and live-out domestic workers and was predominantly concentrated in Vienna. In those years the Einigkeit had between 2,018 (in the year 1919) and 4,708 (1928) members — a small number compared to more than 66,000 live-in domestics in Vienna alone. It was banned in 1934 by the Austrofascist regime. The other large organization for domestic servants was the Catholic Reichsverband der christlichen Hausgehilfinnen (RdH). In its Viennese branch membership ranged from about 1,000 (1922) to 5,269 (1920) between 1917 and 1937. Austria-wide it had about 6,500 members during the second half of the 1920s.

The Einigkeit regarded domestics as wage workers and aimed for the formalization of their employment. Labour relations in private households, in the union's view, were — as much as at other workplaces — marked by a clash of interests of workers and employers. Since domestics were the weaker parts of such relationships they were often exploited: as workers forced to sell their labour and as dependants on an interpersonal level. The union published articles and case studies on a regular basis in its journal dealing with the issues: "Forchtshabl" (until 1923), "Einigkeit" (1924-1927), "Die Hausangestellte" (1928-1933). Generally, it should be published on a monthly basis, but this was often rendered impossible by economic crises. Einigkeit, Der Aufstieg der Hausangestellten und Heimarbeiterinnen, 74-76.

I have integrated some case studies published in the journal into a systematic comparison of life narratives, in which I analysed life-phases (text segments) as well as life-courses as presented in the texts. In this context, I will use the Einigkeit's viewpoints differed considerably from those of the RdH. The ReHippes regarding gainful domestic work as wage labour and aimed to achieve a permanent integration of domestics into their employer's families. Richter, A Vocation in the Family Household?, 248f.

The print run of the journal was higher than the number of members (e.g. 5,450 copies in 1928, when the Einigkeit had 4,708 members), which implies that a broader readership was targeted. In the interwar period, the journal's name was changed several times: "Forchtshabl" (until 1923), "Einigkeit" (1924-1927), "Die Hausangestellte" (1928-1933). Generally, it should be published on a monthly basis, but this was often rendered impossible by economic crises. Einigkeit, Der Aufstieg der Hausangestellten und Heimarbeiterinnen, 74-76.

64 Richter, A Vocation in the Family Household?, 253.

65 Ibid., 247.

66 Einigkeit, Der Aufstieg der Hausangestellten und Heimarbeiterinnen, 78.

67 The Einigkeit's viewpoints differed considerably from those of the RdH. The ReHippes regarding gainful domestic work as wage labour and aimed to achieve a permanent integration of domestics into their employer's families. Richter, A Vocation in the Family Household?, 248f.

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70 Richter, A Vocation in the Family Household?, 250, 253f.

71 The sample I have used comprises thirty-nine texts in total: domestic and farm servants' accounts in autobiographies, letters, interviews and a diary, texts taken from publications of different interest organizations and political parties, a theatre play, a biography, as well as employment references. The sample covers possible variations of "service" and "servants" life-courses (often composed of very different ways to make a living) and allows insights into the varying ways in which "service" was conceptualized and practised. Therefore, different perspectives on "service" and contrasting narrative styles and formats were included to make them comparable. Narratives were analysed by implementing a Multiple Correspondence Analysis. See Brigitte Le Roux and Henry Rouanet, Multiple Correspondence Analysis (Los Angeles etc., 2010). This approach follows the work of Alexander Mejstrik and Sigrid Wadauer, see e.g. Alexander Mejstrik, "Felder und Christian Schmidt Wellenburg (eds), Feldanalyse als Forschungsprogramm r. Der programmatische Kern (Wiesbaden, 2012), 151-189, Sigrid Wadauer, Die Tour der Gesellen, Mohlbiicher und Biographien im Handwerk vom 78. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert (Frankfurt a.M. etc., 2005). A broader overview of the results (which includes my analysis of the first of the following life stories) will be published in Jessica Richter, "Von der Arbeit im fremden Haushalt. Lebensabschnitte und Lebensverlaufe von Dienstbot/innen im Vergleich
discuss only some of the most important results of the comparison of segments: The variety of ways in which "service was practised and narrated in relation to "employment," in the sense of a working arrangement that is clearly defined. To a lesser or greater extent, the text segments either represent work in these terms or in ones that fail to correspond to this logic. This notion of employment in the interwar period had attained the status of a benchmark.

Employment is characterized by unambiguosity of what work the protagonist is expected to perform and in what context, and how he/she is compensated as return. The authors of the texts do not specify whether working arrangements were based on explicit agreements with their employers. Rather, what I mean by a segment representing work as employment is one which conveys that protagonists' tasks and remuneration as well as the contexts were precisely determined. There may be differences between occupational categories such as "parlour maid" or "cook," but each one indicates a range of duties, rewards, and the specific context. In this sense, standardized work relationships are presented.

Those segments of narratives that realize the logic of employment best are extremely short and often written by contemporaries. The presentation is abstract and focused on the ways work and labour relations were arranged. The segments follow the logic of standardization since mere reference to the kind of employment or one's own position was sufficient. Thereby, authors relate to an occupational category rather than specific experiences and particulars of the workplace. This involves omitting feelings, relationships to other persons in the household or other areas of life such as their own families from the narration. Also characteristics of workplaces that differ between situations, such as specific activities in a certain context or working conditions, are neglected for the purpose of generalization.

In the following, I will illustrate my findings using the life story of a narrator identifying herself as M.T., published in 1929 in the Einigkeit's journal. The story of M.T.'s life is written as a letter to the editor. Every segment of this text corresponds to the logic of employment. The protagonist is forced to enter gainful domestic work at the age of forty after her husband has died in 1898. She works under harsh conditions and is badly treated by her masters and mistresses. To try her luck elsewhere she serves in Berlin, London and France.

At the beginning of the First World War, she leaves France and travels to Vienna, where she is recruited for work in a "grand mansion." Subsequently, she only finds temporary positions. After five months working as a cook for sweet dishes in a sanatorium in post-war Brandenburg, she collapses, sick and exhausted. When she recovers, she returns to Vienna.

In the context of the journal, M.T.'s narrative is an exception because most case studies present protagonists' experiences in individual households rather than life-courses. However, like other cases, the narrative supports the union's campaigns and its aim to increase membership by pointing out the harsh working and living conditions of domestics. The story ends with M.T.'s difficult situation at the age of seventy. Now she neither finds a position nor receives a public pension, as she does not meet the requirements. The narrative illustrates the particular hardship of elderly domestics in Austria which the union tried to fight through demands for old-age insurance or at least other forms of financial relief for a decent life. When old-age relief was introduced in 1928, the union continued to campaign since most elderly domestics remained excluded and allowances were too small for a living. According to the union, such problems persisted even when the amount of relief was increased and age limits were lowered.

The protagonist M.T. seldom mentions details about her work, her remuneration or the households she worked in, and describes her positions in a rather abstract way. This is particularly the case in some segments where positions are hardly described at all and are solely referred to in general terms without further explanation: "I served [...1 as the senior cook." Of course, journal articles needed to be brief and the readership was well-informed. However, when compared to other segments, this was a way of writing that negated the purpose of generalization.
particularly matches the logic of standardization. In other segments, the author is more explicit by describing one particular negative aspect of a post, In respect to this specific feature, her working arrangement differs from standardized employment, the representation deviates from the generalized mention of an occupational category. The logic of employment functions as an implicit benchmark, which determines what domestics were supposed to do, how they should be rewarded, and in which context such work relations were located.

In one segment the protagonist describes her position in the "grand mansion" during World War I as follows:

Two families with fourteen people lived together. Many nights I had to queue up for food and work hard in the day-time. My only help was a sixteen-year old girl [...]. During three years the girl and I bore up in this position without really an hour of rest, without having a single free day.  

The situation was affected negatively by the difficulties of everyday life in First World War Vienna, with scarce supplies — queueing for food is presented as an extra duty for the domestic worker. Thereby, she points out specific characteristics of this working arrangement in which the line between "normal" (as measured by standardized employment) and excessive amounts of work was crossed. The same applies to another situation when the narrator was confronted with the mistress's fraudulent behaviour:

Constantly, there were guests in the house, who stayed until late at night, and I had to do all the work all by myself. The most disgraceful thing about this was that the lady of the house reduced and pocketed the tips that the guests should leave in the hallway for me.  

The tips should have offered some compensation for the extra work but the employer broke with this arrangement. Although such constellations seem specific to certain situations in M.T.'s life story, each one described the kinds of hardship which the union criticized. This and other narratives construct the occupational category "domestic worker" characterized by shared problems. For the purpose of organizing, an abstraction of differences between household positions is crucial. However, generalization necessarily proceeds on two levels. On the one hand there is the ideal of formalized employment, viewed as a desirable norm by the union. On the other, there are abuses which are presented as deviations from that norm, but nonetheless as widespread, typical and relatable for the journal's audience. Any other individual circumstances not lending themselves to generalization or not fitting the union's agenda were not of interest in this context and thus were omitted from the texts.

The union perceived households as a specific form of workplace where bad treatment and exploitation were too easily possible. Ideally, transformations of domestic labour as well as households would eliminate these differences and turn the latter into workplaces like any other.  

"Employment" is thus constructed as a point of reference for the organization of domestic labour, in opposition to its current status of being ambivalently and insufficiently codified and formalized. This makes sense for an official journal of a union which wanted to convert service into wage labour or, preferably, into a vocation with formal training and rights.

As in the case of M.T., segments of institutional writings were especially likely to present employment in an explicit and clear manner. This is particularly true for a narration taken from the communist newspaper Die Arbeiterin. However, this correspondence between a type of text and a perspective on "service" was far from universal. In her diary Johanna Gastegger (born in 1905) kept accounts of her different posts as a domestic by either retrospectively mentioning that she had started and left them or by adding striking details in form of notes about e.g. her wages or that a mistress had a "hysterical predisposition."

In this respect, parts of her diary are similar to the segments of M.T.'s letter even though the logic of employment is more distinct in the latter. Other narrations did not follow this logic. They contradicted it simply by articulating practices that did not conform. In these cases, working

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77 Ibid., 3.
79 T., "Die alte Hausgehilfin," 3.
80 See e.g. N.N., "Die Hausgehilfin und das Einköchenhaus," Einigkeit, 15 (1927) 8ff., 2-3, 2f.
81 R, "Der Leidensweg einer Hausgehilfin!" Die Arbeiterin 3 (1926), 5. 5. These segments realize and describe "employment" best. However, since there was no communist domestic workers' organization, and since the communist party's influence was comparatively little, I decided to focus on a text published in the journal of the Einigkeit.
82 Johanna Gastegger, diary entries 1926 (Sammlung Fausenklischee [hereafter, sFNI, NL 47]), diary entries of 3 October 1926 to 28 April 1927.
arrangements appear much less pre-defined. Occupational titles are attached to a variety of tasks that differ widely between contexts, or such titles are not specified at all. Similarly; remunerations, relationships to other household members as well as the composition and structure of households are closely described indicating that they cannot be presupposed in the narration. Instead of restricting the narrative to employment as a sphere of its own and generalizing the situations, these segments provide detailed accounts of experiences and events not limited to gainful work. Moreover, they cannot be abstracted from the context or the respective protagonists. For example, a segment in Franziska K.'s handwritten autobiography about her work in the household of a rich elderly woman in Vienna differs greatly from those of M.T.'s letter. Her position in this household is narrated as a distinct phase of K.'s life — with its own relationships, activities, and experiences. Moreover, her activities cannot be divided clearly into work, leisure, and relationships, nor are her tasks properly defined.

Franziska K. was about eighteen years old when she started to work in this position in 1887. Apart from her, her mistress also employed a domestic in charge of cleaning and a seamstress. Franziska K. was responsible for a range of activities: cooking and serving dishes as well as doing needlework or taking care of the many visitors. She was also entrusted with personal services for the mistress, such as facial cosmetics and massages, or accompanying her on journeys. Even though there was a division of work between household staff, K.'s tasks could hardly be labelled with one occupational title. She therefore provided a list of activities for the mistress in the segment and described in detail what she did and what was expected of her.

In this upscale household, her performance was measured not only by the results of her work but also by the way she behaved. This added another dimension to the principle of work in exchange for remuneration. K. was criticized, for example, for having conversations with guests and was to "act like a lackey," as she summed it up herself. Thereby, she pointed to class differences and the expectation of subordination that also affected her image of herself. "Service," in this description, was more than the performance of tasks. It also demanded an attitude of devotion, and thus subjected the personality of the domestic as well as her labour to the needs of the mistress.

K.'s segment also illustrates how boundaries between work and free time as well as personal relationships were blurred. This was the case when the seamstress taught her how to behave at the table, but also when members of the mistress' family attempted to integrate her into the family by taking her on excursions. Some paragraphs, moreover, show K.'s difficulties in maintaining personal boundaries: The mistress asked K. to take baths with her and to wash each other — which K. at first reluctantly agreed to do even though she expressed how uncomfortable she felt. Later on, K. found ways to end this and to assert privileges such as listening to music. Yet, in the context of an unequal balance of power between K. and her mistress, the work relationship between both was undermined to K.'s disadvantage. Not only was it unclear what was part of the "job" or not, but K. had also had to deal with violations of her integrity and either needed to defend her privacy (and to potentially risk negative consequences) or to bear the situation.

In this and similar segments, work situations were presented as separate, distinct phases of life, set off from each other by variations between house- holds, tasks, specific living and working conditions, expectations, and relationships. Often, this differed from everything else the protagonist experienced before or afterwards. In this respect, these parts of the narratives contrast with those representing "service" as employment. When K. was working for the elderly lady, the protagonist's unfamiliarity with her new context of work was important, too. She had grown up in a rural area in Carinthia and was neither acquainted with Viennese city life nor with the manners and standards of conduct in wealthy urban households. Her narrative is therefore detailed and

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83 The author did not want to have her full name published. Franziska K., no title (unpublished manuscript, Dokumentation lebensgeschichtlicher Aufzeichnungen [hereafter, nova], 1983-84), 51-60. In my sample, there are segments narrating life and work particularly in rural, agricultural contexts that are even more distant from the logic of employment. See especially Leopold Kandler, Die Bichlbauemleute. Eine Familiengeschichte (Gresten, n.y.), 9-99.
84 Ibid., 51.
85 Ibid., 52f.
86 Ibid., 57f.
87 When she leaves that position she calls the person who replaces her a 'cook," ibid., 60.
88 Ibid., 57f.
89 Ibid., 53.
90 Ibid., 53.
91 Ibid., 58f.
92 Ibid., 56.
93 Ibid., 56f.
94 There are different possible ways in which narrations of life phases diverge from the logic of "employment". In some segments, for example, the protagonist's livelihood organization is of lesser importance compared to other areas of life and other activities (such as making music in the case of the farmer Karl Pichler). Karl Pichler, "Mein Lebenslauf in Freud und Leid" (typescript, n mat, 1996), 34-38.
illustrates specific experiences. And since the boundaries between work and leisure time as well as relations to the employer and other household members were not clear, the narrative covers more than the work relationship. The text includes multiple aspects of her everyday life, which cannot be separated from each other and cannot be standardized in an abstract way.

Franziska K.'s segment points to some specific features that characterized domestic work in the households of others: The especially close entanglement of personal and working life and, at the same time, the high level of variation between individual work situations, making each one a special case. Since household demands and employers' needs and preferences differed, domestics were required to adapt their labour, and often themselves, to the respective context. Besides, gainful domestic work lacked clear contractual standards and rights, if at least their enforcement. In the contrasting segments from the Einigkeit's journal, the narrative aimed at constructing an ideal of standardized household employment and at presenting domestics as a more or less homogeneous occupational group. This vision served the purpose of pressure-group politics but did not match the narrated "realities" as presented by Franziska K. and other domestics.

Conclusion

This chapter deals with the definitions and the formalization of domestic work in the households of others in interwar Austria, contrasting three distinct perspectives: that of courts and authorities, that of the trade union Einigkeit, and one found in a domestic worker's own account.

The introduction of new legislation in the early 1920s marked a fundamental shift, already the product of prolonged debates and struggles over the definition and organization of gainful work in the households of others. Even though the new laws enhanced domestics' formal rights and entitlements, important points they remained vague and limited. Personal dependency on masters and mistresses was to some extent maintained; the previous legal difference between "service" and "employment" was formally abolished, but this was undermined by the construction of the household as a specific kind of workplace.

The new legislation by no means ended the struggles between state institutions, interest groups, employers, individual domestics and others over how gainful domestic work should be defined and organized. By working or employing according to legal categories or at variance with them, and sometimes by openly challenging legal definitions, domestics and employers attempted to shift boundaries in their favour. Courts and administrative bodies dealing with contested cases, in contrast, strove to reduce ambiguities and establish order by further extending state control over the multiple practices of making a living. They introduced progressively more detailed criteria for differentiating gainful household work from other occupations, thus constructing distinguishable categories. By their efforts, domestic work was more and more clearly formalized as a kind of work distinct from others, and devaluated in relation to other employment; old hierarchies between workers, contexts and livelihoods were reinstated on a new basis.

This classification of working arrangements was highly gendered. Defining households as a sphere of personal relationships and "love" set them apart from "regular" workplaces, and domestic work from allegedly "real" work. Paid and unpaid domestic work was assigned to women and remained an important way for them to make a living. Authorities even promoted women's work in the household of others or pressured them to enter it.

While authorities defined boundaries to other types of work ever more clearly, they left the lack of formalization within the category of gainful domestic work untouched. This marked the difference between their aims and those of the Einigkeit. While the trade union similarly aimed to construct domestic work as a well-defined category, its goal in doing so was precisely to formalize the terms of employment for domestic helps, giving them more enforceable rights, entitlements and contractual norms. Eventually, this formalization was meant to eliminate the categorical distinction, transforming domestic work into regular employment. To public authorities, differences between households and other workplaces were a given fact, on which they based their politics of inequality. To the Einigkeit, these same differences were the source of unjust exploitation, and could and should be reduced and eventually abolished. Variations between individual households were acknowledged by the authorities and utilized in that they served to justify the lack of formalization within the category. The Einigkeit, in contrast, tended to ignore them. So even though the visions and goals of both authorities and the union can be described in terms of formalization, this meant very different things and served divergent, even opposite, purposes.

However, as both the example of Franziska K. and the details of the cases disputed in court show, both ways of constructing domestic workers as an occupational category were far removed from the work and life situations experienced and narrated by domestic workers themselves. For them, the inseparability of personal life, relationships and work, as well as the vast variations in working arrangements, created a multiplicity of incomensurable situations that resisted categorization and formalization. The case of
K. furthermore points to the fact that domestic service extended beyond the performance of tasks, frequently imposing a status and attitude of subordination. These unique features of their condition, though often perceived as unpleasant and vividly resented, were nonetheless seen as natural by many domestics themselves.

CHAPTER 24

"The Problem of Domestic Service in Chile, 1924-'95"

Elizabeth Quay Hutchison

This data eloquently demonstrates that current labor legislation has been ineffective for this group of workers, because of the working conditions and biological-social deficits we associate with the empleada doméstica (household worker). ... Unfortunately, we must recognize that the labor laws and social policies so wisely applied to other groups of workers have not had the same beneficial effects for household workers. ... By looking at the problem in this way, the solutions become clear; improving the domestic employee's education, changing employers' consciousness about their obligations...and making basic changes to current labor legislation.

José Vizcarra 1942

In his speech to the 1942 International Congress of Social Welfare, the Director of Santiago's office of social and medical insurance provided a detailed analysis of the abject working conditions and socio-economic marginality of Chile's household workers. Drawing on data collected at state clinics in Valparaiso from 1926 to 1942, Dr. Vizcarra documented alarming rates of infant mortality, fertility, venereal disease, tuberculosis, heart disease, mortality; and abortion among household workers. These medical statistics, Dr. Vizcarra argued, could be addressed only by offering professional training to household workers and revising Chile's Labor Code, which in the 1940s and into the 1990s excluded household workers from many of the basic protections available to industrial workers.

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1 The term empleada doméstica (and its male variant, empleado doméstico) employed by Vizcarra and his contemporaries can be literally translated as "domestic employee," but throughout the chapter I use "household worker" to refer to those performing paid service in private homes. This phrasing avoids the term "domestic" - a term considered pejorative by Chilian activists since the early twentieth century - and corresponds more exactly with contemporary usage of trabajador de casa particular, literally, workers in private homes.

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and other workers. Citing Chile’s early abolition of slavery and creation of a welfare state relative to the rest of Latin America, Vizcarra’s speech referenced a variety of legal studies of household workers’ status in the 1931 Labor Code, presenting rulings made by Labor Inspectors to clarify the proper interpretation of the articles relating to domestic service. Like many of his contemporaries engaged in social medicine, Vizcarra went on to argue for the expansion and modification of state protections already available to other workers, advocating a maximum sixty-hour work week; broadening the definition of empleada to include part-time workers and those who worked more than one employer; minimum wage, or salaries calibrated to reflect years of service; increase of weekly rest periods; oversight of servant living conditions by the Office of Sanitation; and biannual medical examinations via state medical clinics. By Vizcarra’s account, these changes in the education and protection of household workers would allow employers “to improve their relations with these new household workers, who will be educated, honest, efficient, and really protected by the law.”

Dr. Vizcarra’s critique may strike many observers of recent struggles for household workers’ rights as a precocious protest against the historic - and continuing — marginalization of household workers in formal labor relations throughout the globe. A closer examination of the “problem of domestic service” in Chile during the early decades of the twentieth century; however, reveals that domestic service has long provided not only a focus of employer anxiety, but also as the site of worker mobilization, social reform, and state intervention. Like the international YWCA activities and ILO debates on domestic service in the interwar period - discussed in Boris and Fish’s contribution to this volume - Dr. Vizcarra’s frank critique is characteristic of broader efforts to incorporate household workers into Chile’s labor code, in which male and female union activists forged common cause with like-minded medical doctors, labor inspectors, journalists, and social workers. This early history of household worker activism and advocacy offers an important corrective to recent studies of Latin American struggles for household workers’ rights, which have located meaningful legislative debates and changes only in the late twentieth century. On the contrary, when- and wherever Chilean household workers organized for labor rights, they gained new political allies in the state and contributed to ongoing critiques of the Chilean labor relations system.


3 See, for example, Merike Blootfeld’s otherwise excellent study Care Work and Class: Domestic Workers’ Struggle for Equal Rights in Latin America (University Park, 2013).

4 Karin Houseblatt, Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920-7950 (Chapel Hill, 2000).
As Boris and Fish demonstrate in their analysis of the loosening of laws that made domestics predominantly female, a process shaped by the legal and political reclassification of men’s work in specialized trades (such as chauffeurs and cooks), as well as by the continuing influx of girls and young women from poor rural families to Santiago and other urban areas. Although reliable demographic data on this shift is not available before the 1950s, a wide variety of sources tell a common story of girls’ migration from rural poverty to urban domestic work through family and local networks; adaptation to wealthy employers’ households and urban life; and the importance of parish-level religious activities that brought empleadas together. The frequency of this path to paid domestic work is suggested not only by the recent testimony of older empleadas, but also by recurring portrayals of this experience in news, popular culture, and literary sources of the period. In the absence of census or other quantitative measures, memory and cultural representations tell a vivid story of young women’s terrifying experiences of extreme rural poverty, sexual abuse at the hands of family members and employers, and their subsequent migration (often alone, as young as 13 and 14 years old) to work in strange new homes and cities, spaces that presented opportunities for new hardships, as well as independence.

Although the representation of these rural migrants varied widely, the story of rural girls’ displacement and transformation through domestic service is also significant because of its iconic status: the presence of young women migrants at work in urban homes provided the foundation for a variety of efforts, both by and on behalf of household workers, to ameliorate or transform the circumstances of their work in the 1930s and 40s. While state professionals—from Labor Office Inspectors to the doctors and social workers of the Social Welfare Office—urged greater state protection of household workers, activists and their union, feminist, and party allies continued to press for recognition in the Labor Code and greater oversight of social insurance mechanisms. Significant because of how they document the advance of social medicine and progressive social work in Chile, social work theses of the 1940s and 50s also reveal important details about the ways that state officials and legislators understood the logic of empleados’ most basic claim: that household workers were in fact workers deserving of the rights and protections accorded to other laborers in the emerging Chilean labor relations system.

The story of household workers in Chile confirms yet another common trend in the comparative history of domestic service: the transition from a mixed-sex to a predominantly female labor sector.

The history of household workers in Chile confirms yet another common trend in the comparative history of domestic service: the transition from a mixed-sex to a predominantly female labor sector. Although the story of unionization and legislative debate in the 1920s and early 30s reveals the important leadership of male activists, over the next two decades the domestic service sector — and the corresponding discursive construction of the "problem of domestic service" in legislation. As Boris and Fish demonstrate in their analysis of the loosening of laws that made domestics predominantly female, a process shaped by the legal and political reclassification of men’s work in specialized trades (such as chauffeurs and cooks), as well as by the continuing influx of girls and young women from poor rural families to Santiago and other urban areas. Although reliable demographic data on this shift is not available before the 1950s, a wide variety of sources tell a common story of girls’ migration from rural poverty to urban domestic work through family and local networks; adaptation to wealthy employers’ households and urban life; and the importance of parish-level religious activities that brought empleadas together. The frequency of this path to paid domestic work is suggested not only by the recent testimony of older empleadas, but also by recurring portrayals of this experience in news, popular culture, and literary sources of the period. In the absence of census or other quantitative measures, memory and cultural representations tell a vivid story of young women’s terrifying experiences of extreme rural poverty, sexual abuse at the hands of family members and employers, and their subsequent migration (often alone, as young as 13 and 14 years old) to work in strange new homes and cities, spaces that presented opportunities for new hardships, as well as independence.

Though the representation of these rural migrants varied widely, the story of rural girls’ displacement and transformation through domestic service is also significant because of its iconic status: the presence of young women migrants at work in urban homes provided the foundation for a variety of efforts, both by and on behalf of household workers, to ameliorate or transform the circumstances of their work in the 1930s and 40s. While state professionals—from Labor Office Inspectors to the doctors and social workers of the Social Welfare Office—urged greater state protection of household workers, activists and their union, feminist, and party allies continued to press for recognition in the Labor Code and greater oversight of social insurance mechanisms. Significant because of how they document the advance of social medicine and progressive social work in Chile, social work theses of the 1940s and 50s also reveal important details about empleadas’ experience, from working conditions and childbearing to participation in Catholic and union associations. During the 1930s and 40s, domestic service became even more closely associated with the economic and sexual exploitation of poor women—variously diagnosed as a problem of social inequality and moral

5 Elizabeth QuayHutchison, Labors Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender and the Politics of Labor in Urban Chile, 1900-79 (Durham, 2001), Chapter 7.
7 Ivonne Szasz, Mujeres inmigrantes y mercado de trabajo en Santiago (Santiago: CELADE, 1994).
9 Micaela Maiz, Paulina Matta, and Ximena Valdés, Los Trabajos de las mujeres entre el Campo y la Ciudad, 1929-79 (Santiago, 1996); Pilar Mendizábal, María Sisa y María Soar: La Vida de Dos Empleadas Domésticas en la Ciudad de La Paz, Siglo XVII (La Paz, 1997).
Labor Inspectors, Social Workers, and the Problem of "Servants"

From the 1920s on, a series of labor inspectors struggled to draw attention to the plight of household workers, especially with respect to maternity care. Labor Office officials not only made regular visits to private homes to report on employers' failure to comply with social insurance laws, but also received complaints from union officials, intervened in employer/worker disputes, and disseminated their findings about the recurring problems that affected household workers, such as maternity and the spread of abusive private employment agencies. Social workers and doctors of the Social Insurance Office (Caja de Seguro Obligatorio or cso), by contrast, entered the world of domestic service via the illness and pregnancy of household workers, who in spite of employers' frequent failure to make social security payments on their behalf, sought medical care and other services in droves through cso clinics in the 1930s. While published reports of social workers focused more than did Labor Inspectors' on health and living conditions — in part because they spent more time in employers' homes — cso officials likewise emphasized the pressing need for greater regulation of labor in the domestic service sector, arguing for minimum wage, hour limits and other rights already granted to other classes of workers in the Labor Code. Their reports and insights evidence the widespread recognition of domestic service as a labor problem in Chile, long before the legislative advances of the late twentieth century

In seeming contradiction to union leaders' frequent protests that Labor Inspectors did not do enough to enforce the Labor Code with respect to their trade, the Labor Office's own report of their activities in 1939-40 show that a high proportion of the Inspectors' activities were dedicated to precisely these relations. According to Jorge Arancibia Munoz, an inspector with the Labor Office from 1934 to 1939:

The Labor Inspectors carry out regular home visits, in order to collect data about compliance with the articles related to household workers, and in order to issue reports that publicize these articles.9

According to the Revista de Trabajo, in early 1939 Provincial Labor Inspectors made 2,136 visits throughout Chile to assess enforcement of domestic service relations, fully 12.6% of all inspections they completed. Inspectors then reportedly made return inspections of 718 sites, a lower rate of second inspection than in either industry or commerce: the report is silent, however, with respect to the Inspectors' specific findings, and did not comment on their failure to issue sanctions for the violations they recorded.10

Through the collection of statistics on household workers, as well as regular inspections of workers' homes and recommendations regarding household workers' maternity, the Labor Office of the 1930s evidently gave regular attention to domestic service relations. In this respect, as in Labor Inspectors' frequent quarrels with landowners and their Conservative political representatives over the status of agricultural workers, Labor Office officials proved to be progressive in their broad interpretation of empleadas' status as "workers" in Chilean social legislation.11 By 1952, Labor Office officials continued to report frequent interactions with household workers, resulting in interventions stemming from servant complaints and 1,485 letters from employers in Santiago alone. According to social worker Pêrez Monardes's review of these records, empleadas sought Labor Inspectors' extra-official support for claims that they had been denied vacation as well as salary, severance, and social security payments. For their part, employers complained regularly about their empleadas' abandonment of employ; others simply recorded that a contract had ended. Significantly, a third of all interventions resulted in successful agreements between household workers and their employers, while another third were remanded to the Labor Courts, where most were never tried because household workers had insufficient funds to press charges; another third of these cases were abandoned, rejected, or unresolved.12

Beyond the Labor Office, the cso was the state entity whose officials most regularly interacted with household workers. As stipulated in Decree-Law 4054, after 1924 household workers between the ages of 12 and 65 — like all salaried workers — were required to pay (along with their employers) a small portion of their wages into a social security fund to provide benefits in old age, illness and pregnancy. The Labor Inspectors and Social workers found these duties nearly as burdensome as the collection of latas, botes, and cunetas: while the former were frequent and difficult, the latter were often ignored. As cso official Pêrez Monardes observed, even in Santiago alone, household workers sought medical care and other services in droves through cso clinics in the 1930s. While published reports of social workers focused more than did Labor Inspectors' on health and living conditions — in part because they spent more time in employers' homes — cso officials likewise emphasized the pressing need for greater regulation of labor in the domestic service sector, arguing for minimum wage, hour limits and other rights already granted to other classes of workers in the Labor Code. Their reports and insights evidence the widespread recognition of domestic service as a labor problem in Chile, long before the legislative advances of the late twentieth century.

9 Jorge Arancibia Munoz, El contrato de trabajo de los empleados domésticos (Santiago, 1939).

10 Industry received just 10.8% of inspections, and commerce 19.4%, Revista de Trabajo 44(9):10 (1944), 23-29.

11 This posture was consistent with the approach taken by a previous generation of Labor Office officials, who had pressed for more rigorous regulation of articles on women's and children's labor, as well as state oversight of home-work, in the 1920s. Hutchison, Labor's Appropriate, 2002:30.

interest in domestic service likewise shifted to reflect more progressive approaches to "the problem of domestic service." It was also in this period that concern for the labor conditions and maternity care of empleadas grew rapidly, spurred by research and discussions that repeatedly confirmed the inadequacy of labor regulation and insurance coverage among household workers.

Social workers were not uniformly concerned with the limits of state oversight, however: in one of the earliest of several dozen social work theses on domestic service published in the 1940s, Juana Concha presented the 25o empleadas she studied as fatalistic and childlike. Following a brief overview of the relevant sections of the 1931 Labor Code, Concha focused on the moral dangers of domestic service, which she argued stemmed not only from contact between empleadas and male members of the employers' family, but also from the weak moral training the empleadas received in their early family life, characterized by family disorganization, weak manners, economic misery, and ignorance. According to Concha, these factors were compounded by poor primary and vocational training, which combined to create "domestic workers' problems":

This is how we explain the empleada doméstica's serious defects, which she has because of the malformation of her character and personality, which were not taught well in her home: because her parents did not have enough education to do it; and she could not acquire this knowledge at school because the curriculum does not teach these things.

Concha went on to attribute the high rates of single motherhood among household workers to "the poor moral, religious, and intellectual training they got at home and at school...although I cannot judge the exact cause of their personal weaknesses and defects." Though Concha's final diagnosis included marriage and religious training for the unfortunate, mothering empleadas, she also emphasized the problem of household workers' exclusion from the maternity protections provided for other women workers in the Labor Code, the need for a minimum wage, religious and professional training, as well as greater charity and consideration from employers.

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13 In the 134r report of the head of Santiago's cso clinics, Dr. José Vizcarra, empleadas received cso services in a variety of clinics, including the Medical Center's Children's office, Anti-venerial campaign, Pulmonary clinic, Heart clinic, and the Valparaiso Anti-venerial campaign. Specific data sets are from late twenties and early thirties. Vizcarra, "Servicio doméstico," 15-19.

14 Karin Rosenblatt, Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures & the State in Chile,1920s-1950s (Chapel Hill, 2000),127,129,137-144.
Pérez Boggioni's study illustrates the intense involvement of pregnant household workers with cso social workers, doctors, and institutions. In one case study after another, the author documented how social workers intervened in these pregnant women's lives, inspecting their homes and those of their employers; instructing young mothers in breastfeeding and *puericultura* (child-rearing); seeking to legitimize consensual unions; tracking down errant "progenitors"; finding domestic service positions for postpartum mothers; and, at times, pressing employers' families to recognize children born of sexual unions between *empleadas* and male members of employers' households. An extreme example of the level of social worker involvement from Pérez Boggioni's study includes that of "Rita R.R.," a twenty-five-year-old part-time *empleada*, separated from her first husband and living with the alcoholic father of her child-to-be in precarious conditions:

Given what had happened and the scarce support he gives her, we convinced Rita to separate from her boyfriend. We found her work in a home that allows her to bring two of her children with her. The older child went to live with the mother-in-law, until her skin condition improves. The infant was left with her boyfriend's married daughter. We gave antifungal cream to the client's oldest daughter. We collected the infant from the boyfriend's daughter's house and brought her to Rita's workplace. We taught her *puericultura*, health, and family education. We will continue monitoring the infant's care.20

The *empleadas* discussed in Pérez Boggioni's study sought maternity care in the cso *Servicio Materno-Infantil*, but many also received a variety of other services, including medical attention and child care from the *Instituto Madre y Niño*, birthing at the E. Deformes Hospital, and testing and treatment for tuberculosis and other infectious diseases in the cso Epidemiology Clinic. These studies, and the professional interventions which they document, demonstrate the widespread concern with "the problem of domestic service" in Chile of the 1930s and '40s, as well as the relative consensus among state professionals that these problems were caused by the lack of labor legislation and proper enforcement of social insurance systems. While state officials concerned with the evident vulnerability of household workers were not able to undo *empleadas' exclusion from the central provisions of the Labor Code, they

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did change outcomes in specific labor disputes and, through their vigilance, keep alive hopes that greater protections would be forthcoming and effective. Evidence of these hopes can be found in the union activism of the period, which relied heavily on appeals to Labor Inspectors and cso doctors to lobby for legislative change.

The Politics of Domestic Service under the Popular Fronts

The other key player in debates over lack of effective protection to household workers in Chile was of course the household employees' union, a small Santiago union that boasted an official membership of about 240 empleados in Santiago and several provincial cities in the 1920s. From its founding in 1926 and particularly under Chile's Popular Fronts (1938-52), the Autonomous Union for Employees of Both Sexes in Private Homes lobbied state and political actors to protest the exclusion of their trade from the laws on contract, minimum wage, and accident protection granted other workers in Chile's labor laws. They also turned a critical eye on the one major piece of legislation that did include them — DL 2054 for obligatory social insurance — working closely with Labor Office and medical officials to ensure that employers paid insurance stipends and household workers had access to health, maternity, and child services. Although the empleados' union remained a small group whose political fortunes were tied to militants' activism in pro-government circles in the 1920s, the workers' discussions are fascinating for their insistence on the need to treat their profession as work like any other, incorporating their trade into the emerging labor relations and social welfare systems of the Chilean state. When President Ibanez and legislators began the work of elaborating a comprehensive Labor Code in the late 1920s, servant activists and their legislative allies lobbied a government commission on social laws to incorporate household workers into the legislative reform. Despite the active discussion of household workers in the House of Deputies in July 1928, and recommendations registered by the government's commission on social laws, the Labor Code that was issued by executive decree in May 1931 treated domestic service in a separate article (Book I, Title VII) that mandated written contracts with stipulations unique to these labor relations. In forms later approved and distributed by the Labor Office, the model domestic service contract defined workers' responsibilities and hours (mandating nine hours' daily rest), the employers' responsibility to provide by giene housing and salary (including the cost of food, light, and fuel), and the circumstances under which contracts could be broken with and without severance pay or advance notice. Significantly, DL 178 contained no regulatory apparatus to enforce the mandates of the Labor Code's title on domestic service.

After a brief hiatus in the early 1930s, the empleados' union was re-inaugurated and sought legal status as a union under DFL 178, this time operating as the trade had been redefined in that law: as a group of workers engaged in full-time employment in private households. The narrow definition expressed in the Labor Code's section on domestic service — which excluded part-time workers and those employed by multiple households and commercial establishments — also transformed the membership and political standing of the union: now composed almost entirely of women members, one of the first orders of business was to ally the group with workers in similar trades who could no longer be considered empleados, including hotel workers and cooks. After a few years' continued male leadership — by a male activist who was simultaneously president of the cooks' union — the Sindicato emerged under the leadership of Graciela Sánchez, a determined political activist whose engagement with the national labor federation would guide much of the union's activities in the early years of the Popular Front. Sánchez's participation in politics as a delegate to the Chilean Workers' Confederation (CTCh) and connections to Popular Front organizations embodied the workerist aims of the union and drew it into the contentious partisanship that marked the Chilean "compromise state" in the 1940s.

By 1939, the reinvigorated union of more than 10,000 workers was laying more plans to agitate for household workers' rights, studying proposed reforms to the 1931 Labor Code and continuing to protest individual employer abuses, strengthen ties to Labor Inspectors, and press the cso for funding to open a hogar social (literally, social home) for the use of their members. These

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21 The Libros de Actas on which this reconstruction is based contain a gap in union minutes between October 1945 and January 1951, at which point a reconstituted, all-female empleadas' union appeared: the Sindicato Profesional de Empleadas Domésticas fVo. 2. Santiago, Archivo Nacional de Chile, Siglo XX, Fondo Organizaciones Sociales, "Libros de Actas: Reuniones Generales" Four Volumes, 1926-1946. [Hereafter, Actas]. The author thanks historian Jorge Rojas Flores for depositing a photocopied set of the Actas at the Archivo Siglo XX and for bringing their existence to the author's attention.

22 Aracelia Munoz, El contrato de trabajo, tz—330.

23 In 1938, for example, new legislation excluded chauffeurs in private homes from the category of domestic service, allowing them to participate fully in the general articles of the Labor Code.

24 Actas, 27 May, 4 August, and 26 September, 1939.
campaigns were discussed in multiple meetings of the union membership, and publicized in a long descriptive manifesto penned by union president Manuel Rojas. The speech—which addressed the need for better protections to household workers and better enforcement of existing legislation—is not so impressive as the list of those invited to a dinner served up by the union members, with entertainment and an orchestra to celebrate the union's second anniversary: the guest list included Provincial Labor Inspector Avila, head of the Department of Associations Amengual, Labor Inspectors Montecinos and Aristodemo Escobar, members of the press and labor leaders from other unions. Other activities organized that year by the union include an assembly attended by the union's doctor, lawyer, and accountant; that same meeting was attended by an employer recognized for raising his workers' salaries, Abraham Atlà. They went on to hold a dinner for the press and labor inspectors, "in recognition of the work these professionals do in support of the union organizations' demands," and another meeting to show films about childhood rickets and tuberculosis. In a report published in the daily La Opiniòn about the union's third anniversary celebration, we learn that the union had grown to over ten thousand members and was planning to offer classes in domestic economy and fashion for empleadas who wished "to become independent: According to union minutes, activists also worked with an official from the cso, Luciano Kulkweski, to establish a hogar social, while outreach to other hotel-workers' and cooks' unions continued. Finally, in meetings with President Aguirre Cerda, union leaders learned that household workers' problems "cannot be resolved so long as [the Popular Front] does not have a majority in both Houses of Parliament."

The sources for reconstructing this involvement are few, but once again confirm how household worker unionization treated domestic service as a legitimate form of work, one deserving and requiring increased state oversight to guarantee their salaries, secure workplaces safe from abuse and danger, and provide accident and severance protection for household workers. When she was sworn in as president in July of 1940, Sánchez declared the union's priority as setting up the hogar social and obtaining a minimum wage for household employees. During her first presidency, Sánchez formed work commissions comprised almost entirely of female union members in the areas of hygiene, parties, accounting, work placement, member relations, unemployment, and propaganda. This work included promoting union membership among empleadas in Vina del Mar and Santiago's elite neighborhoods, where new members were enjoined to read the Labor Code and the union statutes, particularly the "rule of style" that committed union members to decorous behavior. Citing the recent recruitment of 82 new members from October to December of 1940, the directorate agreed to "tell those skeptics that if they don't like what the union does, they can just stop being members of it, and that we beg no one." In 1941, Sánchez also reported the union's new affiliation with "an organization of women of the Left," most likely the MEMCh, a women's political movement associated with the parties of the Popular Front coalition. Attention to the plight of household workers was evident in the MEMCh as early as 1935, when the first issue of the organization's newspaper, La mujer nueva, reported the inclusion of both ocheras and empleadas in the MEMCh statutes. Eulogia Román first reported on the topic for the organization's paper: protesting the unlimited nature of empleadas' workday, and poor treatment at the hands of employers, Román called for household workers to organize within the MEMCh, seemingly oblivious to the prior existence of domestic service unions in Chile. The following year, journalist and leading feminist Delia Rouge protested the lack of labor protection for empleadas, calling on the Congreso Panamericano del Trabajo to approve a MEMCh proposal for such a law. Later news stories—this one profiling the populations suffering from illegal abortion—would point to empleadas' exclusion from the Labor Code, according to the following sources:

25 "Señor la prensa ofrecerá el sábado próximo el indicativo de RE, de Casas Particulares," La hora 4, 435 (30 May 1939). 16
26 Actas, "Reunión General celebrada el día 6 de Agosto de 1941; Volume 1, 92. On MEMCh, see Corinne Antezana-Pernet, "Mobilizing Women in the Popular Front Era: Feminism, Class, and Politics in the Movimiento Pro-Emancipación de la Mujer Chilena (MEMCh), 1935-1950," (PhD Dissertation, UC Irvine, 1996); Rosenthal, Gendered Compromises, Chapter 4.
27 "Reunión de Directorio celebrada el día 3 de Octubre de 1939 (Nocturna)," Actas Libro 11; "Reunión de Directorio celebrada el día 17 de octubre de 1939 (Nocturna);" "Sesión de directorio celebrada el martes 18 de Julio de 1939."
29 Actas, "Reunión General celebrada el día 6 de Agosto de 1941; Volume 1, 92. On MEMCh, see Corinne Antezana-Pernet, "Mobilizing Women in the Popular Front Era: Feminism, Class, and Politics in the Movimiento Pro-Emancipación de la Mujer Chilena (MEMCh), 1935-1950," (PhD Dissertation, UC Irvine, 1996); Rosenthal, Gendered Compromises, Chapter 4.
30 "Cena a la prensa ofrecerá el sábado próximo el indicativo de RE, de Casas Particulares," La hora 5, 606 (17 November 1939). 16
31 Actas, "Reunión de Directorio celebrada el día 3 de Octubre de 1939 (Nocturno)," Actas Libro 11; "Reunión de Directorio celebrada el día 17 de octubre de 1939 (Nocturno);" "Sesión de directorio celebrada el martes 18 de Julio de 1939."
32 "Reunión de Directorio celebrada el día 3 de Octubre de 1939 (Nocturno)," Actas Libro 11; "Reunión de Directorio celebrada el día 17 de octubre de 1939 (Nocturna);" "Sesión de directorio celebrada el martes 18 de Julio de 1939."
34 Delia Rouge, "Que esa ley sea un hecho," La Mujer Nueva 6, (March 1935), 4. Delia Roug was the pseudonym of Delia Rojas Gareés (or Delia Rojas de White), a prominent literary figure, feminist, and member of MEMCh.
including the child care and breastfeeding protections granted other work
526ers;35 as well as offer reports on training courses on gender inequality that ref-
526erenced household workers; incipient provincial domestic service unions; and
the implementation of new household worker legislation in New York. This
and other bits of evidence from MEMCh thus illustrate the fact that domestic
service, if not the reinvigorated union later led by Sanchez, had registered its
concerns with the leading women's group of the Popular Front era, whose
attention to women's work and reproductive rights made it a unique expres-
528sion within Chilean Left feminism of the era.

Under Graciela Sánchez's leadership, the union's directorate pursued two
key strategies for pressing their cause: strengthening alliances with other
unions and active representation of the union in the Chilean Workers' Con-
528federation (Confederación de Trabajadores de Chile or CTCh). In her travel to
528nearby Villa del Mar in January 1940, for example, Sanchez met with members
528of a fledgling empleadas' union, urging them to join forces with those "workers
528who are similar to us in work and exploitation," the Hotel Workers' Union
528(Central de Trabajadores Hoteleros). The directorate went on to protest gov-
528ernment intervention in that union in July 1940 — "even under the Popular
Front governments" — and to express solidarity in November of that year with
the hotel workers in their dispute with the Waiters' Union. Sanchez's own
involvement in the intra-union disputes became clearer in March of 1941, when
528former household workers' union president Valentin Navarro complained to
528hotel workers that Sanchez was corrupt, whereupon the empleadas' union
528promptly banned Navarro and reaffirmed its solidarity with the Hotel Workers' Union. These episodes demonstrate the ways in which some household worker
528activists participated in — and debated — the wider politics of organized labor,
528ascribing to the discourse of the family of labor" even as they campaigned for
528the specific remedies needed to affirm the rights of workers in their trade.

Serving as the union's delegate to the CTCh from late 1939 through at least
5281946, Sanchez also ensured that the union's demands were voiced in one of the
most critical arenas of Popular Front-era union politics. Sanchez offered the
empleadas'union's directorate regular reports on CTCh activities, which sparked
repeated controversy about her reports of partisan infighting, provoking mem-
528bers to ask whether the domestic service union should even participate in the
528confederation. Sánchez's prominence in CTCh activities is reflected in political
attacks leveled against her leadership, as well as by her contributions to CTCh
528the news arm of the confederation. In June of 1946, for example, Sanchez
528(b) then a provincial representative to the CTCh) published an editorial calling
528women to action in defense of their labor rights, as well as a report on the
528union's demand for the creation of professional certificates for household
workers. In the latter report, Sanchez wrote:

our laws for domestic service are very insufficient, and make it necessary
for public authorities to resolve this problem, which becomes more acute
with the current economic crisis, and for which the Professional Union of
Domestic Employees presses to achieve, as soon as possible, the creation
of professional certificates.36

Through her participation in CTCh, Sanchez repeatedly placed the specific
concerns of household workers on the broader agenda of the CTCh, clearly
articulating her union's struggle for empleadas' rights as workers' rights.

The clearest evidence of Sánchez's success in bringing the specific concerns
of the household workers' union to the CTCh was the publication, in January
1947, of "Concrete Agreements on General Demands," authored by the General
Demands Commission of the CTCh. Following a list of eleven legislative
projects the CTCh is pressing on legislators, the Commission lists "problems
that are affecting the professional trades," including hotel workers, household
workers, state employees, and industrial workers. Sánchez's hand in the list
of demands is evident, as it included a call for professional certificates,
restaurant-schools, family salaries, vocational schools, and day care for the
children of household workers. Notably, the list also included the demand that
the word "domestic" be removed from the Labor Code, "because it is a damag-
ing term for a respectable part of our citizenry."37 Given the usual elision of
household workers from the political agendas of national labor federations,
the inclusion of this list of demands offers powerful evidence of the impact of
Sánchez's participation in the broader labor movement in the 1940s. Because
the household workers' union records contain a gap extending from 1945 to
1950, we cannot know exactly what transpired within the union while Sanchez
continued her efforts as a provincial delegate of the CTCh. When the union
reconvened in 1950 under new leadership, no mention of the union's links to
other unions or the CTCh remained. Instead, the union leadership worked
closely in this new era with a new actor: the Hagar de la Empleada (Empleadas'
Home), founded by a group of empleadas previously active in union affairs

35 "A los enemigos del aborto," La Mujer Nueva 6 (May 1936), 4.
36 "Los obreros domésticos y el carnet profesional," CTCh (June 1946), 4.
37 Acuerdos concretos sobre reivindicaciones generales," CTCh (January 1947), 44.
and progressive clergy of the Young Catholic Worker movement. When the union faced financial trouble in the early 1950s, activists stored union furniture, and even held some of its meetings in the offices of the Hogar. Also characteristic of this latter phase of organization was conflict with Communist-identified unions, one of which sought to organize a competing union for household workers. Under new leadership by 1954, the union finally returned to activities promoting new labor legislation for household workers, under the supervision of the CTCh subsecretary Luis Gálvez. Finally, in this third founding of the household workers' union, the fact of the profession's almost entirely female composition came to be recognized in the union's new name: The Union of Women Household Employees Number 2 (Sindicato de Empleadas de Casas Particulares No. 2).

Conclusion: Making Visible the Politics of Domestic Service

The early legislative and political history of household workers in Chile reveals how the marginalization of domestic service occupations was constructed and reinforced over the course of the twentieth century, at the same time that workers' movements emerged as a political force and the Chilean state began to intervene to protect labor rights in other sectors. Rather than accepting dominant constructions of domestic service as "traditional," household worker activists and their allies defined their trade as "a problem" for Chilean labor relations, one deserving of political advocacy, scientific study, and state intervention. Household workers (along with rural workers), explicitly excluded from key articles of Chile's landmark labor laws of 1924 and 1931, were nevertheless recognized as salaried workers entitled to medical and retirement benefits, a status that nevertheless limited their access to Chile's emerging labor relations system. Their ambiguous status in labor relations stimulated organized protest from household workers — male and female alike — even as increasing female migration for domestic work and the legal redefinition of service trades narrowed this exclusion to a largely female, migrant population. Acutely aware of household workers' marginal legal status, a number of labor inspectors, doctors, and social workers in state employ produced systematic studies of household workers' living and working conditions, reproductive health, and relations with employers through clinical surveys and fieldwork conducted in the 1940s. Their protests fit into a larger story of the consolidation of progressive professional sectors under Chile's emerging welfare state. The work of the household workers' union in the 1930s and '40s documents the emerging political voice of empleadas as women workers, consolidating a discourse of political citizenship and women's rights that later reemerged in socialist campaigns for domestic service labor laws in the late 1960s. The experience of domestic service activism is therefore tied to the historiography of the Popular Fronts, especially its gendered history of female professionals and organized labor. This is a history that reveals not only where and how empleadas worked, but also something of their lives outside of employers' homes: their religious and cultural activities, as well as the beliefs and experiences that tied their activism to the Church, political parties, and women's movements over the course of the twentieth century.

This chapter is also relevant to larger debates in Latin American historiography over the gendered politics of labor, documenting how and why paid domestic labor in Chile has been understood as "work," with all the political status and welfare entitlements that such a category entailed subsequent to the imposition of Chile's first labor laws in 1924. Despite the categorical exclusion of household workers from labor legislation and most histories of labor, this history — rendered visible by the attention of state professionals and union activists, for whom the "labor" of household workers was never in question — reasserts their importance, both for understanding the gendered politics of organized labor and reconceptualizing that labor history with respect to reproductive labor. This approach allows us not only to challenge the gendered, racial, and ideological blinders that have rendered household workers invisible in Chilean labor history, but also to complicate our understanding of the construction of reproductive labor in working-class history. This challenge is all the more vital in Chile, where Marxist and nationalist narratives of worker agency have continued to privilege heroic, vanguardist, and usually male subjects of labor history. The challenge here has been not only to make visible empleadas' ubiquitous presence in Chile's social and political history, but also to render them and their work significant for a history of Chilean labor and politics. While social science research has ably advanced this twin agenda for the late twentieth century, an historical approach further challenges the scholarly endeavor and exclusion of both male and female household workers from the Chile's vital labor history.


39 For a thorough exploration of the emerging historiography reproductive labor in Latin American labor history, see Jocelyn Okott, "Introduction: Researching and Rethinking the Labors of Love," Hispanic American Historical Review 91 (February 2011), 1-28.
CHAPTER 25

Decent Work for Domestic: Feminist Organizing, Worker Empowerment, and the ILO

Eileen Boris and Jennifer M. Fish

"A baby was born, the baby is starting to crawl, but the baby is going to walk; announced South African Myrtle Wibbou, the newly elected President of the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDwF). This birth took place on 28 October 2013 in Uruguay, nearly eighteen months after domestic workers worldwide won the first international set of standards to acknowledge their right to decent work. They would be "slaves no more," no longer the invisible workers whose care and household labors long proved essential to the world economy. "Now, for the first time, we can speak on our own terms," declared Juana Flores from the National Domestic Workers Alliance, who became a United States Worker delegate to the International Labor Organization (ILO) during the final debate over passing a convention for domestic workers in June 2011. After years of strategic activism and negotiations with governments and employers, the ILO approved Convention 189, a treaty-like document that now extends wage, hour, working conditions, and other labor protections to domestic work. Some two decades of organizing at the national level, a distinct history of feminist and labor advocacy within the ILO and an overarching climate to expand protections to the informal economy facilitated this symbolic birth of the first global policy on household labor.

Deliberating on global standards for domestic workers was not entirely a new issue for the ILO. As early as the 1930s, the ILO studied conditions of domestic work; it was particularly concerned that low pay and the practice of living-in posed moral dangers, leading women to prostitution. Following

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1 Election Statement made by President Myrtle Wibbou, International Domestic Workers Federation Founding Congress, Montevideo, Uruguay, 24-26 October 2013; see also, International Domestic Workers Network, 'A Message from Myrtle Wibbou,' IDwF Chair, June 2014, October 2013.

2 Flores in Gelia Martin, "Yes, We Did It! How the World’s Domestic Workers Won Their Rights and Recognition" Report published by WIEGO (Cambridge, MA, 2010).

3 Helen Schwenken, "From Maid to Worker," Queries 7 (2003), 14-23.


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wwii, when sociologists and policy makers alike predicted the end of domestic service, the surveyed member nations on the plight of household workers. It understood domestic work as part of the problem of an expanded movement of women into employment, and sought solutions to what loomed as a crisis of care and household maintenance. This initiative fizzled in the early 1950s; neither did study of the occupation in subsequent decades lead to action. It would take over sixty years for this international body to include household workers under basic labor protections.

What accounts for the designation as "decent work" of a prototypical form of feminized labor, hidden in the household and involving familiarity and intimacy — prime reasons that domestic work long stood outside of public scrutiny and legal regulation? This chapter considers the initial framing of domestic service by the ILO in the interwar period and then compares two moments in which the ILO discussed domestic worker protections: the early post-WWII period, when labor feminists raised the question, and the last half-decade, when the first transnational network of domestic workers won a convention. In reflecting on the factors that made possible the passage of Convention 189, it illuminates the specificity and contingency of historical change even for work that too often appears as timeless. Where women experts and international women's associations pushed for domestic workers during the interwar and early postwar years, domestic workers themselves, supported by labor and feminist NGOs, were central to the making of Convention 189.

Understanding this transformation first requires awareness of its institutional setting. As the premier agency devoted to the conditions of work within the League of Nations and subsequently the United Nations (UN) systems, the ILO sets codes of conduct and offers governments, unions, and other groups technical assistance on a range of labor market and employment issues. Founded in the aftermath of wwi, reflecting the geopolitics of that era, it sought to reconstruct the European industrial workforce, overwhelmingly male, through improved labor standards. It would eliminate inhumane working conditions, counter the economic injustice believed to be behind political instability and revolutionary upsurges, and remove disincentives to reform by setting worldwide practices. Dependence on nation states, for funding as well
The bureaucratic structure of the ILO offered policy entrepreneurs room for maneuverability, but also curtailed its ability to act quickly. That is, it more often responded to requests from the League or the UN, member states, and international labor federations or employer associations than initiated its own programs. Compromise was built into its very structure due to the tripartism—national delegations of government, trade union, and employer representatives—that continues to set it apart from other specialized international agencies. Worker and employer delegates came from male-dominated national “peak” organizations; representatives from politically dominant groups filled the categories of “worker” or “employer.” Additionally, the organization consisted of three branches: the Office, a secretariat staffed with global civil servants under an elected Director-General; a Governing Body elected from the delegations; and an annual International Labor Conference (ILC), a decision-making assembly where country delegates make recommendations and pass conventions drafted by the Office in consultation with committees of experts, themselves tripartite. Nations then would ratify these conventions, using them as guidelines for labor standards legislation. The impact of the ILO, then, has come not from enforcing conventions, for most have only nominal ratification, but rather from its setting of global norms. Through the convention process, what counts as achievement is the articulation of aspiration.

The Interwar Legacy

Post–WWII discussions of domestic work represented unfinished business from the interwar years. From time to time, delegates raised the status of domestic servants, as they were called, but national governments typically omitted these workers from labor laws. For example, a Danish Workers’ delegate thought that “workers boarded by employers, especially domestic servants,” ought to be part of an inquiry into “the nutrition of the working classes.” More typical was the exclusion of domestic workers from investigations and discussions of workplace safeguards. After all, the focus of the ILO initially laid with industrial and maritime employment, with bolstering working conditions that would lead to a male family wage. The woman worker, usually reduced to the woman in industry, represented difference, those who needed special protections because of their responsibility for biological and social reproduction and generally unorganized status. In this context, domestic work entered ILO deliberations obliquely; included in a few conventions and recommendations that addressed women and child laborers, such as the minimum age for children in non-industrial occupations, and discussed as a cause of prostitution and in relation to forms of coerced or bonded labor.

The unemployment crisis of the Great Depression nevertheless brought some attention to domestic work, then the largest occupation for women, while the creation of a Section on Conditions of Employment of Women and Children within the Office under French socialist Marguerite Thibert facilitated research. Sometime after the urging of the Chilean Worker’s delegate at the 1931 ILC, Thibert contracted a study of “The Social, Economic, and Legal Conditions of Domestic Servants.” Published in 1934, this report concluded that the stigmatized social status of the labor trumped the idea of self-regulating labor markets as unemployed women refused to enter household service. It called for including domestic workers, with the hedge “as far as possible,” in general standards developed to improve living and laboring conditions, with the goal of eliminating the “social difference between” servants and other workers. It recommended legislation to extend social insurance and vocational training to household workers, permit their organizing, and encourage living out rather than living in their place of employment.

9 ILO Proceedings, 16th Session, 1936, 444; Proceedings, 20th Session, 1936, 403, 604.
The home location of the job turned domestic service into an exception to the form of work, one subjected to cultures of protection focused on the consequences of its perceived difference as intimate labor in private spaces done for low wages, but outside of the purview of public interference. Jobs supplying housing, like live-in service, were deemed inherently dangerous, subjecting women to sexual assault. In 1933, as its contribution to the fight against "white slavery," the ILO adopted a convention abolishing fee-charging employment agencies, justified as a measure to stamp out abuse of women in domestic service who presumably found themselves placed in environments of sexual danger. Another convention raised the minimum age for jobs deemed "dangerous to morals," which included household employment. Low wages, experts believed, made prostitution an attractive alternative to domestic work.

In discussing "holidays with pay," ILO delegates revealed a general ambivalence about such labor. They initially voted to discuss domestic servants along with agricultural and industrial home workers as part of a proposed convention on vacation pay, agreeing with the Swiss Worker delegate who held "that domestic servants...are wage-earners, and therefore entitled to protection in the same way as other wage-earners." Yet only a handful of countries — Chile, Finland, France, Latvia, Peru, Spain, and one Swiss canton — actually extended paid vacations to them. During the debate, in contrast, the Swiss Employer advisor insisted that the employer group only represented those in industry and commerce and was not concerned with domestic work. Ultimately, the ILO voted to postpone consideration of holidays with pay for field and home workers to a session in the near future. Research, Director-General Harold Butler advised, "was not very advanced" and thus consideration of standards for such workers would be "premature." Even within the category of the "excluded," domestic workers appeared different: in deciding to postpone discussion, the ILO agreed to consider whether domestic workers, "could form the subject of international regulation." At the same time, the Governing Body opportunistically thought that inclusion of domestic workers in holidays with pay would speak well of the ILO. It hoped to curry support with some women's organizations at a time when the Open Door International for the Economic Emancipation of the Woman Worker and other gender-first, known as legal equality, feminists were campaigning against the ILO for restricting women's rights through conventions that treated women differently than men.

Chief among the more favorable international women's organizations was the World's Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), which mobilized other social welfare groups to urge regulation of domestic service. Formed in 1898 to enhance the evangelizing mission of national branches, the World's YWCA came to direct the moral authority of Christian women toward the taming of unfettered industrialization. It followed the agenda of British and U.S. members, who during the first decade of the twentieth century sought not only to uplift but also to ameliorate the living and working conditions of wage-earning women through legislation, social contact with factory girls, and employer voluntarism. After WWI, the World's YWCA devoted one of its sections to "Industry" and another to "Emigration and Immigration." It further sought to foster worker organization, making it one of the most progressive of women's associations.

Industrial work was new to the YWCAs in the early 20th century, but not so domestic labor. Since the mid-19th century, local branches had sought to alleviate what middle-class members called, "the servant problem: In cities like Boston, New York, and London, they established training centers to prepare the rural migrant and immigrant to tend the middle-class home. The contradictions within a sisterhood that would seek to cross class and race lines never went away, though the YWCA attempted to reconcile the interests of employer and employee members. Thus it would encourage household workers to unionize, equip them to meet the specifications of the women whose homes they cared for, and educate employers to abide by labor standards. About the same

14 Eileen Boris and Rhacel Parrenas (eds), Intimate Labors: Cultures, Technologies, and the Politics of Care (Stanford, 2010).
16 ILO Minutes, Seventy-Seventh Session of the Governing Body, 12-14 November 1936,129.
17 ILO Minutes, 77th Session, 92.
time that the YWCAs in the United States began to grapple with the condition of
black women, who dominated domestic work, its National Board appointed a
Commission on Household Employment in 1915. Over the next decades, it
coordinated efforts by reformers, academic experts, and housewives to develop
best practices.

After moving its headquarters to Geneva in 1930, the World's YWCA intensified
its collaboration with the League (through the Liaison Committee of Women's
Organizations), as well as its involvement with the ILO. It spearheaded interna-
tional agitation over improved conditions. In characteristic moral tones, it
committed "to make household employment a more fair, just, and satisfying
occupation for women." It disseminated ILO reports; the ILO's Marguerite
Thibert, in turn, relying on YWCA investigations and networks. But she also offered
the association technical assistance in the construction of surveys and political
advice on building up public support for legislative actions and reaching out to
"progressive" employers, counsel consistent with ILO tri-partism. Under her tutel-
age, the YWCA affirmed support "by continuing and increasing the efforts to pre-
pare public opinion in different countries" for labor standards. The
YWCA generally was one of the few organizations in a country concerned
with regulating domestic work. National efforts paralleled the strength of local
women's movements, but progress was slow. A few YWCA sections, such as Syria and Mexico, offered employees training and education courses.
Other sections pushed governments for legislation and concentrated on
employer education. In Australia, a delegation approached the labor minister
in 1939 to allow for a domestic employee union to be registered as an industrial
union and thus eligible for wages, hours, and other determinations under the
Arbitration Act. He was "surprised" that "so many countries were beginning to
take an active interest in this subject" and pledged to consider the request.
British and U.S. YWCA industrial commissions encouraged trade union for-
mation, with limited success. There were scattered and small domestic worker
unions in Canada, some part of the YWCA and others judged "rather radical
and not really representative," as one YWCA official described a Toronto
union. On the local level, YWCA's could not press much beyond voluntary
codes, standards that its own Domestic Worker League of Calgary, Canada
decided "will have no real effect in improving our working conditions of long
hours and low pay," despite the best of intentions. Only minimum wage inclu-
sion could remedy their situation, a treatment equal to that of hotel and res-

taurant workers doing similar tasks but outside the home.

Generally, the YWCAs encountered resistance to its promotion of domestic
worker rights. Employers rejected the method of gathering information through surveys as "prying into their private affairs." Orientalist assumptions
about the impossibility of action in places like India framed its discussions.
Conflicting class interests weakened conference resolutions, so that meetings
sometimes endorsed "steps" towards better conditions rather than specific leg-
islation. Nonetheless, the World's YWCA developed a broadly conceived strat-
 egy of including domestic work as part of the study of women's overall status.
It offered model contracts, aided with worker organization, and urged legisla-
tion. Its position fit well into the ILO's embrace of protective labor legislation
and its own mission to uplift and improve the lives of female wage earners. But
a new war short-circuited these efforts, hollowing out Geneva as the ILO tem-
porarily moved itself to Montreal and organizations like the World's YWCA
found their networks disrupted.

The Post-wwii Years

In the years following二战, advocates for domestic workers were unable to
overcome the obstacles inherent in the organization of the ILN. The ILO's tri-
partite structure served as a major barrier to introducing policy recommenda-
tions centered on household labor. With the notable exception of British Worker
delegates Florence Hancock and Alfred Roberts, labor was disinterested.
Employers found the whole subject laughable. Nations excluded household

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22 Elizabeth Wilson, Fifty Years of Association Work among Young Women, 1866-1916 (New
York, 1916), 41-42, 95-76; Phyllis Palmer, Domesticity and Dirt: Housewives and Domestic
23 Mrs. C. Beresford Fox to Miss M. Hage, 17 November 1939; World YWCA Council,
"Measuring the Progress of Women," no and 13 August 1936, 2. For an overview, Social and Industrial Section, World's
YWCA Executive Committee, Household Employment, Occasional Paper No. 9, February
1936. Here the YWCA notes the efforts of Thibert. 24

25 ILO WN104/1/1, "Programme of Conference on Household Employment as an Occupation for
Women," 8 and 13 August 1936, 2. For an overview, Social and Industrial Section, World's
YWCA Executive Committee, Household Employment, Occasional Paper No. 9, February
1936. Here the YWCA notes the efforts of Thibert. 26

26 ILO WN104/1/1, "The Growth of an Idea No. 9," August 1936.
labor in their laws. A majority of the delegates never recognized domestic labor as work and its workforce as fitting into accepted structures of employment.

Thus, advocates battled major discursive and ideological constructs about domestic labor. Government delegates regarded these jobs as apart from the real world of work, that is, industry, commerce, and agriculture. Not only were there no organized employers to bargain with, employer delegates long claimed that international regulation did not apply because domestic work just wasn’t “a matter in which international competition is likely to arise.” For Western Europeans, the personal relationship between servant and employer allowed for individual settlement of conditions, making labor standards unnecessary. Delegates from Asia and Latin America similarly insisted that domestic workers were “part of the family system.” As the Belgian Government representative explained in 1950:

It was true that the problem of domestic workers arose in an acute form in every country in the world, but owing to the dispersal of these workers the problem was so complicated that it did not seem appropriate at present to treat it in a draft Convention or even a Recommendation.

Moreover, the timing of the initial proposal was inauspicious. The issue of domestic worker standards appeared with the dawn of the Cold War, which turned the ILO into an ideological battleground between capitalist and communist states over the meaning of worker rights. Communist nations, touring equality, found “the question of the status of domestic workers was of no practical importance.” Other issues were more important: collective bargaining, equal pay, unemployment, and higher standards of living. The emergence of newly independent and decolonizing nations led the entire UN system to questions of development — and domestic labor appeared as evidence of underdevelopment, as residual, non-modern labor. European nations remained reluctant to extend identical labor standards to “non-metropolitan” regions, as the ILO was apt to refer to colonial areas. In this context, advocates from Western Europe and the United States framed domestic work more in terms of conditions facing urban, industrial nations in the Global North. When it came to Asia, Africa, and Latin America, they condemned practices classified as “life servitude,” including “quasi-adoption.” Until the 1970s, the Eurocentric posture of the ILO combined with racial and national hierarchies to generate conventions that reinforced racial categories and privileges generated by colonialism and its legacy.

A perception further existed that modern household appliances and a greater participation of men were replacing the domestic worker, making action unnecessary. In early 1952, the Washington Post highlighted the work of the ILO and efforts toward improving domestic labor. But it ended with a declension narrative:

Faithful retainers, an age-old institution, may become as legendary as Uncle Tom and the slow-witted hired girl have become in this country. Still, a lot of high-flown folk everywhere are going to have to learn to boil water and sweep floors.

Indeed, the recently concluded ILO Meeting of Experts on Women’s Work saw domestic work as a job women were fleeing from; instead of discussing its conditions, the experts considered “practical steps which would lighten the household tasks of women workers.” The assumption was that not only the “high-flown folk” would do their own domestic labors, but also that women workers needed social services to meet family responsibilities.

The very rejection of domestic workers constituted another reason why no recommendation emerged after 1951. Domestic work represented “the most exploited” and unorganized form of labor, “through no fault of their own but because of the character of their work” that led to the postponement of discussion of their conditions, the Italian Government delegate stressed in 1950.

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31 ILO Minutes, Governing Body, 117th Session, 1953, 32.
32 ILO Minutes, Governing Body, 106th Session 1956, 29.
33 ILO Minutes, Governing Body, 50th Session, 30.
But despite some understanding that such workers deserved protection, delegates went on to pass standards that either excluded domestic workers or made it easy for national governments to do so. That few nations covered domestic work in their labor laws made it a low priority for ILO action.

Finally, the social movement behind such action had narrowed to the efforts of women "experts" The World's YWCA remained a powerful advocate, supported by other international middle class women's associations with observer status at the UN and its agencies. But Western-oriented labor feminists in government bureaus, universities, and trade unions dominated the discourse on domestic work. The ILO's own Section on Women Workers lacked institutional power; competing agendas kept pushing domestic workers off the ILO calendar. Indeed, the Governing Body turned to equal remuneration instead to fulfill a request by the UN's Social and Economic Council. By 1953, the labor feminists had failed. Mildred Fairchild, the former Bryn Mawr professor of social investigation who then headed the women's section, reported:

Because of the attitude of the Governing Body, I think the Director-General is inclined to believe that we probably cannot and should not attempt to press this subject before the conference.

Latin American countries and India stood in the way, believing "that any attention to this question was absurd." European nations were not on board either. Though Frieda Miller of the u.s. Women's Bureau led the Expert Committee on Domestic Work, neither could the u.s. government be counted on. Some members of the State Department felt that the subject was outside of ILO concerns, and Miller was unable to convince her own government to act. Under budgetary limits, the Director-General was not willing to push domestic work without fuller backing. The ILO could prod but it could not move too far ahead of member states. Even after the Second African Regional Conference in 1964 and the 1965 Le request that the Office investigate the occupation, other areas held precedence, like relieving the double burden of women workers with family responsibilities and moving women from the Global South into "development." It took until 1970 for the Office to even issue a report that merely called for improved conditions but not for an international instrument.

During the last third of the century, the ILO itself went through a number of changes. It attempted to adapt to the twists and turns of global politics, including Cold War posturing and human rights battles over apartheid and Palestinian rights; restricted institutional capacity when the United States briefly withdrew in the 1970s; declines in industrial unions, the emergence of the service sector, and relocation of industries; and the rise of neoliberalism through market ideology, financialization, and structural adjustment; and the unraveling of social democratic welfare solutions to capitalist globalization. It investigated domestic work in specific locales: in 1993, for example, the "Le recommended placing domestic workers under the labor law in post-apartheid South Africa." In approving Convention 177 on Home Work in 1996, however, it set a precedent that home-based employment deserved coverage under labor standards. It took a coalition of feminist advocates, researchers, ILO staff, unionists, and industrial homeworkers led most notably by the Self-Employment Women's Association of India to win Convention 177, and it would require a similar transnational network to consider household labor as employment.

Toward a Convention

The 20U victory of domestic workers illustrates the significance of transnational networks and activist practices forged in more localized struggles but
applied to an international campaign. By drawing upon national movements as a means of developing a collective voice, the International Domestic Work Network (IOWN), the first transnational organization of domestic workers, established a tangible presence that challenged the formal boundaries of the ILO, absent from previous considerations of domestic work. The participation of national domestic worker activists in the 2010 and 2011 International Labour Conferences clearly influenced the outcome of the nearly unanimous vote in favor of the convention. Their struggles were key but not sufficient: the domestic worker cause required support from professional advocates from allied organizations outside the ILO and from within the ILO bureaucracy itself.

Success depended on the willingness of the ILO to take up this cause. With the Director General setting the overall program of the organization, the tenure of Chilean diplomat Juan Somavia beginning in 1999 led the ILO to foster “decent work and fair globalization” and encouraged an emphasis on women’s labor, the informal economy, and transnational migration. Under the leadership of feminist Manuela Tomei, director of the Conditions of Work and Employment Programme, the Office compiled a 2010 report that located “care work in the home” as part of the ILO’s mandate to promote decent work for all and offered a rights-based approach to revalue domestic labor.

Furthermore, the quantification of domestic work conditions through an extensive member state survey translated the larger cause of women workers in the informal economy to the language most relevant and meaningful to the ILO as a macro transnational policy-making institution. This institutional investment in this most comprehensive global survey on domestic work comprised a vital precondition to substantiate the need for global protections within the 2010 ILO formal deliberations of the ILC.

The legal and political climate in various countries was also undergoing change. There was some inclusion in local labor standards, but still half of all workers remained uncovered and migrants faced precarious standing. Over the previous quarter century, national and regional worker organization expanded, facilitated by feminist and human rights NGOs. 1988 marked the formation of the thirteen nation Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Household Workers (CONLACTRAI), with a branch in Europe, and in 1989, the Hong Kong-based Asian Domestic Workers’ Union, with members mostly from the Philippines and Thailand. These groups reached out to rural migrants in major cities, many of them undocumented and most from ethnic minority groups. They hung around parks and metros and joined community coalitions. They not only offered “workshops and capacity building,” but also addressed the needs of the worker as a whole person.

By 2010, the number of nations with domestic worker organizations grew to forty-four. These national formations preceded the global mobilization of domestic workers and would persist as key advocates for state ratification of Convention 189. Indeed, all of the early states to ratify (i.e., Uruguay, Philippines, and South Africa) had a prior history of engagement with domestic worker organizations. Thus, while the convention adoption proved a major victory for domestic workers at the global level, the successes and capacities of national domestic worker organizations made this historic moment possible.

We have discussed the road to an ILO convention in more detail elsewhere. Here we want to highlight historical changes. First and foremost comes the linking of domestic worker groups to feminist transnational NGOs and international labor unions. A transnational network took shape four years prior to the inclusion of domestic labor in the ILC agenda. In 2006, Go leaders from trade unions and support organizations gathered in Amsterdam for the first global meeting of domestic workers. The meeting set the stage to create a united front for domestic worker rights within the ILO. To advance the concrete goal of building a global movement, advocates formed the International Domestic Workers Network (IDwN) in 2008. That same year, urged by the International Bade Union Confederation (ITUC), the Governing Body announced that it would schedule “Decent Work for Domestic Workers” as an agenda item for the 2010 ILC. If the delegates decided to move forward, final action would occur in 2011.

We thank Eileen Boris and Jennifer N. Fish, ‘Slaves No More’: Making Global Standards for Domestic Workers,” Feminist Studies 40:2 (Summer, 2014), 411-440. We think Feminist Studies for permission to include material from this piece.

46 Fish ILc fieldnotes, Decent Work for Domestic Workers, Report IV(1), 11-14.
48 Fish ILc fieldnotes, Decent Work for Domestic Workers, Report IV(1), 11-14.
During the Amsterdam conference, representatives of national movements and organizations shared their own particular histories of domestic service, discovering common struggles. They wove together demands for "respect, "rights" and "protection." Geeta Menon, leader of the Karnataka Domestic Workers Union in India, emphasized the need to reframe domestic work from an institution embedded in servitude to one that considers "domestic workers as workers," eligible for equivalent legal protections as other sectors of the formal economy. She recalled:

In our union, we felt that, unless domestic workers are given a legal identity as workers, their work and relentless toil will go unrecognized. Society must go beyond the gendered notion of housework, lift this work from patriarchal definitions, and look at its economic value, changing the attitude of looking at these women as servants or slaves and start perceiving them as workers.54

This appeal became a strategic argument in the organization's continued lobbying for international standards. Out of this conversation emerged larger concerns for gender, labor and migrant rights, which activists then translated into tangible policy points in hopes of eventually reaching the ILO.

From its formation, the IDWN forged an intersectional praxis. It maintained critical relations with a range of ally organizations, including global unions, NGOs, and research institutes. The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IuF) and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (wIEGO) served as complementary pillars of support. The combination of a service sector union and a policy research institute on women in the informal economy strengthened the placement of the domestic worker movement within both arenas. These organizations sustained the network in its formative years through funding and technical resources that strengthened the ability to organize internationally. They crucially provided entrée to obtaining NGO observer status within the 11.0s conferences. A larger network of allies, defined as NGOs in the no structure, organized in distinct ways to assure that those most impacted would be present at the deliberations — even without formal voting rights and the authorization to speak — thus opening every aspect of ILO policy formation to IDWN members.

By providing in-depth training on the no process, and space for worker education, self-reflection, public relations and planning, these organizations ensured that IDWN leaders acquired the knowledge base and capacity to fight for a convention within the ILO system, confessed Fish Ip PM Yu from Hong Kong:

It is very complicated to understand...even if we got a Standard, if governments don't respond, what could we do? But, in learning about the process, I had a change of thinking: that negotiation involves different parties and at least gives us a platform. And our technical support people would help us 55

Extended discussions led the IDWN to identify several effective lobbying strategies. It, in turn, applied activist knowledge, drawn from experiences within both labor and women movements, to infuse the campaign with social justice "struggle credentials."

With access to ILO structures, domestic workers could draw from their own repertoire of activist strategies. Ever pragmatic, IDWN leaders convened with their allies throughout the conference in order to find spaces to assert their collective expression and deploy mobilization tools that had strengthened their own capacities as activists and leaders. As a condition of participation, IDWN members had to abide by ILO procedures, such as the use of formal names and statements of gratitude for being given "the floor" during comment periods. Based on trainings, they conscientiously followed the rules of order at each meeting. Such participation forced all members of the tripartite bodies to recognize their presence. The IDWN displayed domestic workers' realities in ways that made denying their rights seem immoral. In provoking shame through their very embodiment, as poor unprotected migrants, often mothers, they balanced a politics of affect with demands for rights. As proof of their organizing success, by the 2011 meeting, some IDWN members also obtained voting seats on national delegations, thereby giving domestic workers a formal voice within the ILO power structure.

In preparatory workshops, the IDWN had strategized on how to represent collectively the face of domestic labor in order to influence the system and strengthen the case for global standards. During the entire extended process — opening statements, workers meetings, gender section meetings, and closing statements — domestic workers echoed four main points: the historical nature of domestic work; the contemporary centrality of domestic labor in the global

54 Quoted in IRENE. Respect and Rights: Protection for Domestic/Household Workers! (Geneva, 2008), 59.

55 Quoted in Mather, "Yes, We Did It!" 38.
economy, the moral obligation to redress the continued exclusion of this sector from national laws; and the demand to adopt a convention that would be ratified by all member states. Crucial was the decision to demonstrate that domestic workers experience similar oppression from their daily labor regardless of the diversity of work across regions.

Through consistent messaging, domestic worker representatives drew upon the rhetorical appeal and effectiveness of personal testimony to increase the likelihood of passing the convention. Leaders of the IDWN took advantage of traditional constructions of gender by enacting an emotional "women's story" within the traditionally masculine space of the ILO. The continuing significance of women and gender in development discourses since the 1970s enhanced the legibility of their appeal. Individual narratives, stories of struggle, and highly personalized appeals that drew upon discourses of love and care — missing from the earlier 1950 effort — provided rationale for the institutional demands each representative included in public statements. As network leaders explained, "we want to reach the hearts of employers" and "leave the audience in tears." Members of the IDWN also displayed a collective voice within the ILO beyond the limitations of the prescribed formal channels for (often pre-approved) public statements. The holding back of emotions in order to conform to existing procedures remained difficult for most of the members of the network. However, the constraints of the ILO inhibited but did not stop them from adapting social movement strategies to motivate change. They drew upon expressive forms embedded in the organizational cultures of unions and women's movements. They broke into song immediately upon the end of formal meetings, singing, "Domestic workers, need a Convention, domestic workers, need a Convention, domestic workers in the ILO." They deployed visual rhetorical statements of solidarity through shared dress, t-shirt messages, buttons, and campaign colors. The bodies of domestic workers served as a rhetorical tool to strengthen the position of labor within formal institutional spaces. The infusion of song, dance, and physical gestures of solidarity into the proceedings made it difficult for employers and governments to ignore the existence of domestic workers, while fortifying the strength of the network.

These strategies of affect, made present by the IDWN's direct participation, capture a distinct difference in the institutional dialogue between the 1950s and recent conventions. The Convention 189 process not only validated the experiences of domestic workers, but also suggested the power of feminist understandings of the personal for the transnational, Recalled Ida Le Blanc from Trinidad and Tobago:

We met others from around the world and shared our experiences too, which helped us get stronger, knowing that we are trying for the same goals. We heard about strategies that work in other countries. It built our confidence. Though discourses of exploitation and victimhood persisted in the presentation of domestic work within the ILO, the presence of domestic workers themselves in 2010 and 2011 embodied a politics of both collective activism and affect missing from earlier efforts, suspending objectification and enhancing rights. More groups embraced the effort to align, hold the no accountable and insist on global standards for this long-overlooked sector of women workers. In 1950, there was, as the u.s.'s Frieda Miller explained, "no effective organization of either workers or employers." By the first ILO meetings in 2010, academics, labor feminists, and government researchers from a wide array of nations constituted a persuasive group of experts on domestic work, unlike earlier periods when labor representatives to the ILO Committee of Experts on Women's Work came from other sectors, like railways or textiles. In the 1950s, the women's groups with consultative status had carried over from the League of Nations; they were European and urban organizations like the International Federation of University Women, the World's YWCA and Business and Professional Women International. Sixty years later, a range of NGOs sought to participate in the no domestic worker deliberations. Human rights, trade union, and religious groups dominated, including Anti-Slavery International, Migrants Forum in Asia, and World Movement of Christian Workers. WIEGO and IUF knit together these allies.

This difference in players is not the only factor distinguishing our times. In the early post-WWI years, labor feminists sought better working conditions so to increase the supply of servants within Western industrialized nations and to eliminate servitude in the rest of the world, the latter as much a "civilizing" as a modernizing project. In the 20003, domestic labor represented a prototype for the non-standard employment characteristic of an ever-expanding

56 Fish, IIC, fieldnotes 2010.

57 Quoted in Mather, "Yes, We Did IV", 39.
58 Frieda Miller to Mr. Zempel, n May 1950, Box 10, folder 210, Frieda S. Miller Papers, A-37, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe.
worldwide informal economy. Concern over the impact of maternal employment on family labor persisted, but moved from a national to a global issue with the prominence of migrant domestic workers. More legal coverage and worker organization within nations joined to new priorities within the ILO to make international action more probable. Though employers "took a pragmatic view and focused on ensuring that the eventual Convention would be practical, useful and capable of adoption by a majority of countries," they still equated fairness with "the rights of householders to conduct their family affairs." So rather than the end of a struggle, Convention 189 marks one step toward decent work and fair globalization. Now it is up to individual nations to make decent work for domestics a lived experience. With the passing of the convention, domestic labor organizations, global unions, human rights groups and faith-based movements turned their attention to advocating for ratification, whereby domestic workers' organizations and unions used an international convention to strengthen demands and heighten the moral ground for labor protections at the national level.

To date, seventeen countries have ratified C189. But given how few states abide by any international convention, the real significance of Convention 189 might very well come from its use as an organizing device, as seen in the state-level "Bill of Rights" campaigns by the National Domestic Worker Alliance in the United States, and as a prod to governments to enhance national standards, as happened in Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Spain, India, Thailand, and elsewhere. At the same time, domestic workers' organization increased in formalization: 2013 marked the shift from a global network of domestic workers to a formal labor federation. WIEGO, the IUF, and the ILO remained midwives to this birth as they supplied financial, technical, and organizational capacity to put on a truly global founding congress in Montevideo. Delegates adopted a five-year action plan with the goal to "increase domestic workers' participation in collective actions that will help effect changes in the social, economic,

political and cultural landscape, and will allow for the growth and strengthening of organized domestic workers and the advancement of domestic workers' rights and interests." Among the strategic campaigns and actions agreed upon were collaborations with trade unions, NGOs, and appropriate political allies to ratify ILO conventions, fight "abusive" employment agencies and labor recruiters, eliminate exploitation of children in this workforce, and win "basic labor rights and social protection," that is, the "right to organize, minimum wage, rest days, health insurance, occupational health and safety;" and establish collective bargaining. To that end, the new international labor federation -- the first for and by women -- planned to engage in extensive education, research, and communication, touching on such issues as forms of collective bargaining, the aging society and growth of home care as a form of domestic service, and the situation of migrant workers.63

Conclusion

By the second decade of the 21st century, domestic work had moved from an invisible form of labor to the celebrated subject of global deliberations because of social, cultural, institutional, legal, and economic transformations within and between states and in relation to international and transnational labor and feminist organizations over the preceding half-century. Institutional barriers, ideological blinders, and representational limits overdetermined the mid-20th century failure to bring forth a worldwide instrument on the rights of domestic workers. So did the disinterest of governments, indifference of unions, and ridicule of employers. Few nations included domestic work in labor law and the sector remained mostly unorganized. Moving away from protective labor legislation, Western feminists were less interested in improving a low-waged occupation dominated by women of color and ethnic minorities than in seeking equal rights on the job. In the 1950s, they focused on obtaining no conventions on equal pay and non-discrimination rather than on procuring standards for domestic workers. When it came to domestic work, they were most interested in modernizing the occupation, making it more efficient, and relieving predicted shortages of "help." They saw themselves setting the preconditions for organization among workers who were too isolated and victimized to act on their own.

60 Quoted in Mather, "Yes, We Did It!", 65.
63 Documents from Founding Congress, IDWN, 2013, in authors' possession; quotes from, "Item 6: IDWF 5-Year Action Plan."
In the decades leading up to the 2011 convention, substantive shifts in the global political economy transformed the context in which domestic workers and their labor and feminist allies operated. The most important of these were the reorganization of the global economy itself, the influence of Global South nations through the UN system, the intensification of transnational feminisms, and the expansion of informal economies. Significantly, domestic work did not wither away, though migrant women came to dominate this ever-growing sector. In 2013, the ILO estimates up to a million workers, mostly women and children, undertake this labor, composing a quarter of the female labor force in Latin America and the Caribbean and a third in the Middle East. Asia has the most domestic workers, many of whom work outside of their own countries. Since the 1970s, neoliberal economic policies created exchange relations that hinge upon the migration and "trade" of women workers to provide emotional labor and household reproduction for a global care chain, part of a distinct rise in feminized service economies. With both families and nations drawing upon women's labor force participation, migrants had become "the oil in the wheels," as Tanzanian trade unionist Vicky Kanyoka reminded the ILO's International Labor Conference (ILC) in 2010. That is, the contributions of domestic workers make to social reproduction, as well as the global economy, justified the ideological and ethical rationale for what advocates touted as a "long-overdue" need for international labor standards.

In the 2000s, a convention for domestic workers gained traction because of organizing among national groups, and their ability to form a transnational movement, facilitated by human rights and feminist NGOs and international labor federations. The resulting coalition drew upon the ILO's ideological emphasis on "fair globalization" and "decent work" to place domestic work on the agenda of the ILC. The commitment of key players within the ILO, with political capital and knowledge of its bureaucracy, proved vital to advancing a domestic workers convention. Over the preceding decades, employer representatives had become increasingly hostile to any labor regulation; however, convention supporters overwhelmed this opposition through a politics of affect linked to human rights claims.

The same globalization undergirding the mounting demand for domestic labor also spread new avenues for networking and activism, often enhanced by digital communication. Thus, forty-five years after the last major conversation on domestic labor within the ILC, a worldwide network of domestic workers—developed through a new transnational feminism that included NGOs and labor union women—joined global union leaders and gender and labor rights advocates to take an active role in ILO deliberations, indeed to shape them through an unprecedented intervention in the convention-making process. This world-wide dialogue on women's paid labor within the private household developed from and further fueled a transnational activism not possible earlier, when women's organizations in the 1990s and a handful of labor feminists in the 1990s pushed for international standards without much support from trade unionists or governments. Belonging to both a renewed internationalism among trade unions and a broader transnational feminism, today's domestic worker movement illuminates the promise and difficulties of advocacy across borders when the struggles of the "poorest of the poor" move from the periphery to the center of international debates.

The future of domestic workers will emerge as transnational organizations mediate the dialectic of state power and grassroots movements. Throughout
This process, as a symbolic shift from the earliest considerations of domestic work within the ILO, this "movement of women" now proclaims a victory in formal recognition. We cannot discount the transformation in domestic worker consciousness that already has taken place through the ILO process where as workers and the most oppressed workforce in all countries they sat "with the big bosses and the technical people of the ILO." As Peruvian Ernestina Ochoa, the Vice-President of IDWP, emphasized on its passage, the convention was "what society owed to us...for all the injustices that were committed during decades." Or, as South African domestic worker leader Hester Stephens explained, "freedom is at last come for domestic workers around the world. Maids no more, they had become workers.

72 Field Notes, Boris and Fish, Founding Convention of IDWP, October 25-28, Montevideo, Uruguay.

73 Quoted in Mather, "Yes, We Did It," 69.

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