

Chapter 1

Irregular Migration and Domestic Work in Europe: Who Cares?

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Irregular Migration and Domestic Work

International migration in the last two decades has been increasingly gendered. Women have become important components of international migration flows both within Europe (from East to West) and from developing countries in Asia and Africa to Europe. Female migration has been encouraged by both push and pull factors. On the push side, the implosion of Communist regimes in central eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics has left women unemployed, without a welfare state to rely on and/or with salaries that were too low even for the mere survival of families. In developing countries, women were and still are faced with poverty and unemployment as well as violence.

At the same time, there has been a strong ‘pull’ effect as western and southern European societies have been characterized by an increasing demand of migrant labour, and particularly in sectors that are highly gendered such as caring and cleaning work in private homes. Such work was traditionally performed by women (in southern Europe) and to a certain extent by welfare services (in northern and western Europe). While welfare services have been suffering major cuts, European societies have been rapidly ageing and the demand for caring and cleaning services has boomed. These factors have contributed to the creation of an important niche in European labour markets for mainly female migrant domestic workers.

Native women have favoured the employment of immigrant domestic workers in the home, as they have freed them from caring and cleaning tasks. Migrant domestic work has at the same time had important implications for welfare systems. In southern European countries for instance where assistance of elderly or ill people at the home is generally not provided or where public nurseries are scarce, migrant women have come to fill important gaps and to actually substitute for services that are not there. The current economic crisis and the overall restructuring of welfare systems both in southern and northern Europe make the need for an affordable domestic care labour force all the more necessary and sought after, especially as life expectancy is prolonged and the European population is increasingly ageing.

Interestingly migrant domestic work poses important gender role and welfare challenges at the countries of origin too. Migrant women become the main breadwinners in their families and parental roles change (if the father is left behind

to look after the children). Many times families break up because of long absences and the change in gender role balance within the family. Inter-generational solidarity among women at the countries of origin is also an issue triggered by migrant domestic work: young women leave their children with their own mothers (that is, the grandmothers of the children) so that they can go abroad to find work and send money for the family's survival or also for the children's education.

Domestic work is characterized by a number of special features that make it a labour market sector that stands apart from other areas of migrant employment. Domestic work takes place in the home of other people – a place that notoriously escapes any control on the part of labour inspections and that by definition is not a 'formal' workplace. It involves tasks that are very personal in nature: caring for elderly people or young children, cleaning somebody's house, taking care of their private belongings (clothes, furniture, cooking food, for instance). Hence it involves a high level of intimacy – even if it is an unwanted or implicit one – between the employer and the employee.

It is highly gendered: domestic workers are in their overwhelming majority women. And increasingly in Europe domestic work is an immigrant's job. Indeed native women are no longer willing to occupy this labour market niche but increasing immigration during the last decades have swelled the ranks of immigrant women who move to European Union (EU) countries to take up jobs as cleaners and carers in private homes.

Domestic work is seen as a dead-end job. There is no career properly speaking when one works in the private care or cleaning sector, although as we shall see in the studies presented in this volume immigrant domestic workers do engage into a career path within this sector. They can go from live-in to live-out, from being at the mercy of the employer towards selecting their job, from a feeling of deskilling to a feeling that they become specialized in the sector, they are good at their job and they are needed – their employers depend on them.

The above issues and features of domestic work have increasingly attracted the interest of scholars during the last decade. The relationship between immigration and domestic work, the particularities of domestic work as a specific sector of employment as well as the gendered nature of the work are some of the topics investigated (Anderson 2000, 2007, Cox 1997, 2006, Cyrus 2008, Lutz and Schwalgin 2004, Lutz 2002, 2008, Pannell and Altman 2009, Scrinzi 2003, 2005). Moreover, a number of specialized NGO networks and international organizations have issued their own studies to provide support and assistance to immigrant domestic workers as well as to raise public and policy makers' awareness on the special vulnerability of immigrant domestic workers (see for instance Respect 2000, Respect Network 2009, Gallotti 2009, ILO 2010, PICUM 2009).

This book subscribes to the wider area of research on immigrant domestic workers but particularly focuses on immigrant domestic workers in an irregular situation. In other words, we study the particular characteristics and the challenges faced by immigrant domestic workers that have no legal stay permits in the countries in which they work and who thus have no proper work contract or welfare benefits.

The book covers eight European countries, notably Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain and looks at all types of domestic work (live-in, live-out with one employer, and live-out with many employers). The countries were selected on the basis of the estimated size of their irregular immigrant domestic worker population. The book aims to cover both genders when and where relevant even though domestic work remains a women's job in the vast majority of cases.

Contributions to this book focus on three main aspects of irregular immigrant domestic work: employment conditions, health issues and family life. Concerning employment, we investigate the living and working conditions of irregular immigrant domestic workers, the tasks assigned to them, their relations with employers, their access to basic rights such as sick leave, sick pay and holiday pay.

The book covers two issues that are generally neglected or not directly addressed by other studies: health issues and family life. Domestic work is a heavy job both physically and emotionally and entails particular health hazards. Access to health services is at best limited when an immigrant worker is undocumented and the fact that they work in the home makes it even more difficult to access information and/or to refer to NGOs or trade unions that could assist them.

Domestic workers are implicitly seen as having no right to a family life when they work as live-in carers, and even when they work as live-out they may face unfriendly working times (for example, night shifts, starting early and ending very late, asked to work on Sundays), and a lack of flexibility on the part of their employers when they need to be absent for family reasons. On the other hand, the very nature of the work sometimes transforms the employers into a surrogate family environment for the domestic workers, especially when she has left her own family in the country of origin.

This book has three main objectives. It seeks to provide for a country-by-country and comparative overview of the situation of irregular immigrant domestic workers in Europe (unique in its kind). It offers conceptual advancements in the study of immigration and domestic work by discussing three important issues: (1) the notion of a 'career' for irregular immigrant domestic workers – a concept that has to date only been discussed for legal immigrant domestic workers; (2) the notion of legality and irregularity highlighting the fuzzy borders between them in immigrant domestic work; and (3) the gender and (transnational) family issues – the right of irregular immigrant domestic workers to have a family life and the difficulty of combining this especially with live-in employment (see also Anderson 2000). We particularly highlight the multiple dimensions of legality/illegality involved for immigrant domestic workers in an irregular situation. The book also touches upon the additional challenges posed by irregular immigration status and the periodical creation of surrogate family ties with employers and their families. This volume aims also at critically assessing the policy responses of different European countries to the growing sector of (irregular) immigrant domestic work and their efforts to regularize immigrant domestic work and/or protect the rights of both irregular and legal immigrant domestic workers.

The aim of this introductory chapter is to place the book in the wider literature on global migration and the 'global care chain' (Hochschild 2000), looking at how domestic work fits the needs and dynamics of developed countries' labour markets in the era of post-industrial capitalism and neoliberal globalization. The gender dimension of domestic work and the global care chain is an important aspect that needs to be taken into account in studying domestic work. Secondly, the chapter puts this discussion into the specific European context and the ways in which migration policies construct illegality in the domestic work sector. Last but not least, the chapter discusses the special features of domestic work as a particular type of employment comparing today's domestic workers with 'servants' and 'maids' in the past when domestic work did not involve international but national migration from the countryside to urban centres. The last section outlines the structure of the country specific chapters and the empirical work on which they are based.

Migration and Domestic Work in the Age of Neoliberalism and Globalization

There are a few issues that need to be discussed in this chapter which are not peculiar to our interest in the link between domestic work and irregular migration but rather to domestic work and migration more generally. They are, however, important in placing the book in the appropriate theoretical and social policy context.

There are several social developments that have marked late industrial societies in the post-World War II era and particularly so during the last three decades which are directly relevant for our work. First, the fact that increasing numbers of women in industrialized countries have started working outside the home. They have engaged into paid work instead of what they used to do, which was notably unpaid care work, within the home. Second, that European societies are increasingly ageing, thus generating higher needs for care, for both children and elderly people. The issue is that there are fewer adults to look after the sick and the elderly, while at the same time there is a need for looking after young children and infants as women are increasingly working outside the home. Third, European welfare systems are downsizing. The prevalence of neoliberal models in economic and social policy pushes towards the commodification and also towards the marketization of care work as the most efficient policy in responding to the care needs of households. This section briefly discusses these three phenomena with a view to showing how they relate to the more limited realm of irregular migrant domestic work.

Gender equality has been a priority for national and EU level policies in past decades. Such gender equality is inscribed in what Lewis (2004) has termed the 'adult-worker society' model. In this model, a prototype of which can be seen in the Scandinavian countries for instance, all employable adults enter the labour market (and paid work). In this perspective, all adult people are seen to be autonomous and

self-providing individuals, what Manske (2005) calls ‘autonomous worker-citizens’, realizing their full capacities and life prospects through work (and of course leisure). This principle is seen as corresponding to ideas about equality between genders but also about social policy regimes and their viability in the context of ageing societies. This model finds support not only in ideas about gender equality and women’s emancipation – as expressed by women’s movements – but also in economic arguments about female human capital. As the level of education of the female population rises, the interruption of their careers when they become mothers involves a waste of their human capital (OECD 2001, cited in Lutz 2011: 6).

Women entering the labour market and paid work has two important implications for the household’s production and consumption patterns (Esping and Andersen 2002: 69). The woman’s earnings increase the overall purchasing power of the household. The woman’s employment outside the home, however, creates at the same time a ‘gap’ in the provision of her unpaid obligations vis-à-vis dependents such as young children or the elderly and sick. The process of transferring the caring and cleaning chores from the domain of the home (where work is invisible and unpaid) to the labour market (where other people are hired to do this work or where these services are purchased by other agents or offered by the state) is what has been called the process of commodification of care.

Whether commodification of care is good or bad and for whom is a complicated research and policy question. For the women who enter the paid work domain, this process may be seen as liberating and empowering. Outsourcing domestic work has other important implications, however. State provisions even in countries with well-developed welfare and education systems do not cover all the possible needs and arrangements that families need, especially in the context of an overall ageing population. Market provisions are often too expensive to be affordable. There may also be issues of cost (care services may be quite expensive) and lack of labour supply (not many people being willing to take up such jobs). As Milkman et al. (1998) argue, latent demand for domestic help becomes actual demand only when such help becomes easily affordable.

Europe is experiencing relatively rapid population ageing as the baby-boom generation grows older in western and southern Europe, while central eastern European countries are experiencing mostly negative demographic growth in the post-1989 period (due both to low fertility rates and high emigration). These developments have dramatically increased the social and economic cost of elderly care. In response to these rising costs most countries reduce entitlements (targeting services for the populations with greatest need) while also seeking to reduce costs (Simonazzi 2009). The reduction of costs takes place through cash transfers, private provision and home care. Thus in most European countries private households share the burden with the state by contributing to the cost of care as this is not entirely covered by either the state or any private insurance funds (Simonazzi 2009: 212).

This double reduction, as previously stated, is driven not only by the increasing cost of care services but also by the prevalence of the neoliberal logic: welfare

systems are being downsized strengthening the tendency not only to commodify care but also to delegate it to the market (Lutz and Palenga 2011). Thus instead of expanding the public child-care sector, states prefer to provide child allowances; instead of providing for full-time care for those the sick and the elderly, today's welfare systems opt for cash transfers to their families. However, these cash transfers whether through dependency or care allowances, retirement pensions or other insurance payments are not sufficient to cover for the care work needed. Care becomes affordable only when migrant women step in as the necessary labour force to satisfy this labour market niche (Lyberaki 2008, Lutz 2011). Thus, women's engagement in paid work, ageing societies, and welfare systems that are being downsized and reorganized leads to an inextricable link between care work, welfare and migration. Migrants provide for the missing link in the chain. It is only through the provision of a plentiful and affordable migrant labour force that welfare and care regimes in Europe become affordable, cost-efficient and functional.

The whole system is conveniently integrated by the structural adjustment neoliberal policies imposed by richer countries on developing ones (Cox 2006: 18–19). Such policies instead of promoting growth they rather tend to disrupt local production structures, increase poverty and ultimately force women to seek work opportunities abroad. It may be argued that the link between care regimes, welfare systems and migration regimes have become structural features of late capitalism at the age of globalization (Cox 2006, Lutz 2011).

Gender in this chain is a crucial factor: it has to do with gender equality and the need for paid work to substitute for European women who are no longer available for the unpaid care work. Gender is crucial in relation to migration too: it is immigrant women from eastern Europe, Asia and Africa that replace European women in their caring, cleaning and cooking tasks. The role of carer remains heavily gendered (Lutz 2011: 6).

The gender implications are notable: immigrant domestic workers are employed by native women helping them in reconciling their roles in the family and work. During the last 10 years, scholars have paid increasing attention to the inequalities involved in global care chains (Hochschild and Ehrenreich 2002, Parreñas Salazar 2001, Anderson 2000). The asymmetrical power relations between workers (migrant women) and employers (native women) and the ethnic or racial stereotypes that often structure such relations (Anderson and Phizacklea 1997, Lutz 2002) have been also critically analysed.

State discourses legitimize global care chains through reference to the opportunities provided to immigrant women to improve the life prospects of their families through their employment as domestic workers by comparison to what they could have provided for them if they had stayed in their home countries (Peterson 2007). Such discourses ignore the care gaps that global care chains create: the fact that these women are then absent from their own families and their countries' welfare systems. They leave children and elderly or sick relatives behind to be cared for by their spouses or also by their own mothers, thus creating gendered chains of solidarity and support (see also Vianello 2009).

European Migration Dynamics and the Construction of Illegality

European countries have played an important part in the development of these global care chains as receivers of immigrant women who find employment as domestic workers, cleaning houses, looking after children and caring for the sick and the elderly. Indeed during the past 20 years these women have become an indispensable part of the welfare and care regimes in both northern and southern Europe. The situation in different European countries is presented succinctly by Lutz and Palenga (2011: 352):

In order to enable female nationals to 'reconcile' care work and working life, some European states have decided to impose quotas for the recruitment of domestic workers (Spain, Italy, Greece) or have opened their borders to them (Britain and Ireland). Others such as Germany (cf. Cyrus 2008) or the Nordic states (Widding-Isaksen, 2010) have been reluctant to acknowledge the need for migrant domestic and care workers, let alone to include this need in their managed migration policies. This however, does not mean that migrant domestic workers are absent from these countries; they are present and endure the difficult conditions of life in a twilight zone (for Germany see Lutz 2011).

Indeed there have been a wealth of studies which have highlighted the gendered nature of East to West migration within Europe, the power structures behind them, the ethnic and racial stereotypes, the class issues, the migration networks, the care chains and the inter-generational solidarity relationships (for instance Metz-Göckel et al. 2008, Karakayali 2010, Lutz 2007, Triandafyllidou 2006). In these studies the legal or irregular status of the immigrant domestic worker has often remained out of focus as a secondary concern. By contrast, in this book the irregular residence status of many immigrant domestic workers comes centre-stage.

This book pays attention to the fact that illegality in the immigrant labour market is constructed by state categories that divide people into 'work permit holders', 'student visa holders' or 'undocumented' (Ruhs and Anderson 2007). We note that the legality of residence and employment of the immigrant is structurally determined by the state. In line, however, with Ruhs and Anderson (2007), we consider neither the immigrant nor the employer as a victim of the situation. Both immigrants and employers make choices and influence the situation through their actions or lack of action. Thus immigrants have their own agendas, plans and priorities (for instance to help their family back home, or to work hard and save money with a view to realizing as soon as possible a specific project) and are independent agents. Naturally immigrants have constrained choices: their actions are limited by their own human, social and economic capital, by the policies of their own country of origin as well as the policies of their destination country. In other words, immigrants, as Ruhs and Anderson argue, are neither mere victims nor manipulative abusers. They are social agents who are capable of choice and action.

The same is true for employers. Even though the employer–immigrant relation is unequal in terms of power, employers are also constrained by state policies. It can be assumed that they have to bargain between minimizing labour costs, recruiting suitable workers and also moderating immigration costs (for example, costs related to their employing an undocumented alien). However, employers (like immigrants) are neither villains nor cultural dupes. They have their own priorities and agendas. Last but not least, the state shapes the institutional environment within which employers and immigrants interact not only by state policies as such but also by policy priorities, implementation practices and relevant discourses on immigration, immigrant work, security, power, and ‘national interests’. Indeed the design and implementation of policies are also the result of multiple influences: concerns about public opinion, concerns about upholding the law, or lobbying of special interest groups.

We thus conceptualize irregular immigrant domestic work within this triangle of actors: the state, employers and immigrants themselves. Within this triangle there are ‘spaces of illegality’ as Ruhs and Anderson call them; notably there are different types and degrees of illegality that can be produced and negotiated among the actors. In particular, the authors pay attention to what they call semi-compliance. Semi-compliance involves legal stay but irregular work in violation of one’s immigration status, which according to Ruhs and Anderson, allows employers and immigrants to maximize economic gains while minimizing the costs related to state control. This book is concerned mainly with full irregularity, not semi-compliance. However, the analysis of semi-compliance and its dynamics is important because it highlights the interplay between structure and agency among state institutions, employers and immigrants.

In this study we not only take into account state policies and employers/immigrants but also the meso-level of networks and organizations (see also Lutz and Palenga 2011). Networks include family and friends which provide information and support. Organizations may be trade unions or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide legal or social support for irregular immigrants. They may also of course be employment agencies, legal or semi-compliant ones that act as mediators between employers and migrants.

The Special Attributes of Domestic Work

Transferring care work from the private domain of the family to the public domain of the labour market is not a simple policy task because care work transcends actually both domains. Somehow care work transcends the distinction between public and private. It is private because it is performed in the home and concerns very personal needs of the family members (caring after children or elderly) but also public because it should normally subscribe to ‘proper work’ arrangements (paid work, a place of work, conditions, a salary, and so on). However, as Lyberaki (2008) points out, care work does not always qualify as ‘proper work’ because it

may involve also unpaid work, and its conditions and parameters may not be so neatly clarified.

Domestic work is not a new profession. There is significant literature analysing the nature and conditions of work of 'servants' in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England for instance (Davidoff 1974, Davidoff and Hawthorne 1976). As Lucassen points out (1987), domestic workers enter the labour market in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries within wider socioeconomic changes such as industrialization and the emergence of salaried labour. Cox (2006) explains that before industrialization, the profession of house servants was widespread. The majority of these servants then as now were women and mainly originated from rural areas. They were then employed in large households of nobility as part of a large household staff. They migrated to urban centres like today's domestic workers migrate from one country or continent to another.

A significant change in the 'servant' or 'domestic worker' profession took place with industrialization. On one hand, the servant labour force seriously diminished as workers were absorbed into industry. On the other hand, the emergence of a middle class led to the emergence of the servant profession in middle-class households. Thus, young girls from poor rural areas came to work as 'maids of all work' in smaller households (Cox 2006: 14–15).

Several scholars note that then like now there were stereotypes about what kind of attributes were appropriate for a 'good worker'. Young girls from the countryside were considered to possess the 'good character' that was necessary for this kind of work while working-class urban girls were to be found at the bottom of the ladder as they were not seen to possess these qualities (Gillis 1979). Today such distinctions form along ethnic or racial lines: Latin American women are good carers because they are warm and loving, Asian women are good carers because they are peaceful and patient, Eastern Europeans are good cleaners because they are thorough and hard-working.

At the time, salaries were negotiated directly between domestic workers and their employers – there were no legal frameworks about working and living conditions to protect the worker. The relationship between the maid and her employer had clearly the features of a master-and-servant relationship. Control over the life of the servant was total and the servant was dedicated to her boss. Hours of work were long – at least 10 per day – and exploitative conditions were common (Davidoff 1974). Of course working hours at the time were long for all workers, domestic or not, but what was distinctive of the 'servant' occupation was that there was no distinction between time of work and time that the servant was on call and could be asked to perform house chores (Davidoff and Hawthorn 1976).

We note here that there are many similarities between the situation of live-in maids in Victorian and Edwardian England and today's migrant domestic workers caught in the web of the global care chains outlined earlier. However, while in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries being a maid before marrying was a respectable job for a working-class and rural-origin young woman, by the early twentieth century it had become the most denigrated job. Although the domestic

sector was the single largest employer of women in industrialized countries it had become the least desirable one, suitable only for migrant women who had no other choice (Cox 2006: 16). Indeed today too, being a carer or cleaner is a job of low prestige undertaken actually by immigrant women who have little other choice to find employment in other sectors (Anderson 2000).

The low prestige of domestic work has to do with its ambivalent character in-between the public and the private. While it is traditional paid work like any other, it is inherent in the family life and not in the employment system. For instance, qualities that are highly valued in paid work such as speed, effectiveness and efficiency may not be appropriate for domestic work where caring for the elderly, sick or children requires patience, flexibility, slowness. In addition, care work is so close to non-paid work and to private relationships that it is difficult to acquire a professional status of its own (Lutz 2011: 8). Thus we see that the domestic work sector reproduces the gender inequality and male cultural bias, however uplifting the 'burden' of low prestige care work from native women and putting it on the shoulders of immigrant women.

Looking at the scholarly literature on domestic work, three forms of domestic employment can be distinguished: live-in domestic workers, live-out domestic workers employed full-time by one employer, live-out domestic workers working for different employers (see also Gallotti 2009). In any of the three cases, domestic work involves cleaning and house chores or caring for elderly people or children, or indeed both sets of tasks. This book is concerned with all three types of domestic employment to the extent that the immigrant in question has no legal stay status. Although it is probably live-in immigrant domestic workers that face the most important challenges as regards exploitation, abuse, and lack of access to fundamental rights (such as their right to privacy and dignity, and even their freedom), important challenges arise for both live-in and live-out immigrant domestic workers who are in an irregular situation.

Contents of the Book

The book includes 10 chapters; eight chapters focus on a specific country each. We cover thus eight European countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. Each chapter discusses the relevance of (irregular) immigrant domestic work in total immigration and in total domestic work. It outlines the main features of irregular immigrant domestic workers in each country: whether they are live-in or live-out workers, in which regions or cities they concentrate, the main nationalities concerned and also if relevant links between specific nationalities and specific sub-sectors of domestic work (that is, as carers of elderly people, baby sitters, cleaners). Each chapter pays special attention to questions of employment for irregular immigrant domestic workers: their living and working conditions including contract, salary, holiday, sick pay, sick leave, accommodation, and relations with their employer. Issues discussed

include dependency from employers, exploitation, possibility to negotiate, the importance of being legal (vs. being undocumented) for negotiating their employment conditions, issues of work identity (live-out domestic workers for instance can be conceived of as freelance professionals, the notion of a ‘career’ within domestic work). Apart from employment, each chapter takes into special consideration issues of health and access to health care: particular health hazards involved in domestic work are discussed (physical and psychological) and the access to health services provided by the state or by NGOs. Last but not least we look at issues of family life, both as regards transnational families and the possibility of reorganizing one’s family life in the destination country. Each chapter concludes with some critical comments on the main issues of concern in the specific country as regards irregular immigrant domestic workers.

The book concludes with a comparative chapter which does not actually replicate the findings of the country chapters but rather addresses the issue directly at the European comparative level. In other words, the concluding chapter engages with a comparative analysis of the situation that prevails in each country, the labour rights and employment conditions, the health and family life challenges that immigrants face and how these are dealt in different countries. The book thus aims to offer an in-depth analysis of irregular immigrant domestic labour in the 10 countries separately and an in-depth comparative analysis of these same issues at the European level. We believe that such comparative analysis is important for highlighting common (or diverging) standards, practices and policies. We thus also address from a comparative perspective, the role of civil society actors in assisting irregular immigrant domestic workers and shaping policy responses to immigrant domestic work.

Sources Used for This Book

Seven out of the eight chapters (notably all chapters¹ except the Netherlands) included in this book find their origins in empirical research conducted within the context of a project on the fundamental rights of irregular migrants funded and coordinated by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA).² The project documented the situation of immigrants in an irregular situation in the European Union, through a comparative report covering policies

1 Conversely this book does not include case studies on Hungary and Sweden which are included in the FRA study.

2 See FRA, Annual Work Programme 2009: 8. Available at: http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/wp09_en.pdf [accessed: 8 July 2012]. Further information on this project can also be found on subsequent Annual Work Programmes of the FRA covering 2010: 8, 2011: 9 and 2012: 21. ‘Fundamental rights of irregular migrants in the European Union’ in the 2012 Working Programme of the Fundamental Rights Agency. Available at: http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/FRA_AWP2012_EN.pdf at p. 21.

and practices in the 27 EU Member State.³ This report was complemented by two thematic comparative reports, one on the situation of those employed in the domestic work sector and a second on access to healthcare, both covering 10 EU Member States.⁴ The reports by the FRA were the subject of discussions with policy makers and other stakeholders at a Conference organized by the Agency together with the Polish Presidency in Warsaw in November 2011.⁵

The authors of the chapters had conducted 10–15 interviews each with irregular immigrant domestic workers, and civil society actors active in the field in 2009. These interviews were conducted following a common interview guide which covered the same issues: employment, health, family life, education, access to legal remedies and other issues.⁶ The chapters presented in this book depart from the original study as they have a different focus: they offer a sociological and policy analysis of the conditions of irregular immigrant domestic workers and highlight how specific policy frames interact with the needs and wishes of irregular immigrant domestic workers.

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3 FRA, *Fundamental Rights of Migrants in an Irregular Situation in the European Union*, November 2011.

4 FRA, *Migrants in an Irregular Situation Employed in Domestic Work: Fundamental Rights Challenges for the European Union and its Member States*, July 2011 and FRA, *Migrants in an Irregular Situation: Access to Healthcare in 10 European Union Member States*, October 2011.

5 See Fundamental Rights Conference 2011, *Summary Conclusions by the FRA*, December 2011. Available at: http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/research/publications/publications_per_year/2011/pub-frc-2011-summary-conclusions_en.htm [accessed: 8 July 2012].

6 The interview guidelines for migrants as well as for civil society actors in the domestic work sector are annexed to the report by the FRA, *Migrants in an irregular situation employed in domestic work: Fundamental rights challenges for the European Union and its Member States*, July 2011: 181.

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