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Care Workers, Care Drain, and Care Chains: Reflections on Care, Migration, and Citizenship

Abstract

In this article, we discuss a case study that deals with the care chain phenomenon and focuses on the question of how Poland and the Ukraine as sending countries and Poland as a receiving country are affected and deal with female migrant domestic workers. We look at the ways in which these women organize care replacement for their families left behind and at those families' care strategies. As public discourse in both countries is reacting to the feminization of migration in a form that specifically questions the social citizenship obligations of these women, we also look at the media portrayal of the situation of nonmigrating children. Finally, we explore how different aspects of citizenship matter in transnational care work migration movements.

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Introduction

In an article published in 2000, Hochschild coined the term "care chain" to describe a situation in which migrant women take care of children and elderly people elsewhere, leaving behind a gap with regard to their own care responsibilities. Hochschild outlines how care work in the First World is being commercialized and outsourced to mainly female migrants from poorer countries. These migrants usually leave their families behind, and consequently a *care gain* in the receiving country implies a *care drain* in the sending country (Hochschild 2003, 186–7) which leads to the continuation of social inequality on a global scale. Hochschild argues that the winners are families at the top of this global care chain, who buy care work and additionally gain what she calls "emotional surplus value." At the other end of this global care chain, however, are families in the sending countries, in particular children and elderly people in need of care, who pay the social and emotional cost of the deficit of care and emotional work.

Over the last few years, various research projects have taken the "care drain" and "care chain" concepts as points of reference and started to use them as empirical tools in order to test them. However, this discussion has hardly taken into consideration the citizenship situation of these women, for example the fact that migrant women often fail to obtain citizenship rights in the receiving country while they are harshly reminded of their social citizenship obligations by their countries of origin.

As a result, female migrants find themselves in a dilemma; as Lister (2003, 176) expresses it, they need to balance their obligations as "citizen-the wage-earner" against those of "citizen-the carer." In this contribution, we draw on the findings of our research project "Landscapes of Care Drain: Care Provision and Care Chains from Ukraine to Poland and from Poland to Germany," which focuses on these women's management of the care gap—Polish migrant women working in Germany, and Ukrainian care migrants working in Poland. In addition to biographical interviews with Ukrainian and Polish female migrant care workers, we conducted in-depth interviews with dependent family members, other relatives, and friends who take on caring tasks when women leave. We also carried out a media discourse analysis on migration, transnational parenting, and care in Poland and Germany (EU member countries) and Ukraine (EU fringe country).

We will first present debates on global care chains and transnational parenthood and sketch the migration situation in the countries under study. Secondly, characteristics of child care arrangements in

the Ukraine and Poland will be presented; the analysis focuses on care patterns and on transnational care management by the migrant mother. Thirdly, we show how public opinion, mirrored in the media in the respective countries, conceives of the issue of care in the context of migration. Finally, we refer to the key issue of this volume—the different aspects of citizenship in transnational care. We will address both the social citizenship rights situation of migrants in their home and in their receiving country and the question of how the citizenship situation of migrant domestic workers, with or without EU membership rights, differs and matters in terms of their employment and care opportunities.

Global Care Chains and Transnational Parenting

The "global care chain" concept captures a process in which several phenomena, such as capitalism, globalization, and the feminization of migration interact with gender relations, care, and emotional work. It is often argued that the care chain is beneficial to states and individuals involved, as all of them gain either money or care. Macroeconomists in powerful global institutions like the World Bank, for example, consider remittances sent by migrants to their home countries a significant development source for so-called Third-World countries (see, for example, the OECD report by Dayton et al. 2007). Given the fact that, for some national economies, currency import in the form of migrants' remittances is the most important source of income, this standpoint seems comprehensible. However, the question arises of whether and how these sending countries deal with the *care gap* or care deficiency in their national social policies. How is transnational parenting perceived by these countries as well as by the migrants themselves, their children, spouses, and/or parents? In recent years, a growing number of studies have dealt with distant or transnational parenting, in particular mothering and the situation of children left behind. Among these are (a) those focusing on the relation between financial support and educational performances of children left behind (cf. Nicholas 2008), the result of which is evaluated positively; (b) studies that underline the negative effects of the care drain and in particular the consequences of the absence of mothers (cf. Gamburd 2000; Parreñas 2005; Phoenix 2009); and (c) those which argue that the outcome of the care chain cannot be characterized as exclusively negative or positive (Madianou and Miller 2011; Zentgraf and Chinchilla 2008). American scholars like Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) and Parreñas (2005), for example, have drawn attention to the important influence of *care substitution* and *care*

arrangements in transnational families. They have underlined the fact that gender relations are at the heart of these care arrangements, because the core question in care arrangement is concerned with the gender-specific distribution of care responsibilities. All in all, these studies suggest that the question of gender norms and ideologies in the sending country seems to be an important issue not only for care arrangements in transnational families but also at the level of the sending country's dealings with the absence of mothers.

Before presenting our research findings, we discuss briefly the development of migration from the two sending countries, Poland and Ukraine, and link this information to the discussion about women's social citizenship rights and obligations.

Ukrainian and Polish Labor Migration and the Dilemma of the Wage-Earning versus the Caring Obligation

The geo-political situation of Poland and Ukraine is different in various ways; Poland has been a formal member of the EU since its extension in 2004, and Ukraine is still an EU fringe country with enormous economic problems. Nevertheless, it can be said that in both countries labor migration has had a long tradition since the nineteenth century. After World War II, the prototype of East–West migration was established by refugees from the socialist bloc who left without any chance of returning, while seasonal and short-term labor migration occurred only inside the socialist bloc. Following the liberalization of border regimes after 1989, this pattern changed significantly; transnational labor migration is now the dominant form of migration. This means that migrants no longer take their families with them to the places where they work. Instead, they commute at intervals ranging from one week to several months while their families stay behind. Another new phenomenon is that of "feminized migration," which can be observed primarily in domestic and care work (Lutz 2011). In parallel with this development, Poland and Ukraine, like many other countries in Eastern Europe, have undergone an economic transformation that resulted in high unemployment that affected women more than men (Kałwa 2007, 208–9; van Klaveren et al. 2010). Thus, since the 1990s, more and more Polish female migrants have been working in households in Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Notwithstanding the tightened migration regime against Ukrainians following the Polish EU accession, the geographical proximity makes Poland an attractive destination for Ukrainian women. Out of all Polish middle-class households that employ domestic workers, 10 percent employ migrants; among those migrants, Ukrainian women make up the largest group (Golinowska 2004, 186). Poland and Western Ukraine

also share a common history and are connected by social and cultural ties. Next to Poland, Southern European countries such as Italy, Portugal, and Spain have become important receiving countries over the last ten years.[1]

While high (compulsory) labor market participation of women in the Eastern bloc, partly cushioned by state-run care facilities, was the normal state of affairs during the earlier period, this did not mean that gender roles were totally different from those in non-communist countries. Rather, the gendered division of labor in the family followed the traditional asymmetrical pattern within which women performed almost all care work; the latter was often divided between women active in the labor market and members of the older, retired generation (Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007, 356). When in the post-socialist period of neo-liberal state reconstruction, the state's investment in offering child and elderly care institutions was reduced and "the market" took over, families and society as a whole fell back on a cultural pattern which had only partly been replaced during communism. At the same time as system transition was occurring in Eastern Europe, Western and Southern European countries plus the EU as a whole (likewise all OECD countries) were promoting the intensification of women's admission into waged work. In particular, the departure of "mothers" from the labor market was branded by economists as resource destruction of female human capital (OECD 2001, 129). This means that paid employment and not care work is deemed to be the central mode of social participation. The universalization of labor market participation in an "adult-worker-society" (Lewis 2004) is now being advocated. All employable adults—men and women—are considered to be individualized market subjects, as "autonomous worker-citizens" (Manske 2005). Summing up these two developments, it can be said that at the end of the twentieth century Eastern Europe and Western and Southern Europe—despite their very different histories—arrived at a nexus in which labor market participation was seen as an adult citizen's duty, while states were not or no longer prepared to deliver the necessary support for the balance of waged and care work. Lister (2003) has convincingly demonstrated the tension between citizenship obligations that are gendered: while men are expected to fulfill their duty as "citizen the- wage-earner," women, in particular mothers, must perform as "citizen-the carer"—independent of the welfare regime, the former seems to be privileged over the latter (Lister 2003, 176).

These two analytical insights taken together demonstrate that women in most parts of Europe nowadays are expected to perform waged work; but while middle class women in the West and South

of Europe purchase the support they need if other care facilities are absent, women in the migrant sending countries continue to perform their "duty" as wage earners but can no longer combine this with their care obligations.

Characteristics of Care Arrangements and Their Consequences

Addressing the question of how care substitution is organized in the sending context of the migrants, we can identify patterns of care arrangements. We draw on exemplary case studies (for more details on the method, see Lutz 2011) from interviews—twenty-two biographical interviews with female migrant domestic workers and forty-one in-depth interviews with spouses, grandmothers, children, and friends in Poland and the Ukraine. Omitting the cases of two migrants whose family members did not agree to participate in the study, we were able to collect and analyze data from nine transnational family constellations in the Polish and eleven in the Ukrainian sample. In our sampling procedure, we initially looked for female domestic workers with care obligations toward children or elderly (mostly in sending countries). Following the principle of theoretical sampling, we then selected cases in order to obtain a maximum variation of relevant care constellations (e.g., various types of parenthood, unpaid versus paid support networks, etc.). We reconstructed both typical and extreme care arrangements which allowed us to generate an array of exemplary case studies.

We have identified the following *care patterns*: (a) fathers left behind; (b) grandmothers; (c) female friends, family members, and caring children; (d) skype mothering; (e) significant carers.

Our first focus is on fathers and whether or not they take over the role of the caring mother while the women are abroad.

Fathers Left Behind

Among fathers we can identify the following patterns: (i) care-sharing, (ii) withdrawal from caring, and (iii) caring as a single father.

Care sharing is practiced by the majority of the interviewed fathers; they share care work with other relatives, mostly with grandmothers, and are involved in the care of children. In fact, their care obligations often do not change radically after their wives leave, because grandmothers and other relatives are considered the suitable female replacement for the migrant mother. The second type of fathers withdraw from care and are de facto absent, due to job obligations or because they are separated from the child.[2] Caring as a single father is the third pattern. We can assume that this

single-father care arrangement is the least widespread, as we had one case in each national sample (for more details on fathers as carers, see Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2011).

This overview of father-related child care arrangements shows that, in two-parent families with a migrant mother, fathers to a large extent leave or delegate child care to female relatives, particularly to grandmothers. By doing this, they adopt a strategy of sharing care work with female persons in the immediate social environment or of transferring the entire care-work duties on them.

Regarding how single-fathering looks in actual practice, our study revealed that, across all identified types caring, fathers experience a great deal of difficulty caused by a lack of (emotional) care competencies or insufficiencies. One of the interviewed fathers said that when confronted with his son's crying, he became very upset that his son was such a "sissy" (sic). Asked how he usually reacted to this situation, he responded:

> I just closed the door to be alone or went out to smoke a cigarette or something like that. But when he still wouldn't stop, I also gave him a smack . . . and be done with it.

This reaction is well known from various debates about traditional male upbringing; it shows that fathers who learned how to suppress tears as signs of helplessness transfer this pattern to the next generation by disciplining their sons. Current research on fathering reveals that there is no such thing as a uniform "male upbringing," but that fathering is always dependent on its social and historical context as well as on factors such as age, income, class, ethnicity, and individual biographical experience (Edwards, Doucet, and Furstenberg 2009). However, studies on the topic show that while "male" characteristics in education—including a habit of physical and emotional independence, willingness to take risks, and a preference for games and sports—may appear in many variations, they nevertheless always play a role cutting across all differences of class, ethnicity, and age (Doucet 2010, 2006; Duncan and Edwards 1999).

Examples in our research indicate the fathers' awareness that they are supposed to replace the absent mother, but many feel at a loss and have few resources and coping strategies at hand.

Based on our analysis, we argue that gender norms, in this case traditional perceptions of gendered coping strategies, care competencies, and responsibilities, are extremely pervasive and do not change automatically by the power of the factual. The role reversal in the form of a "mothering father" simply does not occur "naturally" when the mother becomes the breadwinner of the family. Interestingly, the question of role reversal has hardly ever been

discussed in the case of male migration; in many countries, absent fathers seem to be perceived as "natural" or more acceptable than absent mothers. Migration studies started to speak about the fragmentation of the family as a problem only when mothers started to migrate in larger numbers.

Concerning care replacement by fathers, one of the most important aspects to be further interrogated is the phenomenon of a "crisis of masculine identity." When fathers lose their breadwinner or principal earner function, they have little to gain by taking over the role of the caring mother because that is linked to a loss of status rather than to a gain in social prestige, a development which applies, in spite of many differences, to the cultural coding of both sending societies and receiving ones. Connecting our findings to Lister's statement that "citizen the-wage-earner" is privileged above "citizen the-carer," it needs to be said that the privilege seems to be reserved for male wage earners and does not hold for breadwinning women (see also "Public discourses on migration and "abandoned" children in Poland and Ukraine" section).

Grandmothers

In most of the families in our research, female persons act as "foster mothers" for the children. Grandmothers are the most important group of carers and act as "supervisors" for young fathers who are also being "looked after." Next to gendered norms, the important role of grandmothers must be seen against the backdrop of care regimes in Eastern Europe. As a result of a *deterioration of public care facilities* in the transformation period since 1989, this has become very family oriented (Wóycicka and Rurarz 2007). Family orientation goes hand in hand with the high unemployment rate for older women and a large proportion of men and women who have retired early in Poland (Sztanderska and Grotkowska 2007, 138).

Our study shows grandmothers as very devoted carers, and the most reliable ones for mothers abroad. As already mentioned, historically this is not new, but in a certain way a continuation of their role during socialism; supporting their wage-earning daughters (in law) in their family responsibilities. New, however, is the fact that in the absence of their daughters they take on the principle care responsibility which renders them relevant for the well-being of their grandchildren. Some of our interviewees mentioned intergenerational communication problems, especially in cases where they have to deal with teenage children, and that they feel at a loss when it comes to supporting schoolchildren with any problems they are encountering at school.

Female Friends, Relatives, and Caring Children

In a few of the interviewed families, female friends of the mother or other relatives acted as care substitutes. However, due to the carers' own family obligations, these situations were often experienced as unstable. The substitute carers often reported exhaustion and stress from too many responsibilities, in particular authority problems with teenage children and the lack of legitimation for their intervention when children would just tell them: you are not my mother/father. Apart from fostering on a regular basis, we found some friends and neighbors who help regularly or occasionally in emergency situations in various paid or unpaid forms: assisting with homework and caring for elderly people.

Moreover, there were many cases in which siblings cared for each other, at least for some periods of time. In these cases, the parent–child hierarchy is absent or at least blurred and children, mostly teenagers, need to cope with their roles as "substitute parents." They have to manage educational and financial issues, and this results in a lack of time for themselves.

Intermediate Conclusion

As an intermediate finding, one could easily come to the conclusion that the absence of migrating mothers from their families has immense negative repercussions and can only lead to the traumatization of children. However, this kind of naturalization of the caring tasks as the principle responsibility of biological mothers needs to be questioned. Mothering can take different forms, such as *caring about* and *caring for* children, among which being a physically present mother is one and transnational mothering is another possible pattern (for an overview, see Lutz 2007, 125–7). The latter, also called "mothering from a distance," is a new form of caring which emerges where migrant mothers and their children are physically separated (see also Zentgraf and Chinchilla 2008, 325). We will first focus on mothers' management of "doing" family from a distance.

Skype Mothering

Mothering from a distance appears to be a sensitive combination and coordination of absence and proximity, the quality of contact, and the management of emotions. One tool for this is the new information technology. Due to the low costs of international calls via telephone or the internet (for example using the Skype server) for Polish domestic workers in Germany, communication with their family on a daily basis has become normal. Mothers talk at length to their children, mothers, and husbands discuss issues of everyday

life. This frequent and unlimited contact in virtual space has changed the quality of transnational motherhood considerably. Mothers seem to be always up to date on what is happening at home, and children (can) talk to their mothers whenever they want. Family members can express their feelings in spite of spatial separation; for instance, some interviewed couples and children regularly send "signs of love" to each other by mobile telephone. One woman texts her husband every evening, so that he knows she has arrived home safely; a mother texts her daughter every morning to say "I am thinking about you."

A further development of this type of communication is low-priced software for internet communication, where all members of the family need to be in possession of computers and webcams. We have also interviewed mothers who supervise their children's homework by Skyping.

Although families seem to become socialized in telephone conversation, it needs to be mentioned that such long-distance contacts have their limitations. Even though phone calls are frequent and both sides get used to them, none of the interviewed persons, be they mothers, fathers, grandmothers, or children, perceive these virtual contacts as an equivalent of physical presence. For very small children, the phone is not an option, and for more introverted children who are simply poor telephone talkers contact via the internet or telephone can be very difficult. Moreover, long-distance virtual contact allows people to hide their feelings or to play an artificial role; children can learn not to bother their mother with bad news from school or about the family's relations, and children as well as grownups can camouflage their sorrows in order not to disturb one another. Thus the quality of telephone contact can vary, and it is not always perceived as a substitute for physical presence (for more on the limits of virtual relationships, using the example of Filipina transnational mothers, see Madianou and Miller 2011).

Finally, frequent communication by telephone is not an option granted to all migrant domestic workers: German and Polish employers may feel disturbed by hearing their carers speaking in a language they cannot understand, and ban their carers from calling at all or at certain times. Some employers were not familiar with cheap international call rates, and did not see frequent phone calls to Poland as justified. For Ukrainians working in Poland, contact by telephone is generally more limited because of high telephone costs between Poland and Ukraine or because people have no telephone at all in Ukraine, especially in the rural regions.

The Significant Carer

As earlier research has demonstrated (see Lutz 2007, 2011) transnational mothers moving from Eastern to Western and between East European states prefer a three-month rotation system which involves organizing a replacement carer for their employers and enables them to return to their families at regular intervals. Many mothers in our sample have arranged their work and family life according to this pattern. It implies that mothers have to find a balance regarding the frequency and quality of their presence, as well as their replacement during their absence.

In this sense, being a mother means managing their role as a "significant carer," finding someone to be responsible for task assignment and budget control during their absence.

Migrant women's personal visits home (must) become an event in the lives of their families.

Here, Ukrainian migration to Poland and Polish migration to Germany are comparable with regard to the short distances between the pairs of countries and the relatively liberal political migration regimes, two factors which make frequent trips home possible. Migrant mothers with young children try to commute back and forth every four to six weeks, and usually stay at home for several weeks. This direct contact makes their involvement in family life quite different from that of Mexican or Filipino migrant parents, who can only see their families every few years due to the long distances and high costs of traveling. In our interviews in Ukraine, the implications of short-term versus long-term migration were discussed by the interviewees. While commuting to the neighboring country, Poland, is relatively easy even though salaries are low, working in target countries like Italy, Portugal, and Spain involves long hours and days of travel. Therefore, migrants' trips to Italy are perceived as "absent" or "lost" for their families as commuters, while migrants traveling to Poland are closer and can maintain ties to the family by regular visits.

During their visits back home, mothers usually cannot enjoy leisure time but take care of neglected household tasks and compensate their absence from the children.

In spite of many difficulties in transnational care arrangements, on the positive list of care constellations we found many well-functioning care arrangements. These are characterized by a perfect organization of the child's everyday life, by accompanying the children at important moments of their life (e.g., their first or special days at school), ensuring physical tenderness from other carers when needed, regular contact with children in everyday life, but also by

teaching self-reliance, and avoiding the expression of empathy for the "motherless child" which is characteristic for many grandmothers.

Public Discourses on Migration and "Abandoned" Children in Poland and Ukraine[3]

The increase in female labor migration from Ukraine and Poland caused strong media interest in and public debates on the absence of parents, in particular mothers, throughout our period of investigation. Our study therefore revealed a conspicuous contradiction between the everyday normality of migrants and their family and its scandalization in public discourse.

We identified several discursive threads in the Polish and the Ukrainian press on the subject of children left behind. Noticeably, until 2008 the repercussions of labor migration for families left behind were not an issue in the press at all.[4] Starting in 2008, public national discourses switched from relative silence to a very lively interest in children of labor migrants.

One discursive figuration that turned up and had a huge impact was the term "Euro-orphan"—a child without parents, or of parents who have left their country for "Europe," a child left behind to the care of foreigners, a victim of the parents' hunger for euros. Thus, *Euro-orphan* has strongly pejorative and normative implications, identifying the children of labor migrants as virtual orphans. The term quickly developed into a buzzword which was used in virtually all press articles, but also in scholarly reports by NGOs (e.g., Mikuła 2008, 3), without being clearly defined or critically reflected. It is applied to the situation of children of labor migrants, most of whom live with at least one parent or carer in Poland, and has been picked up by scholars, for example a university teacher who claimed in an interview that children living with only one parent behave like orphans (*Dziennik.pl* 27 March 2008). The prefix "Euro" has to be seen against the background of other discourses on labor migration from Poland after the country became a member of the EU in 2004. Terms like *Euro-migrants* and *Euro-labor* relate to the phenomenon of labor migration from Poland to other EU countries, especially the UK and Ireland, and have been used in the press since 2003–04.

In Ukraine, the regional press in the western part of the country, which is strongly affected by female labor migration, coined the corresponding term "social orphans" as early as 2005. This term originates from the discourses on social poverty, street children, and abandoned children, who are often referred to as "social orphans." This figuration received its strength from scandal stories according

to which parents migrating to "Europe" had left their children in the custody of children's homes. The press uses so-called statistical references for emphasis in this debate: most articles mention large numbers and suggest that they can be seen as indicators for an as yet undiscovered and underestimated mass phenomenon. In Poland, the question of "how to count Euro-orphans" dominated the discourse in 2008. In Ukraine, the figure of 7.5 to 9 million children left behind has been circulating. In an effort to trace the source of these numbers, we found a survey which estimated the number of Ukrainians working abroad at seven million, of whom only 6 percent are said to be childless (*LG*, 5 July 2006). Polish sources mention one hundred and ten thousand *Euro-orphans*; however, the only quantitative study by Walczak (2008, 32) concludes that three thousand to six thousand children aged nine to eighteen years live apart from both parents for more than one year. In summary, the figures circulating in the media of both countries cannot be considered the result of serious journalism; rather, they serve the scandalization of the problem as a whole.

An analysis of the "orphan" debate in the context of competing discourses in Poland and Ukraine reveals that it counteracts earlier success stories of migration to Europe, which tended to minimize or ignore social costs altogether. In 2004, when Poles could legally access some Western European labor markets for the first time, labor migration was framed as "liberating" for both the state and individuals; it was welcomed as a solution to unemployment and poverty, especially in the context of cuts in public expenditure on the welfare state. In contrast, in the current debate, the targets being blamed, primarily women, are seen as being responsible for the neglect of their children. As Zimmer (2007, 3–4) confirms that this underlines a trend of unequal perception of gender roles in the Ukraine. While labor migration of an estimated one to three million Ukrainian men to Russia was/is regarded as "normal," the fact that one million women are migrating to the West now is portrayed as an anomaly (cf. Shostak 2006). While male migration to Russia has a long history and was always considered a male preserve, the predominantly female migration from Western Ukraine is a hot topic in particular in the regional press (*Lvivskaja Gazeta*), but not in the nationwide press (*Fakty i Kommentary, Ukraina Moloda*, *15 Min*). In contrast, male migration from Eastern and Central Ukraine to Russia gets more attention in the nationwide media, without being scandalized as a loss of caring resources. In Poland, similarly, the long tradition of male labor migration has never been questioned in terms of its negative consequences for the family; this is confirmed by our analysis of the regional press in Upper Silesia, the region with

the highest net labor emigration from Poland, mainly by men. Interestingly, at first sight, the nationwide discourse also appears to blame the absence of both parents; however, when one looks more closely it turns out that concrete examples always scandalize the absence of mothers, not fathers. Thus, the migration of women (as mothers, wives, daughters-in-law, etc.) is seen as more problematic than that of men. In an extreme version of this picture, migrant women are *suspicious*, and former Ukrainian president Kuchma's equation of women migrants with *prostitute*s exemplifies this particularly well.

The repercussions of this debate were echoed in our interviews with Polish and Ukrainian women migrants and other family members: women felt the urge to justify their migration decision by referring to their balancing of their responsibilities as mothers, wives, and daughters-in-law.

Comparing the negative representation of migrant mothers in public discourse to the observation of practices in transnational families makes clear the limitations of economic and social citizenship rights (i.e., their economic and social participation) for female migrants. While during socialism, the mothers' obligation to work went hand in hand with their care responsibilities, currently there is no substantial support from the state in terms of childcare facilities to reconcile transnational work and family life. In Poland this became apparent during the heated discussion about whether migrant children were entitled to placement in day-care. As the number of these care facilities is insufficient, single parents are now privileged when applying because they are considered to have a justified claim to preferential treatment. In contrast, single parents in migrant families are considered fragmented "on their free choice and should bear the consequences of their decisions"—as the head of one kindergarten stated (*Gazeta Wyborcza,* 11 April 2009).

In summary, there is a contradiction between two tendencies in the sending countries. Unlike in many other European welfare states that promote the citizen as adult worker model and tend to conceive of women's participation in the labor market as a "civic duty" (Lister et al. 2007; Lutz 2010), an ideological and institutional *re-familialization* is typical for many post-socialist countries—care responsibilities are being "privatized" and shifted back to families (Szelewa and Polakowski 2008), a fact that complicates the reconciliation of working and caring. On the other hand, governments and labor markets in the those countries are unable to provide families with just one adult worker with the necessary income that would allow one parent to stay at home full time. As a result, a de facto adult-worker model is imposed that flies in the face of the culturally

engrained and politically promoted traditional distribution of roles within families; and it is working (and especially, migrant) women that are bearing the brunt of the blame for the problems that arise from this contradiction.

Finally, in addition to the tensions between policies and the reality of family lives, we see public debates counteracting transnational families experience in every day life—as described in the previous section. Indeed, these care arrangements are often very challenging for all family members, especially women; yet, these practices and relations are far from the pathological family relations and neglectful motherhood as described in sections of the media. Instead, this perception is shaped more by ideological battles regarding migrant families than by those families' own experiences.

EU and Non-EU Migration Regimes and How Citizenship Matters

By comparing the two case studies of Ukrainian–Polish and Polish–German care work migration, we can see how the global economy of care is embedded in (supra)national migration and employment regimes, and how this results in different positions of migrant care workers as citizens vis-a-vis sending and receiving countries.

In terms of *legal/political* citizenship, we are dealing here with cases of mobility of both EU and non-EU citizens. In the case of Polish care workers in Germany, free movement is (partially) guaranteed by EU law, while Ukrainians coming to Poland constitute a case of "external migration." Being subject to different legal frameworks does have a significant impact on the lives and labor conditions of migrant workers. However, actual labor migration policies are still shaped more by individual member states than by any common EU policy. For instance, although Germany and Poland are both EU and Schengen Zone members, the German labor market remained closed for Polish workers until 2011 (data for this study were collected in 2007–09); at the same time, although the Polish–Ukrainian border is now part of the EU's otherwise heavily guarded external border, in 2007 Poland deregulated access to its labor market for Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Russians in response to an overall westward workforce drain. Only recently (as of 2011) have Polish citizens come to enjoy the EU's freedom of movement for (employed) *workers* on the German labor market; previously, they could only make use of the freedom of movement for *services* and offer themselves on the German labor market as self-employed

service providers or as employees of companies whose seat is in Poland.

As a result, after 2004 privately organized informal networks were complemented by commercial agencies placing East European care workers in Germany, Austria, and Great Britain. These agencies play a key role in the new *semi-legal* employment forms for domestic workers from the A8 countries. The number of international and bi-national employment agencies brokering the placement of domestic workers has rocketed in recent years.[5] However, the practice was and is legally controversial as working for one client is considered bogus self-employment (Dollinger 2008). Despite this partial legalization, most Polish migrant care workers remain undocumented (Neuhaus, Isfort, and Weidner 2009) or "switch" between documented and undocumented status when necessary.[6] The issue of irregular employment in domestic/care work, regardless of whether the workers are migrants or not, is on the political agenda in most countries. Confined to private homes, this work is hard to police as long as the state respects the private sphere as exempt from investigation. Some researchers argue that legalization and regularization would make the work less profitable for employers and—at least in the short term and on an individual level—workers alike (Geissler 2006). Several countries have made attempts at regularization of (migrant) domestic work, among them France (Scrinzi 2010), Austria (Schmid 2009), and Germany, which has initiated a recruitment program for East European care workers (Karakayali 2010). The experience of these attempts shows that even regularly (self-) employed care workers face precarious work conditions which do not differ greatly from those of undocumented workers. In summary, as EU citizens, Polish care workers in Germany have a greater scope of action than Ukrainian workers in Poland, but for the reasons mentioned their status and working conditions as undocumented migrants are similar to those of Ukrainians in Poland. After Germany's opening of the labor market for Polish employees in 2011, for the reasons outlined above, a large-scale regularization in this sector is not expected.

In the receiving countries, next to families purchasing care work, there is another actor that profits from the cheap and flexible care workforce: by restricting migration to forms that will bring immediate economic benefit, temporary migration is made attractive because reproduction costs, social risks, and the responsibility for investing in human capital are shifted from the receiving to the sending countries and from society as a whole to the individual: with the "burden" of a dependent family left behind, migrant women are welcome as flexible workers. Although EU regulations

theoretically offer the possibility of family reunion, in practice a more long-term social and cultural inclusion of migrant care workers and their families is not provided for in this model (for example, posted workers are not included in the social insurance system of the receiving member states). Many EU member states, like Germany, pursue a very restrictive migration policy toward third-country national care workers as an occupational group, even though they rely heavily on the undocumented workforce. The result of these contradictory attitudes is that migrant care work is officially combated, but tacitly tolerated, a phenomenon we called "complicity" elsewhere (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2010). Also, as argued in the previous section, the sending countries are among those who benefit economically from the current situation. The public debates in the sending countries show clearly that their governments and opinion leaders openly support the labor migration of their citizens because it helps save public costs (unemployment benefits, etc.) and because of the remittances sent back by labor migrants.

To sum up, the cases of both EU and non-EU care work migration show that the legal status and social rights of domestic migrant workers are rather precarious in the receiving countries. Due to their mostly illegal or semi-legal employment, migrants and their families lack social benefits (health care, etc.) and family rights (e.g., family unification). Moreover, the migrant workers' social and reproductive citizenship rights are safeguarded neither in the receiving nor in the sending countries.

Taking the feminist perspective of gendered citizenship (Lister 2003) into account in the transnational context, which means considering working and care obligations in both sending and receiving countries, we come to a rather pessimistic conclusion regarding the prospects for an improvement of citizenship rights in European care chains. Given the continued socio-economic divergences between EU countries and the EU's support for the adult worker model (Lister et al. 2007, 68), in which the duty to work often overrides the right to care, we expect that global care chains will continue to result in inequalities between families and states, not only on a global scale but also inside the EU and at its rims. For the women involved, it will be a continuous struggle to combine their obligations and rights concerning citizenship and performing motherhood (see Erel 2011).

Conclusions

In our study, we found mainly unpaid care arrangements which are the domain of female relatives and, primarily, grandmothers. However, the care-replacers back home benefit from the remittances

sent to them. We have not found a single case where migrant mothers employ another migrant as a replacement; our finding is that the first choice for care replacers is another family member. Moreover, we can show that the migrant domestic work phenomenon is clearly a middle-class phenomenon in receiving *and* sending countries. Employers are members of the middle class, and so are many carers who try to keep their middle-class status and lifestyle intact by working abroad.

The study also shows clearly that the specificities of transnational care arrangements are very important: the quality of care and emotional work done by carers back home, the transnational contact with the mother, and her care management from a distance.

The gendered citizenship perspective, including family rights, surprisingly shows more similarities than differences between the cases of EU and non-EU migration. We have seen that migrant families in both sending and receiving countries suffer from a lack of support. The sending countries see their emigrants as investors in their national economies. The social costs of migration, however, are to be covered by individuals; the same goes for the receiving countries.

As currently in the EU the reconciliation of work and family life is described as a key policy to achieve gender equality in the labor market in all member states, Poland is now obliged to improve its standing in this respect (Plomien 2009). In the long run, this may help migrating parents from Poland, but only if mothers' migration is no longer scandalized as bad motherhood and fathers' obligations as "citizen—the carer" are emphasized.

Finally, we are convinced that the crucial criticism of the care chain concept will remain valid: families and countries at one end of the care chain continue to have better opportunities to reconcile their work and family life than migrant care workers and their families at the other end of the care chain.

NOTES

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1. According to IOM data (2008), there are four hundred and fifty thousand (male and female) migrants in Poland, five hundred thousand in Italy, two hundred and fifty thousand in Spain, and seventy-five thousand in Portugal.

2. Another category of absenteeism is also visible in the single parent families with a single migrant mother (due to divorce, separation, or death of the father). According to quantitative data, single parent families amount to about 10 percent of all migrant families (see Walczak 2008, 6).

3. The analysis of media discourse on migration, transnational parenting, and care in Poland and Ukraine was based on 181 articles from Polish newspapers and 559 articles from the Ukrainian press that appeared over a period of ten years (1997–2007/2008). For Poland, we selected the national papers *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*, the yellow press *Super Express*, and the regional *Nowa Trybuna Opolska*. For Ukraine, we selected the national papers *Fakty i Kommentary* and *Ukraina Moloda*, the regional *Lvivskaja Gazeta* and the free *15 Minut*.

4. On a national level, two events gave rise to intense discussions on children left behind in 2008.

In Ukraine, a survey of children of labour migrants initiated by the NGO "La Strada – Ukraine" (International Women's Rights Centre) was published in 2007, and a literary competition entitled "Migrants' children on themselves, life in the Ukraine and abroad. Dreams and wishes" was launched in early 2008. NGOs like "Open Ukraine" and politicians then put this topic on the agenda (the president's wife represents one of the NGOs involved, "Ukraine 3000″).

5. In 2007, we counted twenty-eight agencies on the internet, in 2008 sixty-five agencies, and in 2010 we identified 115 agencies.

6. For example, to avoid high taxes or social security contributions.

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