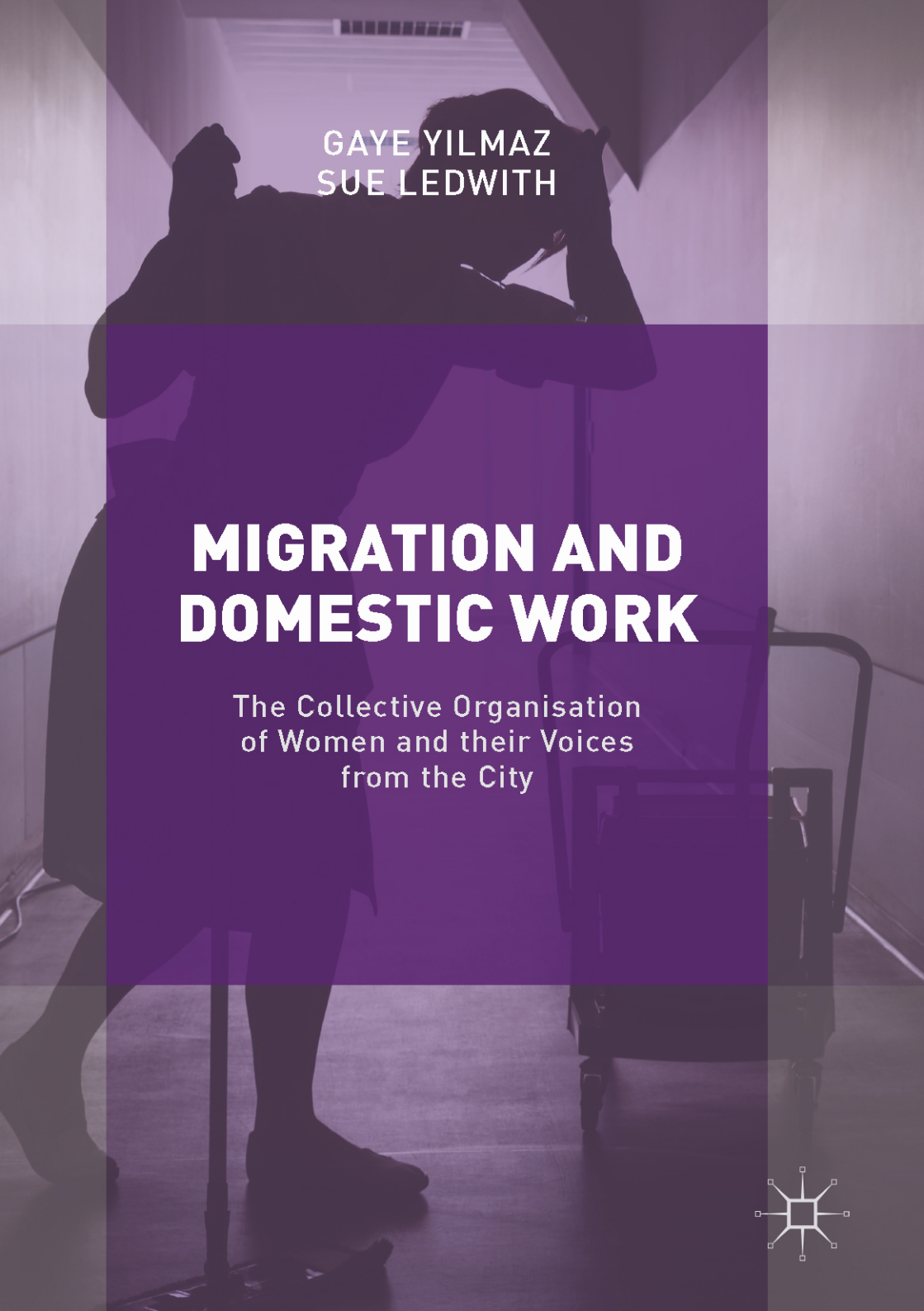

GAYE YILMAZ
SUE LEDWITH

MIGRATION AND DOMESTIC WORK

The Collective Organisation of Women and their Voices from the City

Migration and Domestic Work

Gaye Yilmaz • Sue Ledwith

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The Collective Organisation of Women and their Voices from the City

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Preface

The idea for the research trajectory of this book came from Gaye Yilmaz' experiences of being a citizen of and living in an ostensibly secular country, Turkey. As an atheist herself, a feminist and from a Kurdish background, as her country moved further towards becoming an Islamist state under the government of AKP, she increasingly questioned the pressures on women of the progressive convergence of religious and patriarchal codes, and how for some groups, especially Kurds, Turkey was again becoming a difficult place in which to live. Long interested in questions of migration and women, Gaye then undertook the interviews in the three cities which make up this book, starting in her home city of Istanbul in 2012. She had worked with Sue Ledwith in the Global Labour University's Gender and Trade Unions Research Group, and their shared interest in gender issues in labour movements brought them to write this book together.

The research was carried out before the current and intense period we find ourselves writing about, including the failed coup by an Islamic sect (Gulenists) in Turkey in July 2016. The huge flow into Western Europe, including Turkey, of refugees from conflict and war, mainly in Syria, but also in Iraq, Afghanistan and African countries, must have impacted the lives of the women Gaye interviewed, but we do not know how. They were telling their stories in a more stable period – if any migrant can call their lives stable. But it is likely that they would not have been

untouched by these events and the intensified rise of racism, misogyny and homophobia and nationalist xenophobia in the UK and across Europe, which has also been aggravated by the 2016 British referendum vote to leave the European Union.

So this book is dedicated to the women migrants in this study with the wish for them to realise their dreams.

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2016.

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Thank you from both of us to the trade union activists and officers who we interviewed in Istanbul, Berlin and London.

Finally, thanks to our husbands, Selim and Peter.

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Migrating Women and Domestic Work: Starting Our Exploration

Introduction

Who are women who migrate, and why do they do so? – dreams of a better life or better education, to improve chances for their children, to escape from wars, for individual freedoms? Where do they go and what work do they do? What identities, beliefs and values do they carry with them? How do migrating women both adapt to and re-shape their new situation along with its gendered social and power relations? What choices do they have and to what extent are they able to extend agency and choice through organising collectively? With migration and movements of people as possibly the biggest issue in the modern world these are important questions. In this book we explore these questions through interviews with 120 women migrants working as domestic carers and cleaners in three cities: London, Berlin and Istanbul.

Women now make up almost half of migrant workers worldwide and the overwhelming majority of those are employed in the ever-growing field of domestic and care work. Yet these women are often difficult to access, and reflecting their subordinate social position, the

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detail of their lives, beliefs, hopes and fears are under-researched. Here we aim to redress the balance through the narratives of migrant women domestic workers themselves and to explore issues not often addressed in such research. We are especially interested in the role of religion and its relationship with patriarchy and family in the lives of women, both before and after migration, in the privacy of the household and in the public sphere of paid work. These questions are explored with the women in the research, and also frame the prospects for and the propensity of the women to organise collectively through trade unions and/or community organising.

Women such as those in this study are often invisible as migrants, in official statistics, and in research studies where they tend to appear as groups or categories of migrant workers, rather than as women with individual and many layered identities. Their distinctive voices are rarely heard, but regardless of their legal or social status, the women nevertheless are active agents. In this book we aim to put right some of these wrongs and present the voices of migrant women domestic workers through analysis which foregrounds their own stories.

We focus especially but not exclusively on Kurdish and Muslim women, for a number of reasons. First, Gaye Yilmaz, the principal researcher is herself Turkish with Kurdish links and is also especially interested in examining the role of religion, particularly Islam, in the identities and lives of women who migrate. The cultural codes of religion and patriarchy are powerful influences on identity, beliefs and behaviour, yet are a little explored aspect of such research, especially among Kurdish women, partly because of the absence of their voices in other studies of migrants (Holgate et al. 2012). Another factor is that Turkey is not a member of the European Union (EU) although in the recent past it has aspired to be, and at the time of writing, has a fractious relationship with the EU. We are thus interested in how migrant women care workers fare in Turkey compared with the UK and Germany and how their situations might change should they ever find themselves in an EU country. This research was conceived and carried out before the 2016 UK referendum resulting in 'Brexit', which although is not a consideration here will undoubtedly have had some impact on these women.

These parameters provide the context within which to interrogate and compare similarities and differences among and between the women in the study on a number of axes and themes, and in our discussions we draw on intersecting regimes to frame our study. Following Esping-Andersen (1990), we use the term regime to mean the organisation and corresponding cultural codes of social practice in which the relationship between the social actors is articulated and negotiated. We find that two dominate; regimes of gender (cultural and structural) and regimes of migration (structural and cultural), which in turn are inflected through and with other regimes, especially religion and patriarchy.

In the three cities 120 women of 28 national identities were interviewed and their narratives offer rich data across three broad areas:

1. Women's motivations to migrate, and differences and similarities with their home country situation in relation to their often multiple identities, their roles in relation to family, their beliefs in relation to religion and cultural codes and their political and gender consciousness
2. Women's material position as migrant workers, their employment situation, type of paid work, opportunities and action in improving/changing their material position and their class position as migrant workers compared with their class position in their home country
3. Women's collectivism and forms of organising as members of communities, such as religious, national, class, which may overlap, and as members or aspiring members of organised trade unions.

Our analytical approach is one of intersectionality, and we aim to use it to avoid debating the lives of women migrant domestic workers in terms of discrete categories, but rather through a series of trajectories of their lives as told in their stories and recounted throughout the book. In these narratives there were certainties, uncertainties, positives and negatives, joy and despair although these were not binary, but simultaneous, and interlinked. So were their class, sexuality, religion, and ethnicity and race, which were all intrinsic to their lives as migrants in their new countries.

Migration Models and Theories

Movement of people is a key phenomenon of the early twenty-first century, encouraged by economic magnets of better work and lives, as well as being driven by the devastation of terror, war, conflict and climatic disaster.

Migration is unstable and precarious for both host and migrant, and migrants might well find themselves assigned to a very different category of person today from that of yesterday, and from their own identity of self. Transnational migration is now global, and migrants have become key in labour forces worldwide (McDowell 2013: 6).

In all three countries in the study, there have been years, decades, centuries of migration, leading to generations settled in their country of final arrival. This has been especially the case in Britain with its history of colonialism and post-colonial settlers. In the second half of the twentieth century, these were mainly from the Caribbean, the Indian sub-continent and South Asia, and former African colonies, and were economic migrants, deliberately sought to help reconstruct post-war Britain and its developing welfare state and public services (McDowell 2013). Similar but different motives led the West German state to seek migrants to help rebuild the country post-war, especially Italians and Turkish migrants. Migration in Turkey is different yet again, with migration both internal from the rural to the urban, and cross-border mainly from bordering states, including former Soviet states. Half of the migrant women from the study in Turkey were moving into the city (Istanbul) especially from Turkish Kurdish enclaves, while the other half were from bordering countries such as Armenia and Turkmenistan.

'Migration' itself is a slippery concept, continually being re-defined in the modern period of worldwide instability, conflict and inequality, especially by states nervous about the economic impact on their own populations and labour forces, and increasingly, the importing by migration of culture, ideology and religion. The impact of states closing down opportunities through increasingly restrictive legislation also affects existing and settled migrants who may well find themselves re-designated undocumented. In these ways, migrant status as refugee, asylum

seeker, documented, undocumented, legal, illegal tends to be shaped by the response of the receiving country's policies and laws at the time, which are increasingly in flux.

Add in ways in which migrants are ascribed as 'illegal aliens' (Schinkel 2011) and are thus at the mercy of the authorities which may veer from locking them up to granting them legal status, and a migrant's life is very precarious indeed. As Broeders and Engbersen demonstrate in their study, such 'irregular immigration' in Europe can be identified through three criteria: 'legal and illegal entry; legal and illegal residency and legal and illegal employment' (Guiterrez-Rodriguez 2010: 47).

Individuals may begin their migration journey in one category and then fall into another as their work permits expire (McKay et al. 2011). This was the case with some women in our study in Istanbul who under 90-day permits had to exit and re-enter if they wanted to remain legal. Several of them had in fact stayed on illegally and so were undocumented at the time of the research. Another way of regularising their legal status is by marriage, which was a route identified by one of the women in our study in Istanbul.

Theorising about migration is as complex and fast changing as is the status of migrants themselves. However, McKay and colleagues (2011) have usefully surveyed migration theories, and we use their 'set of theories' (op cit: 27) as a framework for our own research. Although these can be identified conceptually as distinct, when it comes to actual analysis, they are difficult to separate, as we can see below.

Models based on migration push and pull are widely discussed in the literature, whereby a combination of disadvantages experienced in the home country push migrants, and presumed advantages in the host country encourage them (McKay et al op cit: 29). These are clearly linked to what has been described as 'survival migration', where migrants' search for basic economic security is a decisive factor regardless of holding valid permits to work or being a resident. The corollary here is that such migrants will tend towards irregular paid work in the underground economy of the receiving country, on the edge of the formal sector (op cit: 31). Here they are at the mercy of employers seeking to push down wages by employing workers who have little

choice but to accept poor pay and conditions establishing and reinforcing their status as precarious workers. Under traditional dual-labour market theory, such migrant workers are used by employers as a variable factor of production where migrant flows in a flourishing underground economy are mainly demand determined (op cit: 32). Not only this but hierarchies of desired workers develop according to ethnicity, race and national background as we found among some of the women in this study who came from African countries and who declared that they were fortunate to be able to work in advanced and democratic states. In such situations migrant women may be more likely to compare their pay and work with the conditions they left behind rather than with those in similar work in their new countries, a situation which makes it less likely they will question or challenge employment systems in their countries of migration.

In such conditions, with limited access to formal institutions and labour markets and limited fluency in the mother tongue of host countries, recently arrived migrants may turn to informal social networks as one of the few options for finding work (Sassen 2006, Vasta 2004 in Gavanas 2010: 15, 16 and 23). Existing communities, ethnic enclaves (Bloch 2013), in the host country provide important social capital to help migrants find accommodation, paid work, childcare, while also maintaining ethnic cultures and religion, although as we discuss later, they are also a source of downward pressure on pay and can be personally stifling and controlling. In turn combinations of push and pull are also linked to models which concentrate on family strategies (op cit: 32) to maximise or at least increase income. This was the case for several of the women in our study who had been obliged to leave home to earn enough to support not only themselves and their immediate family but also the extended family. Such remittances have long been an important part of the economics of migration, and in the case of some women in our study it was also a consequence of their gender role as subordinate to all males in the family. Their human capital was also severely diminished in that some of these women were educated to degree level and above, had worked professionally in their home country, but had had to sacrifice all this when they were obliged to migrate.

In turn, this move away from individual decision-making about migration relates to extensive family, kin and ethnic networks across and between home and the new host country. These days information technology (IT) and e-communication networks are important in sustaining transnational links. Among the women in our study, these operated positively in terms of keeping in touch with children they had to leave behind, but also enabled parents and family to monitor the religious observance of their absent daughters. These continuing bonds may also be the means of future generations' migrations; among the women in our study, there were some who were third generation, yet they still also described themselves as migrants. In these ways migrants may also finds themselves creating new identities straddling both home and away, in a 'culture of migration' (Massey et al. 1994 in McKay et al. 2011: 35). Women in our study who had developed good language skills in their new countries saw themselves as advantaged in relation to both their new neighbours and colleagues in that they were now bi-lingual, and to those at home since they were able to demonstrate superior new skills and proficiencies. All of these factors may also be influential in their decisions about which countries, and cities, they prefer to migrate to, and whether or not they want to stay or go home, as was the case with some of the women in the research.

Women may also achieve increased autonomy by migrating, and even within the same community, the consequences of migration may be different for married and single female migrants (Tienda and Booth 1991). Women are diverse, migrants are diverse, and so are migrant women.

Women and Migration

Previously, being a woman was seen as a barrier to migration unless it was as part of family movement, with the majority of migrant workers in guest worker schemes in northern Europe in the 1950s and 1960s being male, with wives moving for family unification. Now in the twenty-first century female migration has reached the same level as male migration, and further, a large number of women initiate

migration themselves, independently (McKay et al. 2011: 25). Nevertheless, women tend to have fewer opportunities in labour markets than men wherever they are, and occupational gender segregation seems to be firmly reinforced among migrants (McKay et al. 2011). This has seen the emergence of specifically female forms of migration, especially the commercialised migration of domestic workers sometimes labelled as 'the maid trade' (Carling 2005). These are low-income women who are frequently involved in domestic service and commerce. The differences in gender migration also emphasise the divisions in productive and reproductive roles in the household. Women have responsibility for both domestic labour and working for cash income (Chant 1992).

On the demand side of domestic and care work in general, the feminisation of migration is also fuelled by a number of factors such as the increase in women's labour force participation, falling fertility rates, increasing life expectancy, changes in family structure, shortages of public care and the increasing marketisation of care in the global North (Fudge 2010; Parella 2005; Anderson 2000). Today, there is both a growing share of part-time and temporary jobs as well as fewer protections and benefits for growing proportions of the workforce, which becomes increasingly insecure.

Women's motives for migration are both the same but also different from those of men. Gendered cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, and gender-based violence have become strong reasons for women to leave their homelands. So have escape from conflict at one level, and oppressive cultural regimes at another. A search for a better life, for family re-unification is also common. In these, motivations to migrate can be ambivalent; women may leave home because they want the homes and families of their hearts to be sustained, and if this cannot be achieved in their own country, moving elsewhere might work better (Morokvasic 1993 in Lutz 2008). Several women in our study came into this category; few actually wanted to start and establish a new home somewhere else and were pushed to migrate for reasons discussed in Chapter 3.

Gender Regimes in Migrant Domestic Work

Gender regimes of family and household roles can be seen as the engine of gendered cultural scripts and discursive frameworks around family, household and gender regimes of housework, breadwinning and preference for male superiority in these. Motives of women to migrate are frequently interwoven with gender regimes, which are explored in Chapter 3. Gender regimes also underlie our examination of the migrant women's working lives in Chapter 4, which in turn are structured through religious and patriarchal codes that promote and shape the employment of migrant domestic workers in the three countries in the study.

For migrants, identity is central to the making and re-making of self as they move, settle and find employment, as well as reconstructing their personal and family lives. McDowell (2013: 44–45) describes this making of self as a social act involving many shifting layers of ideas and practices by the migrant herself, local natives and the receiving society and the state. Yet women's choices are constrained, and their identities proscribed. Several of the women in our study were highly educated and qualified, but were compelled to migrate to support financially either themselves and/or their wider families. By ending up as domestic workers, they also found themselves downwardly mobile. Being re-designated by class is a significant shift, both materially and through the impact on their new lives as migrant domestic workers.

So, the women in this study were involved in both being assigned identities, and also of re-affirming and re-making their own identities, and these are examined in Chapter 5. Identity can be partly ascribed to religion, and in following this thread, we will see in Chapters 6 and 7 how its associated cultural codes were of central importance, especially at the intersections of patriarchy, gender and family. Feminist scholars generally agree that there is a strong relationship between patriarchy and religion, especially in Islamist countries. El Saadawi (1997) sees women as victims of the patriarchal class system consolidated by politics, religion and social customs (Shihada 2007: 163). She presents a picture

of how poor servant women are employed by upper-class people at shamefully low salaries and who are frequently sexually abused by their masters and sons – the women in our study acknowledged the employment conditions, but not sexual abuse. Saadawi focuses on showing why and how for patriarchy to survive as an institution, it has to be fortified by religion, politics and social customs (in Shihada 2007: 168, 169). Confirming this, in recent times there have been important moves within Christianity, Judaism and Islam to consolidate identity around a defence of 'traditional' roles for men and women, which involve male headship and female domesticity (Woodhead 2013: 64, 65). These cultural-religious issues are rarely addressed in studies of migration and migrants, rather they have become subsumed in normative ideas about the family, labour and domesticity (Moors 2003).

Half of all the women interviewed in this study came from a Muslim background, and much of their testimony confirms the powerful partnership of patriarchy and religion in shaping how they see themselves and their relationships, their behaviour, deference to their husbands/the men in their lives and their beliefs about their own subordinate roles in heterosexual relationships. The other main religion represented among the migrant women was Christianity, also shaped by patriarchal hegemonic masculinity. Reactions by women against religion was strong too, with 20 atheists represented in the study.

At a practical everyday level nevertheless, churches and religious community centres also serve as the places where migrant care workers meet, chat and satisfy their needs to talk with their home-country sisters. This was the case in each of the cities in this research. As well as operating as community centres they also functioned as job centres, as can be seen in both London and Berlin. We explore the efficacy of such ethnic enclaves and communities as sites of collective organising in Chapter 8, and the role and prospects of labour unions in collectivising in Chapter 9.

In the twenty-first-century climate of international terrorism, the implication of fundamentalist religious beliefs in this and the ensuing growth of racism, there has developed a strong argument that religion has become a central category of political mobilisation and that

religious groups are potential vehicles for collective action. As a consequence, some writers have suggested that linking with religious groups is a relevant and useful development in the struggle against racism (Davis and Dhaliwal 2007).

Women and Paid Domestic Work

Worldwide, domestic/care work is the largest employer of women, and women make up the vast majority of such workers. It remains a highly feminised field although a substantial number of men work in the sector – often as gardeners, drivers or butlers. Over 80 per cent of all domestic/care workers are women. We refer to domestic/care work as joint because the two are so closely related that they often become conflated. For example, some of the women in our study described how, although they were employed as carers, this frequently involved cleaning or other domestic tasks. Domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and are among the most vulnerable groups of workers. They work for private households, often without clear terms of employment, unregistered, and excluded from the scope of labour legislation. Currently, there are at least 53 million domestic workers worldwide, not including child domestic workers and this number is increasing steadily in developed and developing countries; 83 per cent of all domestic workers are women, and globally, domestic work accounts for 3.5 per cent of women's employment (ILO 2013).

In the West especially there is a rapacious and unmet demand for such workers to care for children, the disabled and the elderly, as populations change and age. In addition, historical, post-colonial, economic and cultural links often play an important role in migration trajectories of migrant care workers (Tholen 2009; Williams 2012, in Luppi et al. 2015: 16). Paid domestic labour is also attractive to immigrants because it has low barriers to entry and often includes housing. This feminisation of migration, increasingly feeding trajectories from east to west and south to north has become what Lutz (2008: 1) refers to as a gendered global care chain.

Although the work involved is complex, demanding and highly skilled, especially in relation to emotion work, within the traditional gender lens it remains designated as low status, unskilled, typically is in the informal economy, is unregulated and poorly paid (Parella 2005: 148). In Germany, such work is largely regulated by the state, but does not include employment rights, just as in the UK where work in private households is not protected by employment law, so the women have no formal rights. While there are some positive examples of tripartite arrangements between the employer, the care worker and the local trade union or community organisation (Alvarez and Whitefield 2013), usually it is only in trade unionised settings such as public sector and regulated care homes where collective bargaining results in this work being given its proper worth, and even that is often contested. In the unregulated care work sector, collective organising is sporadic and often tentative. Only in 2011 did the International Labour Organisation's (ILO's) convention 189 Decent Work for Domestic Workers, get worldwide recognition, although of the three countries in this study, only Germany had ratified it at the time of writing.

Domestic and care work is rarely socially valued and many (mainly Western Europe) countries do not consider it as valid for the allocation of a residence and work permit. The fact of working in a private household makes it difficult for undocumented women migrants to supply proof of employment and benefit from regularisation schemes (Chammartin 2008: 2). Historically across a diverse range of countries, both developed and developing, women from disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups have tended to provide care and household services to meet the needs of more powerful social groups, while their own care needs have been downplayed and neglected.

Data about domestic workers is problematic, especially since much of it takes place in the informal sector, and it is not unusual to find discrepancies between official estimates and estimates from other sources, such as NGOs (Palriwala and Neetha 2009; ILO 2013: 14). However, some statistical departments have looked further into potential methodological shortcomings of household surveys in recording paid domestic work. Germany, one of three countries in this study, is a good example, where

domestic work is frequently identified as part of the 'shadow economy'. Here, the 2009 labour force survey counted 203,000 persons engaged in 'Activities of households', yet the national accounts section of Germany's federal statistical office supplemented these data with other sources and estimated that some 712,000 persons worked in the same industry (see Korner and Puch 2011, cited by ILO 2013: 15). For these reasons statistical data on domestic workers is neither convincing nor reliable.

So for migrating women this is the labour market in which they find themselves (Kofman 2003: 14, Woodhead 2013). For some of the women in this study, it was a positive choice. In Berlin training was available for care workers, but not in London. For others with, for example, professional qualifications and experience as teachers or scientists, migration became a slide to downward mobility. In addition, the ideal standards of care varies across cultures, leading to carers and care recipients not necessarily sharing the same view as migrant care workers of what 'good care' should look like (Lamura et al. 2013: 4). Work relationships are fraught with such difficulties. Nevertheless, in all of this, domestic care work is a niche market for women since it embodies the main aspects/components of their ascribed domestic role with all its skills and attributes of caring, which are then exported to the labour market as productive labour.

In exploring these issues, chapter by chapter we have set up our analysis using an intersectional approach. While intersectionality is a contested concept, we think by using it as an approach for analysis, it offers a way of examining women's lives both structurally and culturally; categories such as gender and migrant are both structured by and themselves structure migration and co-exist as cultural identities too. How they do so is our task in this book, but first we move on to Chapter 2 to discuss the methodology and methods of the research study.

Summary

In this chapter we have introduced our study and the objectives driving it, together with the context and location of the research in London, Berlin and Istanbul. Our focus is an exploration of aspects of women

migrant domestic workers' lives which have scarcely been addressed in previous research. Key among these is their relationships with religious and patriarchal codes in the private domain of family and the public sphere of paid work, and how these relate to being a woman migrant and a woman migrant domestic worker. We are also interested in the prospects for the women in moving from being individual problem solvers towards collective organising.

To set the scene, in this chapter we have surveyed concepts and realities of women domestic migrants and their work. We have drawn on a range of theories, and started to see how these are linked. In the rest of the chapters we explore these in more detail, including the intersections among them.

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2

Women Migrating to London, Berlin and Istanbul: A Research Study

Introduction

In this chapter we explain how the research was conceived, designed and carried out, exploring the ethical and methodological issues, before presenting the biographical data from our research population as the basis for analysis in the rest of the book.

This study was carried out in the spirit of solidarity with migrant women doing some of the most difficult work there is, domestic care and cleaning. In conceiving the research, Gaye Yilmaz (GY) wanted to help give such women visibility and a voice, and to do so, by exploring with them the contours of their lives in a foreign country, in unfamiliar territory, in a new city. The contours she chose were not the usual ones about migrant workers and citizenship or rights, but focused instead on the role of religion and its relationship with patriarchy and family in the lives of women, at home and at work, both before and after migration, and the possible tensions with their organising collectively. To test these concerns, field research was carried out in three cities; London, Berlin and Istanbul, all recipients of the recent waves of female migrant domestic workers, making the study partially comparative.

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This was feminist and labourist research (Ledwith 2006), with interviews and observations carried out at a number of sites in each city, and in several ways it developed into a project of collaboration with migrant women domestic workers, especially some of the Kurdish women who shared an ethnic and political background with GY. The analysis uses a discovery, interpretative, grounded theory approach. In this, GY was joined by her colleague Sue Ledwith (SL). The two met and worked together at the Global Labour University (GLU) where SL was the academic coordinator of the GLU research group Gender and Trade Unions.[1] As two feminist researchers we come to our work from a particular ontological perspective and epistemological position; as all researchers do even if they espouse neutrality. Our own positionality as researchers, teachers and formerly a journalist have always been feminist/feminist socialist and this has guided our work.

We situate this as being concerned with praxis, the interaction between knowledge and experience and the possibility of change as a result; changed perspectives of those involved in the research with the longer term prospect of political change – liberatory research (Gottfried 1993 in Ledwith 2006: 380).

Methodological Issues and Perspectives

Traditional epistemologies and positivist research paradigms systematically excluded the possibility that women could be knowers, or agents of knowledge; insisting that the voice of science was masculine, that history was written from only the view of men; the subject of a traditional sociological sentence was always assumed to be a man (Stanley 1990). From this 'iron cage' (Morley1994), feminist scholarship and research developed along several trajectories. Feminist empiricism 'added women in', although while providing

[1] See, for example, Akua O. Britwum and Sue Ledwith (Eds.) (2014). 'Visibility and Voice for Union Women: Country case studies from Global Labour University researchers'.

important evidence, it did not address power relations (Maynard and Purvis 1994). Feminist standpoint, however, identified feminist research practice which saw women as actively constructing and interpreting the social processes and social relations which constitute their everyday realities, and as a way of empowering oppressed groups, of valuing their experiences and of pointing towards routes to develop an oppositional consciousness. This was about engaging in the intellectual and political struggle necessary to see nature and social life from the point of view of that 'disdained activity which produces women's social experiences' (Harding 1987: 185). These positionings led us towards qualitative research techniques that allow women to speak for themselves, giving them a voice. This then was a narrative inquiry which served to help understand the experiences of female migrant domestic workers themselves and rather than formulate a logical or scientific explanation regarding their life and work conditions, examined what they themselves were saying in order to construct our analysis. Listening to the women's stories enabled us to elicit what happened, how the women experienced events and how they made sense of them, providing an important vantage point for exploring the links between subjectivity and social structures. As Plummer (2001: 90) argues, 'more marginal voices (. . .) speak not just of themselves but of and for "others" in the world'. These autobiographies 'from below' work to create a sense of autobiographical form where consciousness of self becomes more of a collective exploration than just a private one (ibid. cited by Erel 2016: 5, 6). This research method also has the ability to develop over time into collaboration between researcher and participants (Clandinin and Huber 2010). And so it did here.

Feminist, collaborative research which watches other people live their lives, asks them about their experiences and chooses the words to tell their stories raises important ethical and reflexive questions. Because of the close relationships forged between researcher and the researched, issues of power relations arise. By allowing themselves to be studied, 'a subject population has a right to expect from the field researcher something more substantial than bourgeois respect, courtesy and honesty; they have a right to the social power that comes from knowledge' (May 1980 in Tisdale 2004).

We also have to acknowledge that while feminist research practice ostensibly involves relations of mutuality, it is harder in practice, especially when it comes to writing up and publishing. It is the researcher who narrates and authors the final text, and in doing so offers her/our interpretations, which are registered in our voices (Ledwith 2006: 395).

The Research Design

The locations of the three cities were chosen in order to provide comparative data from both within and outwith the EU, with Turkey having been in a situation of seeking EU membership. At the time of the research, London and Berlin were both within the EU (pre the 2016 UK Brexit referendum) and each had a, although different, history of immigration. The aim, then, was to find 40 migrant domestic care workers in each city, interview them and listen to their stories of migration within the frame of a series of questions[2] about their new, and old, lives. In addition, it was important that they also had religious belief. Doing all of this would also make for a broadly, but not strictly, comparative research project.

Migrant domestic workers are known to be difficult to access for research, inhabiting as they do liminal places between their families and their work in private homes, sometimes undocumented, representing a workforce about which there is much ambivalence in terms of official recognition by governments and labour movements for example, and which also impacts on their own self-identity. In addition, for Kurdish women there are further problems. They are often referred to as 'invisible' as migrants, partly, say some, because they 'do not occupy a clear position in the white/non-white divide on which much understanding of ethnic minorities is based' (Enneli et al. 2005), especially in the face of east–west migration and substantial movements of peoples within the EU. Especially important we think is the issue of Kurdish identity and nationality, since Kurdistan is historically disputed territory

[2] See Appendix for the interview schedule and research questions.

crossing Turkey, Iran, Iran and Syria. When they migrate, often escaping from these states, Kurds are nevertheless designated by their host country as being from these very countries (Holgate et al. 2012: 596). There is little comprehensive statistical data about the Kurdish population as such in the UK (op cit: 596).

Predictably then, finding women to interview required much use of GY's informal networks and friendships among communities, and as she says: 'of course each of the women interviewed agreed to meet with me and discuss their lives, and also encouraged other migrant women domestic workers they knew to take part'. The women knew this was for a research study and possibly a book. GY agreed that they would not be identified in anything written/published. They were very interested and cooperative, and anyone who did not want to take part, did not. Forty interviews were carried out in each city; in Istanbul in 2012, London in 2013 and Berlin in 2014. They were recorded, transcribed and translated. A further seven interviews took place with trade union officials in each city; three in London, two in Berlin and two in Istanbul. These were also recorded, translated (those in Istanbul) and transcribed. When presenting data in the Tables, we have rounded up fractions.

Finding the Women

In London some respondents were approached through community centres while others were found with the help of Kurdish and Turkish friends settled in London and who knew women migrant care workers who frequented the shops that they ran. Most of the Kurdish women were persuaded to be interviewed by both the DAYMER/Solidarity Centre of Kurdish and Turkish People, the Alevi Cultural Centre and Cemevi,[3] where GY had contacts. In turn, these women used friends and

[3] Cemevi is recognised as a communal space for secondary religious practices, instead of an alternative place of worship within Islam, see (Issa 2016) 'Alevis in Europe: Voices of Migration, Culture and Identity' Routledge.

other informal groups to help GY find interviewees. At Daymer, GY arranged an appointment with the president and general secretary, not knowing that these two men were already familiar with her academic work published on the internet. On agreeing to help her find women domestic workers in London, they explained that they also had expectations from her as a researcher, asking her to teach Marxian economics to their members. Within two weeks, a four-month programme with three hours classes every week had been organised. So this quickly became a collaborative research project, and GY also became friends (and remains friendly with some) with the women in her classes who in turn put her in touch with other domestic workers and relatives and friends who were doing domestic jobs – including non-Kurdish women. This free education also fed into a relationship of trust.

GY followed a similar research route in Berlin through pre-established relations with private care agencies, most of which were run by Kurdish employers, and friends from SIMURG, a cultural centre of leftist and Kurdish migrants in Berlin. Email and skype conversations between her and SIMURG activists before her arrival in Berlin helped find migrant domestic workers, and also provided logistical and translation support. Political economy classes were set up there too.

In London and Berlin and also in Istanbul there was an excited buzz around the research, especially by the style of interviewing and the substantive content of the questions. They wanted to know whether the study would be published, and if so, which country, which language? Additionally, especially during questions on collective organising, the majority of the women who were not or had not been organised also wanted to know whether was there an appropriate trade union to organise domestic workers, and did trade union legislation in their host countries allow unionisation of migrant workers? Thus the meetings were mostly run as two-way conversations.

In Istanbul contacts for the interviews were established through women's and migration associations in addition to the relatives, friends and students of the researcher. One IMECE, a women's organisation, helped to find seven women to interview. Subsequently, IMECE became a trade union of domestic workers. Similarly, six Armenian women in Istanbul were reached with the help of a student of GY at her university.

Istanbul was the city in which the first stage of field research took place, with 40 interviews held between January and June 2012. These interviews were extensive because Turkey was neither an institutionalised migrant receiver country in particular nor had it a developed domestic care labour market in general. One manifestation of the lack of an institutionalised migration regime was the less diverse range of nationalities of foreign born[4] women compared with 17 in Berlin and 13 in London. There were only four nationalities represented in the Istanbul interviews; Moldova, Georgia, Turkmenistan and Armenia, all countries directly bordering Turkey and in two of these countries Islam was either fully (Turkmenistan) or partly (Georgia and Moldova) the official religion. In addition, these women were fearful of being deported if they were in contact with people they didn't know since the majority of them were working as fugitive immigrants, undocumented immigrants who had overstayed in Turkey after their visas expired. In the interviews, the majority of these women said that they had no choice other than to work in domestic service even if they had a university diploma from their home country.

The difficulties faced by the women trying to manage the legal/illegal 'cat and mouse' visa system were vividly illustrated by their stories:

> After a two years break last time, three months ago I came to Turkey again. In the past I worked two consecutive years in Istanbul and went back to Armenia when I lost my job. I stayed two years in Armenia and came here again. In fact once in every month we have to go back to Armenia, as only with this condition does the Turkish government allows us to stay one more month. If I am arrested by the police now I am deported to Armenia and I am not allowed to come back for a period equal to the extra months I stayed in Turkey. i.e. if they arrest me now and see that I am here for two years they deport me for two years even if I can pay the fine as well. If I refuse to pay the fine, the deportation period extends to five years. (Armenian female interviewed in İstanbul)

[4] Foreign born here refers to those who had migrated to Istanbul from outside Turkey, as compared with those Turkish and Kurdish migrants to Istanbul from other parts of Turkey.

Interviewing the Women

Interviews were held in a number of locations; in the women's own homes, in cafes, at the offices of care agencies, in Istanbul at the flat of researcher Gaye Yilmaz or at the villas where they worked and lived in. Sometimes other people were present; not only translators but also employers, agency staff or husbands. The presence of the employers and husbands created some difficulties, especially in Istanbul.

Using extensive in-depth interviews provided the opportunity to step beyond the known and enter into the world of the participants in order to examine the context in which their experiences were framed or embedded. The research questions were arranged in a way to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture. For all the women it was the first time they had been involved in a gender research project; they were unfamiliar with the method and also with the questions. The average time of interviews varied between 30 minutes and one and a half hours depending on translation needs, participants' questions to the researcher and also the fears of the women, especially Turkmen women in Istanbul and Serbian women in Berlin. While the former were fearful of being denounced to the security forces, the latter were confused about why a foreign woman researcher was asking questions about the life of another woman. In contrast, there were also participants, especially in London, who made phone calls to their female colleagues and asked them to join this research. It was very interesting to see the way of talking they used in order to convince their colleagues. They were repeatedly saying on the phone that the questions were not difficult or risky, or dangerous, and researcher was so warm and frank, just like a friend. In these moments, a bridge of empathy developed between the migrant women and the researcher. Thus the discussion conducted through the interviews turned into a process of awareness, both for GY as a woman researcher and also for the migrant women, developing into a rich ethnographic study.

The interviews themselves were in two parts: an initial informal chat followed by a more in-depth discussion based on a set of questions about the women's background, origins, religion, family, qualifications and work situation, including collective organising, for example, in trade

unions. Further questions addressed their reasons for and experiences of migrating, their current situation, both domestic and paid work, and the influence on these of their background. The interviews were recorded and where necessary translated. Language and translation complicated the research, especially in Berlin and for Armenian women in Istanbul, where translators were found among the Turkish and Kurdish communities in Berlin and among Turkish-speaking Armenians in Istanbul. Here triple interpretation was necessary; questions were first translated from Turkish to German and the answers translated from German to Turkish and then into English. As the principal researcher, GY had to rely on consecutive translations made by friends who were amateurs in language interpretation, so the stories were mediated and were not directly told by the original narrators. To try to verify their stories, GY asked additional cross questions, which worked well. For some women, like an Eritrean care worker in Berlin who wished to be interviewed in English, translation between German and Turkish was also needed following the first few questions, as she realised that she was unable to understand questions in English. Overall, balancing the numbers of Islamic and non-Islamic women and arranging appointments at convenient times for respondents and for translators in all three cities was complicated and difficult.

The Women Migrant Domestic Workers

Origins and Identities

As already discussed, part of the research was to find out more about the lives of Kurdish women as migrant care workers. Thus among the 120 interviewees, the largest group was Kurdish; a third of all the women. Most were in Istanbul, half of the interviewees there, but they also made up a substantial proportion in the other two cities. In Istanbul many of the women had migrated there from eastern cities. Most of the foreign women, however, were undocumented and had stayed on in Turkey after their visas had expired. Seven of these 20 women were also both culturally and religiously Muslim.

Table 2.1 shows the research population by city and origins/nationality. Turkish (21) and Kurdish (39) women together made up half of the total across the study, while Kurdish women represented the biggest single ethnic/national group, 33 per cent. In a third group we see 13 Bulgarian women in London (10) and Berlin (three) and eight Armenian women in Istanbul. In Armenia and Kurdistan decades-long identity and diaspora politics and struggles have shaped the cultural context for those both inside and outside of these countries. The reflections on these identity struggles, on religiosity and the gender perspectives of these women are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Table 2.1 Women's national identities

National Identity	London	Berlin	Istanbul	Total
Turkish	7	14	–	21
Kurdish	12	7	20	39
Bulgaria	10	3	–	13
Italy	1	1	–	2
Belgium	1	–	–	1
Brazil	2	–	–	2
Caribbean	1	–	–	1
Cyprus	1	–	–	1
Malaysia	1	–	–	1
India	1	–	–	1
Poland	1	2	–	3
Spain	1	–	–	1
Czech Republic	1	1	–	2
Cameroon	–	1	–	1
Eritrea	–	1	–	1
Ghana	–	1	–	1
Greece	–	1	–	1
Iran	–	1	–	1
Iraq	–	1	–	1
Kenya	–	1	–	1
Kosovo	–	1	–	1
Montenegro	–	1	–	1
Portugal	–	1	–	1
Serbia	–	2	–	2
Armenia	–	–	8	8
Georgia	–	–	3	3
Moldova	–	–	4	4
Turkmenistan	–	–	5	5
TOTAL	**40**	**40**	**40**	**120**

Religion

As religious identity was quite central to the study, Table 2.2 shows the women's religious affiliations in each of the three cities. Nearly half, 43 per cent, of all the migrating women were Muslim, and in Istanbul they were the majority, or 63 per cent of migrant women. In contrast to their minority position in Turkey, the share of Alawites in the Muslim group was 46 per cent, followed by Sunnites who represented 40 per cent of the Muslim women. Among the Muslim women there were different religious affiliations, with the Kurdish women having adherence to Alawite, Sunnite or Shafiism, each of which differ from the others in their rituals and belief systems. The only sub-sect of Islam in Turkey to which only Kurdish people are affiliated is the Shafii belief. In this study there were six Shafii Kurdish women, two in London and four in İstanbul. Both Kurds and Turks may be found in Sunnite and Alawite sects. Sunniism is the largest Islamic sect worldwide and Shiahism the second biggest. There was only one Shiah woman in our study who was an Iranian interviewed in Berlin; it is the weakest Islamic sect in Turkey, whereas Sunnism is the strongest.

Table 2.2 Religious affiliations of women in three cities

Religion	London	Berlin	Istanbul	Total	%
Muslim					
Sunni	3	3	15	21	40
Shaafii	2	–	4	6	12
Alawite	12	6	6	24	46
Shiah	–	1	–	1	2
Total Muslim	***17***	***10***	***25***	***52***	***100.00***
Christian					
Catholic	5	9	–	14	32
Orthodox	10	7	13	30	68
Total Christian	***15***	***16***	***13***	***44***	***100.00***
Other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Paganism)	**2**	**2**	–	**4**	
Atheist	**6**	**12**	**2**	**20**	
Total	**40**	**40**	**40**	**120**	**100**

The original aim had been to interview 20 Turkish-born Islamic and 20 foreign-born women of different religions, and of no religion – atheists – in each city, of which a small number were also Muslim, especially among those migrating to Turkey. Actually, 52 Muslim women and 44 Christian women made up the majority of the religious women, with four from other religions; Hinduism, Buddhism and Paganism. There were 20 atheists.

The Christian women were made up mainly of those of Orthodox belief (30), came from the Eastern block or former Soviet states and were represented in each of the three cities of migration. The smaller group were Catholics (14) and were found only in London and Berlin. They were mainly from the Caribbean and Brazil, Italy, Spain, Poland, Portugal, Trinidad, Czech Republic, Ghana, Cameron, Kenya, Kosovo and Eritrea. Atheist women (20) emerged as the third main grouping and were mainly found in Berlin, with five among the Turkish women and six among the Kurdish women. A total of 16 Kurdish and Turkish women made up 80 per cent of total 20 atheists, and as seen in Table 2.3 one-quarter of all the Kurdish women were identified as atheist. These groupings and patterns are discussed further in later chapters.

The third largest national group of interviewees were from Bulgaria (13), and 10 of them worked in London. All the Bulgarian participants declared that they had migrated to London and Berlin, starting from the dates of full EU membership of Bulgaria (2007).

Family

Given the strong influence of religious codes in relation to family and relationships, one important area for questioning and discussion was the status of the women in this respect. It was noticeable that the largest group of married women was in Istanbul, which also had the lowest number of divorced women and/or unmarried women living with a partner. Such a lifestyle is defined as 'shame' and 'sin' for women in Turkey and in Islam and also those who had migrated to Istanbul from abroad. This is no surprise given the combination of the shortest distance these women were from their roots and that some of their roots were also in Islam.

Table 2.3 Kurdish and Turkish women, by religion

	London		Berlin		Istanbul		Total	
Religion	Kurdish	Turkish	Kurdish	Turkish	Kurdish	Turkish	Kurdish	Turkish
Sunni	–	3	–	3	8	–	8	6
Alawite	8	4	1	5	6	–	15	9
Shaafii	2	–	–	–	4	–	6	–
Atheist	2	1	6	5	2	–	10	6
Total	**12**	**8**	**7**	**13**	**20**	–	**39**	**21**

In London and Berlin, family and cultural ties were weaker following migration, with more women who were divorced.

Being a mother was also an important aspect of women migrating, and as seen in Table 2.4 two-thirds of those in our study had children regardless of marital status; the largest group of mothers being in Istanbul. Most of the women had their children with them in their host city. Seven women had had to leave their children behind; a Bulgarian woman in London who had left her 11-year-old daughter with her mum in Sofia and six foreign-born women in Turkey who had to leave their children because of the migration and working conditions in Turkey.

All 19 divorced women with children reported that they alone had looked after their children as they grew up, illustrating how the sexual division of labour at home continues even after women divorce. Being a mother was both a boon and also a disadvantage for this Kurdish woman found in London:

> Once I was working with an Iranian family, before I started to work I told the female employer that I had a boy and that I can't leave him alone at home. She accepted my condition and hired me for caring for her child. But when I brought my boy with me the lady insisted I leave him in the garden despite it was winter. (Kurdish woman, London).

Work

We can see from Table 2.5 that nearly two-thirds of the care workers in the three cities were aged between 31 and 50 (64 per cent), and the biggest group was women aged between 41 and 50. Although they did not all work in elder care, our research findings are similar to Kummerling's (2011: 8) that as well as being a migrant, the typical employee in the elderly care sector is on average older than employees in other professions (2011: 8).

Of the 120 women, half were in paid work, caring for the elderly or disabled; while 17 were working with children and 43 were working as cleaners, as seen in Table 2.6. All these women were working in private houses regardless of how they had been recruited.

Table 2.4 Marital status of women, with and without children

	London		Berlin		Istanbul		Total	
Marital status	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children
Single/ engaged	–	2	–	3	–	5	–	10
Married	17	2	13	2	24	1	54	5
Living with partner	1	6	1	3	–	1	2	10
Widow	–	–	1	–	3	1	4	1
Divorced	6	6	9	8	4	1	19	15
Total	**24**	**16**	**24**	**16**	**31**	**9**	**79**	**41**

Table 2.5 Age of migrant women by host city

Age	London	Berlin	Istanbul	Total
18–30	6	7	8	21
31–40	13	8	11	32
41–50	14	17	14	45
51 and over	4	5	6	15
No answer	3	3	1	7
Total	**40**	**40**	**40**	**120**

Table 2.6 Type of work by host city

Type of work	London	Berlin	Istanbul	Total
Elder care	12	36	10	58
Disabled care	1	1	–	2
Child care	11	–	6	17
Cleaning	16	3	24	43
Total	**40**	**40**	**40**	**120**

Among the women there were those who chose to do domestic care work for reasons such as fitting in with their own family, liking working as a carer on a one-to-one basis, having qualifications and/or experience in the work. The majority of care workers in Germany are professionals compared with those in London and Istanbul, having trained for three years, nine months or a minimum of three months. In London, 17 per cent of the women had participated in some form of elder care training.

Among the women in this study, 25 in Berlin had other qualifications. Four had worked as nurses in their home countries (Montenegro, Czech Republic, Italy, Turkey) but not all of their qualifications counted in their new countries, and some were studying in Berlin via apprenticeships and other care courses. A few others were highly qualified but couldn't make a living in their home country:

> I graduated from the faculty of Chemistry in Bulgaria but I never worked as a chemist because wages in Bulgaria are too low, also in Turkey my diploma had to be accredited which was a highly indefinite and painful process that I didn't apply for accreditation. When I came here, I took courses on care work throughout nine months which have been organised free by German state. (Bulgarian woman in Berlin)

Or personal circumstances had intervened:

> I studied in Nursing Faculty in Czech Republic but in my last year in the school I became pregnant so that I had to leave school. For long years I did cleaning and care jobs in Berlin independently from agencies. Now I have been doing house cleaning and working with an agency. (Czech woman in Berlin)

> I graduated from nursing faculty in Turkey. I worked as nurse for 15 years in Turkey. Here I have been doing care work. (Kurdish woman in Berlin)

However, overall these women were in the minority, and most were working in this sector for instrumental reasons. The undocumented in Istanbul were able to stay invisible as domestic workers, but often they suffered by having their passports confiscated by their employer. Some had a university education or professional qualifications and experience but could not use these in their host country. As Paral (2009) also points out, many female migrant domestic workers are well educated with some of them even holding university degrees. Working in households in Germany and other Western European countries leads to 'brain waste/drain' in their countries of origin. Since their educational certificates were not accepted in their new country, they were not able to work in a profession which would comply with their level of education. In this way migrant workers find themselves designated downwardly mobile from professional middle class to working class.

This then is the outline of our study, and in the chapters that follow we identify themes and identities which shape the lives of the migrant women, and see how they re-shape them. Although these are presented separately in the chapters, we try to keep in mind throughout that these are intersecting realities where the emphasis varies depending on which lenses we are discussing, for example women's migration motives and dreams compared with the realities of their new working lives in one chapter, or religious beliefs and the domestic in another.

Having outlined the framework of the study, we start in the next chapter with a discussion of the three cities and the attitudes, motives to migrate, cultural codes and legal frameworks of the 120 women migrant workers.

Conclusions

Here we have discussed our epistemological and political positionality and have seen how it related to that of the women in our study. We have presented the aims and methodology of our research, in which instead of categorising the migrant women's experiences, narratives and the selves produced through typologies, we relate them according to regimes addressing the different themes in their migration stories.

As feminist researchers we are mindful of our responsibilities in terms of telling the women's stories, and hope that we are able to do them justice, especially as they entered into the interviews with enthusiasm and excitement. They had not been asked these sorts of questions before, and were keen to exercise their agency not only in our research project but also in possible future activism, geared towards making migrants and domestic care work seen more positively as valuable and legitimate.

We present it as a three-city/country comparative study of migrant domestic workers and their relations with the domestic, with paid work and forms of collectivism, using a framework of questions which included their religious beliefs and affiliations.

A third of the women were Kurdish, offering the opportunity to find out more about the lives of women from an under-researched and often 'invisible' migrant group, and in Istanbul where a substantial number of the women were undocumented, representing another hard to reach group and illustrating the difficulties that their precarious status brought.

It is striking to note that some of the women were highly qualified, having university degrees from their home countries, but unable to afford to work there. Although in Berlin particularly, some were following new qualifications in care work, overall these women could be said to be downwardly mobile following their migration.

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3

Dreams Dashed but Not Forgotten

Introduction

Migration is as old as human history; its people have always travelled to new places. Meanings of migration also travel. Migrants move for many reasons, both pull and push: globalisation, opportunities, poverty, natural disasters or wars and internal military conflicts. Pull factors centre on economic migration, but we should also keep in mind that even if not the primary motive, things soon change and turn to economic for survival. Migrants forced or pushed by war or politics to become refugees or asylum seekers have to find work in order to live. All these *force majeures* lead people to dream of a better life, not only before they migrate but also throughout migration, movement, settling in and settling for something less – which is what often happens. Unlike tourists or those who travel for business, in most cases immigrants are unable to return home since they do not have other bearable choices even if they fail to realise their dreams. What's more, dreams force immigrants to work more while keeping them silent against exploitation. But dreams are not forgotten. In this chapter we explore with the women their motivations for uprooting themselves and their families. Sometimes from choice, but often from expediency or flight.

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Migration

Since migration implies movement from one nation state to another, the role of the state is significant as an actor in the migration process, demanding – when borders are crossed – passports, visa, work permits, etc. (Nijeholt 1992: 5). The idea of the nation takes on exclusionist features – homogeneity and superiority. Migration of qualified people becomes frowned upon and the nationalism which inspired imperialism engenders ambivalence, if not hostility, to the emigration of citizens. Even 'shovelling out paupers' comes under attack as a policy that might push up labour costs and impair competitiveness (Bohning 2009). In truth, imperialism favoured immigration as it boosted population growth and economic power, provided the foreigners were easily assimilable. Where immigrants could not be moulded to the liking of society, they were admitted as workers on a temporary basis and sent home when no longer needed (Bohning 2009: 14–15). There is a modern declaration by Schinkel about 'Illegal Aliens' and the State, or: Bare Bodies vs the Zombie by means of which this kind of immigrant is reduced to an 'illegal'. In this it is not the immigrant's actions which are the prime focus in the discourse of illegality. Rather, their being is. The totality of the personhood of the irregular migrant is reduced to the instrumental label of 'illegal alien'. Since the regular laws do not apply to him or her due to lack of citizenship or even 'humanitarian status', this alien can be incarcerated for an indefinite period of time (2011: 786–787). In these ways, in both theory and practice, in the quest for control, migration is continuously re-conceptualised and re-redefined, with migrants finding themselves re-labelled and their status re-packaged according to economic, political, and cultural frameworks of the day – which to many commentators is also a process of demonisation (Standing 2011: 145). As Bauman puts it: *'the tourists travel because they want to; the vagabonds because they have no other bearable choice'* (Bauman 1998: 93). Among the migrants in this study there were 'vagabonds' but these were also women who did have choices, and these and their dreams for migrating are explored here.

Migration is unstable and precarious for both host and migrant, and migrants might well find themselves assigned to a very different

category of person today from that of yesterday, and from their identity of self, from documented to undocumented, from legal to illegal (McKay et al. 2011). In this fluid modern period, yesterday's refugee is today's migrant, making it appropriate to look at international migrants and refugees, not as two separate groups with entirely different experiences but as two groups occupying different spaces but within a single trajectory. The position in which refugees and recent migrants find themselves regarding access to the labour market and use of job search methods is not identical, given that they may be subject to different legal controls and rights to work. However, in practice refugees and recent migrants often end up working side by side in similar jobs (McKay et al. 2009: 16). This was the case with women in our research.

Feminisation of Migration

Alongside women's movement into labour markets worldwide, women's migration has also been increasing and women now make up almost half of the world's migrant population (Ruiz et al. 2015; UNFPA 2016; IOM 2015). Their motives are both the same and also different from those of men, as we discuss below. While migrant women workers are recruited in both skilled and unskilled jobs in many different sectors, the tendency is towards their concentration in low-status jobs at the lower end of the job hierarchy, where work is characterised by exploitive working conditions and represents informal and insecure employment (WIDE 2010: 5). These conditions neatly describe domestic and care work, which is dominated by women, and which is the realm of the women in our study.

Today, with the drive towards casualisation of work, there is an increasing share of part-time and temporary jobs as well as fewer protections and benefits for growing proportions of the workforce. These women and these jobs are part of the 'new precariat' (Standing 2011). This, combined with an increasing demand for low-cost services and products in 'global cities', has resulted in an increase in subcontracting, outsourcing and demands for worker flexibility.

Migration is multifaceted and complex, with contradictory perspectives among commentators. There are those who assert that migration is liberating for women, and so it may be for some, for example professional women such as nurses, and even for women domestic workers (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Lopez 2005; George 2005; Gilbertson and Audrey 2003). The argument goes that 'women make greater gains in status, autonomy and resources relative to men' in migration. First, these scholars argue that women's greater income-earning power leads not only to their greater economic contributions to the family but it also translates to more decision-making authority in the household for women. Second, they assert that on migration women have greater access to the public sphere because, for instance, they are the ones dealing with teachers in schools and doctors in hospitals when tending to the needs of children (Parrenas 2010).

These arguments are indeed quite troubling because they reduce the facts of women's migration to gender regardless of other social factors such as ethnicity, race, class and nationalism (Parrenas op cit). These other factors are sometimes more eye-catching in determining the quality of life for migrants although they are not as visible as economic factors. Not only that, but by reducing gender to economics this ignores women's 'second shift' at home. Additionally, men who earn less than their female partners are more likely to do less housework than the men who actually earn more (Parrenas 2010). Indeed, migrating men and women occupy discrete roles in the labour market which mirror gender roles more generally, with women segregated into low-paid work in specific sectors. In doing so, gender divisions are reinforced and migration does not provide women with the opportunities to escape from such traditional work (McKay et al. 2011: 9).

So women tend to be more disadvantaged in the process of migration compared with men, and when we start to analyse the intersections of gender, age, nationality, class and ethnicity, it can be found that women face multiple challenges and adverse conditions. The disadvantaged position of many migrant women leads repeatedly to increased exploitation and a growing vulnerability of

their health, bodily integrity and well-being (WIDE 2010: 6). Also in our study, for instance, we found that educated migrant women from countries such as Armenia, Bulgaria or Poland experienced 'conflicting class mobility' as they earned more in the host society than in the sending society, yet were working in much lower status jobs there than those they had once held at home. An international law expert, for instance, may be working as a domestic worker. Thus, many migrant women tend to be in employment which has little to do with their training and skill levels; the declining and lack of accreditation of formal diplomas and qualifications obtained in the country of origin are only a few of the problems women have to deal with.

This also raises the question whether paid domestic workers should be regarded as part of the working class, since this should not depend on whether the type of work done is productive or unproductive. All paid domestic workers should be considered part of the working class, just like millions of other working women and men who undertake productive and unproductive labour.

At the heart of the issue of class and paid domestic labour is the debate about the nature and value of paid domestic work. It has an uncertain relationship with the ideas and ideologies of labour productivity and has been widely discussed as an ambivalent component of 'simple reproduction' with claims that, supposedly from a Marxist perspective, no surplus value is created in this labour as it generates 'use-value' and not 'exchange-value' (see, e.g., Guiterrez-Rodriguez 2010). This arises from the conceptualisation of paid domestic work as unproductive because of its lack of societal recognition and fair remuneration. However, Marx pointed out that the question is whether that labour was bought as a value creator or for its use value. In the case of domestic workers it is clear that their services are mostly bought to meet needs of employer families, namely only for use value, meaning that domestic workers do not create a surplus value (profit) for their employers. Nevertheless, trends such as the rise in renting domestic workers from private employment agencies suggest that domestic workers do create surplus value for private corporations (but again not for families); they become 'value creator'

productive labourers as suggested by Marx.[1] We can see this in our study, both through the stories of the women who work for commercial agencies and the small number planning to set up their own contracting businesses. In addition, remittances from migrant domestic workers, such as those women whose husbands then acquire property, lead towards opening the way to seeing migrant domestic workers as economic activists and important agents in charge of their own economic destiny (Gibson et al. 2001).

For most domestic workers setting up their own business is unlikely, especially for women such as Kurdish women migrants, with low cultural capital manifest in poor English language skills and lack of education and training; even access to employment is difficult for them (Keles 2008: 10). Together with limited fluency in the mother tongue of the host country and because of limited access to formal institutions and labour markets, recently arrived migrants may turn to informal kinship and social networks as one of the few options for finding work (Sassen 2006; Vasta 2004 in Gavanas 2010: 15, 16 and 23). For some in our study, especially the Kurdish women, these ethnic enclaves were important; just as in earlier generations they were, and remain, strong among former British colonial groups such as those from the Caribbean. Using social capital (Bloch and McKay 2015) which accumulates in this way can be both advantageous and problematic. Enclaves can be a haven, but may also limit access to the wider labour market, networks and community, and especially for undocumented migrants, such as the women in Istanbul in our study, who were also living in the homes of their employers, they become vulnerable to exploitation and may live in constant fear and anxiety about their status (Bloch 2013).

[1] In a dozen and more places, Marx repeats this fundamental property of productive labour: 'Only labour which is directly transformed into capital is productive' (IV/1, 393). 'From the capitalist standpoint only that labour is productive which creates a surplus-value' (IV/1, 153). 'Productive labour, in its meaning for capitalist production, is wage-labour which, exchanged against the variable part of capital . . . reproduces not only this part of capital (or the value of its own labour-power), but in addition produces surplus value for the capitalist' (IV/1, 152 quoted by Gough 2013: 50, 51), see (Gough 2013). 'Marx's theory of productive and unproductive labour' *New left review*, I(76). pp. 4772

Stories of Migrating Women

In this chapter, our study begins with an exploration of the women's dreams and motivations for migrating, the push and pull conditions and how these changed as they made their journeys, moved around, settled in and settled for their new and different lives.

Many factors influence women's migration, whether internal or external; for example from the country to the city, or further, internationally to different lands and cultures. Influences on migration may be found at individual, familial and societal levels. Individual characteristics include age, birth order, race/ethnicity, urban/rural origins, marital status (single, married, divorced, widowed), reproductive status (children or no children), role in the family (wife, daughter, mother), position in family (authoritative or subordinate), educational status, occupational skills/training, labour force experience, and class position (Martin 2003: 16, 17).

While the lives of the women in this study are individual, there are also strong similarities and themes among them. As we identify the women's original motives for migrating, see Table 3.1, and then dig deeper in the interviews, we see how these are further entwined and how they changed over time. The most compelling reasons, for over half of the women, were of dreams for a better future, including escaping poverty, with a further fifth seeking to flee war and conflict, especially those Kurdish women who had to move to Istanbul. Third in importance came 'family unification' which in itself may seem straightforward,

Table 3.1 Women's motives for migration

Motives for migration	London	Berlin	Istanbul	Total	%
War/conflict	4	2	20	26	22
Seeking asylum	–	5	–	5	4
For a better future (economic)	25	18	20	63	53
Sexual orientation	2	1	–	3	3
Familial reasons	6	–	–	6	5
Educational purposes	3	1	–	4	3
Family unification	–	13	–	13	11
Total	**40**	**40**	**40**	**120**	**100%**

but it belies striking stories of separation and meeting, including those of earlier generations, and of the whole family. Quite different stories under the heading of family reasons were about escaping familial conflict, and also to find a good partner abroad. It is important for us to tell these stories so that as years go by they are kept alive and the tracks of inter-generational migration do not fade. As the book proceeds, these and more stories of the women unfold.

While the most common motive for migration among the women in our research was economic, this was also often mixed into a cluster with other reasons, especially war and conflict, and also including gender and sexuality. There were women who would never have left their homes if they were able to survive there. These included women fleeing from conflict and several who moved to be able to afford to make a living for both themselves and their immediate families, and to fund their extended families back home.

Political refugees and asylum seekers came to flee oppression in their countries: an Iranian woman escaped to Germany 28 years ago after the Islamic revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979, at a time when the lives of women were 'turned to hell'. For a Kurdish woman, living in Turkey was too risky and insecure for Kurdish people in 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, an Eritrean women interviewed in Berlin had escaped to Germany because of war in her country. In her first few years she had no papers and documents and lived as a fugitive.

Gender-based persecution of 'non-conformist' diverse and different sexualities, gender-based violence and oppressive domestic regimes are also reasons for women to leave their countries. In our research this was the case for women interviewed in London and Berlin. In London a Brazilian lesbian explained that she migrated to Britain because her family had a strong religious background and she did not feel free in her choices and lifestyle in Brazil and was unable to live freely in her own country. Her partner, an Italian care worker also came to the UK because marriage between lesbians was banned in Italy. Another Italian lesbian care worker interviewed in Berlin also migrated because she felt unable to live her sexual orientation in Italy. All had to find work, and all ended up as domestic care workers.

Three Countries: Three Cities

The UK/London

The history of migration to the UK is a long one, with the latter half of the twentieth century especially as a receiving nation from its former colonies to help reconstruct after the Second World War and to shape the new welfare state.

Weakened by the war years and short of labour, the attention of the British government turned towards in-migration as a possible solution, especially in those sectors of the economy crucial to the reconstruction programme. These included the production of raw materials such as iron, steel and coal, as well as food, and those parts of the public sector that were essential for the running of the economy and the well-being of the population. Transport, the new National Health Service (NHS) and, somewhat anachronistically, domestic service in private homes were identified as important parts of the service sector that experienced labour shortages (McDowell 2013: 75).

Britain's colonies were a rich source of migrant labour for the UK, especially the Caribbean. Some of these are known as the Windrush generation, named after the ship on which they sailed to the UK, and subsequent generations of children and grandchildren. Other migrants, often temporary, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, worked in domestic settings in middle-class Britain where women choose to free themselves of domestic chores to spend time on the physical and emotional development of children and partners, thereby maintaining themselves as 'proper wives' and 'proper mothers' (Anderson 2005: 115).

Among the migrant women in our study, there were examples of these inter-generational migration characteristics. It was also striking that they had kept their migrant identity over all this time:

> For over 30 years I have been doing cleaning and care work. First in 1950s my parents migrated to the UK then I was born here in London. In these years British Governments were in need to export workers from abroad and many poor Caribbean families migrated to the UK. They didn't know what

> a very refined racism they would face. They didn't know that they had to undertake most dirty jobs. In my big family for three generations we did and still have been doing the same job: cleaning homes, caring for children and elderly or sick people. Imagine, three generations, more than 50 years. My parents, my sisters, my daughter and two granddaughters we all did, and are still doing, care and cleaning jobs. (Caribbean woman, London)

The story of the Ghanian woman interviewed in Berlin was similar, again illustrating the potency of migrant beginnings in the creation of inter-generational dynasties in the new country:

> My parents migrated to Berlin from Ghana for economic reasons in 1980. It is strange that despite migrating for economic reasons 33 years ago we still couldn't solve this problem even 33 years later. My mum has been working as a cleaning and care worker for 33 years, I have been doing care work for three years. (Ghanian woman/Berlin)

Later as political conflicts developed, refugees and asylum seekers dominated. Britain was one of the host countries where Kurds, under political pressures in Turkey, particularly, sought and obtained political asylum. This emigration was extensive throughout the 1990s and continued in the early 2000s. By 2010, more than 50,000 people settled in Britain, primarily in London, as political refugees claiming asylum (Atay 2010: 125).

> I migrated; we escaped from the war in Turkey to London in 1989. As soon as we arrived (together with my husband) we started to work at the same clothing factory in London. My daughters were 11 and eight years old when we migrated. I was always dreaming to migrate to one of European countries to guarantee a better education for my children. Moreover living in Turkey was too risky and unsecure for Kurdish people in the 1980s and 1990s; every night we had a police raid. I didn't want my children to grow up in such a crazy political environment. In the last five years I have been doing child care work at private houses. (Kurdish care worker, London)

In the early years of their migration they worked in manufacturing sectors, mainly textile and catering which were dominated by Turkish and Turkish Cypriot communities. However, the Kurdish community

itself became dominant in due course in many respects; politically in the beginning, but also culturally and economically later on. Most came from the rural areas of central-eastern and south-eastern Anatolian provinces, and the majority are affiliated with Alevism, a heterodox version of Islam (Atay 2010: 125).

As reported by some of the Kurdish women in the research, those who arrived in the UK before the 1990s were working in industrial sectors such as food or textile production and work other than domestic services. Our interviews in London confirmed the trouble Kurdish women had had in finding jobs, especially those aged 45–50. They pointed out that when they first migrated they were working in the garment trade, but after all the factories closed down they had to move to care and cleaning jobs.

> I migrated to London in 1987. For 20 years I have been doing cleaning works at private houses. In the past, in the very beginning years of my migration I was working at clothing factories, but then all them were closed down and many women workers started to work at cleaning jobs. (Kurdish woman interviewed in London)

Germany/Berlin

Migration patterns to Germany were rather different. It is possible to define Germany as the most experienced country receiving labour migrants, especially in Europe, in the last 60 years. Indeed, soon after the Second World War, the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany envisaged re-building its economy by recruiting 'foreign workers' based on the 'guest worker program', a temporary work model with 1- to 2-year contracts that targeted young, single and 'healthy' men and women who were supposed to supply the booming car manufacturing and mining industries with the labour force needed. The 'guest worker programme' was first launched in 1955 with Italy, and in consecutive years further inter-governmental contracts were forged with Spain, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Portugal, Morocco and Tunisia. As industrial workers, their previous skills were not recognised by Germany's education and professionalisation

system. They were deemed unskilled and placed at the bottom of the salary ladder (Guiterrez-Rodriguez 2010: 62).

After 1959, the foreign population in Germany rapidly increased. Just a few years later, in 1964, the arrival of the millionth 'guest worker' was celebrated. During this era, foreign workers were employed primarily as unskilled and semi-skilled labourers in sectors where piece work, shift work and assembly line positions could be found. They took on jobs that German labourers considered unattractive. This made it possible for many West Germans to move up into more favourable or more qualified positions. A 1973 ban marked the end of the era of foreign labour recruitment to West Germany, blocking the entry of 'guest workers' from lands which were not members of the European Economic Community (EEC). While immigration figures remained modest through the 1980s, the numbers rapidly grew again in the early 1990s. In particular, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the wars in former Yugoslavia and the human rights crisis in the Kurdish region of Turkey spurred the influx (DOMID 2013). Unification of eastern and western Germany following the fall of the Berlin wall was another factor, as was the pull of Germany's EU membership and role.

In the twenty-first century migration has been tended to be within Europe through the EU's freedom of movement rights. Since 2009 the migrant population significantly increased and by 2013 Germany had become the second-largest immigration country in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), right behind the United States. In 2012, the net migration figure stood at 400,000, of which about 60 per cent came from countries of the EU (Angenendt et al. 2015). From then on, large numbers of migrants were refugees and asylum seekers.

The EU's Schengen treaty shows how, on the one hand, it permitted the opening up of frontiers between the member states on the basis of the liberal principle of the free movement of people and goods, but on the other it has constituted new borders inside the states and between human beings with regard to foreigners (Calloni and Lutz 2000: 148). In recent years this process has accelerated and increasingly the discourse has become one of terrorism, with migrants reduced to 'unwelcome foreigners' required to produce documentation when in public spaces,

or waiting for a bus or train (Guiterrez-Rodriguez 2010). The ongoing civil wars in the 2010s in the Middle East, especially Syria, which pushes out refugees aiming for sanctuary in EU countries, led to a sharp heightening of cultural antagonisms and tightening up of state boundaries against migrant refugees.

Our research revealed some of these stories of migration to Germany, the last stop on their journeys.

> I first migrated to Turkey and stayed and worked in Bodrum (Turkey) for eight years. In the meantime I got married to a Bulgarian man who didn't want to stay in Turkey, so then two years ago, soon after we got married we migrated to Berlin. I graduated from the faculty of Chemistry in Bulgaria but I never worked as a chemist because the wages in Bulgaria are too low, also in Turkey my diploma had to be accredited which was a highly indefinite and painful process, and I didn't apply for accreditation. When I came here, I took courses on care work throughout nine months which are organised free by the State itself. (Bulgarian female in Berlin)

> I first migrated to Hamburg following a sudden decision I took 22 years ago soon after I was fired from the firm where I was working. It was a crazy decision because my son was only a one and a half year old baby. I remember my mum phoned and told me that 'okay whereas you went there you must forget your baby'. Of course I didn't forget him, in a year I also took him with me and we moved to Berlin together. Even today I don't have a flat that I am staying in a shared flat together with other immigrants. (Woman from Czech Republic, Berlin)

It was evident that the motivation to migrate, or the pressures leading to migration of women might also develop in more positive directions. A Cameroonian woman, for instance, explained that she migrated because she had dreamed of getting a university diploma from any university located in a highly prestigious country like Germany:

> When I migrated from Cameroon to Berlin in 2005, my dream was to get a university (bachelor) degree here in Germany but I had to leave the school in my first year because I understood that first I need to survive before university. I worked in the child care sector but also worked as

> waitress in several small restaurants before I started to work in elderly care. In the last nine years I forgot about university diploma. (Cameroonian woman, Berlin)

Conversely, an Armenian woman had to give up her university education in order to migrate to Turkey to help her family:

> Why I came to this country? Actually I didn't have a dream of migrating specifically Turkey or any other country; I worked hard to enter university in Armenia where I studied in the department of educational sciences. To migrate abroad would mean to leave everything including my career. However my brother suddenly became sick and medical treatment had a high cost for our family. Also I was a young woman, meaning that migration alone might be dangerous for me. Despite all these risks I decided to go abroad and to work. I chose Turkey to migrate to because travelling Turkey was easier and cheaper and also because there was a Turkish Armenian community in Istanbul. (Armenian woman, Istanbul)

Ironically, regardless of what they dreamed about before they migrated, when these interviews were held, both women were doing the same care job at the same time in two different countries, in two cities far apart, namely Berlin and Istanbul; their dreams not forgotten but not achieved.

Marriage sometimes trapped women into migrating:

> I came to Berlin in 1999 soon after I got married. My first years in Berlin was a total depression that my husband was a foreign man. I had come to a country I knew nothing about. I was not able to speak or understand German, I knew nobody and so on. Despite him not being a strongly religious man he forced me to use hijab, he banned me from going outside and etc. When we divorced in 2003 I had two children that they were only one and two and a half years old. I started to do care work in 2007. For three years I've been doing care work for an agency. In the beginning I did this job informally with the help of a friend who was sharing her wage with me in return for the work I did. Then in 2008 I got a five week course on care work and I was entitled to do care work through agencies. (Turkish woman in Berlin)

In contrast to those who migrated for a better life, women who moved to escape war and political conflict were unable to choose either to which country they wished to migrate or their occupation:

> I came from Istanbul to Berlin in 1995 as asylum seeker. Originally I am from Kars/Turkey, and I'm Kurdish. Therefore I was in jail for many years because of the fight between Turkish army and Kurdish PKK. Soon after I was released my lawyer told me that a new arrest warrant for me was issued. Together with my political organisation we understood that I must migrate to one of the EU countries as an asylum seeker. Neither Germany, nor the care job is my own preference. (Kurdish woman in Berlin).

Turkey/Istanbul

As an international city, Istanbul is a draw for migrants especially for those from neighbouring countries. Migrants to Istanbul, like those in our study, are often internal, from rural areas, oppressed groups, or from adjoining countries. In the so-called 'age of migration', the dynamics of international migration, in terms of its volume, forms and composition, have changed dramatically compared to the trends in the past. Turkey presents an example of this tendency. Previously known as a sending country in international migration movements, and with no demand internally for migration to cities from rural areas, together with poor transport and information (Coban 2013: 61), Turkey has become a receiving and a transit country in the last few decades (Kaska 2006: 7). Many of these migrant women are engaged in irregular work in traditionally female niches. Facilitating factors for this migration are firstly, the immigration regulations, secondly, a high demand for cheap labour, and thirdly, a similar language in the case of Turkish speakers like the Gagauz, the Moldovan Turkish speaking minority or the Bulgarian Turks (Keough 2004, cited by Suter 2008: 1; Erdem 2006: 102). To service the increase in the demand for foreign care givers, new organisations have emerged that informally organise the market and provide migrant female workers to private houses (Kaska 2006). Thus the demands of urban middle-class families for migrant female workers for

care work have become normalised (Dedeoglu 2011: 34). Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, post-socialist migration movements also increased. Women from former Soviet States work mainly in domestic services, entertainment and tourism sectors, and are often identified as sex labourers (Erder and Kaska 2003; Icduygu 2004; Kaska 2005), although none of the women in our study were in this category.

> I migrated to Turkey first in 2001. Before this date I was working on farms, construction etc. But I was not paid regularly and wages were very low. I also migrated to Moscow to work in 1996 and worked in construction and mess halls of Turkish corporations there. I learned my first Turkish words in those days. Our job in Moscow was so difficult and informal . . . We were working 12 hours a day. There was no competition with Russian jobless workers because we were given jobs that local people never want to do. In 2001, I first went to Izmir city via an agency and worked there for a total of 21 months (elderly care). I paid half of my first wage to the agency, the family that employed me also paid to the agency. Then one of my neighbours who worked in Istanbul found me a good job in Istanbul and I came here. (Moldovan woman, Istanbul)

Israel was also a first destination for former Soviet state migrants:

> Long years ago first I migrated to Israel and worked there for two and a half years. I was working in ceramic manufacturing. However as my children needed me I had to go back to Georgia. Then I came to Turkey five years ago via an agency and I am doing this job since then. (Georgian care worker, Istanbul)

Almost half of the women in our study had initially migrated via private agencies, many of them to a Turkish city other than Istanbul, to work in textile manufacturing. Most of these women were undocumented. Using an agency was a way to get work as they had good relations with small textile workshops which would employ undocumented migrants – it was too risky for the firms to directly employ unknown undocumented migrants in case they were denounced to the security forces. In practice these were sweatshops, and the women said that they much preferred domestic work to their previous, poor experiences in textile factories.

> For one year I have been in Turkey and working as domestic worker. When I came first time via an agency I went to Bursa city and worked in textile sector there three months. Conditions were really horrible. Then I came to Istanbul. (Georgian woman in Istanbul)

> In the very beginning I started to work in a textile factory but conditions were very poor. I was working 12 hours/day; six day/week and staying in a basement with seven unknown people together. I worked there a month then I left the job and found a domestic job here. (Turkmen woman in Istanbul)

The main motivation of the 20 women who migrated to Turkey from neighbouring countries was the economic hardship they faced in their own countries and they would not have migrated anywhere if they had been able to survive at home. They included six Armenian women who had bachelor degrees in various academic disciplines like chemical engineering, educational sciences, international law, international relations and educational sciences:

"I came to Turkey 12 years ago when I was 21 years old soon after I graduated from the university. Since then I am working in housework despite I did my career on international relations." (Armenian woman, Istanbul)

> When I was very young we, as whole family, went to East Germany for the military work of my husband. We lived there a total of five years and I worked in public care work. I came to Turkey in 2005. I was working in a school in Armenia but earning very little money. Then I went to Russia to work, my daughter was also there. However work conditions were also very poor in Russia and job opportunities were very limited there as well. Before collapse of USSR our conditions were very different from what we have today. In that period the police were afraid of the people, now the people are afraid of the police. Anyway things changed and I decided to come to Turkey. When I was working in my first job in Istanbul my monthly wage was 700 Lira (320 Euro); I was caring for an elderly woman but also doing all the housework including cooking, ironing, cleaning, washing and etc. If I was able to survive in Armenia I would prefer to stay in my own country.

There were also stories from young unmarried women who had little choice and felt strong family pressures to migrate in order to meet the health expenses of their parents, sisters or brothers, or to pay for the education of their nieces and nephews. For some this came at the high cost of interrupting their own higher education.

> Eight years ago I came to Turkey. Many people think that I don't need to work as I am not married and do not have children. However I came to Turkey to work for my parents, nieces and nephews, I have responsibilities, I need to send money for the education of my nieces/nephews but also for health care of my parents. Because despite 20 years passing since the collapse of the old regime my society is still based on solidarity values. My mum and dad are old today, they cannot work. One of us must take responsibility for caring for them. I have also brothers and sisters who are married. They live in Georgia and they don't have any chance to jump into adventure because they have children. However working and living conditions in Georgia today are very poor. My family may find money to buy bread but not for a good education, better health care, or tools which are necessary for the social and mental improvement of their children. My sister is not able to buy a toy for her son and she asks me to buy it. I know that this toy must be bought and sent to them. It's because he is just a little boy, not able to understand anything. (Georgian migrant, Istanbul)

The Kurdish women also had little choice but to migrate; 20 had all moved to Istanbul because of war in their territories. To those Kurds who had crossed an international border, other terms, such as 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker', apply, even though they share much in common with Kurdish internally displaced persons (IDPs). A significant number of Kurdish IDPs are also former or future refugees or asylum seekers, like this woman:

> First in 1974 we came to Istanbul. I and my husband were the leaders of the struggles for sheltering right in slum areas of Istanbul. We were both arrested several times and put in jail for several months in this struggle. In 1979 we had to back to Dersim. Soon after military coup came when we were in Dersim in 1980 we were again arrested and put in jail like many other Kurdish leftist activists. After we were released we again moved to

> Istanbul in 1986 and first time in that year I started to work outside home. My first employer was a very rich family who runs a coal mine in rural area of Istanbul. (Kurdish woman, Istanbul)

> Twenty three years ago mainly due to war we had to migrate from Diyarbakir to Istanbul. My relatives still live in Silvan and sometimes I go to visit them. I have done house work here for ten years. In the past we were growing tobacco but the State banned the growing of tobacco. Then we started to grow cotton on our lands but it was also banned by the State. There is a very high level of unemployment in our region. People have to migrate otherwise they will die from starvation. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

Their stories were of unsafe conditions, of oppression and of ongoing conflict, including forced evacuations:

> We migrated from Siirt to Istanbul 20 years ago when I was only a child at 13 years old. The reason of why we came here was that State set our houses and villages on fire in the name of cleaning Kurdish areas from Kurds. The State knew very well that people had to migrate to big cities when they lost everything. When we arrived in Istanbul first, I didn't know Turkish. One day a neighbour came and asked whether we had garlic or not. I went to the kitchen and brought a saucepan because I didn't understand what she asked. I and my husband were giving all money we earned to father in law in the first 10 years of our marriage which is something common among Kurdish families especially for those who live all together like us. But then, after we saw that there wouldn't be any return for us we decided to move to another province. This was the only remedy for my own family. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

These Kurdish women, although well seasoned politically, had in their home country been forced to speak in Turkish and also suffered from a lack of education. Nineteen of the 20 Kurdish women in Istanbul had only a primary school diploma. Often they too had to find their first jobs in the dreaded textile factories, again in sweatshop conditions:

> Twenty three years ago my family had to migrate from Ardahan to Istanbul due to war between the Turkish State and Kurdish PKK. For the last three years I have been doing waged house work. Before I was working in small textile factories. In fact I started to work in textile factories when I was a child of only 12 years old. The boss was humiliating us, nagging, even beating us if we slept over our work or done something wrong. Because we were children we had to wake up at 6am in the mornings to go to work which is something may easily cause doing wrong or sleeping over work. Therefore I hate to work outside. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

Language

For migrants, language is always significant. It may be part of the motivation to migrate, or a major obstacle to integration once in the new country, resulting in discrimination in the host country, as we see in Chapter 5. Integrating immigrants partly through language and bringing them into the fold of civic life is significant for governments. For immigrants themselves learning the language of their host country can be key to educational and economic opportunities:

> When you come to a new country first you need to learn its language not only to communicate with people but more importantly to be able to find job which is really hard. (Italian woman, Berlin)

and:

> I feel that people love me very much only because I am an immigrant. Immigrants especially those who understand and speak the mother language of the host country are quite lucky because they are able to harmonise both cultures. (Turkish woman, Berlin)

Non-speakers of the country's official language usually find themselves isolated in their new communities with very limited job opportunities and resented by their neighbours as was experienced by a Bulgarian woman in London:

> The lack of language is the most important problem, I don't speak and understand English and this disturbs me very much. Also the lack of language causes poor quality of jobs; nobody wants to hire you. (Bulgarian woman in London)

As well as these personal problems, the lack of language also prevents immigrant women from knowing their legal rights in the labour market and community in general in their host countries.

> The good thing of being immigrant is to know new cultures and learn a new language; bad things are language differences, visa and work permit problems, lack of knowledge about national labour legislation in the host country. (Moldovan woman, Istanbul)

Non-speakers also tend to avoid contact with other immigrants from different nationalities even if they worked for the same agency.

> The most difficult thing of being immigrant is the language barrier. Learning Turkish took several years and its cost was very high. I was not even able to go shopping to the market. I also felt ashamed. (Kurdish woman, Istanbul)

In our study only two respondents in London said that language was actually the main motivation for them to migrate. One was a Turkish Alawite, 28-year-old woman who expected to apply for citizenship in 2014. Since she seemed confident and ready for citizenship, which requires a good command of English, it may be concluded that this young woman was among the few who were able to realise their dreams. The other woman was a 47-year-old Belgian who had also migrated to the UK, both to learn English and also to get far away from her family. In both matters she also seemed to be succeeding in her original dream. In neither Berlin nor in Istanbul was language a main motivator although the majority of the women interviewed in all three cities were proud of having learned German, Turkish or English. It was also observed during the interviews that women other than those with a colonial past, like Indians or Filipinos, enriched their stories of success in their new countries by showing their compatriots at home that they could now speak the host country language:

> There is only a single advantage of being an immigrant – that migrants are bi-lingual following many painful years to learn the second language. (Kurdish woman/Berlin)

> Since you are able to send money and also have learned a respectable European language, you are more appreciated by your friends and relatives at home. (Kurdish woman/London)

There were also women who were aware that for their children, the next generation, their migration had been good:

> I think there is not any good thing about being a migrant worker, however if you have children you can see the advantages. My children always tell me that they are very lucky comparing their friends and relatives in Turkey because they speak three languages, they know different cultures, and they have a chance to get a much better education. (Turkish woman, Berlin)

Two more women in Berlin felt that 'despite all disadvantages I am happy I came to Germany' and:

> In my first 10 years I had many troubles, economic problems, language, integration into German culture etc. However after I gave birth I understood that being an immigrant is quite a good deal. I trained my children to think this way, we are so lucky for being immigrants.

Another Turkish woman said that:

> If I stayed in Turkey I would never have the chance to learn German, I would never have a chance to give a qualitative education to my children, I would never have a chance to stand on my own feet.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have seen how despite the diversity of reasons for migrating, or their educational backgrounds, the one common characteristic among the 120 women in three different cities in three

different countries far apart was that regardless of their dreams they had ended up working as domestic carers.

For the most part the women in this study were typically both victims and beneficiaries of the seismic changes over the last few decades; of increasing feminisation of work, of labour markets and of migration. They were both recipients of such change and producers of change, part of the vanguard of the new precariat – although in truth women have always been at the forefront of low paid, low-status precarious work. Add in migrant status and the burden these women have to carry multiplies, as we see from their stories.

Nevertheless, a redemptive picture emerges of strong women coping with fortitude at whatever was thrown at them. Few had really wanted to leave their homelands and would go home if they could. Nevertheless, those from earlier periods who moved to the UK especially, and to Germany, seeking opportunities as these countries rebuilt following the devastation of Second World War had created their own family dynasties of women care workers, while continuing to self-identify as migrants. Two did achieve their original aims of learning English, with one planning to apply for UK citizenship. A handful were pursuing educational opportunities – which mainly came to nothing in the end as they had to put these dreams aside in the interests of supporting their wider family. Mainly, the women were driven by war and conflict, poverty, family pressures and responsibilities, and fear of sexual oppression.

All those who had migrated as asylum seekers dreamed of going home. So did those who felt hopeless about their future in the host country, but could not because of the conditions in their countries of origin. Going home was such a distant dream, they tried to avoid thinking about it.

They did what women do; buckled down and made the best of things. They made as good a job as they could of their cultural and their social capital. They found work to support them and their families. The work was hard, and typically was in traditional women's sectors, especially in the early days of working in sweatshop textile firms in London and Istanbul. No wonder they found care work more acceptable, and for those who became undocumented in Istanbul, working in domestic settings was a refuge – although it also came with high risks.

From very different beginnings, all the women's trajectories were marked by downward mobility, ending up in poorly paid, low-status work; characterised by exploitive working conditions and representing informal and insecure employment, namely domestic care work. This is not to say they all disliked this work, and a few had been able to use it to better themselves, but for others it was a terrible waste of their early professional education and skills. For some it became a form of sanctuary, and for yet others it was a big improvement on the textile sweatshops of their early migrations. And for a few women care work became personally and intrinsically fulfilling, as we will see in the next chapter.

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4

Migrating Women's Working Lives, Rights and Social Protections

Introduction

Having seen how, despite their dreams and their previous lives and qualifications, the migrant women in our study all ended up as domestic care workers, we move here to examine the material situations of the women and their paid work. Through their stories we compare and contrast the lives of the migrant women in London, Berlin and Istanbul. First, we map out the complexities and contradictions of migration status and rights, the risks and benefits for migrant women before moving on to the narratives of the women as they describe their working lives.

The convergence of twenty-first century demographic trends of increasingly feminised workforces, especially among the middle classes, seeking paid cleaning and care workers, together with ageing populations needing elder care, has fuelled demand for paid domestic workers. These developments, combined with insufficient and ambiguous state support and dubious immigration status, have also increasingly seen the gaps filled by migrant women, in many cases undocumented (Anderson 2007; Lutz 2008).

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Migration Regimes

In the case of domestic workers it is possible to distinguish between two main types of regulatory immigrant regimes: those relying on 'managed' migration schemes and those based on 'unmanaged' migration routes (Rostgaard et al. 2011). The former usually considers highly skilled migration as desirable and regulates and controls flows quite tightly, so that undeclared migration is uncommon, as migrants are usually employed by organised providers (i.e. home care or residential care organisations and agencies). Unmanaged migration regimes, on the contrary, usually tolerate or even explicitly allow low-skilled migration, due to a lack of controls, rather than explicit rules, and use ex-post legalisation to regularise the position of undeclared migrants living in these countries, who are more often directly employed by private households (Lamura et al. 2013: 5). Countries usually assess the desirability of specific migrants by their education and language levels, their salary or their indispensability to the economy. The citizenship rights that can be exercised by, for example, migrant care workers depend on the requirements that they have to meet to secure both their entry and residence rights and to their (prospective) labour-market status. In this context, Williams (2012) refers to special arrangements such as quotas for care and/or domestic workers and the existence of privileged access policies for knowledge workers, including qualified nursing work. Historical post-colonial, economic and cultural links often play an important role in migration trajectories of migrants, including care workers (Tholen 2009; Williams 2012, in Luppi et al. 2015: 16).

In these ways the status of migrant workers becomes fluid and ambiguous. Nation state strategies, which normally might be expected to guarantee the basic rights of those within their territories, nevertheless promote the creation of a group of people without social security or fundamental rights. Such strategies enable the building up of a pool of workers with few or no rights who are then obliged to accept working under the most precarious conditions and removed from any labour rights legislation (McKay et al. 2011: 8; Yilmaz 2008: 174).

Worldwide, domestic workers, most of whom are migrant women, represent the single largest group of unprotected workers, excluded from labour legislation in most countries and often denied fundamental rights, such as freedom of association and social protection. This also creates social spill-over to the many who *are* legal and documented. In addition, labour inspectors do not cover the home as a workplace, the women are not recognised as workers, and nor are the private citizens they work for considered as employers. Thus, like undocumented migrant labourers, migrant domestic workers, regardless of their legal status, also remain largely invisible in labour statistics, laws, policies and programmes (ILO ROAS 2009b cited by Gachter 2010: 60).

In this febrile modern period of increased migration and refugee flows, migrants become cast as a major 'risk' group in research and politics on social exclusion, and this heightened atmosphere is aggravated by the paradoxical relationship between policy and practice to gender equality in contemporary Europe. On the one hand, the EU strongly advocates for increased women's participation in the labour market as a way to ensure the sustainability of the social protection systems threatened by demographic change. On the other, at the national level, cuts in social expenditure and provision of social services by the state, especially for pre-school-aged children and the elderly, have reduced the public coverage of care services – with significant sub-regional and national differences (WIDE 2010: 8). Austerity regimes impact especially on women as they work primarily in these sectors, as well as fuelling the feminisation of migration.

So, migrating may be a release from turbulence and conflict at home, but it can also be a trap (McKay et al. 2011: 9). None more so than the domestic work of care and cleaning. Attractive to migrant women and replicating women's traditional domestic role, it has low barriers to entry and often includes housing. Increasingly precarious and much of it within informal sectors, it also suits employers. While much of the available work is in the public sector, there is also plenty across the private sectors, and migrant women work in and across both. Commonly, they access jobs in many and overlapping ways, through word of mouth, kinship and community networks and ethnic enclaves,

through agencies, becoming self-employed, directly employed, and some or all of these combined. If the women are undocumented, precarity increases, becoming ever more fluid and unstable as government regimes change the goal posts in response to political, economic and social pressures.

The problems domestic workers most frequently encounter are low pay, heavy workloads with long working hours, limited training opportunities, poor career development, and in some countries lack of freedom of movement, as well as abuses, gender and race discrimination and harassment. Their jobs are usually low on the occupational ladder. Domestic work provides an example where psychological, physical and sexual abuse is common because of the highly personal relationship with their employers (Moreno and Chammartin 2008: 4). Immigration status is increasingly stigmatised, but migrant women's vulnerability is not simply related to whether or not as migrants they are 'legal'. Those who are working legally may also be subject to threats by employers not to renew their visa, while migrants on certain types of visa are restricted in the kind of work that they can do.

Domestic Work

The ILO describes domestic work as including tasks such as cleaning the house, cooking, washing and ironing clothes, taking care of children, or elderly or sick members of a family, gardening, guarding the house, driving for the family and even taking care of household pets (ILO 2016), while the ILO report 'Decent Work for Domestic Workers' defines domestic jobs through the specific categories of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) 8, as housekeepers and related workers, child care workers, home-based personal care workers, domestic helpers and cleaners (WIEGO, 2015: 7).

A domestic worker may work on full-time or part-time basis; may be employed by a single household or by multiple employers; may be residing in the household of the employer (live-in worker) or may be living in his or her own residence (live-out). Exploitation of domestic workers can

partly be attributed to gaps in national labour and employment legislation, and often reflects as discrimination along the lines of sex, race and caste.[1]

As this sort of work reproduces women's 'natural' domestic role, it is usually assumed that no training is required since women naturally have these skills. Indeed, job adverts typically state 'no experience required'. Sometimes training is offered, as in Germany, but generally domestic work is seen as unskilled and low status, with care workers held, and holding themselves, in low esteem (Lutz 2008).

While the power in the domestic work relationship lies mainly with the employer, especially where the migrant is undocumented, the special nature of these domestic relationships does imply that this should not all be one way. As discussed by Lutz (2008: 1), domestic work is *not just another labour market* [italics in original]. Lutz asserts that domestic work cannot be outsourced, like call centres, to countries where the workforce is cheap. However, already there are signs that even this exclusive aspect of domestic work no longer holds. Growing numbers of elderly and sick Germans are now being sent overseas for long-term care in retirement and rehabilitation centres because of complaints about rising costs and falling standards.

Wherever such care takes place, it needs flexible and experienced (educated) migrants, able to integrate themselves in the households of their employers, with all the idiosyncrasies and intimacies involved. Exploring further, Lutz identifies the important role played by emotions, for example mothers do not wish to be entirely replaced by a childminder or adult children by a carer for their elderly parents, just as housewives do not want to leave household tasks to another without securing their own status and responsibility. This sort of work is also marked by the intimate character of the social sphere where the work is performed, becoming a special relationship between employer and employee, between carer and client, especially children and the elderly, which is highly emotional, personalised and characterised by mutual dependence. Employers and host households must manage

[1] http://www.ilo.org/global/ Accessed in October, 2016.

their relationships with the migrants who work in their homes. It is often important to them to feel that they are not just employing a cheap worker to do a difficult job (Anderson 2007: 261). In theory then, there remains scope for migrant workers to exercise their own agency when choosing their workplace.

Yet the work itself is not easy. Helping an elderly person to eat and swallow, bathing someone without hurting them, communicating with someone with early onset dementia; doing these things with intelligent kindness, dignity, care and respect involves skill. Doing all these alone in the home of a stranger, when the district nurse has left no notes, and you are only being paid to be there for 15 or even 30 minutes, requires considerable maturity and resilience (The Cavendish Review 2013: 7).

The UK/London

The pattern of immigration of domestic workers to Britain is complex, being a product of both its position within the EU and its colonial history. European law allows people from member states to live and work anywhere within the EU.[2] This has encouraged successive waves of migrants, including women. Early migrating women moved from Spain and Portugal to Britain to take work as housekeepers that relatively high wages in Britain made this migration worthwhile. Younger women (aged 17–27) have been able to take on domestic work under the 'au pair' scheme for many years. This allows women to spend up to two years living in the home of, and working for a family (Cox 2005: 132). Since EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007, migrants from former Eastern European countries formed new waves, with Bulgarians and Romanian female migrants starting to replace cooks, housekeepers, maids and full-time cleaners from the Philippines, Portugal and Spain (Cox 2005: 135–136). The new migrants were seen to be cheaper and unorganised. Bulgarian women formed the second largest group in our study in London –10 women – and they were mostly

[2] Including Britain, pre – the 2016 referendum resulting in 'Brexit'.

recruited through informal networks of Bulgarian migrants. Including the Bulgarians there was a total of 15 women migrants from EU countries in London.

In the UK commercialisation has involved the growth of both private providers of publicly and privately funded care services, especially for the elderly, including residential and home care services. Added to this are developments in purchasing of care services directly by older people and their families, including the employment of care workers in private households (Shutes and Chiatti 2012; UKHCA 2015: 9). Some of these home care services are paid for by local councils – but often delivered by private agencies – to the elderly and to younger disabled adults in their own homes if they qualify through a means-tested assessment. The work includes help in activities such as washing, dressing and eating. Around 60 per cent of independent providers rely on local authorities for more than three-quarters of their business, with almost 15 per cent having local authorities as their only customer. Very little data exists on privately purchased home care (Low Pay Commission 2014/UKHCA 2015).

The reliance on public sector funding in the home care and residential sector is highly significant in relation to wage levels and dependence on migrant workers (Cangiano et al. 2009: 12, 13), especially in a period of austerity, putting downward pressure on pay and working conditions. Improvement to the quality of care, such as increased levels of staff training and qualifications, regulations of care standards and inspection of institutional provision, is carried out by a regulatory body, which itself has been found wanting in relation to staff shortages and weaknesses in consistency, accuracy and timelines of inspection reports (Penningtons 2015).

Private employment agencies are an increasingly important part of the market and have become instrumental in shaping the employment of, and thus the lives of, domestic workers. Agencies collect opinions from their clients about who are the best and worst domestic workers, as well as the workers' own experiences. Using this data, they steer different people towards particular types of work, based on their age, gender and, most importantly, nationality. This pecking order of desired nationalities results in racist hierarchies whereby domestic workers who fall outside these groups are not taken on the books of the agencies, as it

is presumed they could not be placed (Cox 2005: 137–138). This often leaves migrants to find their own work, and indeed the recent waves from Eastern Europe have created a smaller care and cleaning labour market for lower income families. Here we see how preferences of employers are re-shaped parallel with the changes in migration regimes whereby since joining the EU, Bulgarian and Romanian women workers replaced Filipinos as a cheaper and non-organised workforce.

At the time of writing, individuals providing personal domestic services were broadly classified into three categories in British Law: employees, workers and self-employed or independent contractors. According to Kalayaan (2009), a London-based campaigning charity, the unique position migrant care workers occupy within the British social care system is shaped by three distinct factors: non-existence of any definition in policy in relation to 'migrant care worker'; exemption of jobs that involve working for an employer in a private household from employment and discrimination law and third, immigration restrictions which prohibit migrant care workers from attending training courses leading to certification. Successive governments have vacillated on English language training for migrants; under the Labour government pre-2010, it was available free, but under the 2010–2015 coalition it had to be paid for and was then abolished altogether by the Conservative government elected in 2015. This hit women especially as they were two-thirds of learners (Ashworth 2016).

London: The Research

Table 4.1 shows that caring was the main paid work carried out in London, by 60 per cent of the women. This was elder and child care, plus one woman working as a carer of a disabled client. Although they did not dislike the work itself, the women did hate the working conditions of low pay and long hours:

> There is not any work I hate, because I love children very much. May be I can say that I hate to do this as a professional job, or in return for a wage.

Table 4.1 Type of work, London

Type of work	Migrant worker nationality	London
Elder care	Turkish(4); Brazilian(2); Kurdish; Polish; Caribbean; Italian; Spanish; Czech	12
Disabled care	Indian	1
Child care	Kurdish (5); Bulgarian (2); Belgian; Cypriot; Malaysian; Turkish	11
Cleaning	Bulgarian (8); Kurdish (6); Turkish (2)	16
Total		**40**

> Since I am working with an agency my working hours change. Sometime I am asked to work three hours, sometime whole day. I am paid 9 pounds per hour by agency but I know that families are paying 13–14 Pounds to the agency. (Kurdish women, aged 37, divorced, working as an irregular baby sitter via agencies)

Working with children was emotionally rewarding but poorly paid:

> I love nanny job very much, there is nothing I dislike. I am working 42 hours (four days) per week and I'm working only with a single family. (31-year-old Cypriot woman living with a partner, London)

> I love to care for children and to do housework as a professional job. I work between 7am and 6 pm and six days per week. My wage is 1.300 pounds a month. (42 years old, married Bulgarian woman with children)

> I love this job, in fact I am happy for having a job to do! I also love children very much. Since I get jobs from agencies my working times are quite flexible and indefinite. I sometimes work between 8 pm – 11 pm for instance, but times are changing. I receive 9 pounds/hour from agency, if I work independently I receive 8 pounds/hour. Once a client told me that he didn't want to pay 15 pounds to agency, instead he would prefer to pay 12 pounds directly to me. It seems that agencies pay us only 60 per cent of the payment made by clients. (Kurdish, 35 years old, divorced, living alone)

And for some, so was working with older and disabled clients:

> There is not any work that I dislike, because my employer is a 52 year old disabled woman she knows that I'm older than her and I have problems with my back. She never asks me to do hard work. My working hours change, for instance on Mondays I work between 10am and 3 pm; on Tuesdays I start to work at 10am and stop at 10 am on Wednesday. My hourly wage is nine pounds. I'm paid by the Council (Government, because she is disabled) . . . (60 years old, married Indian, no child)

Ten of the 12 women who worked in elderly care reported that although they wanted to work independently from agencies and mediators, this was not easy in a highly competitive labour market. They complained about the fees they had to pay to agencies and the time schedule and the needs of the clients which did not match.

> This makes me stressed and exhausted. Clients' needs are not limited only by their physical needs, they also need verbal therapy, you need to chat, to talk to him/her. However given times are limited because you need to go to other clients on time. It's shift work, I have three shifts changing according to rotation existed in 'Uncharitable Organization'. Sometimes I work between 7.30am and 2.30 pm; sometimes I work between 2.30 pm and 9.30 pm; and also between 9.30 pm and 04.30 am. My hourly wage is 8.80 Pounds. (Turkish elderly care giver, London)

The most common form of paid domestic labour in the UK is the part-time, live-out cleaner who works for a number of households for a few hours a week (Cox 2005: 135–136). In our study, as Table 4.1 shows, in London, nearly half were working mainly as cleaners in private households having found their jobs either through agencies or their community and kinship networks. All were legal immigrants. Mainly Kurdish (six) and Bulgarian (eight), they lived out and worked part-time for a number of households for a few hours each.

They worked long hours and some were unable to visit their home country on holiday because of the demands from their clients, and also because of hardship.

> I have been doing cleaning work for more than six years. I went to Bulgaria only two times in this period. Because every travel to Bulgaria means spending money. However my people do not need to see me more often, what they need is more money to meet their basic needs, so that I'm transferring money to them. Here every day I work in a different house. I do my best to find clients on my own, because agencies make big reductions from our wages. (Bulgarian cleaner, London)

Most of the women had experienced working with private agencies. Their most common complaints about them were of downward pressure on their pay, and pay levels variations as shown by what these women had to say:

From the information provided by the women in the study, we can see quite large variations in pay[3]:

> When I work with agencies working hours and hourly wage are set by the agency itself that my hourly wage is £6. (Bulgarian cleaning worker London)

In the UK many domestic workers are employed informally, either because they receive state-aid or because their immigration status prevents them working in the formal sector. In the interviews some of the women talked about how part of their rental costs were met by the British state or directly by the Queen herself! Some others also explained that they received monetary support from the government for their livelihood and/or for their children if they could prove that their income was really insufficient to survive.

> In the last five and a half years I have been doing care jobs. I am not allowed to work more than 15 hours per week. I work with agencies. My working times are quite flexible and totally depends on the company to

[3] The national minimum wage in 2013 when the London interviews were carried out was £6.31 an hour, and the London Living Wage was £8.80 an hour. See Livingwage Foundation http://www.livingwage.org.uk/ Accessed in October, 2016.

> where and for how many hours they will send me. I made a different full time contract with them. (Czech woman, London)

The testimonies of the Bulgarian domestic workers illustrate the relationship between both migration and economic hardship in their home country and how Bulgarians found jobs via their own network in London. This 'ethnic enclave' (Bloch 2013) also became a means by which this woman aimed to become an employer herself, although to be free from strict control over her labour was at the cost of heavy workloads at private houses:

> I work five days per week but now I am at a turning point that I want to hire cleaning workers instead of doing this job myself. My plan is to find workers who accept to work for me. I will direct them to the clients. I've already started to implement this plan, there are a few women in my portfolio for the moment, they are going and cleaning houses, when they return I pay their wages and keep a fee for myself. Prices are jointly set by me and clients. This is a win-win process where clients, I and my workers become happy in the end. Working hours are quite flexible between both clients and workers. Now on one hand I am going to houses for cleaning work, but I'm also hiring and directing Bulgarian cleaning workers to the clients. If I do cleaning work by myself my wage is £10 because I have fluent English, and I have also learned this job well, I'm a qualified cleaning worker. Sometimes I work only a few hours but I also accept 'end of tenancy' work meaning that I have to work till all work has been completed which may mean working more than ten hours in many cases. (Bulgarian care and domestic worker, London)

This interview was held in a rental room in a south London where the respondent was living with her family; her husband, a six-year-old boy and her mother in law. Actually this was a rented three-storey house with five bedrooms, a shared kitchen and a shared bathroom. The family had recently decided to rent out three rooms upstairs to newly arrived Bulgarian families. A high turnover of these tenants was profitable for the 'landlord' family as the small and insufficient rooms were attractive only for recent Bulgarian migrants to London before they found somewhere more suitable.

Germany/Berlin

Despite the end of the guest worker system in 1973, and regardless of attempts at regulation to reduce immigration, Germany continues to be a destination country for immigrants. Indeed, the contradictions and paradoxes of government policy on migration and domestic care work in the face of the increasing demand for care workers in private homes have led to the development of a large sector of undeclared care work; a 'twilight zone' according to researchers Lutz and Palenga-Mollenbeck (2010: 419). This has also been accompanied by a growth in the number of commercial placement care agencies which operate transnationally.

Two types of services exist within the German domestic work sector: the housekeeper service, which is regulated full-time or part-time employment, and 'house cleaner', which is based on two- to three-hour shifts, one to three times per week. Under this any domestic worker becomes full-time or part-time, and 'mini-jobbers' (an employment form of marginal part-time work that is exempt from social security payments) and trainees can claim both the minimum wage and pension rights. Nonetheless, they are denied protection against dismissals and regulation of working hours, which include working weekends and/or holidays if needed by the household. Hourly paid domestic workers are in a more complex working rights situation, they cannot register as housekeepers and are considered as 'cleaners' (*putzfrau*) as long as they are not employed by a single household as part-time or full-time domestic workers. The housekeeping job is predominantly occupied by working-class German women, while migrant women tend to work as 'cleaners' (Gutierrez-Rodriquez 2010: 80, 81).

In Germany, the strong familial culture places care within the family, with social rejection of putting the elderly into care homes – over 70 per cent of care is provided in the home (Lutz and Palenga-Mollenbeck 2010). Financial resources allocated to assistance programmes for the care of the dependent elderly population have also increased. In attempting to reconcile these conflicts, German legislation on 'care time' moved to promote care through family members with legal

arrangements to allow employees to take time out of their employment to care for elderly relatives (ver.di. 2011: 19). However, such seemingly gender-neutral regulations led to the disproportional involvement of women in care tasks, in turn increasing structural gender inequality in the labour market (Roig 2014: 20,21). The government had hoped to create mini-jobs in private households to provide care, but the policy failed mainly because of the assumption that domestic and care work requires few skills, and these could be easily acquired (Lutz 2007, 2010). This shift from formerly unpaid household domestic work to paid formal/informal work has resulted in an absence of native low-skilled workers in the sector, and large staff shortages (Bednàrik et al. 2013, cited by Lamura et al. 2013: 26). These remain and even with the gap being filled by migrant women, with increasing numbers of Germans unable to afford the growing costs of retirement homes, and an ageing and shrinking population, the number of elderly Germans expected to be sent abroad in the next few years is likely to rise. Previously this 'chronic care crisis' had been mitigated by Eastern Europeans migrating to Germany to care for the country's elderly (The Guardian, 26th December, 2012). Not all Germans are on board with their seniors packing up and leaving however. In a 2014 poll, more than four of every five Germans rejected the idea of elderly citizens spending their final years in Poland or nearby Slovakia, another country to which seniors are moving. Munich's leading newspaper *Suedeutsche* branded the trend as 'gerontologic colonialism and featured a cartoon depicting Germans traveling eastward on walkers, in wheelchairs, and on hospital beds' (Medical Tourism Magazine February 18th: 2014).

In spite of the worker shortages in the domestic care market, as in the UK, in Germany migrant women who are filling the gap are disproportionately in employment, which does not provide social protection such as unemployment and pensions benefits (Frings 2006). Domestic work migration regulations are severe and there are no official quotas or recruitment programmes (Lutz and Palenga-Mollenbeck 2010), seeing domestic work becoming a niche for undocumented workers, with some agencies operating semi-legally. The largest number of migrant women domestic workers are in care work for the elderly, although there are also thousands of young women, predominantly from Eastern Europe,

working as nannies with young children on the au pair scheme (Hess 2005 in Lutz and Palenga-Mollenbeck 2010). Many do not return to their country of origin but stay in their 'host families' when they succeed in legalising their status by registering as students. Migrant domestic workers either live with the family they work for, or they rent their own accommodation, often working for several households at the same time. In Germany, in contrast to other European countries such as Italy and Spain, and like the UK, the 'live-out' employment option is prevalent (Paral 2009).

In Germany, domestic workers are excluded from the occupational health and safety law, although there are general health and safety regulations under common law (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*) which apply to domestic workers (ACTRAV-ITC-ILO 2012: 16).

Nevertheless, the German care market is more regulated in terms of working time for each patient/elderly compared with the UK and Turkey. It lists strictly what kind of care is required by a patient (e.g. hygiene, feeding) and how often and in what time period it is to be provided by the care worker. Each activity is charged for a pre-defined amount of money by the care insurance scheme (*Pflegekasse*). Given this regulation, it becomes obvious that the scope for reducing costs for the German state is limited. According to the German trade union ver.di and representatives of Caritas[4] and professional organisations, the main leverage points in order to maximise profit for private firms are personnel costs. Normally, staff costs in the elderly care sector amount to roughly 70 per cent – some private providers managed to lower them to 50 per cent, by employing underqualified or untrained staff, employing 'mini-jobbers' who can be employed at very low hourly wages, ignoring the legal ratio of fully trained personnel, by exerting time pressure (applies to all provider groups) and, particularly in the case of nursing homes, by contracting out, for example laundry, cleaning, kitchen (Kummerling 2011: 7).

[4] Caritas is a faith organisation which is inspired by the teachings of the Catholic Church and responds practically to humanitarian crises, such as natural disasters, conflict and the effects of climate change (Caritas 2016) http://www.caritas.org/ Accessed in October, 2016.

Germany introduced its first-ever national minimum wage laws in 2015[5] (the year after our research interviews) to better integrate migrant care workers into the German long-term care system (Heureka 2016). And in pursuit of job creation and re-integration of the unemployed on the labour market, some communal administrations have adopted a policy of support for Domestic Service Agencies, which employ care workers on a full-time basis and allocate their working hours to several households (Roig 2014: 13). Overall in the care sector in Germany, as elsewhere, there are many challenges regarding quality, working conditions and availability (Angermann and Eichhorst 2012: 12; Roig 2014: 13).

According to Caritas and ver.di many workers caring for the elderly experience moral conflicts because they see that they cannot perform the kind of care that they perceive is really needed. They have no time to talk to the patients or to listen to their problems. During their training, they are taught that real care work also involves 'relationship building'. Many care workers invest their leisure time in order 'to do care properly'. But this also has its toll; time pressures and the lasting effect of moral conflicts lead to a high burnout rate among care workers of the elderly. Moreover, the special working conditions of peripatetic home carers add to a general feeling of being overburdened. Home care work is basically a very lonely and individualistic job. It takes place in the private home of the patient instead of in an office or a company (Kummerling 2011: 11–13).

Berlin: The Research

As Table 4.2 shows, the women interviewed in Berlin were almost all working to look after the elderly. They were employed on an hourly basis, working in different households and although they are not employed as 'cleaners', cooking, paper work and shopping were among the tasks they were expected to do. All the care workers were employed through agencies.

[5] Set at 8.50 euros an hour, but with many conditions. See Wageindicator.Org http://www.wageindicator.org/main/salary/minimum-wage/germany Accessed in September, 2016.

Table 4.2 Type of work, Berlin

Type of work	Migrant worker nationality	Berlin
Elder care	Bulgaria (3), Eritrea, Iraq, Portuguese, Greece, Poland (2), Montenegro, Kenya, Serbia, Czech, Italy, Cameron, Iran, Ghana, Turkey (13) Kurdish (6)	36
Disabled care	Turkish	1
Child care		–
Cleaning	Serbia, Kosovo, Kurdish	3
Total		**40**

During the Berlin interviews held at the offices of agencies, with the exception of the largest which had a 'rest room' for staff and workers, it was noticeable that there was a constant circulation of care workers who continuously came and went to change the keys of the houses where they worked, and they did not have time to talk with each other. They were just hanging up the key of the previous house and taking another key according to the time schedule of patients planned by the agencies. Some of them had bikes, but many had to walk between patients' houses to save on travel costs. Given the shortages referred to above, it was also noted that during the interviews held in cafes, employers from small home care agencies approached these and other women to try to persuade them to work for them by offering more attractive contracts. However, the women preferred to work for the more established firms instead of the unstable higher wages being offered in the cafe. So it seemed contradictory that the women, all of whom were legal immigrants, individually appeared unable to resist some of the demands put on them:

> I've been doing care work since 2008. I dislike extra work loads. For instance according to our job definition we are responsible i.e. washing the dishes only of our patients. If there are five more people in the same house I see that all the dishes of total six persons are left to me, in fact I am not responsible to wash all dishes but if I refuse to wash others' dishes they soon call the firm and make a complaint against me. I work minimum eight hours and maximum 12 hours. My hourly wage was only 7.50 Euro in the beginning, now I am paid 10 Euros. I have one day's leave in every

> two weeks, so I have to work 14 days without even a single day's leave. (Kurdish care worker interviewed in Berlin)

Those from Serbia, Poland and Turkey had to work through agencies because otherwise it would be hard for them to find a job in the highly competitive German care market.

> Since I came to Berlin I have been doing the same job: house cleaning. I usually work with agencies because otherwise it is hard to find a job. I work eight hours a day and five days a week. I hate cleaning either in clients' houses or in my own house . . . (Serbian cleaning worker/Berlin)

> I did cleaning work for a private firm for 17 years and 28 years in total. There were the keys hanging on the board, we used to take the keys of houses and go to clean. Sometimes I had to clean three houses in a day. (An older Kurdish care worker interviewed in Berlin who currently survives with state social aid)

The majority of the women in Berlin were working in private homes as elder carers, and as this woman explains, there were advantages and disadvantages to working through an agency and being employed direct.

> For one year I have been doing care jobs in Berlin and I work with agencies. Before agencies I was doing private care service which is more advantageous because you don't need to pay for rent or meals but it is much more exhausting as you have to work 24 hours. For the moment my essential task is care work, but I am also asked to do cleaning work of the clients of agency that I don't like. Because people expect you clean a flat in only two hours which is too exhausting. (Bulgarian woman in Berlin)

The care work, the main focus in our research in Berlin, requires no formal qualifications. However, as described by some of our interviewees, it can be experienced as more meaningful to support disabled and older people in their daily lives than other types of unqualified work. They liked this emotional labour with its psychological dynamics related to intense user–care worker relationships. Yet it is also often the only work available (Christensen and Guldwik 2013: 19–20). So while

migrants, including the highly qualified, do this work, it is not part of their career development but can, on the other hand, still represent a positive experience, which contributes to their personal and professional lives. This was the case for women from very different backgrounds – a Bulgarian chemist, a Greek woman, a Polish woman from a marketing background, an uneducated retired Kurdish woman:

> For nine months I have been doing care work in Berlin. For each patient I am responsible for body cleaning, cooking, cleaning of the house, shopping. Since I am doing my job by love there is not any work I dislike. (39-year-old Bulgarian woman, a qualified and experienced chemist)

> I'm doing elderly care for two years and I work with agencies. I work eight hours a day averagely. I'm paid nine Euros per hour. I love all care work without exception; there is no part of my job that I dislike. (High school graduate, aged 22, Greek woman)

Like the woman in London, there were others who aspired to running their own care business:

> I chose this profession willingly, and did a nine month course on care work. There is no work I dislike. But again I would like to open a care firm in near future. (22-year-old, graduated from secondary school, Ghanian woman in Berlin)

Another positive factor in Germany was the offer of meaningful training in the care field, although their qualifications from their home country were not usually valid:

> Since my Montenegro diploma was not accredited by Germany I have to take some courses in order to work in care field. (51-year-old divorced Montenegro woman, Berlin)

> I got a three year diploma on marketing and sales in Poland. It was not a university diploma. Here in Berlin I took a nine months course on elderly care. I work both in elderly care and cleaning houses. (38-year-old Polish woman living with partner)

In some cases such training offered a step on the ladder towards better qualifications and maybe even social mobility:

> I graduated from high school. I am taking courses on care works that I am in a apprenticeship position at the moment. (37-year-old divorced Serbian woman Berlin)

> In 2009 I started to take a course on care work and since 2011 I have been doing care work in private homes. I don't like cleaning baths and toilets. (Turkish elderly care giver in Berlin)

> I don't like ironing work . . . 8 hours a day and 5 days a week. I'm paid 6 Euros because I haven't finished the course yet! As soon as I finish my wage will increase to 8 to 10 Euros. (Cameroonian elderly care giver, Berlin)

As mentioned earlier, the nationalities of the women in Berlin varied, and including the Kurdish women, 17 different countries of origin were represented; Turkey, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Eritrea, Ghana, Iran, Cameroon, Italy, Iraq, Poland, Serbia, Kenya, Montenegro, Kosovo, Greece and Portugal. Our research found that, as elsewhere, the basic features of home care work in Berlin were high time pressure and concentration of work. The women were working under strict time guidelines that often could not be fulfilled. Many of them complained that even the time set for driving from patient to patient was so unrealistic that they were already short of time when they arrived at their first client of the day. Kummerling also notes that some providers are known not to pay for petrol or commuting time, which further lowers the income of care workers (2011: 11–13).

> If I exclude travel time I work seven hours. But every day I have to spend minimum of two hours on the way because patients' houses are not close to each other. My hourly wage is 8 Euros. (Bulgarian care worker interviewed in Berlin)

For some women, a punishing work schedule involved 15-minute stay at each client with an allowance of 30 minutes for travelling between them:

> I have to care for 30 patients within 8 hours working day. This is highly exhausting work. I have a bike, but again I lost time on the way while I'm going to one patient from another one. I work 160 hours a month. (42-year-old, married Bulgarian woman)

This pressure was compounded by the attitudes of the clients and the relationships with the women carers:

> I don't like it when family members expect me to do much more than what I have to do for specific patients. The agency gives us a check list of the work, and written in that list must be done by care staff like me. However when we go to houses we see that many work more than what is on the list. Also patients may behave towards us as though he/she was a boss and we were the slaves. However we know that they are not bosses, because not them but the German state pays our wages via agencies. I really would like people, patients, to respect us. I work 6–7 hours a day and 120 hours a month. (Italian care worker interviewed in Berlin)

Added to the pressures of time and the work, the psychological impact on such workers also takes its toll:

> I think caring for the elderly resembles a bloodsucking vampire because this job absorbs all positive energy we had. I am getting old while I am caring old persons. I've almost forgotten how a young woman lives, thinks and behaves despite I am young physically. Because you care people an entire week who move very slowly, speak very little in a low voice then your motions also get slower, your talks become quiet automatically. Mostly divorced or single women are doing care jobs, even I know male patients who say that if they were my wife I would never allow them to do care work. I hate to touch the beds of patients. (42 years old with bachelor degree, married Turkish care worker in Berlin)

Turkey/Istanbul

International migration of women domestic workers into Turkey can be traced back to the early 1990s. The demand for domestic servants mostly arises in large cities like Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Istanbul is a

'globalising city' where the new cohorts of professional women mainly working in the service sector have triggered the need for domestic workers to do the unpaid domestic work that they no longer can or wish to do themselves. Statistical data on immigrant domestic women workers in Turkey, as elsewhere, is limited, and is an indicator of the invisibility of these women, as well as a lack of interest by the Turkish authorities about the demand and supply for domestic workers (Celik 2005: 67). It is left to researchers such as Ali Tezel to report that there are many foreign-born immigrants who are continuously and regularly working in homes in Istanbul including an estimated one million foreign-born care workers from Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Armenia and Ukraine (Haberturk Daily Newspaper 23rd November 2009).

In Turkey, residence and work permits of migrants are regulated by law. Foreigners can obtain a residence permit if they have a work permit, adequate financial resources to maintain them and no power or intention to disrupt the Turkish public order (Celik 2005: 67). In 2012, a new law restricted to 90 days the length of stay on a tourist visa, meaning that migrants coming by this route had to wait 90 days before attempting to enter Turkey again. This means that migrant females who work in domestic and care services lose their jobs at the end of the 90-day period. The only positive aspect of this bill is that migrants with tourist visas are accepted as job applicants. Employers who are willing to keep up the employment relationship with migrant care workers have to pay an insurance premium to the state which is equal to just over half of the minimum wage and they must pay over the minimum wage for the work itself. Regardless, losing your job means losing the right to reside if you are a migrant. In these ways the Turkish state aims to regulate the migrant labour market by including domestic and care workers within formal market relations. However, migrant workers in this system cannot access the social insurance premiums paid by their employers because of the lack of bilateral agreements between sending countries and the receiving country, namely Turkey (Yalcin 2015: 53).

In Turkey, exclusion of care and domestic workers from legal rights comes mainly through migration policies. Indeed, preferences of employers regarding immigrant domestic workers are mostly based on nationality since their demand for immigrant females from this or that

nation is determined by their level of vulnerability, which in turn depends on a bilateral agreement between sending and receiving states. Until recently, Moldovan immigrants were the most preferred as they had to work under possible threat of deportation. Today immigrants from Turkmenistan and Armenia, working in miserable conditions, have replaced Moldovans.

Care services in Turkey are the responsibility of multiple agencies, government ministries, local authorities and the private sector. In the private sector big conglomerates in the pharmaceutical industry have recently become interested in providing domestic care. There are also small temporary work agencies that rent care and cleaning workers to individual homes and a significant informal market where care and cleaning workers are paid directly by home owners (www.konuthaberleri.com 19th November 2012).

Since familial ties are very strong in Turkey, children usually continue to live with their parents regardless of their age, until they get married. The elderly also live with one of their children. Turks and Kurds show great respect to their elders. Sending an elder parent to a nursing home is not a common practice in Turkey. Traditionally, Turks believe that treating the elderly well is a must (Birbiri 2010). Probably because of this common practice, caring for the elderly in their own homes by migrant care workers seems to be a new phenomenon, which in turn may become the first step towards a more institutional care market in Turkey.[6]

Unlike Germany, Turkey does not have an institutionalised elder care education programme, although a recent protocol signed between a private 'Foundation for Healthy Society' and Ministry of Education

[6] The official health and government organisations in Turkey also see the country developing health tourism by becoming a regional centre of care for the elderly. The argument is that the cost of caring for the elderly and those who are retired due to ill-health can place a heavy burden on families and society in developed countries. The Turkish government plans to provide significant investment opportunities to the local and foreign investors in the tourism sector for the elderly and the disabled. According to the World Ageing Organisation, there are currently 600 million people who are above the age of 65 and this number is expected to reach 2 billion by 2050 (ISPAT 2014 'Healthcare Industry in Turkey' ISPAT/ Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey). This enthusiasm of Turkish government must be considered in connection with the new trend in Germany to send the elderly overseas for care. http://www.invest.gov.tr/en-US/infocenter/publications/Documents/HEALTHCARE.INDUSTRY.pdf Accessed in September, 2016.

can be regarded as the first attempt of Turkish state towards a permanent educational programme for elder care services, including those with Alzheimer's disease (Aslanhan 2015).

Istanbul: The Research

In Istanbul, the majority (25) of women, mostly Kurdish, were doing cleaning work, the 'most dirty work', as shown in Table 4.3. They were working at the luxury houses and villas of the new professional classes. A small number (6) of women were looking after children and nine were caring for the elderly. In some cases, they found themselves also doing cleaning work at the houses where they were hired as carers. The Armenian women worked in the houses of their fellow countrymen, where both language and culture were familiar. Sixteen of the foreign-born women lived in the houses where they worked, and on the whole were comfortable as live-in workers, and for some, because of their undocumented status, they felt protected.

Four Armenian women could not live-in because their employers refused to house them together with their children. While these women were at work, they left their children in an Armenian Church with a basement where children were being schooled by volunteers, and where the interviews with them were also held.

> Cleaning is very difficult work. But again doing cleaning is better than working in hotels, for instance. If I did not have a child I might be able to stay at the house where I work. There are many advantages, for instance,

Table 4.3 Type of work, Istanbul

Type of work	Migrant worker nationality	Istanbul
Elder care	Moldova, Turkmenistan (3), Armenia (4), Georgia	9
Disabled care	–	–
Child care	Moldova (3), Georgia, Turkmenistan, Armenia	6
Cleaning	Turkmenistan, Georgia, Armenia (3), Kurdish (20)	25
Total		**40**

> you do not have to pay for rent or daily allowances. Thus you may save money to transfer to your family. (Armenian woman in Istanbul)

On the other hand, as another Armenian woman described it, as a live-in worker she felt as if she was in a prison:

> Working in house work causes a kind of feeling that you were in prison. I remember, once agency informed me that I had a letter from Armenia. To take my letter I was obliged to go to Agency Office. But my employer told me that I can go and take my letter only on Sunday which was my weekly holiday. However my employer also knew that the Agency Office was closed at weekends. In that case I felt that I was in a prison where I was not allowed to leave. (Armenian domestic worker interviewed in Istanbul)

> I do not like when employers control my work. After I finish they usually accuse me of not working well. In most cases you are hired for child care, you make a contract for this work. But the employer knows that you are undocumented. As soon as you start to work, other house work such as cleaning windows, ironing and cooking get start to be added on the list. You cannot say that this was a violation of contract. So your working hours extend much beyond the hours for baby care work. (Moldovan care worker)

Adding to the very precarious existence of being under constant fear of deportation, long working hours, forced labour, unpaid or incomplete payment of wages and appropriation of their income by their husbands, we can see how hard the life is for a migrant women. In addition, some women who worked in order to buy property had no rights of ownership. Instead, such rights were with the men. Patriarchy controlled these women's lives even from abroad:

> In fact the majority of total cost of our house was paid by my labour. Due to cultural and religious rules house was registered on my husband. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

> My husband is in Turkmenistan and he is jobless. I send all the money I earn to him. Before I migrated to Turkey I was working at a hospital as nurse but again I had to give my salary to my husband. This is very common in my country. (Turkmen woman in Istanbul)

> A few years after I migrated to Istanbul my husband came and visited me. He saw my working and living conditions. He was so happy when he was leaving because he witnessed that I did not have time to go dancing or to cafes. He also made sure that I transfer 90 per cent of what I earn to him, meaning that not only time constraints but also monetary constraints limit me to spend time doing what I want to do. (Moldovan woman in Istanbul)

As already indicated, these women had to transfer all the money they earned to their men in their home countries:

> I renovated our house in Moldova, our kitchen and bathroom became very nice and easy to use thanks to the money I earned here in Istanbul. I transfer all money I earned here to my husband. Now we have car and a house. But all properties are officially registered on my husband, not to me. This is very common in Moldova. This is an important part of our culture. However I don't know what happens if I leave my husband or if he leaves me. Because I have nothing, despite I regularly transfer money to the males in my family. Recently my son and husband asked me to send them more money because they intended to buy a car. They told me that they would buy a car by bank credit which would be paid back via the wage of my daughter and then I would pay to my daughter. Consequently, two women worked to buy a car for two men. (Moldovan female interviewed in Istanbul)

Similarly, a Turkmen woman pointed out that she was transferring money to her children who were planning to buy a house in Turkmenistan, but when her children bought a house it would be registered with her husband, not with her. In Turkmenistan, the government will register a house to a woman only after her husband dies.

Although the Kurdish women were working in daily cleaning jobs in return for a daily wage, and were living in their own homes, they too were bound by patriarchy. They reported that their men would not allow them to work as live-in. Being divorced was not much better either:

> I hate to clean the stairs . . . For baby caring I am working 10–12 hours in a day. For cleaning stairs, I am responsible for cleaning of four apartments

> and each them are being cleaned twice in a week. So I clean stairs eight times in a week. Each cleaning takes one and a half to two hours. Thus I am working approximately 70 hours/per week. If I can find leisure time, I clean my own house, wash my clothes and cook meals for myself. I've never gone to theatre or cinema in my life. I don't know how a cinema was. I see people of my age who are sitting, talking, laughing at cafes which is something I've never done but wish to do. What is more, I was not able to take my daughter to cafes or cinemas. Not only because we don't have money but also because of beliefs that when people see me take my daughter to cinema they will gossip about me and my daughter because I am a divorced woman. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

There seemed to be more freedom for a Georgian woman who now ran her own care business in Turkey. She said that when she first went to Turkey, she worked in a private house caring for an elderly woman. She noticed the increased demand for this work came from middle-class working families, so decided to open a care firm (Kolaylı 2015).

Some of the other women did have positive stories to tell about their work:

> There is no part of my job I dislike. After 8 pm every evening I am free to go my room and watch TV there. In the mornings I need to wake up at 7am because I should prepare the child for school. I work six days in a week. My weekly holiday is sometimes on Sundays, sometimes on Saturdays depending on the programme of employer. (Moldovan woman, Istanbul)

Health and Safety and Domestic Work

In this situation of precarious work and precarious rights, migrant domestic workers become especially vulnerable when it comes to health and safety. Infectious diseases, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs), accidents, injuries, musculoskeletal disorders, violence and drug abuse, all appear to disproportionately affect certain migrant groups compared to local populations. These patterns are likely to be linked to increased exposure to risk factors, either in the country of

origin and/or in European countries where migrants are forced to live and work in poor conditions (Holzmann et al. 2005). Migrants also face other difficulties in accessing health care, with language and literacy by far the biggest obstacle. In addition to language, miscommunication and dissatisfaction stemming from cultural differences and expectations can also contribute to suboptimal care (Mladovsky 2007: 2, 3, 15, 16).

At this stage of the research the women were asked whether they had any sickness or pain generated from their paid domestic work. It was interesting to note that in both London and Berlin, the two common characteristics of those who did *not* complain about any health problems were age and educational background. Those aged under 40 – 44 per cent of the women overall – and who were better educated, especially in relation to care work and its risks, reported fewest health problems. In contrast, 40 women aged over 40, in the three cities said that they had serious pains and health problems generated by their work. These included a painful cracked pelvis, a herniated disk and back surgery (Table 4.4).

In both London and Berlin, 45 per cent of women in each city reported job-related sicknesses, while in Istanbul the rate was much higher, at 70 per cent in all age categories. In Istanbul half of the women said they did not know whether or not they had health and safety protection. These were women who were foreign-born, without good language skills. They were also mainly undocumented workers living in the homes of their employers, and both these characteristics made it difficult for them to socialise with other such workers and find out about the possible health impact of their work. Conversely, the Kurdish women, who lived out in their own homes, had the chance to talk and compare their conditions, sickness and health problems with their job-mates, relatives, friends, to watch TV programmes and so on. The number of those who said 'I don't have any job-related sickness' was fewer in London and Istanbul compared with Berlin, and the reasons were also very similar. Most of them explained that either they were too young to become sick or they were too new in this job, or they were trained against health hazards meaning that the majority of them knew the effects over time of monotonous and hazardous domestic work.

Table 4.4 Health and safety problems of women by age

	London		Berlin		Istanbul		Totals	
Age	Have problems	No problem	Have problems	No problem	Have problems	No problem	Have problems	No problem
18–30	3	3	1	6	3	5	7	14
31–40	4	9	2	6	11	–	17	15
41–50	7	7	10	7	8	6	25	20
51–...	4	–	5	–	6	–	15	–
Sub-total	18	19	18	19	28	11	64	49
No answer	3		3		1		7	
Total	**40**		**40**		**40**		**120**	

London

The health problems reported most often were pain in their feet, arms, back and shoulders due to moving heavy bed-ridden and disabled patients and also walking very long distances between patients' houses. A Turkish women aged 50 in London had strong pains in her legs because she had to walk at least two hours every day as her places of work were usually quite far apart. She worked in three or four different houses every day, for just one hour in each house. She could not afford to travel by underground or bus for such frequent journeys to different work-places three or four times a day. She and many other domestic workers preferred to walk.

When it came to occupational diseases, it was striking to note that during these discussions in the interviews the women were not aware that joining trade unions, besides other benefits, might protect them.

Also in London, a Bulgarian woman reported being exposed to a dangerous level of chemicals while cleaning houses and not being given any protective equipment because she was regarded as 'self-employed'. In order to prevent breathing difficulties, they had to buy and carry with them to work their own protection equipment. This form of pressure can be seen as gender-based 'economic violence', caused by the use of, or withholding of, economic resources as a means of pressure, threat and sanction over individuals, and it is women who are exposed to economic violence most (Yalcin 2015: 53).

> I have asthma, so I have serious attacks, breathless, coughing and etc. Therefore my job is quite risky for my health. (50-year-old Brazilian, London)

In both London and Berlin, most of the women pointed out that the lifting element of their job was damaging their backs. This was particularly a concern among care workers who were required to lift clients who were much heavier than themselves. It is one of the most common causes of back damage across this kind of work; in the UK, for example, each year, over 80,000 nurses injure their backs at work

and 3,600 healthcare workers are forced to retire early. Across the care sector, handling injuries account for over a quarter of all reported injuries to employees (Nursing in practice 2011).

Berlin

In Germany, at the national level, the issue of migrant health and access to health care has not yet been sufficiently developed as a specific policy issue and has also mainly focused on preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Politically, migration itself was a widely neglected policy area until very recently, as Germany 'officially' did not perceive itself as a country where people legitimately migrate to. Also many policy initiatives are quite recent and at national level, the picture is fragmented, partly reflecting the nature of the German health system that tends to delegate responsibilities to the regional and local levels (Mladovsky 2007: 21–22).

The health and safety stories of the women in this study confirmed this situation, with 18 women in Berlin reporting health problems produced by their care and cleaning work.

A woman from the Czech Republic when interviewed laughed and showed her hand which was covered by a bandage. She explained that her hand and also the carpal were badly injured while she was doing cleaning at a home two months previously. When she was asked whether she got medical aid, she said that she was publicly insured but insurance premiums were cut from her wage by the agency she worked for.

A 57-year-old Kurdish cleaning worker reported how attrition was diagnosed on both her knee caps due to mopping the floors on her knees in addition to the calcifications on her shoulders, arms, wrists and fingers. She added that she had also had one of her breasts removed because of breast cancer. As another woman explained:

> I have pains on my arms and shoulders but I think this is normal because most of the clients are bedridden and so we need to straighten them up. (54-year-old Polish woman, Berlin)

As with the women in London, the situation of multiple jobs in different locations took its toll:

> I have strong pains on my knees because I go to six or seven houses every day, I have to walk between underground stations and also I have to climb up and come down ladders inside underground stations. We almost fight against time in order to finish all work given in a day and this heavy workload makes serious troubles on our joints and bones. (Turkish care worker interviewed in Berlin)

This woman's analysis of workers 'shouldering' the risks and outcomes of poor employment practice spoke for most of the women in our study:

> I got sick in my back and arms few times. Although many people in this sector exaggerate the training and courses given to care workers by claiming that care staff are learning how to protect themselves from injuries, they forget about working conditions in private houses. Theory and practice are different. Indeed many care workers are not provided with the necessary equipment at home, but they still have to move and clean patients. Thus in most cases our bodies replace the lack of tools and equipment. By doing that the German state saves money but we lose our health. (Kurdish care worker, Berlin)

Istanbul

Turkey is one of the 48 parties to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, and so is required to be reviewed regularly by the committee (Hurriyet Daily News 8th April 2016). Recent research on immigrant women in Turkey found that if they had problems most would rely on family members/relatives in Istanbul, but emphasised that 'they would take care of their own problems'. Some of the undocumented women were not able to go to the hospital for treatment; but overall, they did seek treatment at private hospitals/doctors (IKGV 2015: 27).

Our findings in Istanbul also confirm Human Resource Development Foundation/IKGV's research that undocumented women avoided going to the doctor for fear of being deported or losing their job.

> I have many pains. But I don't know which one is because of my job. I have pains but I don't know whether I have a sickness or not. Even if I knew that I had a job-related sickness I would tell it neither to my employers nor to my friends. Because, employers may easily find younger and healthier women instead of continuing to employ me. Losing job means returning home for us. (Georgian woman, Istanbul)

Even having public insurance does not protect women in the sort of situation described here:

> Not only do I dislike, but also I am afraid of cleaning windows very much. Three years ago, I was cleaning windows in a flat at 12th floor, imagine that I am out of the window with my entire body at 12th floor! Employer came and asked me where I put my passport, I did not think about it, just answered: there, in my bag. She went there, took my passport and gave it to me by adding that 'do not forget to take your passport with you particularly when you are cleaning windows, just in case, I must guarantee myself'. (Georgian care worker in Istanbul)

Conclusions

With the growth in demand from professional middle-class women now routinely working and being able to afford to employ domestic and care workers for family members, we can increasingly see class divisions among women, particularly in relation to migrant women.

These are increased through regimes of migration which were clearly fluid and precarious in all three countries; generally they were a combination of managed and unmanaged, with the latter winning out. This was partly the result of deliberate strategies by governments which enabled them to manage migration through changing the rules when it suited, especially in the UK and Turkey.

At one level the German regime of domestic work did attempt to regulate the market and working conditions, fund care adequately, principally elder care, and provide training. However, the rigidity of these rules meant that an informal flexible market developed to bridge the gap between the demand for carers and the in-country supply. Inevitably, this was filled by migrant women.

In such systems it is the migrant women who become the losers. They endure not only poor pay and conditions of work but also the stigma and abuse from the syndrome of the 'undocumented migrant', which spills over even when workers are legal. They experience precarious work and working conditions, finding it difficult to gain control themselves. The evidence from our research was that the women often found their work situations harsh and they were pressured and pulled in different directions by agencies, employers and clients. The actual work was often experienced as unrewarding, and in some cases, hateful. However, for some women there was a high level of intrinsic job satisfaction, especially working with children, and through their participation in emotional labour and working with the body – except the woman in Berlin who found working with old bodies made her feel old too. Among the undocumented women in Istanbul living-in made some feel secure, but others were fearful of being found out and deported.

In addition, the long reach of cultural and patriarchal codes was experienced by the women, in particular those who had done sufficiently well to buy their homes back in their country of origin but had to cede ownership and control to male members of their families there.

Overall, the dominant feelings among the women about their situation as migrant domestic workers were negative, even where a shortage of care workers in Berlin led to agency representatives turning up at sites where the migrant women congregated to try to woo them to work for them. The lesson here perhaps is that as individuals the women have little power. In later chapters we explore the options of community and collective organising, including in labour unions, which might give them a more solidaristic existence.

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5

Identity, Belonging, Discrimination, Racism, Sexism and Exclusion

Introduction

So far in the women's stories we have seen some evidence of how popular stereotypes and expectations about migration, migrants, legals, illegals and particular national, gender, ethnic and patriarchal and religious codes set up ascribed identities by which individuals become labelled and are expected to behave. In this chapter we examine these further through interview discussions about their experiences of discrimination in their host cities. In doing so, we can see how the women in our study fit or not, and whether the different cultural traditions naturalising their narratives can also be used as discourses of resistance, in which, for example 'women are the stronger sex' (Yuval-Davis 2006: 199). We are especially keen to acknowledge both how these migrant women self-identify, how they challenge categories of assignment and how actually all these are intricately multi-layered, and also which seem to be dominant and established and which are capable of shifting.

Identity is both rooted in attribution and within self, and is both learned and socially constructed. Each social division has a different ontological basis, which is irreducible to other social divisions. However,

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as Yuval-Davis (2006: 195) maintains, it is equally important to recognise how in concrete experiences of oppression, being oppressed, as a woman, is always woven in with other social divisions, such as among the women in our study, immigration status, race, sexuality, age, nationality, geography and so on. In attempting to unpeel these layers of identity, it is also essential to remember how genderisms and racisms are rooted in specific histories (Essed 2001: 1), in social structures, and how these also affect and are influenced by, women's economic and class positions. Key in this are the women's stories; their narratives. As Spivak has pointed out (Spivak 1988), a narrative of identity is a necessary condition for the existence of agency and subjectivity as well as of the many inter-related positions of the narrator, such as social, economic and national status, attitudes and beliefs (Yuval-Davis 2010: 267), whether explicit or implied.

Gender identity is multi-dimensional, and is increasingly seen as fluid (Butler 1990). It exists in a set of relations with other categories such as class, ethnicity or race. Gender can be theorised as a basic principle of social structure and cultural interpretation, a patterning of difference and domination through distinctions between women and men, which is integral to all social processes. As Acker (1992) discusses, in these ways, sex, sexuality and the body are experienced, become comprehensible, through social practices and processes; they are constituted through gender and, at the same time, help constitute gender (op cit 566). And of course, gender is relational and contingent. As already identified, gender identity is diverse and is also temporal and spatial. In this chapter we examine the intersections involved through the stories of women and their migrations. Although migrant identities might be expected to be shared, and often are, these too are various and complex. They come together in cross-cutting ways for particular individuals and at particular historical moments in particular geographical locations (McDowell 2013). And wherever one looks, gender divisions and patterns of power exist (Acker 1992: 567, Ledwith 2016).

Just as gender identity is relational, so with race and ethnicity. Typically, race has its origins in assignment by others, becoming strongly identified with colonialism, and through forms of constructed 'arbitrary closure' and assigned essentialist characteristics, it becomes an expressive means of exclusion and control. The work of racism has been described

as being directed to secure 'us' over here and 'them' over there, to fix each in its appointed place (Hall and duGay 1996 in Ledwith and Colgan 2002). Ethnicity tends to be self-ascribed, and is not necessarily the same category as race.

These are the features to be found in relation to Kurds in Turkey, where those who have migrated out of the main Kurdish-populated areas to western Turkish cities face increasing discrimination. Recent studies have described an 'atmosphere of pressure' and a 'nationalist backlash' against Kurdish minorities stereotyping Kurds specifically as benefit scroungers and as being disruptive of urban life (Saracoglu 2010). A very recent (at the time of writing) example of unfair treatment of the Kurds was that following the 15th July 2016 coup attempt, Kurdish municipalities were required to replace their elected mayors with trustees appointed by the government, against the will of the Kurdish people (Daily News 2016). The Kurdish issue has been identified as a response to a pincer movement affecting middle-class urban Turks through the convergence of a neo-liberal economic transformation of Turkish cities together with internal displacement of Kurdish migrants into urban areas. Further, a class dimension also emerged in that these sentiments were found to be shared with western Europeans who expressed similarly negative views about Turkish migrants. Indeed, some Turks said that if they were living in Europe, they would react in the same way (op cit: 259). In this Kurdish issue, we can also see how easily ethnic identity comes to be conflated with national identity, although these should not be assumed to be one and the same.

For ethnic group members themselves, ethnicity is seen to be based on self-consciousness, on shared beliefs in common descent, memories or legends of a shared historical past and a cultural focus on symbols which rate as the 'epitome of their peoplehood' (Cornell and Hartman 1998 in Ledwith and Colgan 2002: 7). These representations of position, of history and geography are also about home, about belonging, about emotional attachment. And especially in the case of migrant women, 'belonging becomes an on-going project entailing a sense of hope for the future' (Hage 1997: 103). It links to ideas of what it means to be away from home, but can also involve an imagined affiliation with a distant site where self-realisation and empowerment

may occur (Hannerz 2002). There is also a relationship with the idea of citizenship, not only in the nation state or political sense but, as Yuval-Davis (2011: 6) argues, it can be understood as a dimension of participation and membership of community.

That single categories are not on their own adequate to address the complexities of identity was explained by this woman in Istanbul:

> Yes, I am woman, but I am not only a woman, I am also worker, I am also Kurdish and I am also Alawite.

They are complex categories, which are not all fixed, and are continuously being socially constructed, as we have already identified, through external political, social and economic circumstances. How they intersect with internal identities embedded through memory and through cultural meanings of sexuality, class, gender and ethnicity, and ideological values and religious beliefs is a key part of our investigation, and which we also go on to address in Chapters 6 and 7.

Discrimination

In our research these questions were examined partly through the lens of discrimination. Discrimination is defined under the ILO Convention no. 11 as 'any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation' (ILO) unless based on inherent requirements of the job. EU non-discrimination law prohibits discrimination across a range of contexts and a range of grounds. Generally, the concept of non-discrimination can be described as 'equal treatment' and in the UK law, not less favourable treatment and protections in civic and everyday life; being married or in a civil partnership, in work, education, as a consumer, using public services, buying or renting property, and as a member or guest of a private club (GOV.UK. 2016).

There is also a distinction between direct and indirect discrimination; in relation to migrants, direct discrimination occurs when a person or a group is treated unfavourably only because of their immigrant status. The second refers to a situation where treatment has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging immigrants, and that cannot be justified on other grounds (OECD 2013: 194). Of the three countries in this study, Turkey had the weakest protections against discrimination because a dedicated anti-discrimination law and agency are still lacking (OSCE 2013: 1, 2). One of the main hurdles faced by foreign-born workers in Turkey is the absence of access to work permits, a situation which often results in employers taking advantage of their insecure status (PICUM 2016: 2). Turkish labour migration laws also fail to provide adequate protection for all categories of migrant workers. The migrant women in Istanbul in our study suffered from these exclusions.

Even in countries where protections against discrimination are enshrined in law, this does not prevent them being violated, especially in such a private realm as domestic work. Also, forms of discrimination are slippery, fluid and changeable, and the detection and elimination of discrimination becomes a moving target, with success against one of its forms often merely resulting in the shift to other and perhaps more subtle forms (Gachter 2010: 40). Cultural debates in this field have also changed, particularly in the UK, from strong support for 'multiculturalism' – recognition of existence, identity and rights of multiple cultural and racial groups and their traditions – towards a focus on foregrounding British identity and the need for migrants to integrate with British culture. Similarly in Germany, as when in 2007 its National Integration Plan was announced. In both countries language has become a strong focus of integrationary politics (Gutierrez-Rodriguez 2010: 51, 52).

These changes are illustrated by the increasing racialisation of domestic work alongside migration, moving to a position where it is not only gender but also racial identities that are reproduced through household labour (Anderson (2005). Racialisation has attained new dimensions in the EU, and the intersection of issues around employment, migration, citizenship and women's rights results in the gross exploitation of non-EU as well as EU migrant domestic workers (op cit: 115).

The Research

In this part of our research respondents were asked three questions. The first aimed to understand whether they felt or had been faced with discrimination arising from their own race, nationality or religion while they had been working in private homes. The second question was about the perceptions of the domestic migrant workers regarding their female employers and comparisons between themselves and employers. The third was about their feelings about being migrant domestic workers [see the interview schedule at Appendix 1]. Also, the interview discussions ranged to cover issues of sexual abuse and sexual harassment by employers.

Table 5.1 shows that the women had experienced discrimination on several grounds, with most of them reporting more than one type. Among the non-political Kurdish women, discrimination was not a well-known concept and eight of these women said they did not grasp the word 'discrimination' even after extensive discussions. Instead, they felt sensitive to the way they were treated because of their *nationality*; thus national identity was the core value for them.

In Istanbul, the majority of foreign-born domestic workers interviewed seemed to be under the control of their employers, and were reluctant to talk about discrimination because of living-in at their workplaces. Indeed in almost all cases, the interviews had to be held in the same room as their employer. This situation in itself was evidence of discrimination and oppression, with the women feeling compromised into asserting how good their employers were. Altogether only a third, 40 women in the three cities (16 in Istanbul, 19 in London and 5 in

Table 5.1 Migrant women's reported experiences of types of discrimination

Grounds of discrimination	London	Berlin	Istanbul	Totals
Gender/sex	1	2	–	3
Race	3	1	–	4
Nationality	1	4	6	11
Language	10	13	8	31
Being a migrant	9	19	–	28
Being a domestic worker	4	7	5	16
Total	**28**	**46**	**19**	**93**

Berlin), claimed that they had not experienced any discrimination, although reading between the lines most of them gave clues that they had actually been exposed to various discriminatory behaviour.

Altogether, among the migrant women there was a cluster of ideas expressed that indicated low self-esteem and feelings that they were of low worth. These accorded their hosts superior rights over the subordinate status of migrants that they conferred on themselves. Several of the migrant women considered that German or British women deserved a much better life than migrants because Germany or the UK was their own country and migration was not the fault of the Germans or the British. African women and those from Eastern Europe, especially who had migrated to Germany, said that they are very happy to have a chance to live in such a democratic and well-developed country with a strong infrastructure and welfare policies. For those women who normalised discrimination against migrants: 'Germans have a right to dislike immigrants.' These were complex feelings and some of the women were conflicted:

> If I came to Germany this is my fault not the German people's. So I believe that they deserve everything. If I complain about discrimination I'm free to go back home, nobody has forced me to stay here. None of the immigrants should expect advantages in being an immigrant, because people mostly migrate to escape either from starvation or civil wars in their home countries. It is a matter of life or death. And this fact is known also by big states and their citizens, and all nationals of hosting countries try to exploit these fears of immigrants. Also immigrants always remember the fatal conditions that existed in their own country and so they always feel that they must be thankful that they succeeded to migrate into a rich and peaceful country. Therefore they rarely complain about discrimination or hardships they face with in the host countries. (Cameroonian care worker, Berlin)

Although they were very few in number, there were also women who felt that they were in 'paradise' as was indicated by a Bulgarian woman in London:

> Sometimes I and my children totally forget that we're immigrants, because we're treated as if we were British! Maybe because I'm a well-educated

baby sitter, maybe they have very refined discrimination behaviors that I am not aware of! I don't know. (Bulgarian woman in London)

Being a Migrant

Being a migrant, together with language problems, were the two dominant reasons for feeling discriminated against, and the women in Berlin felt these most, although there were further complexities involved. Migrants generally got a hostile reception and this was seen as normal, and further, migrants from poorer countries were seen as being looked down on:

I am also faced with discrimination but I think this is normal. Because we came and settled in their own country. Of course they don't like us, they are right. (Kurdish woman in Berlin)

Germans do not like Turks, they equate all Turks and hate from us. What is more, immigration can be broken down in that Germans behave very well towards immigrants from rich countries such as France, Italy or the U.S. So this is not something related to being an immigrant, this is something about the country you migrated from. If it is a backward country nobody in hosting country likes you. If you are from a developed country you deserve and receive respect. (Turkish woman in Berlin)

For many migrant women, there were constant feelings of fear and bitterness:

How does this discrimination reflect on my life? Did you ever practice absolute fear? All migrants especially women are living with a fear of being humiliated. This fear affects their entire life so that they hesitate to be visible. They don't want to go and check their children in the schools, they are ashamed for they cannot speak English fluently which is another reason to be insulted, they are scared to apply for jobs not only because their application may be rejected but mainly because they know that they will face discrimination. The only advantage of being immigrant in the past was that we were able to guarantee the future of our children. But today university education in Great Britain is quite costly so that

> immigrants are unlikely to send their children to universities because they are unable to pay 9000 pounds every year. Disadvantages are that you are alienated from everything, you live with a hope that you would go back home one day, you miss your people but you are unable to go and see them every year because flight costs are very high comparing with our income. (Kurdish woman, 47 years old, four children and husband living with her, London)

And humiliation:

> I don't feel any discrimination. But humiliation made by employers that many times they criticise our work does bother me. The only reason why they behave such is to create artificial excuses to pay less while asking us to work more. This is the most difficult part of domestic job mostly done by immigrants at homes. Beside they also put money under seat cushions. This is a security check to see whether shall we pocket it or not. These kind of behaviors are very derogatory. (Georgian woman in Istanbul)

Migrants got the worst jobs, and moreover, discrimination spilled over to their families and more generally in the public sphere:

> Migrant women are given bad jobs that none of German women would like to do. We're exposed to discrimination not only from employers but also from clients. (Turkish woman in Berlin)

> If you migrated one thing is sure, that you are not in a friendly environment. So you are faced with intolerance when you send your children to school, when you are shopping or when you are working with German clients. (Montenegrino woman in Berlin)

Visible difference was also a cause of discrimination experiences:

> I am exposed to discrimination many times, especially because my appearance didn't look like a German's. You make birthday parties for your children and you also invite German children, but their families reject the sending of their children to the birthdays of Montenegrinos. (Divorced Montenegrino woman, 52 years old, living with children, Berlin)

> I am exposed to discrimination. Especially because I am a woman wearing a hijab, I receive quite annoying looks from Germans. (Turkish woman in Berlin)

> Especially when I was seeking a job I am faced with discrimination probably because of my colour. But Germans have a right to dislike immigrants. I don't feel any discrimination. (Cameroonian woman in Berlin)

None of the women in Istanbul claimed to experience discrimination because of their migrant status, although that might have been because half had internal immigrant status and half were undocumented and feared deportation.

Language

Language was a powerful source of discrimination. Although language-based discrimination is especially prevalent in the workplace, it is also common in shopping, housing or schooling, and as we saw in Chapter 4, poor language skills and being a migrant are barriers to getting health care. Language was the issue raised most often as a discriminator, as seen in Table 5.1. It was also complex and not only about discrimination:

> In my first 10 years I had many troubles, economic problems, language, integration into German culture and etc. (Kurdish woman in Berlin)

It impacted too on some women's sense of self and their national identity

> You can never speak a second language fluently and this makes you a second class citizen and causes you to be insulted and shamed in the society you live in. Also, integration to different cultures represents both advantage and disadvantage in that if you fail to integrate you are assumed as a second class citizen. If you successfully integrate then you mostly forget about your own culture. (Turkish woman in Berlin)

> Because of the lack of German language in the beginning I was faced with discrimination. Being an immigrant is really hard! You are far away from your relatives, friends and culture. You miss even speaking in your mother tongue. (Kenyan woman, Berlin)

It was women in London and Berlin who mainly referred to their inability to speak like natives. In the UK, the lack of good English language was the most common form of discrimination reported by the migrant care workers, even if they didn't feel that they personally experienced discrimination. Kurdish and Bulgarian immigrants especially expressed feelings of inferiority, regret and lack of self-confidence, mainly because of their lack of fluent English.

> I am not exposed to discrimination in London. If I knew English it would be much better I think. The lack of language is the only disadvantage for me. (Bulgarian woman, London)

> Put a 47 years old British woman to the center of Sofia, assume that she doesn't speak and understand Bulgarian language, she is alone so that she knows nowhere in Sofia but she is desperate. My position was like that when I migrated to London. So this has nothing to do with being British, German or Bulgarian. This is the natural result of labour migration. I don't feel discriminated. (Divorced Bulgarian female, 53 years old living with her two children, London)

With this woman taking an interestingly different view:

> Despite all disadvantages of being immigrant, I strongly feel that Germans are jealous of us only because migrated people have chance to learn second language to know cultures out of their own culture and etc. (Kurdish woman in Berlin)

This was a perspective shared by several women; that the opportunity to become bi or multi-lingual was a positive aspect of being a migrant:

> The only advantage of being an immigrant is the language, and you gain confidence by expressing yourself in a respected language. (49-year-old Turkish woman with university diploma who migrated to London 23 years ago)

> I may be an immigrant, but I am luckier than British women, because thanks to the immigrant position I am in, I had to learn English. However the British speak only in their mother tongue. (29-year-old Polish woman with university diploma who migrated to London 11 years ago)

Although there were also downsides:

> Good things about being a migrant is to know new cultures and learn a new language; bad things are language differences, visa and work permit problems, lack of knowledge about national labour legislation in the host country. (Georgian woman in Istanbul)

But even language fluency did not protect against other forms of discrimination:

> Especially during telephone conversations despite I don't have an accent and I speak German fluently, as soon as they hear my name they react. I strongly feel this reaction. (Turkish woman in Berlin)

Being a Domestic Worker

Being a domestic worker was felt to be a strong cause of discrimination; it was the third most commonly felt reason.

> Especially in the houses of Turkish families most of the times I am treated like a servant. They always remind me that I must be in their service. (Turkish woman, 37 years old, three children and husband living with her, London)

Some women also reported that they were treated as though they were from the lower classes; they were given separate crockery and cutlery at homes in which they worked. These and other slights added to feelings of humiliation:

> Migrant care and cleaning workers are treated as if they were from bottom classes; I'm given separate plates, forks and glasses at homes where I work.

> In most cases I have to carry my lunch with me. (Brazilian woman, 50 years old, her son and husband living with her, London)

> Employers sometimes have lunch together with me, sometimes separately. They make me feel that I need to know how far I can go. For instance if I ask them which body clothes should be washed they ask me to smell each garment, including dirty socks to decide whether or not to wash. I feel humiliated; I don't want to tell my friends or relatives that I am working at houses. I don't tell anybody including my husband what I am witnessing at private homes. (Kurdish woman, Istanbul)

Cruelty, slavery and second-class citizenship were also deeply felt:

> Not only employers but also staff and patients make discrimination in relation to my religion, my nationality and my gender. Most of the firm owners are males, however the majority of care staff are females. Therefore the relations between employers and workers are much more cruel in domestic and care work sectors than other work relations because gender discrimination is also involved in this job. Firm owners mostly hire immigrant females, and treat them as if they were slaves. Immigrant females are always made feel that they were second class citizens. (Divorced Turkish woman, 38 years old, living with two children, Berlin)

Working out the clues about behaviour and traversing their way around and through relationships with employers and clients was complicated and the cultural codes at play were difficult to read:

> Yes I feel discriminated on grounds of domestic work, let me call it not discrimination, but I am treated differently. British bosses are more relaxed with me during job interviews, I don't know why. This gives me wrong signal in that I expected to be friendly with the bosses. However soon after I started to work the roles changes and they become bosses and I become the employee. (Belgian woman, 47 years old, her child and husband living with her, London)

> Before I got promotion I undertook many different tasks in the same company, I was doing lots of work but it not officially given to me. While I was doing these tasks informally my German boss and German friends, all of them were happy and we had very good relations, we even celebrated

> Christmas together. But one day these tasks were included in formal work schedule and while everyone thought that this new job position would be given to me, surprisingly it was given to a German colleague. (Divorced Turkish woman, 45 years old, living with her son, Berlin)

There were fine lines too to be navigated between different national identities, and different forms of work:

> I am exposed to discrimination every day! German colleagues usually ignore and exclude me not because of the lack of language, because I'm from a backward country, for instance they behave to staffs from other EU countries such as Spain or Italy differently. Also because I'm a temporary worker unlike from the majority of them. There is an invisible hierarchical wall between full timers and temporary workers like me. I'm able to break this wall thanks to my professional status as most care workers do not have a nursing diploma. Another aspect of discrimination is related with the cultural difference between Eastern and Western Germans so that when I work with Eastern German colleagues they offer me coffee, lunch, and inform me about all rules of the firm we work for. If I work with Western Germans they tell me that I have no business drinking coffee or having lunch with them, they even warn me that I must bring my own coffee and meal with me. (Kurdish woman, 46 years old, living apart from her husband, Berlin)

Class differences were also evident:

> Because we are domestic workers, we work in luxury villas nearby to our poor houses, and we see that our employers live a totally different life. These women employers don't have to think about their children because they have care workers. They don't worry about house work because they hire workers like us to do this work, they only think about shopping, fun or career. I feel discrimination every moment. I am treated well as long as I do my job properly and accept to work long hours in return for lower wages. (Kurdish woman, in Istanbul)

Despite their often long service, women found that loyalty was cheap, especially when class was implicated and money became central:

> I always felt myself under the pressure of the employer. Not because I was given meals in kitchen, on the contrary we had lunches together; not because they humiliated me, but because they always made me feel that they were job givers, I was the job receiver. A kind of class difference. I worked in this house for eight years, I grew up their child, from a baby to an eight year old. Then I told my employer that I had to have surgery on my back. She replied two months later by firing me. She hired an Uzbek migrant worker who accepted to work in return for 500 USD ($) however I was being paid 700 USD, thus employer found a chance to save money through our (me and Uzbek worker) labour. Six months ago I had surgery on my back bone, and the employer didn't make even a phone call. However I loved their child just like my own children, I gave my love, energy and all knowledge when I was growing her up. If classes exist for employers, they also exist for laborers. If they expect me to behave properly to my class (working class) this will damage them but not me, because this means that now I strictly calculate my working hours, I will not spend all my energy on their personal work. As we experienced, they can easily replace us with other workers regardless how good we are as workers, and we must also negotiate our wages. In all my working life I've never been treated as migrant, instead I've always been reminded that I belong to the working class. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

And sisterhood among women bosses and workers was there none:

> If you want to know whether I am treated in a friendly way by employers, I would say no. Many times they forget I am also a human just like themselves. Once I remember well that the employer was very irritable, shouting at everything I did. Next week when I went to the same house again of course she didn't offer an apology but she complained about her menstruation periods; totally forgetting that I was also a woman. I also suffer from menstruation periods but nobody tolerates if I shout at others. Is it discrimination? I have to swallow all discriminations and poor treatment if I want to keep the job... For me, a migrant is someone who changes his/her native land only to be able to survive. So, there is nothing good about being an immigrant. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

Race Discrimination

Discrimination against migrants is commonly conflated with skin colour, regardless of the country of origin or where people have been born, and it is often also experienced due to nationality. This woman was born in the UK and was the third generation of women in her family, all working in care and cleaning. Yet she still identified herself as a migrant, and as Caribbean, and she saw how race discrimination affected not only her but the next generation:

> Because they are studying at the same schools, migrants' children feel that they are isolated, alienated and ashamed. I remember well, what happened when I attempted to touch a child's hair at a public park, the lady pulled away the boy, looked at me with anger probably thinking that the black colour of my hand would contaminate the blond hair of her son. (Caribbean woman in London)

Racism was everywhere, not just from employers but also in public places, at churches and parks and gardens. Another woman, with many years in the UK and feeling herself no foreigner, was nevertheless exposed to regular racism:

> On the streets boys call me as 'Paki' they throw stones, despite that I am not a Pakistani. These are only children, but how do they know that they must humiliate migrants? Of course they learn this by seeing and hearing from their parents. Since we migrated many years ago for me, there is no meaning of the concept of being a foreigner. Neither Turkey nor the UK is foreign for me. I belong to everywhere, I feel like that. (Indian care worker, London)

Migration from Eastern European countries to the UK following EU enlargement has also led to racism against other Europeans which seemingly has nothing to do with skin colour:

> There are some jokes about Eastern Europeans, they call all Eastern Europe women 'Polishes', I have many Polish friends I am proud of being with them, but British people humiliate Poles and us. (Czech woman, London)

> Once I was caring for a Turkish man who was from Black Sea region of Turkey which is very famous for nationalist and hostile feelings against Kurds. This patient complained about me to the firm and asked them to send a Turkish care worker. After this I decided to keep my ethnic roots secret from patients. (Divorced Kurdish woman, 49 years old, living with her two children, Berlin)

This is important, especially in the light of the recent negative stereotyping of Kurds discussed earlier, and the 20-year period up to 2001 when any language other than Turkish was prohibited. Indeed, there are still laws that forbid or restrict the use of certain languages such as those used on radio and television (Karimova and Deverell 2001: 6). Members of another national and ethnic group who suffer discrimination in Turkey are Armenians. Although the state respects their minority status, most Turks regard Armenians as foreigners. In addition, they still find it difficult to register their children as Armenians (Karimova and Deverell 2001: 9):

> Do you know what working under discriminatory conditions means for someone undocumented like me who deadly needs money? You hate to go and work there but you do not have any other option. (Armenian woman, Istanbul)

Being an immigrant was difficult in several ways for another Armenian woman. Her previous experience in East Germany many years ago was that as East Germans did not like Russians they were not friendly to Russian migrants either. But despite this intolerance, Russians did not have to fear being deported. In contrast, in Turkey although the people were very friendly, Armenians were not safe. Police often bothered migrants. Undocumented people were scared to even go outside.

> The most difficult thing is the fear of deportation. This makes all immigrants totally open for over exploitation. (Armenian woman in Istanbul)

Racism in Turkey generally appears in the form of negative attitudes and actions by the Turkish state towards people who are not considered ethnically Turkish and such discrimination is predominantly towards

non-Turkish ethnic minorities such as Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Kurds and Zazas. Turkish people tend to behave towards Kurds as if they were not Kurds, but Turks. Not only Turks but also assimilated Kurds fall into the trap of rejection of Kurdish identity.

Sex Discrimination

Sexism and sex discrimination were also alive and well in all three cities. So was sexual harassment, in the homes where they worked, in accommodation and flats.

> Yes I have faced sexual harassment. When I was working at a cafe my boss said he loved me. I had to keep this secret from boy friend. (Turkish woman, London)

> When I arrived in Berlin with my son we didn't have any money and had to stay at a shared flat. One night the owner of the flat wanted to make love with me, of course I rejected him but he chucked us out at midnight. (Divorced Bulgarian woman, 43 years old, living with her son in Berlin)

In many cases, the women were mainly concerned about the response from their male partners, especially the possibility of losing their job because of their partners' sexist attitudes.

> If I was faced with sexual harassment he wouldn't allow me to go to this house again. In fact, it was very hard for me to convince him that I should work outside my home. Therefore I avoid to tell him something which may put my professional work in danger. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

Even to the point of demanding they return to their home country:

> Actually I have not faced with harassment till today. If I did, I would tell that man not to do it once more. But I could never mention it to my husband because he would call me back to Turkmenistan. Because a woman's virtue is very vital for Turkmen male. This is something that

> all Turkmen women have to keep secret since also, the state puts your name onto black list. (Turkmen woman in Istanbul)

This fear of losing their job or the new life they have made, or the repercussions on their relationships, may all have been responsible for the reluctance and obfuscation about the issue in the interviews. Sexism in its various forms was not something the women were very willing to discuss, especially the religious women. It was too personal. The women were even surprised to be asked this question, especially at the moments when male translators were translating. In Istanbul when GY was interviewing the foreign-born women and their female employers were present, she felt that it was impossible for them to talk about sexism.

> Once I was faced with sexual harassment in Turkey but I could tell it to nobody including my parents, sisters, brothers and husband. Because in my culture mostly it is the women who were exposed to harassment are punished, not the men. Therefore I was scared. (Kurdish, Atheist, high school graduate woman in Berlin)

> I would keep it secret from my husband. Because he is very jealous. I would try to solve this problem on my own. (Brazilian woman, London)

Integration?

A further layer of migrant identity and experiences was found among those who were second or even third-generation migrants, like the third-generation Caribbean woman in London referred to earlier. In Berlin, some of the migrant women described themselves as German while native German people defined them as 'foreign Germans'. Yet another category was illustrated by this Turkish woman who had migrated to Berlin when she was a child of 13 and said she had two national identities:

> I belong to both Germany and Turkey. I love Turkey to go to for holidays; I love Germany to work and make money. I am even able to get an edge over my relatives and friends in Turkey. Indeed since they know nothing about our working and living conditions in Germany,

> also because they see us only during holidays they think that we are comfortable and relaxed in this country. This makes them admire to our conditions. Also I am totally free in Germany, if I stayed in Turkey for instance I wouldn't be able even to work. (Turkish care worker, Berlin)

This freedom that some of the women experienced in Europe was also important to those whose native culture was more constraining. The family of a Sunni-Turkish woman who had been born in Berlin said that she was a third-generation migrant woman, and as such was totally independent, which she could not have been in Turkey:

> My family migrated to Berlin three generations before, even my father was born here. Originally we are from Yozgat/Turkey but first in early 1960s my grandfather came to Germany to work. (Turkish-German woman, Berlin)

Overall, in London, 19 women said they had not experienced discrimination compared with five in Berlin and 16 in Istanbul. However, the women often tended to live in their own ethnic enclaves – the Turks and Kurds in London had poor English – where as we have seen cultural codes of male superiority are strong and normalised.

However, for this 50-year-old Eritrean refugee who migrated to Germany in 1995, experiences were very different:

> We neither belong to this country nor to this culture. We're totally alienated. I feel that German patients do not like black care workers and they do not hesitate to make me feel that. I'm quite reluctant to care for German patients, if I have to, I lose my motivation. I'm also afraid about losing my job if complaints are made by German patients against me. If there was no war in Eritrea I wouldn't go to any country. So for me there is nothing good about being migrant. (Eritrean carer in Berlin)

Conclusions

As we set out at the start of the chapter, identities are multiple and complex. Being a migrant had the biggest implications for the women and was closely related to their nationality and ethnicity.

At work and in relation to their legal status, being migrant was an assigned identity, and apart from a small number of women who did not see themselves as immigrants, the women also self-identified as migrant workers. In the public realm, if they were visibly different, such as being women of colour, or maybe wearing particular ethnic clothing for example the women wearing a hijab in Berlin, these were also seen as reasons for being viewed as other.

The women's narratives in this chapter reveal, sometimes shockingly, how maltreated they were in their everyday lives in the casual daily humiliations and exclusions, both in the public domain and also in the more intimate settings of their domestic employment.

How the women felt that they were regarded by their employers was a strong influence on how they felt about being a migrant worker and also about themselves, especially their self-esteem. Language was also hugely significant for the women, and as identified, for example, by the Kenyan woman in Berlin, their level of fluency in the host language shaped their existence as migrants. As their language skills improved, it affected shifts in identity and self-esteem, in turn affecting self-image as a migrant and moving towards integration and belonging. These were complicated and at times, seemingly contradictory, ranging back and forth from experiences and feelings of exclusion to acceptance and integration and back to exclusion.

By teasing out these key aspects of identity: being a migrant worker and being a domestic worker, and seeing how they intersect with other aspects of their lived experiences, we can perhaps understand better how the social construction of identity involves all of these categories. In the next two chapters we do some more peeling off layers of the migrant domestic worker identity, and explore the influence of patriarchal and religious codes on the women's lives.

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6

Gender, Family and Religion

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we explored migrant women's views of themselves, their roles and identity, and in this chapter we move further to find out how these were formed and framed by the gendered power and social relations of three key intersecting regimes of society: the family, religion and paid work. Key research questions focused on these and their inter-relationships, and in this chapter and the next these are explored through the interviews with the women. Our method is informed by the concept of agency and empowerment of women; their ability to make effective choices and transform these into desired outcomes, against conditions that may prohibit agency (Kabeer 1999). Agency is also about more than observable action; it also encompasses the meaning, motivation and purpose that individuals bring into their activity, their *sense* of agency or the power 'within'. While in the social science literature agency tends to be operationalised as decision-making, it can also take a number of other forms, such as bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance as well as more intangible, cognitive processes of reflection and analysis (Kabeer 1999: 438).

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The traditional family is seen to be both a central, enduring and taken-for-granted social institution and also one of the most variable, contested, debated and analysed by scholars, policy makers, special interest groups and family members alike (Ferree 1990, Osmond 1987). Feminist scholars argue that the family is an ideological concept as much as it is an institution and that even its boundedness as a private institution cannot be wholly separated from the public sphere (Collins 1998; Bielby 1999: 391–392). Neither can the structures and ideas of family be separated from religion. As Woodhead (2013: 61) discusses, religion is a constitutive part of the gender order of society as well as a system of gender power in its own right. Not only that, but also to be considered is how religion is mobilised in relation to existing distributions of other systems of gendered power, such as the family, domestic and paid work, the state, male violence and sexuality (see Walby 1990, 1997 in Woodhead 2007). These relationships are complex, are not fixed, not universal, and the forms they take will be contingent on inter-related structures of culture, politics, social relations, economics and history. Thus, while the traditional model of the gender division of labour whereby the role of breadwinner is male and earns the family wage while that of wives is to do domestic labour and care for family members, feminist critiques and cultural difference present substantial variations. The trend in Western European countries has been away from the male breadwinner model and towards that of dual-earner households, especially in the Nordic countries where the state provides comprehensive parental and child care support. In the UK, there is equivocation about both the idea and the practice of dual-earner households, and although the New Labour government (1997–2010) moved in that direction, there remain major deficits in child care and parental support. While public investment in child care in the UK has been higher than in Germany, parental leave in Germany is more equitable, substantial and flexible (Cory and Stirling 2015: 29). Recent German practice has been moving towards the dual-earner model, away from a position where mothers worked part time or even marginally (Blossfeld and Drobnic 2001), what the Max-Planck Institute has referred to as the 'long goodbye to the male breadwinner model' (2011). Such labels are themselves open to

interpretation, and variations in ideology and practice are wide ranging and subject to variations of class, culture, religion and level of education. Maternal breadwinning in the UK and in Germany has been found to be more common among lower-income families, older mothers and mothers of older children, more educated mothers and service and public sector workers (Cory and Stirling 2015: 4, 27). Yet, housework is still commonly seen as the women's realm. In the UK, 70 per cent of all housework is still done by women and nearly two-thirds of all housework are done by women even if they work over 30 hours per week (Daily News 23 July 2013).

While 'progressive secularisation' has become increasingly the norm in Western Europe, Turkey has been moving in the opposite direction. Ostensibly a secular state, the population is overwhelmingly Muslim and as O'Neil and Bilgin comment (2013), the last several decades in Turkey have witnessed a resurgence in Islam, since 2002 especially, under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) which has its roots in Islam (2013: 167). The majority of Turks are adherents of Sunni Islam. Within this tradition, albeit not exclusive to it, are five requirements: the recognition of Allah as the one true god; prayer five times a day; keeping the fast during the month of Ramadan; the giving of alms and the performance of the Hajj. Some of the practicalities of these requirements such as prayer five times a day and keeping the fast may make paid work more difficult, particularly if the workplace is not sympathetic or unwilling to accommodate a worker's religious practice (O'Neil and Bilgin 2013: 168). In Turkey, cultural and religious patriarchy frames gender relations, especially the principle that males should be the head of the family, and that women should be obedient. Seventy five per cent of the Turkish population holds the belief that the household head should be a male and approximately 60 per cent of the population agrees that women should obey their husbands (Ermerak 2013).

In Turkey itself, the male breadwinner model is prevalent, with the social security system based on a normative family model according to which women and unmarried daughters are dependent on the status of the male as head of the family. While Turkey has pursued significant secularising reforms in terms of civil and political rights, including

family law,[1] the persistence of patriarchal relations and traditional division of labour between the sexes is still evident with the dominant religion Islam bearing an important cultural influence, particularly on wealth and gender inequalities (Aybars and Tsarouhas 2010: 749).

Religion, Family and Paid Work

Studies find that religious constraints on women's employment operate especially through their family roles. All major monotheistic religious traditions promote women's familial duties over their public sphere activity (Read 2004: 1042–1043). For example, the Christian Orthodox tradition has been found to have the most conservative views on gender roles, while Protestants are the most liberal (Voicu 2009). Women's relationship with religion and family tends to be centred on the home, preparation of food, and sometimes the natural world, thus reinforcing the gender division of labour which leaves women in most societies with greater responsibility than men for bodily and emotional care, for the maintenance of affective and kin relationships, and for domestic concerns in general (Sered 1994).

In Islamic thought, marriage provides the central concept of organising sexuality. Marriage has historically been seen as a contract between families, not just two individuals (Sered 1994: 578), and where, like in other monotheistic religions, sexual relations are seen primarily as the means of procreation. Thus the symbiotic relationship between religion and familial duties takes on a further dimension when sexuality is added to these intersecting identities. This is highlighted by Boellstorff's (2005) discussion of being Muslim and gay and how gay men understand Islam to emphasise heterosexual marriage, and having children in the marriage, as the only acceptable basis for a pious life. As one of his respondents says:

> Being gay is a big sin in Islam, one of the sins that cannot be forgiven. (Woodhead 2007: 570)

[1] Based on Muslim family law.

Bilancetti (2011) explores 'the *hidden* phenomenon of female homosexuality in Islamic countries, which has been largely denied within literature about Muslim women'. This situation is replicated in practice, through the apparent non-existence of lesbians in Muslim countries, which 'can be related with the prevalent patriarchal structure of such societies, where the status of the woman is mainly defined by her role as wife and mother'. The main argument against female homosexuality in Islamic countries is based on the fact that a lesbian represents the anti-thesis of the ideal Muslim woman: mother and wife (Siraj 2011: 111). Nevertheless, Bilancetti finds, the limited ethnographic data shows how the repressive discourse whereby homosexuality is haram (prohibited) is legitimised by religious leaders (male), and influences the self-perceptions of Muslim lesbians who do not accept their 'sick and sinful' sexual inclinations. She asserts that the spreading intolerance legitimated by repressive laws drives lesbians to settle in Western countries. By doing so, women may then be able to assert their agency, especially in secular societies, although as Yip and Nynas (2013: 9) point out, a secularist perspective is itself guilty of bias and fails to capture the multi-faceted and nuanced nature of how religion, gender and sexuality are lived in everyday life. It overemphasises the structural power of religion and plays down the agency of religious actors for creative resistance transformation on the personal and social levels. It also fails to give due recognition to religiously inspired and religiously informed gender and sexual subjectivities that could be liberating and meaningful on multiple levels.

Notwithstanding such debates, it is no surprise that embedded religious and cultural beliefs and practices are carried by migrants into their new countries and we go on to see how strong and universal gendered family roles remain among the women in this study. The lesbian couple interviewed in London for our research migrated to the UK and continued to practice the traditional home-based gendered division of labour. The Brazilian partner explained that she alone was doing all the housework. Her Italian spouse just smiled and explained that this was normal because when she was kid, her mum was doing everything inside home and breadwinners were males, not women in her religion. In this relationship, therefore, she had put herself into the place of a man. It was evident that

in the perception of this Italian lesbian care worker there was no contradiction between being lesbian or gay and having strong religious affiliation. This is a good example of Yip and Nynas' argument of how religion, gender and sexuality are lived in everyday life, albeit reinforcing traditional gender roles in the family regardless of sexuality. It also contradicts views such as that of Schmitz et al. (2012) who assert that the lesbian or gay parent family presents a family structure alternative to the two-parent male/female model. Accordingly, say Schmitz et al., since household tasks as well as parenting tasks cannot be divided along gender lines, the children from lesbian/gay parent homes learn that these are not gendered activities. In these families, neither power nor nurturing is gendered, even if there is not equality between the parents. Similarly, Wright (1998), in her study on lesbian stepfamilies, found that participants believed they were capable of both mothering and fathering their children. 'Tasks that are often divided on the basis of gender in heterosexual families are assigned [in lesbian step-families] based on preference, ability, or time.' (op cit: 229–230)

In relation to our interest in the way in which women manage these intersections when they migrate, studies of Arab and other middle-eastern communities settled abroad are of significant interest. In her US study of Christian and Muslim Arab American women, Read (2004) found that religion did influence the women, but most important was the degree of religiosity among women in determining women's labour force participation, especially those with children (2004: 1048–1049). Ahmadi's (2003) study of Iranian migrants to Sweden found that exposed to an individualistic ideology and lifestyle in Sweden, the migrants showed a clear tendency to revise their previous holistic way of thinking, especially in regard to sexuality. The traditional, authoritarian, patriarchal sexual relationship among Iranians in Sweden was giving way to more egalitarian relationships, and a relatively strong tendency towards a similarity of views between the sexes regarding sexuality. However, in contrast, the stories told by Akpinar (2003) of two very young immigrant women of Turkish origin, also living in Sweden, showed how control of women is maintained by control of their sexuality, especially when they live in 'immigrant enclaves' which reinforce the dominant cultural norms.

Religion and Women's Lives

Overall, of the 120 women migrants interviewed in the three cities, 83 per cent were from religious backgrounds (see Table 6.1). Of these the biggest group was Muslim, 52 women, and half of these were migrants to Istanbul, which itself is culturally Islamic. Clearly, this closeness of personal religious affiliation with the country to which the women migrated was significant, as was the strength of the women's religious belief and their propensity to practice their religion – their religiosity; the extent to which they upheld the religious and cultural codes. Forty per cent were Christian, usually coming from countries where forms of Christianity were practiced. Twenty of the women described themselves as atheists, largely reacting against religion, but who, as we shall see, were nevertheless still variously influenced by patriarchal and religious codes.

The women's religious affiliations varied across both Islam and Christianity, as shown in Table 6.1, and maybe it is telling that the most liberal strand in Islam, Alawite women, was strongly represented among those in London. They were also Kurds.

Of the four sub-groups of Islam, which the women in the study represent, the Alawite strand is reputedly the most liberal, and as such

Table 6.1 Religious affiliations of migrant women

Religion	London	Berlin	Istanbul	Total	% of Total
Muslim					
Sunni	3	3	15	21	
Shaafii	2	–	4	6	
Alawite	12	6	6	24	
Shiah	–	1	–	1	
Total Muslim	***17***	***10***	***25***	***52***	***43***
Christian					
Catholic	5	9	–	14	
Orthodox	10	7	13	30	
Total Christian	***15***	***16***	***13***	***44***	***37***
Other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Paganism)	2	2	–	4	***3***
Atheists	6	12	2	20	**17**
Total	**40**	**40**	**40**	**120**	**100**

is often seen by the majority Sunnis as outside the faith and non-Muslim in practice. One of the reasons for this prejudice is the role of women in Alawite culture, worshipping side by side with men. Another is the different traditions in fasting and praying. Discriminatory practices by Sunnis are common, such as not eating the food offered by Alawites (since they think they are not hygienic enough), accusing them of immoral behaviour between men and women because their ritual involves both sexes, and not shopping at their stores (Alemdar and Corbacioglu 2010: 118–119).

The second big group of Muslim participants was Sunni women. The followers of Sunni Islam, one of the two major branches of the tradition (the other is Shiah), make up approximately 80 per cent of the Muslim population in the world. Although Sunnis and Shiahs agree on many theological and practical matters, the Sunnis are typically seen as putting more emphasis on the power of God and his determination of human fate, and are often understood to be more inclusive in their definition of what it means to be a Muslim (Patheos 2016).

The six Shaafii women constituted the third group among Islam participants. Shaafiism is one of four schools under Sunni belief. Baghdad and Cairo were the two important centres of the Shaafiis. From these two cities Shaafii teaching spread into various parts of the Islamic world. In the centuries preceding the emergence of the Ottoman Empire, the Shaafiis had acquired supremacy in the central lands of Islam. It has a large following in the following countries: Egypt, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Singapore, Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and among the Kurdish people (Islamic-Laws 2016).

The only Shiah woman in our study was an Iranian participant in Berlin. Significant numbers of Shiahs are found in many countries including Iraq, Pakistan, Albania and Yemen. They make up 90 per cent of the population of Iran, which is the political face of Shiah Islam today. Initially, the difference between Sunni and Shiah was merely a question of who should lead the Muslim community. As time went on, however, the Shiah began to show other preferences (BBC 19 August 2009).

Women from the two Christian strands were either Roman Catholic, whose head is the Pope, or Orthodox which draws on Greek, Middle-Eastern and Slav culture. The Armenian Orthodox community ranks as

the second largest Christian denomination in Turkey. In addition, 7,000 other Armenians belong to an Armenian Catholic Church in Union with Rome, or to various Protestant denominations. The two Christian strands differ mainly in their way of life and workshop. In this study there were 14 Catholic women in London and Berlin and 30 Orthodox women in all three cities.

When we look in more detail at the women's religious affiliations, we can identify the influence of patriarchal religious codes on their beliefs and how these differ by marital situation/identity and variations by city of their migration. There were also variations in the extent of the women's religiosity, which is discussed here and then applied to their views of women's domestic roles in the next chapter. By religiosity we mean how these women define themselves in terms of their relationship with the religions they belonged to, usually through attending their place of worship, and by prayer.

Already we can see in Table 6.2 that location was important, with all but the two atheist women migrants in Istanbul presenting as complying with the orthodoxy of gender roles prescribed by their religion, 15 to a high level. In Istanbul, the influence of the women's own religion – predominantly various strands of Islam, followed by an Orthodox group – combined with the Islamic culture in which they lived formed a strong though complex framework of patriarchal traditions for their lives and work:

> I am Shaafii-Muslim. I was very curious about religion when I was a child. Since my uncle was a prayerman I had a chance to take special courses. And now, I am a strictly religious person. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

However, it is also clear that in many cases the women's religion travelled with them:

> I'm Orthodox/Christian, I'm quite strongly religious, I go to church every Sunday, I pray very often. (Bulgarian woman in Berlin)

> I'm Catholic. I'm a strictly religious person, I go to church every Sunday, I pray every night, I celebrate Easter. (Eritrean woman in Berlin)

Table 6.2 Levels of religiosity among migrant women

Religion	London			Berlin			Istanbul			Total			Total by religion
Muslim	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	
Sunni	–	2	1	1	2	–	7	5	3	8	9	4	21
Shaafii	–	–	2	–	–	–	2	–	2	2	–	4	6
Alawite	1	5	6	–	4	2	2	–	4	3	9	12	24
Shiah	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Total Muslim	***1***	***7***	***9***	***1***	***6***	***3***	***11***	***5***	***9***	***13***	***18***	***21***	***52***
Christian													
Catholic	2	2	1	4	3	2	–	–	–	6	5	3	14
Orthodox	1	6	3	3	2	2	4	3	6	8	11	11	30
Total Christian	***3***	***8***	***4***	***7***	***5***	***4***	***4***	***3***	***6***	***14***	***16***	***14***	***44***
Other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Paganism)	2	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	3	1	–	***4***
Total	**6**	**15**	**13**	**9**	**12**	**7**	**15**	**8**	**15**	**30**	**35**	**35**	**120**
Atheists		**6**			**12**			**2**					**20**

Some found that they were pulled in two directions as they were unable to comply with the demands of their religion, either because of their immigrant status or they were too busy working:

> I am Sunni-Muslim . . . I fully believe in God. I believe my religion. But I cannot fulfil its requirements due to lack of time. (Turkmen woman in Istanbul)

These problems were also experienced by the less religious women:

> I'm Christian-Orthodox, I'm not a strictly religious person. But I was going to church every Sunday when I was in Sofia, now if I want to go Sunday prayers it takes two hours because Orthodox churches are very far from where I live in London. (Bulgarian woman in London)

In London and Berlin secular perspectives lined up more readily with attitudes and gender rights frameworks there, with more egalitarian domestic gender relationships and dual-earner models of work and welfare, and it was in those two cities where most of the atheists were to be found. As we have seen, patriarchal religious codes have powerful controls over sexuality, and for this woman, being atheist and moving to Germany liberated her to follow her own sexual preference:

> In the past I was Catholic, but now I do not believe religions although I believe that something really special, let's say the God, exists. Because I think belonging to this or that religion could be quite problematic especially for my sexual orientation because without exception all religions are homophobic. Even my reason to migrate to Germany was to perform my sexual orientation freely that marriage between lesbians are banned in Italy so I wouldn't be able to live my sexuality if I stayed in Italy. (Italian woman in Berlin)

Indeed, of the Muslim women interviewed in London and Berlin, there were only two women who self-identified as strictly religious compared with 13 women of all the other religions who identified themselves as strictly religious. But among the Christian group of women, seven in Berlin and three in London had maintained their strong religious

affiliations. Overall, the level of religiosity was highest in Istanbul, with 11 Muslim women and four Orthodox defining themselves as strictly religious. Berlin was next with nine women and London with six. Interestingly, the lowest level of loyalty to religion among the Muslim women was with the Alawite women, especially in London.

Such contrasts can also be seen among the Kurdish women in all three cities who, although primarily Muslim, simultaneously and additionally, represented a strand of politicised and relatively independent Islamic women (see Table 2.3 in Chapter 2). Among these, 10 atheist women were mainly from the Kurdish group, and mainly located in Berlin, with three atheists in London and only one in Istanbul.

> I am atheist. My family is Alawite and I grew up in the Alawite culture. Then I personally chose Atheism. I have friends from Imam Preachers School many of them define themselves as atheist. We even have a common joke: those who don't know religious rules become religious, those who know these rules become atheist. (Kurdish woman in London)

A half of all the 20 atheists and two-thirds of the Alawite women were Kurdish and of those Kurdish women who clearly identified as politically active, 6 were in London, 5 in Berlin and 14 in Istanbul; in total 25 of the 39 Kurdish women. This can be linked to the position explained by an Alawite woman interviewed in Berlin; that the daily life of Turkish Alawites closely resembles that of Sunnis, because in Turkey the culture and practice of the Sunni majority strongly impacts on Alawites. This woman added that this was particularly so in Arabic Alawism, a sect of Islam, which was very close to the Sunni belief that Arabic Alawites also perform namaz, fast and pray like Sunnis.

The Kurdish women made up the largest single identifiable group in the study and a third of all the women. These women had a strong Kurdish identity and political consciousness independent from their loyalties to religions. They were politically experienced and organised, and this was consistent across all three cities. They talked of how they had learned to defend their rights in the decades of struggle by the Kurds against the Turkish state in which Kurdish women actively took part. These women talked of how their views about democratic values had

developed/matured through their fights against the assaults of the Turkish state; how in the decades of struggle of the Kurdish people against both feudalism in their territories as well as against the Turkish state they were trained and experienced in issues of gender, equality and democracy and explained how this all generated a strong sense of agency:

> Because we, as Kurdish women suffered most from male dominancy due to late decomposition of feudalism existed in Kurdistan. The process of decomposition of feudalism still continues. However, thanks to the oppression and also because of our women-friendly leader, the consciousness on women rights increased among Kurdish women, particularly for those who are organized in the Party (BDP). (Kurdish woman, Istanbul)

Familial Control over Women's Religious Obligations

Although the majority of the women in our research had migrated away from their families, parental and religious influence was still important. For some, parental religious control had a long reach. When we asked whether their parents abroad checked their performance of religious obligations, a third of the women reported strict parental control, as shown in Table 6.3, which includes the atheists as they are identified by their previous religious affiliations, which they had said they preferred to consider when responding to the research questions on this topic. These women were one Brazilian, two Kurds and two Turks.

The majority of women, two-thirds, regardless of religion, reported no parental or familial control. The higher levels of freedom were evident in London and Berlin, where the majority of the atheist women were also living. Nevertheless, as many as a fifth of the women did report such controls, although this could also be interpreted as parental and familial care and concern generally for their daughters and female kin.

Among those whose parents did not check up on them, there were women who nevertheless maintained their religious beliefs and observance in their new country. For example, a Sunni care worker who was

Table 6.3 Parental control of women's religious obligations

	Parents strictly control					Parents do not control					Total
Cities	Islam	Christian	Others	Atheist	Total	Islam	Christian	Others	Atheist	Total	women
London	2	5	–	1	***8***	14	11	2	5	***32***	40
Berlin	3	2	–	3	***8***	8	13	2	9	***32***	40
Istanbul	16	8	–	1	***25***	3	11	–	1	***15***	40
Total	**21**	**15**	–	**5**	***41***	**25**	**35**	**4**	**15**	***79***	**120**

also married to a Muslim said that she was religious because of her social environment in Berlin:

> No, my parents do not check on me. I'm religious not because of my family, my parents are secular people. I became religious because of my social environment here in Berlin. Even in the past I was dressed like a modern women. (Sunni women, who now wore the hijab, Berlin)

Among those who were still being influenced by their families, six Muslim women in Berlin reported that they were still strictly being checked from Turkey by their parents. Compared with other religions, Islam seems to engender high expectations about continuous practice of religious obligations. An atheist Kurdish woman from Turkey now in Berlin said that although she was 52 years old, her mother still insisted and pushed her to perform namaz.
It was not only Islamic families, which tried to monitor their children:

> My parents very often phone and check whether I am going to church or fulfil my religious obligations. They are scared that I might forget my religion, they even resisted my decision to come to Turkey in the beginning because of religious fears. (Moldovan woman, Istanbul)

In London, only eight migrant women reported that their parents strictly controlled them. An Alawite woman in London said that her parents expected her to fast during the longest 12-day fasts.[2] Similarly, a Polish migrant recounted how her mother often checked whether she went to church every Sunday.

The lesbian Brazilian woman in London, who defined herself as atheist, said that she overcame these controls by lying to her parents. In contrast, her Italian partner who identified herself as strictly religious did not go to her normal Catholic church, but to an Anglican church, since what was important to her parents was not to 'lose her way' or her belief in God.

[2] Based on Muslim family law.

Two women in Berlin reported that their parents regularly checked with them about their religious obligations. Of the non-Muslims, only a Bulgarian (Orthodox) and a Kenyan (Catholic) said that they were strictly checked. All eight defined themselves as strictly religious.

Here we see the religious 'push effect' of migration whereby although, for example, the Turkish Sunni woman did not have a religious background, but because she lived in a religious community in Berlin, she was affected by friends and neighbours and became religious. She was also married to a Muslim. In such cases non-religious migrant females living in cultural or ethnic communities tend to go to mosques or perform Islamic tasks around mosques in order to see and talk with their fellow country women. This moderate Orthodox Moldovan woman also explained why she went to church every Sunday:

> Neither me nor my family are religious . . . Actually I don't go to church either in Moldova nor in Turkey. The only reason of mine to go to church in Istanbul is to chat with Moldovan people. (Moldovan woman, Istanbul)

Conversely, faithful migrant women may experience the 'pull effect' of enjoying the modern lifestyle in their host countries instead of routinely performing religious tasks. A Turkmen woman in Istanbul, who reported that her parents monitored her religious activities, added that sometimes she lied to them:

> They don't have any chance to control me here. And Turkey is also a Muslim country. But when I look at other people here I see that they don't have strong relations with religion. They represent good example in my view. (Turkmen women, Istanbul)

Other women revealed how relatives exerted control through subtle means:

> Yes my family still checks me, but family elders usually do this by using quite refined ways, for instance they do not order or ask directly, instead they tell me what they are doing regarding religious obligations, like sort of reminding me. (Alawite woman, London)

A moderate Sunni Islam woman had a similar story about her family, especially her father's side, putting pressure on her by using an 'oily tongue'.

Not all the women who were interested in religion 'inherited' their interest. This Armenian woman did not define herself as a religious person but she did believe that the condition of being a good woman and a good citizen was to know the Bible.

> I lost my father when I was a child. But neither daddy nor mum were religious persons. My mum even criticized me when I started to work in a church. However I don't define myself as a religious person. I just read bible to become a good woman, good citizen, not for other religious purposes. (Armenian woman, Istanbul)

Underlying some of these discussions, it was possible to discern that parents may be willing to tolerate their daughters omitting the performance of religious tasks if they live abroad, especially taking into account the reasons for migration or the destination country. Religion may not always have been one of their priorities, especially when set against economic well-being. There emerged a sort of trade-off between religion and security made by parents in the women's home countries, especially in those families that had themselves had similar migration experiences in the past; they were able to find empathy with their migrant children.

Conclusions

Through the voices and the stories of the women, it is possible to hear how strongly they were tied to patriarchal and religious codes, which define men as superior and women as subordinate in the family and the household. These tentacles extend to control sexuality, especially in Islam where sex is seen as solely there for procreating children, although this is also a credo of Christian religions. We can see how long a reach these codes have, when women who have moved away as far as Britain and Germany continue to subscribe to these beliefs and practices, and in

some cases being reinforced through familial pressure. Nevertheless, the fact that the women had moved, resettled themselves and their families and found work, is evidence of their agency, and for many, especially the atheists and some of the Kurdish women, they had strong feelings of liberation. Overall though they were the minority and many of the women were not yet ready to challenge patriarchy, or even establish the connections between their position and patriarchy and religion, but neither may this be a priority, especially for newly migrated women. Liberation of sorts may be sufficient at this stage.

Some women took a defensive position by objecting to any possible connection between religion and male dominance. This is quite common in all religions, where the emphasis is on the social traditions and local customs as the main reason behind women's position rather than the religion itself. Secondly, some others asserted that it was not the religion itself, but outdated views of religion, which were responsible for the secondary positions of women, asserting that religions must change according to the rules in contemporary world. And thirdly, some women normalised the subordination of women by arguing that this was fair because males had a more superior position than females, affirming the traditional view of men as heads of their households.

A key factor was the level of religious belief, with those claiming high religiosity more likely to adhere to the traditions discussed whatever the country of migration, and those with low or no religious adherence and belief much more willing to challenge and subvert these patriarchal traditions. These women were also those who travelled furthest to more progressive secular societies where they were more able to exercise agency both at home and in their work. Prominent among them were the Kurdish women, empowered through political struggle to work for gender equality and indeed displaying important feminist perspectives.

Nevertheless, these must continue to be weighed against the power of gendered social relations at work in the key intersecting structures of family and religion, and in the next chapter we explore how they do so when it comes to migrant women's dreams and choices about work.

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7

Family and Gender: Religion and Work

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 6, the influence of religious and cultural codes has a long reach and we now move on to consider this further, first through the lens of women's role in traditional marital relationships and then how these impacted on their jobs and work.

In order to explore the intersecting beliefs and relationships across the religious groupings and in the three cities in the study, the research questions focused on four inter-related issues, and in each situation the relationship with the appropriate religious standpoint was also examined. The aim of these questions was to tease out the women's attitudes and beliefs overall towards domestic gender relations, how they were influenced by their religion, or not, and how they played out in practice.

The issues were:

- Distribution of household tasks by gender
- Who is the breadwinner?
- Who in the family relationship takes priority in their paid work and particularly in a situation of promotion, the man or the woman?

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- Who in the family relationship dominates decision-making on paid work and relationships with collectivism, especially trade unions?

While these four aspects are closely intertwined, we concentrate first on the domestic, then move on to ways in which these impact in the public sphere on jobs, paid work and joining trade unions.

First, to say that concentrating on these issues might imply that all the women were in a family relationship or partnership at the time of the research. They were not, as shown in Table 7.1. However, regardless of marital status and religious belief, evidence of compliance with patriarchal and religious cultural codes remained strong.

As introduced in Chapter 2, the vast majority (92 per cent) of the women had experience of living in some sort of marital relationship or equivalent, the largest group was middle-aged, and two-thirds (79) had children (see Table 2.4). So these were women who were acculturated into traditional gender and familial roles.

Also, in Istanbul, 15 of the women were living in the households where they worked. Of these, seven also had husbands and children who remained living in the country of origin, apart from these women.

Almost half (55) of all the women, regardless of their current marital status, reported that they were always the ones who cared for the children. They also claimed to have the sole responsibility for the housework, but not always willingly:

> Family and home is like a prison for women, it is not a life, it is definitely a prison. [Trinidadian (Caribbean) woman migrant in London]

Table 7.1 Marital status of women

Marital status	All women	%
Single/engaged	10	8
Married	59	49
Living with a partner	12	10
Widowed	5	4
Divorced	34	28
Total	**120**	**100**

Housework, Domestic Gender Relations and Religion

Housework is an issue which goes to the heart of domestic gender relations, and in this study was mapped in each host city by religious code. To explore the intersections involved, first we asked the women about the responsibilities and tasks they were expected to do at home, and secondly, who took on the position of breadwinner in their relationship, according to their respective religion. The responsibilities were: bringing up children, cooking, laundry, cleaning, ironing, caring for elderly parents, helping children to do their homework and teaching the children basic rules of culture and religion. Table 7.2 shows the responses of the women and their interviews elaborate further on the issues.

It is striking to note the strength of patriarchal codes and the resilience in the twenty-first century, of the gendered hegemony of women's domestic role. A large majority, 86 per cent of all the migrant women, irrespective of their religion (or none, including the atheists) and national affiliation, stated that in their religion or culture, housework was women's work, as shown in Table 7.2. For example, in both London and Berlin over three-quarters of the women reported that housework was women's work. Indeed in the interviews, many of the women reminded GY that obeying husbands was among the tasks of their religion. This was especially the case for Muslim women, with 88 per cent confirming women's domestic role. Among those who saw housework as women's work were 15 atheists, for whom patriarchal codes embedded both in their original religion and in society remained powerfully strong even as they challenged these. These women had chosen atheism as a reaction against their 'official' religion, although in the research interviews they said that they preferred to reply to the housework and breadwinner questions from the perspective of their previous religion. In London, all six atheist women, three Kurdish, plus one each, Turkish, Brazilian and Belgian, confirmed that all housework was women's responsibility in their previous religions, as did the women in

Table 7.2 Domestic division of labour by religion and host city

	Housework is the task of women in my religion				Housework is not the task of women in my religion				
Cities	Islam	Christian/ others	Atheist	Total	Islam	Christian/ others	Atheist	Total	Overall Total
London	15	14	6	**35**	1	4	–	**5**	40
Berlin	8	11	11	**30**	3	6	1	**10**	40
Istanbul	23	12	2	**37**	3	–	–	**3**	40
Total	**46**	**37**	**19**	**102 (85%)**	**7**	**10**	**1**	**18 (15%)**	**120**

Istanbul. In Berlin there were 12 atheists, Bulgarian, Greek, Italian, Turkish (6) and Kurdish (3). The view of one of these was that:

> In Islam all houseworks are the tasks of women. However in atheism none of above given tasks are women's tasks. Breadwinners are males in Islam. However there is no such concept in atheism. (Atheist/Turkish woman in Berlin)

Only 18 women altogether said that in their religion/belief housework was not specifically defined as a female role, although all but one of these had had experience of married life and tended to comply with traditional gender roles. Of these, 11 were married, four were divorced and one was living with a partner. The majority of these women lived in Berlin; five in London and only three in Istanbul.

London

In London, all the women born in Islamic countries, except one moderate Sunni, reported that in their religion, housework was women's responsibility. The majority (16 of 20) born in non-Islamic countries said the same. The four women in London who stated that their religion did not specify that housework was women's work were Orthodox, Catholic and Hindu.

With one exception (an Indian woman), three of them argued that although their religion did not require it, in the very olden times women in their culture had nevertheless been expected to do all the housework, although this had changed today:

> I don't think that housework is the task of women in our religion. In the past, women were at home, not because of religion but because of the objective conditions of life, women undertook housework. Similarly going to churches on Sunday is required. My mum and father were always going to church because they were farming, they had enough time to pray, to go to church and so on. But today men and women are working outside together; we don't have time to spend for our religion.

> Therefore religion and culture must change. But breadwinners are still males in our religion too. (Spanish woman in London)

The intersections of religion, culture, and patriarchy present complex and sometimes contradictory realities such as this description of the Alawite position, whereby although the Alawite belief is known as the most moderate sect of Islam:

> Alawites believe that all housework inside the home is defined as the task of women in that women have to serve first the oldest man in her family, second to their husbands, third to their sons. My mum washed the feet of my father, she never used to take a seat at dinners or launches if men were present; the two chicken legs were always given only to the males in my family even if they were little boys. (Kurdish woman in Berlin)

This argument about patriarchal priority was repeated by two women, one Catholic and one Islam Iraqi in Berlin and one Alawite woman in Istanbul.

Berlin

In Berlin generally, quite contradictory answers were given to the question of whether housework was the task of women in the respondents' religions. The most striking was the reaction of women regarding the 'breadwinner' position in couples. With only two exceptions – a Catholic Ghanaian woman and a Pagan woman from the Czech Republic – they all reported that the breadwinner was male in their religion. This contrasted with their responses on the issue of housework, where more of the women, eight, had said that their respective religions specified that housework and waged work should be shared by males and females. As the Catholic Ghanaian care worker explained:

> The task of women at home is to obey husbands, to do all house work inside the home. But the Bible does not say that breadwinners are men, therefore both sexes are breadwinners in the Catholic religion. (Berlin)

This woman's somewhat paradoxical view was echoed by a Pagan care worker from the Czech Republic:

> Pagans are matrilineal, so they are free from patriarchy. Except in the bringing up children, to help them to do their home-work and to train them about their culture, all house work must be shared by men and women in Paganism. However breadwinners are male in Paganism as well.

A Polish care worker in Berlin, defining herself as a moderate Catholic, replied to this question by elaborating on the political and social transformation in Germany since the fall of Berlin Wall:

> Like the world itself, religions are also changing and relaxing. Although still it is women who are responsible to do house work since women are increasingly entering into labour markets men probably feel that they have to help to their wives in doing house work in order to increase the total income of the family. In Germany we must accept that the unification of Eastern and Western parts have had an enormous effect on the religious perception of women because before unification almost all women were the part of labour market in the Eastern part, while the majority of women in the West were sitting at home thanks to the so called benefits inherited from Bismarck period. Since unification completely pulled social gains down more Western women had to enter the labour market and were partly emancipated from religious perceptions just like us, Easterns in the past. But breadwinners are still men, not women.

But not for this woman:

> Legally I am Islam/Sunni, however I define myself as atheist. Where some people say that I respect all beliefs I do not respect any religion because I believe that religions were invented only to make women slaves of men and oppressed slaves of oppressors. (Atheist/Turkish woman in Berlin)

Despite the trajectory towards the model of dual earner in Western Europe discussed in the previous chapter, an overwhelming 98 per cent of the women in all three cities in our study accepted the position of men as breadwinners, regardless of religion and including women who

reported that housework should be shared according to their respective religions. Some atheist interviewees clarified that their answers did not reflect their own standpoint; they just aimed to explain the 'breadwinner' ideology from religious perspectives.

Istanbul

At the Istanbul stage of our research, 37 of the 40 women interviewed agreed overall that housework was defined in their respective religions as women's work. This was not unexpected since 15 were living in the employer's household, making it difficult not to adhere to cultural (and religious) norms of gender roles. However, there were some interesting variations, including within the same strands of their religion and culture.

Some women's responses chimed with other research findings about women reporting that they could only enter the labour force with the consent of a husband or a male sibling (Ermerak 2013: 10), while Ozyegin (2001) comments about domestic service in Turkey that 'Women are excluded from activities that require mobility, flexibility, and independence and provide higher earnings while they are concentrated in those activities that are compatible with their roles within the domestic sphere.'

One Kurdish woman said that when women got married they not only had to accept undertaking all the tasks inside the home, but they also had to accept the authority of the husband. She felt that it was not fair to revolt against this authority as for her, housework included child care, and children were sinless.

Yet others were not so sanguine. This Kurdish woman described the drudgery she experienced:

> I sometimes cry as I do work in my own house. Every morning I get up at 5.30am in order to cook meals for the evening; laundry and cleaning the house. Because I have to depart from home at 8am to go to work outside, and also because of the risk of being late when I am returning home in the evenings I must do all the house work in the early mornings. (Kurdish woman, Istanbul)

Another Kurdish woman, now divorced, remembered how:

> If I held back on house work due to my job he would get angry, probably would beat me. If I told him that I can't sustain to do both he would get angry, probably would beat me. (Kurdish woman, Istanbul)

However, for an Armenian woman, to revolt against housework would bring shame. She asked who would do the work if she stopped? This woman explained how she had to cook meals not only for the family but also for herself; she had to clean house for her husband and children and also for herself. She concluded that housework must be done by women because male and female work were naturally different.

Another Armenian woman prioritised women's work inside the home:

> You may think that university diploma is not necessary for women as their primary role is to work inside home. On the contrary, in Armenian society it is believed that women should become well educated in order to do house work or care work better.

The complexities of gender roles and how they are expressed linguistically were explained by this Turkmenistan/Sunni woman, but whatever the language, patriarchy still ruled:

> There is big gap between men and women in our religion. For instance unlike English, in Turkish there are two pronouns to call someone as 'you', one (siz) is more polite, official and used to express 'respect', the other one (sen) is more common, friendly. In Turkey spouses call each other by the word of 'sen'. However in Turkmenistan women have to call their husband by using 'siz' after they get married. Women are not allowed to use 'sen' except with their own children. All work inside home is defined as the task of women. Men are the breadwinners according to Islam. (Turkmen/Sunni female interviewed in Istanbul)

The 13 Orthodox women interviewed in Istanbul confirmed these traditional domestic gender roles, yet also asserted with some pride that the genders were relatively equal in their home countries.

This woman differentiated between Georgian culture and religion; for her men were not in a superior position. Thus, the conflict between religious belief and practical life becomes insignificant, yet she also wanted to comply with the rules of her religion. In practice, however, she was unable to perform religious tasks as she was scared to go outside because of the fear of deportation:

> All house work tasks are defined as female work in my religion. Despite it is a man's job to earn bread in Georgia as well, mostly women work, not the men. But two sexes are relatively equal in practice. Males are not in a superior position in my religion and country. (Orthodox woman, Istanbul)

The 15 participants who stated that their religion did not say anything about male and female domestic tasks seemed quite annoyed to be asked this question at all. For instance, one Alawite woman said housework must equally be shared by couples, while others argued that all housework was defined as women's in the Alawite religion.

One Alawite woman interviewed in Istanbul agreed with this position, then she changed her mind and said that her religion did not discriminate between the genders in terms of housework. Then she was asked a further question: 'If this is true, aren't Alawite women breaching religious rules by doing all housework on their own?' She answered that this was not a violation because such gender roles depended on a male-dominant society, not the religion. Here, it can be seen that according to her perception, masculinised societal gender codes take precedence over religious rules.

A similar position was also taken by an Indian woman interviewed in London who said that her religion did not specify gendered domestic tasks, rather that *all* housework was normally and naturally women's work, but not because of religion. She also believed that women were much better at housework and were much cleaner than men:

> Men are impatient therefore you cannot expect that men do sensitive tasks better than women. Cooking, laundry, cleaning and to do what is necessary for guests all are women's tasks. All religious books are written by men because women have periods, so they are not clean. That's why only men write religious books.

One little discussed area was women's menstruation, on which religious views seem remarkably similar. In different cultures and languages such as India or Hinduism, or in Turkey, or Islam, menstruating is denoted as 'being unclean' and 'impure' even among women themselves. Indeed, many traditional religions consider menstruation ritually unclean. Thus, it makes sense why many women feel that they do not deserve respect or higher positions than males because they menstruate. But it is equally surprising that these women did not question how can these 'dirty' women do the work which requires cleanliness the most, such as caring for children, the elderly and those with disabilities, cleaning and cooking, while their periods prevent them, for instance, from work for which it is not required to be clean such as writing religious books?

Breadwinning

Although the dual breadwinner pattern is now common in both the UK and Germany, with McDowell identifying a 'the new capitalist mother' (2013: 57), Crul and Mollenkopf (2012) found that among women of Turkish descent in Germany, only half were in such households, with half economically dependent on their spouse. Second-generation women with Turkish parents were much less likely to be in paid work, whether compared with native Germans or with Turkish women in other countries. This was partly due to parental backgrounds whereby immigrant Turkish parents had much less education than Turkish immigrants in some other countries, such as Sweden. Also, the German 'conservative welfare regime' was seen as discouraging mothers to move into paid work (Soehl et al. 2012: 152–154). In Turkey itself, the male breadwinner model is prevalent, with the social security regime based on a normative family model according to which women and unmarried daughters are dependent on the status of the male head of the family. There is no right to parental leave in Turkey, neither paid or unpaid (Moreno 2006).

In general, regardless of what the religious books say, it was clear to these migrant women that paid work was primarily the task of men. To some of the women it was obvious that breadwinners were men because housework was women's work. For these women it was normal and

essential for men to earn the money. Defining men so strongly as breadwinners has a serious impact on women, such as the independent Czech migrant in London who had been trying to earn her own living for the last 15 years. Observing that in the labour market nobody cared about her, she explained her experience on the basis that because men were the breadwinners, the market offered good jobs only to men. Because she was a woman, nobody expected her to bring the bread home.

The breadwinner model assumes that as men are already earning a family wage, women can be paid less. One of the Kurdish Alawite women in London confirmed that this played out in her faith, adding that women cannot object when they are asked to work longer hours. This woman also stated that in her view, if a woman's labour is assumed as secondary, her primary target becomes keeping her job rather than fighting for better conditions of employment.

A Kurdish woman in Berlin explained that in the Alawite faith men and woman were equal and so housework should be shared equally between them, but breadwinners were males. She also explained the reasons for this thinking were as a result of insufficient demographic representation of Alawites in Turkey, who lived within the more restrictive Sunni culture. Accommodation seemed to have been reached between the two strands, and unlike Sunnis, Alawites do not fast in Ramadan, they do not perform namaz (a form of ritualistic prayer) and so on. Women have a more reputable place in Alawite society compared with other sects of Islam.

Overall however, and as shown in Table 7.3, the justifications of non-Islam respondents were not so different from Islamic ones:

> All housework is the task only of women. Also breadwinners are males in Catholic religion. But all these are fair and normal. Because males have a more superior position than females. (Cameroonian Catholic woman, Berlin)

In Berlin, the Ghanaian woman was the only exception, reporting as above, that the Bible did not say that breadwinners are men, therefore both sexes were breadwinners in her Catholic religion.

Table 7.3 Breadwinner position by gender

	Breadwinner is male in my religion			Breadwinner is not male in my religion			
Cities	Islam	Christian/Other religions	Total	Islam	Christian/Other religions	Total	General total
London	20	18	**38**	–	2	**2**	40
Berlin	22	17	**39**	–	1	**1**	40
Istanbul	26	13	**39**	1	–	**1**	40
Total	**68**	**48**	**116**	**1**	**3**	**4**	**120**

The majority of Orthodox respondents interviewed in the three cities were from former Soviet countries and might have been expected to see breadwinning as a dual role. However, they also identified men as breadwinners, both in their religion and in their material experiences. As a Moldovan woman in Istanbul explained, these days it was mostly women bringing home the bread despite its going against the grain of the stereotypical breadwinner norm:

> If economic conditions impose themselves women have to work despite that they know that they are not responsible for the livelihood of the family according to their religion. In the early times of my migration to Turkey, my husband seemed more dependent on religious and cultural codes. He tried to prevent my coming to Turkey because he took my working abroad as a hit to his pride. But later on, especially after I started to transfer money to my family he soon adjusted himself to the rules of real life instead our religion. (Moldovan woman, Istanbul)

It seems that this consent was not sufficient to change the nature of patriarchal–religious relationship in that his wife must also transfer all the money she earned to him. This perverse situation was well illustrated by another women's comments:

> Although I think differently about being breadwinner, again it is dictated by religion and culture that only men are breadwinners. I don't understand this . . . Money is the same, but males' money is more valuable than the money earned by women. (Kurdish/Shafia woman, Istanbul)

Prioritising Careers by Gender

These arguments about gendered superior and subordinate roles also played out when it came to decisions about paid work outside the home. To test the attitudes and beliefs already discussed, interviewees were asked: *Imagine that your education, seniority, abilities and wage are same as your husband's. You are working in the same workplace, doing same job.*

Table 7.4 Whose job promotion do you prefer?

Promotion preference	London	Berlin	Istanbul	Total
My own promotion makes me happy	16	15	16	47 (39%)
Partner's promotion makes me happy	20	21	22	63 (53%)
Both	4	4	2	10 (8%)
Total	**40**	**40**	**40**	**120 (100%)**

One day the boss comes and says that he would promote either you or your husband and would double the wage of the promoted one. Whose promotion makes you happier? Yours or your husband's?

If we see the interviews around this issue as a proxy for the women's feelings of independence and self-worth, we can see that the group of migrant women across all three cities was fairly evenly split. Nearly half (48 per cent) of all the women preferred their own promotion or an equitable situation of promotion for both partners, whereas just over half or, 53 per cent of them said that they would prioritise their partner's job promotion, see Table 7.4.

Marital status was an important differentiator of agency in the idea of who in the family partnership should take priority in promotion at work, and it is telling to see how universal gendered family roles remain. Among those in all three cities who were married, or had been previously, just over half prioritised their male partner. Of these, the most 'husbandist' group were those who were widowed (four of five), a surprising six out of 10 single women, but fewer than half of those who were divorced or living with a partner. Among the women in Berlin, host city to half of all the divorced women, only five (out of 17, or 29 per cent) would give preference to their partners' promotion. It is likely that these differences in Berlin can be explained not only because it had biggest and oldest labour market for immigrants but also possibly because of the wider emancipatory impact of unification of east and west Berlin/Germany.

On this issue of promotion preference, it also became clear that religion and religious codes of belief and behaviour were influential, as shown in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5 Promotion preferences by religion

Religion	London		Berlin		Istanbul		Total	
	Partner's promotion	Totals per Religion	Partner's promotion	Totals per Religion	Partner's promotion	Totals per Religion	Partner's promotion	Total
Muslim								
Sunni	3	**3**	2	**3**	7	**15**	**12**	**21**
Shaafii	–	**2**	–	–	–	**4**	–	**6**
Alawite	**7**	**12**	5	**6**	3	**6**	**15**	**24**
Shiah	–	–	–	**1**	–	–	–	**1**
Total Muslim	***10***	***17***	***7***	***10***	***10***	***25***	***27***	***52***
Christian								
Catholic	5	**5**	7	**9**	–	–	**12**	**14**
Orthodox	3	**10**	4	**7**	11	**13**	**18**	**30**
Total Christian	***8***	***15***	***11***	***16***	***11***	***13***	***30***	***44***
Other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Paganism)	2	**2**	1	**2**	–	–	**3**	**4**
Atheist	–	**6**	2	**12**	1	**2**	**3**	**20**
Total	**20**	**40**	**21**	**40**	**22**	**40**	**63**	**120**

Those who gave most precedence to their partner's promotion tended to be highly religious; six of the 20 women in London, five in Berlin and 12 women in Istanbul. Among the women of moderate religiosity who preferred their partner's promotion were 15 in London, 12 in Berlin and eight in Istanbul. Thus, a total of 70 per cent or more than two-thirds of the 63 women who explained that they would prefer their partners' promotion were either strictly religious or moderately faithful. This influence increased when we asked the views of women who had migrated to Istanbul – itself located within a culturally Islamic country. In Istanbul 85 per cent of Orthodox women stated that they would prefer their partner's promotion against 30 per cent in London and 57 per cent in Berlin. In Istanbul too, an atheist woman seemed to comply with the dominant Turkish culture, despite her lack of a faith, by putting her husband's promotion first, justifying this by explaining that if husbands hold more powerful, more superior positions than their wives they will become happier.

Prioritising Self

The women who prioritised their own promotion can be seen to be more independent of the religious and patriarchal codes that were working so strongly on the identities of women whose stories are told above.

The Kurdish women were outstanding in this respect; they made up the largest single identifiable group in the study and a third of all the women. In Istanbul, 70 per cent (14) of the Kurds prioritised their own promotion, as did 12 in London and five in Berlin. These women were more independent and were interested in their own material prospects rather than those of their partners. One Kurdish woman interviewed in Istanbul believed that her job promotion would help her to leave her husband. This woman had maintained her marriage only because she did not have the ability to survive on her own, adding that if she had chance to have more money she might break her chains. The Alawite-Kurdish women who were also politically active displayed similarly independent attitudes, articulating the view that they would prioritise their own promotion regardless of how religious they were. Yet

although the Alawite-Muslim strand is reputedly the most liberal, 15 Alawite women in total, nevertheless, reported giving preference to their husbands' promotion.

As might be expected, 17 of a total 20 atheists prioritised themselves in getting promotion, although two of 12 in Berlin (one being a lesbian) and one of two in Istanbul prioritised their partners. It was apparent that the actual lives of these two women, from Iraq and Iran, were shaped by cultural and religious codes they brought from their countries of origin. The Iranian woman stated that she would prefer her own promotion despite previously revealing that her husband became angry if she did not do the housework. She added that her marriage relationship was quite traditional and housework was her responsibility regardless of whether or not she was also in paid work outside. Similarly, an Iraqi woman whose preference would be for her own promotion, told how her husband would tell her to leave her job rather than complain about doing the housework. The second atheist woman in Berlin thought that her husband's promotion might help him to overcome his inferiority complex which she suspected originated from the fact that she was always in senior job positions compared with him.

The migrant women in Berlin seemed more aware of gender inequalities in their relations with male partners, as described by a Turkish migrant woman there who thought that men tended to prevent women's self-empowerment by using quite subtle methods without causing direct clashes:

> He asks me to bring fruit, desserts or a newspaper as soon as I sit to study at nights despite that he well knows that I have been putting in a great effort to be able to finish my course while I have also been working as a domestic carer. I am almost sure that my partner doesn't want me to get a diploma.

Among the interviewees there were three lesbian women; a married couple in London (Brazilian and Italian) and one married in Berlin (Italian), all working in domestic care. The Italian lesbian in Berlin noted that she loved her job and her current job position and therefore

she did not want to be promoted. What was more striking was that the Brazilian lesbian spouse in London said that she would be happy for either herself or partner to be promoted, while her Italian partner was clearly saying that she would prefer her own promotion. This woman described herself as quite jealous and selfish, adding that she would feel very bad if she was not promoted and her partner was. Perversely, this woman defined herself as strictly religious, while the other two lesbians described themselves as atheists.

Overall, however, it was disappointing to see the gender orthodoxy repeatedly reflected in the women's narratives. In Istanbul the majority, 80 per cent (16 of 20) foreign-born women were convinced that men deserved more respect than women. Regardless of religious affiliation, the most common justification for preferring their partner's promotion was based on a religious belief, saying that a woman has to respect a man, and a third (24 of 63) of the women who preferred their partner's promotion emphasised that women had to respect men even at the cost of self-sacrifice:

> In my culture, women have to respect men. They are superior over us. He should be happy, because the peace in family relations depends on the happiness of men. When he becomes happy, all family members automatically become happy. We learned this from our forefathers, this is a significant part of our religion. (Turkish woman, Istanbul)

Some of the women with a strong religious affiliation were not only quite sure about both the superiority of their husbands/partners, but also their own lack of ability.

> I prefer my husband's promotion. Because I'm sure that he does this post much better than me. (Ghanaian woman, Berlin)

> He is German, he knows everything much better than me I think he deserves such a higher position not me. (Kenyan woman, Berlin)

These answers from African women expose how power relations between nation states also shape the view of life of migrant women labourers. The Kenyan woman care worker felt that people from advanced capitalist

states knew and did everything perfectly, leading her to translate the lower status of national states into lower status of their citizens.

Some women also talked about how women in general wanted to have men who were more powerful than themselves. This view stemmed from their own experiences of how when their men were unhappy they reflected these feelings onto their female partners:

> My partner's promotion makes me happier. I love to have a very powerful man who is able to manage me. Therefore the promotion of my husband makes me happy since he would have a superior position over me. Otherwise, if I get a promotion this is big shame for me that I will have a superior position over my husband. This is not good for my society and culture as well. (Armenian woman, Istanbul)

But this was not always positive. A divorced Bulgarian woman interviewed in London talked of preferring her partner's promotion, because otherwise he would be very angry, unhappy and upset and then all his negative feelings would be transferred onto family relations. Others made similar justifications such as keeping the marriage healthy; that men knew everything better than women; or that the woman's promotion might cause feelings of inferiority by the male partner which would badly affect the relationship.

A small number of women (five) thought that job promotion was not good for women because of overload. The Czech woman working in Berlin took the view that women were too busy to take on promotion because of the accompanying increased workload and responsibilities when women already had lots to do at home. For this group it was women's sole responsibility to do the housework. Similar attitudes and beliefs were shown by a small number of women migrants in Istanbul. Among foreign-born women in Istanbul only one respondent theoretically prioritised her own job promotion over that of her partner. She was young, single and recently graduated from university in Georgia. The other 19 foreign-born respondents gave similar reasons for preferring their partner's promotion; women had to respect men because men had a superior position in their respective religions; peace in family relations depended on the happiness of men, not women. Others referred to the

possibility of a job promotion for themselves being seen by their men as humiliating; promotion was seen to be more important for men than for women. For these women the idea that they themselves might get promotion was impossible; they were surprised to be asked such a question, and were often unwilling to answer it.

Women's Agency in Job-Related Decisions

The women's views about gender relations in their partnerships illustrated here in relation to promotion were tested further through questioning on the way in which decisions about jobs were made in these relationships. Once again the whole group of women was fairly evenly split, with just over half saying that either their partners interfered in job-related decisions or they had to get permission from their partners if they wanted to change jobs. In this, Istanbul was well ahead with 25 in total 40 women reporting dependence on their partner in this respect. Almost half were Muslims, including nine Kurdish women and 16 were foreign-born women of different religions. When we came to look at the women who expressed a dream of independence, of preference for their own promotion over that of their partner, it was startling to see that 60 per cent (34) said that nevertheless, their partners interfered with their job-related decisions. Although these included politically conscious Kurdish women who had expressed dreams of liberation, this did not mean that they were able to transform their relationship with their male partners in the domestic realm. Nevertheless, forms of independence were stronger among other women in Berlin and London as illustrated by the data in Table 7.6, which shows that none of the Orthodox women in London and only four of the atheist women in Berlin stated that their partners obstructed their job-related decisions.

There are also some interesting contrasts here; all the Orthodox women were from former Soviet States or the Eastern Bloc. The Armenian women had also lived within a former Soviet State, yet seven of the eight Armenian women interviewed in Istanbul positioned themselves within a more religious and patriarchal realm. So while both groups of women had experienced the Soviet emancipatory environment in terms of

Table 7.6 Partner's interference in job-related decisions of women who prefer their own promotion, by religion

	London		Berlin		Istanbul		TOTALS	
Religion	Decisions interfered with by partner	Prefer own promotion	Decisions interfered with by partner	Prefer own promotion	Decisions interfered with by partner	Prefer own promotion	No. of women decisions interfered with by partner	Total no. of women who prefer own promotion
Muslim								
Sunni	5		–		4		9	
Shaafii	–	2	–	–	1	4	1	6
Alawite	5	5	1	1	3	3	9	9
Shiah	–	–	1	1	–	–	1	1
Total Muslim	***10***	***7***	***2***	***2***	***8***	***7***	***20***	***16***
Christian								
Catholic	1	–	1	2	–	–	2	2
Orthodox	–	7	2	3	1	2	3	12
Total Christian	***1***	***7***	***3***	***5***	***1***	***2***	***5***	***14***
Other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Paganism)	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	**1**
Atheists	**4**	**6**	**4**	**10**	**1**	**1**	**9**	**17**
Total	**15**	**20**	**9**	**18**	**10**	**10**	**34**	**48**

sexual and gender issues, each was now living in a new and different host city, each with different cultures.

Living in London and Berlin could be said to be emancipatory in relation to gender, while Istanbul was imbued with Islamic patriarchal cultural codes. In addition, the complexities of Armenian identity within a post-Soviet cultural space but also within a Turkish one where the re-animation of the genocide discourse may also have impacted on a seeking for a 'true Armenianness' (Antonyan 2011: 316).

Methods of control used by male partners varied; in London a Belgian woman explained that her husband pushed her to accept offers of paid work that she disliked, and discouraged her in relation to jobs she really wanted to do. She saw this as psychological manipulation. A Kurdish Muslim woman in London described how her husband told her to leave her paid job if she was going to complain about doing both a job and her housework. A divorced Kurdish woman reported that her husband pulled faces when he couldn't find meals in the evenings or when he saw that his trousers weren't ironed:

> He didn't have any tolerance for such complaints, and the easiest way for him to escape was to tell me 'OK, just stop working'. Because he was so sure that I would never want to leave working outside which was the only way for my emancipation.

A Turkmen woman in Istanbul shared a recent experience of her married sister who came to Turkey to work but soon afterwards her husband came and took her back to Turkmenistan.

> My sister was so sad when she was going back, but she couldn't resist. However when she went back to Turkmenistan she couldn't find a job, and as her husband was already jobless they faced a serious survival problem. The only remedy for them was to go and ask the family for support. This all meant that I was obliged to help my sister and her husband, making myself the provider, out of my sole wage, for a total of three families back in Turkmenistan.[1] This is a very common situation in

[1] These families did have some paid income but too low to survive.

> my country of origin, and it had made me decide not to get married. In Turkmenistan married men also interfere in how their wives spend the money they earn; the women usually giving all their money to the husband, properties are registered only with men. In the past my mum was working night shifts, but only on condition that she took her two children with her to work. (Turkmen woman, Istanbul)

Surprisingly perhaps, only 30 per cent of the 20 atheist women, two in Istanbul, two in London and two in Berlin reported that their partners did not interfere with job-related decisions and that they had an equal and democratic relationship with their partners. By contrast, nearly half of the atheist women said they were beholden to their male partners, four in London, four in Berlin and one in Istanbul. For example, the Moldovan migrant in Istanbul whose husband loved money, and the divorced Eritrean woman in Berlin whose ex-husband was so keen on money that he would push her to accept any job.

In these ways it can be seen that while usually it might not have been acceptable for women to take steps to challenge these codes of patriarchy, for their men, when the position was reversed, pragmatism kicked in.

Women's Collectivism, Patriarchy and Religiosity

We were also interested to explore how far these patriarchal and religious codes extended among the women migrants to another sphere related to work, and which could further claim the allegiance of women as well as also being in the public domain; collective organising and trade union membership. We might have expected that the most liberated in this respect would be the Kurdish women as we already know that they made up half of the atheists, and were the most politicised women in the study. Indeed, among the Kurdish women the majority interviewed in Istanbul said they were members of the BDP/Peace and Democracy Party implying they considered it their right to organise collectively. Maybe too, that because of these positions, resisting religious and patriarchal rules was easier even if they did define themselves as religious.

Yet some did report that they needed consent from their male kin before joining a trade union. On the other hand, they said they required no such permission to join demonstrations and May Day celebrations – traditionally Labour Day.

> I have to ask permission from my husband before I am unionised. If he says no, I don't become member in TUs. Because I don't want to cause any uneasiness at home. I always take part in May Days. I also go to Newroz celebrations. And I don't need to get permission to take part in May Day or Newroz from my husband. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

Across all of London, Berlin and Istanbul, half of the women (60) interviewed reported that their religion would oblige them to get consent from their partner or kinsmen before joining a union, see Table 7.7. Also, given their views expressed earlier that obeying husbands was integral to women's role, it is likely that they would automatically see the necessity of getting husbands' consent to join a union. However, there were bigger differences among those claiming high religiosity, with London having the smallest number of highly religious women, only three, Berlin nine, and Istanbul 11 – unsurprisingly as over 40 per cent of the Muslim women in the study lived in Istanbul, and as we have already discussed, Turkey is a country with a strong patriarchal culture.

In one case there was a perverse situation, this highly religious woman was forced to join a union by her husband even though it was against her interpretation of her faith and she was strongly against trade unions:

> Because of my religion I wouldn't become member in the unions, but my husband made me go through for unionisation. (Catholic Brazilian woman in London)

The lowest levels of religiosity overall were in London and Berlin, and Berlin was where the largest group of atheist women (12) now lived. Even if not directly influenced by religion, the atheists were constrained by the patriarchal culture which saturated their communities. Six of the 20 said that they would need consent from their male kin should they wish to join a union; three in London and three in Berlin.

Table 7.7 Levels of religiosity among women needing consent from kinsmen to join labour unions (excluding atheists)

Religion	London			Berlin			Istanbul			Sub-total			
Muslim	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	Total
Sunni	–	2	1	1	1	1	5	2	3	6	5	5	16
Shaafii	–	–	–				2	–	–	2	–	–	2
Alawite	1	3	2	–	4	2	1	–	2	2	7	6	15
Shiah	–	–	–			1	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Total Muslim	***1***	***5***	***3***	***1***	***5***	***4***	***8***	***2***	***5***	***10***	***12***	***12***	***34***
Christian													
Catholic	–	–	1	2	1	1	–	–	–	2	1	2	5
Orthodox	1	4	2	3	–	1	3	–	6	7	4	9	20
Total Christian	***1***	***4***	***3***	***5***	***1***	***2***	***3***		***6***	***9***	***5***	***11***	***25***
Other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Paganism)	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
Total	**3**	**9**	**6**	**6**	**6**	**6**	**11**	**2**	**11**	**20**	**17**	**23**	**60**

From the data and the women's narratives here, it seems clear how strongly patriarchal and religious codes inform one another and stretch far into the lives of the migrant women both home and away.

Conclusions

Regardless of marital status and religious belief, patriarchal and religious cultural codes remained strong in shaping the identities of women in marriage, in the family and home, when doing housework, in breadwinning and in prioritising male promotion and job prospects. Such codes spilled over to the unmarried and the atheists, illustrating the weight of traditional gender roles both within and outside marriage. Even when, as one Alawite woman insisted, masculinised societal gender codes took precedence over religious rules, actually we can see how despite such shapeshifting they remained synonymous.

Within this framework, marriage delivered a potent status; it established women in their comfort zone in cultures where marriage was held in high esteem, bestowing on them an acceptable role. It was also about buttressing male superiority, whereby as the Turkmen woman in Istanbul explained, in her home country, once married, women had to address their husbands in the formal language of respect. Here there was no mention of gendered reciprocity. The women were preoccupied with the happiness of their men. Partly this was a pragmatic response to keep the peace and avoid domestic abuse, but it was strongly reinforced by cultural and religious codes. Much the same pertained in the discussions about whose careers and promotion were prioritised – the men's, with a strong concern to avoid men's humiliation and reinforce regimes of respect. In so many ways, women's experiences were of an iron cage within which patriarchal authority and familial control, including violence, and surveillance was routine. We heard little mention of their own happiness in marriage.

Housework too was almost universally seen as the responsibility of women, even among the more liberated and politically conscious, mainly the Kurdish women, and even when the women asserted that it should be shared between marital partners, or that this gendered role

allocation had nothing to do with their religion, only their culture. Regardless, for more traditional and religious women, to revolt against their allotted role was to bring shame. For others it brought drudgery and beatings. It is also interesting to note the contradictions within the iron cage when it comes to women's menstruation, when they are too dirty to write religious books, but not to do housework or care for the children.

No wonder women wanted to escape their situations, or as one woman avowed, avoid entering such a snare in the first place. Being single though still had a price to pay; namely being caught in the trap of the family wage whereby women were routinely paid less than men on the assumption that a man is already being paid to 'keep' his wife, so she comes cheaper to the labour market. Breadwinner ideology was alive and well understood among the women, even if they didn't like it and it ran counter to the increasingly normalised model of dual earner in Western Europe.

Nonetheless, the women in London and Berlin were definitely more liberated than their sisters in Istanbul, especially the Kurds who were politicised and with a mature gender consciousness, as were the atheist women. How far this was because of the cultural distance from their country and culture of origin and the amelioration invoked by moving further from home, or because these women were already determined to move to places where they could feel liberated and empowered, or both, it is difficult to know. This raises the question about to what extent can women on their own exercise agency and mount challenges, subvert the hegemony? For half of them, it would seem that the answer so far is 'no' in that they would expect to have to have permission from their male kin/husbands to join a trade union. In the next two chapters we explore these issues further through ideas and practices of collective organising.

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8

Migrant Women's Collectivism: The Diaspora and Community Organising

Introduction

In previous chapters we have seen how the migrant women in this study have often found it difficult to resist attempts to control their lives as individuals. Patriarchal and religious codes and practices from their home religions and culture have combined with their labour market position and experiences to work against individual agency and action, to say nothing of the difficulties of organising collectively. Three quarters of the women had no experiences of institutionalised collective organising in trade unions and only a few (10) had been union members in their home countries. Yet they also lived and worked among communities, often finding work and support through these networks and so might be expected to work together collectively in some respects.

However, there were strong barriers to doing so, including structurally and in terms of women's self-identity, image and self-esteem, and here we examine these and relate them to the potential for collective organising among women domestic workers. We also draw on an increasing number of studies in this field, and especially those using new social movement models (e.g. Pero 2014; Jiang and Korzsynski 2016).

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This approach focuses on the political processes and the newer socio-psychological analysis of social movement theory, which regard mobilisation as a cognitive (Klandermans 1997) as well as a political process (Tilly 1978; Kelly 1998). The fulcrum here is *interests* and the ways in which members of the subordinated groups define them; how and why people acquire a sense of injustice or grievance (Kelly 1998), and then how, through consciousness development and 're-framing' of their experience, they may develop a sense of their grievance/s being collective. The move from collective organising to actual mobilising, acting collectively, will also depend on conditions at the time. Even this will not necessarily guarantee sustainability, which in turn Jiang and Korczynski (op cit) claim, depends on being a creative associational model of organising based on participative democracy, collective leadership development, combined with autonomous links to more stable formal organisations such as trade unions (op cit: 815).

Trying to make these links may also be problematic, with some studies showing reluctance among trade unions to engage with migrant workers and questions about whether or not unions can adjust to the needs and demands of migrants even as part of the imperative for their own struggle for renewal (Holgate 2015; Martinez Lucio and Perrett 2009). Trade unions in the UK have been wary of working outside their own structures and 'actively opposed' to the setting up of 'alternative' worker organisations for migrants such as the workers' centres that exist in the USA (Connolly et al. 2014: 14).

Immigrant workers' centres in the USA have, since the 1970s, intervened directly with employers to support and advocate for individuals or small groups in matters of wage theft, safety and health, discrimination and worker compensation in case of injury. They also offer training, education, mediation and legal representation; forward complaints to state and federal labour authorities and bring public attention to both labour law demands and model employers (Tracy et al. 2014: 16, 17). A more hybrid approach of unions and community groups, known as reciprocal community unionism has been behind the successful living wage campaigns in at least 100 US cities. Community unionism has been particularly effective in allowing the trade unions to reach workers in the private sector, both in manufacturing and in service sectors,

including hotels, restaurants, cleaning and textiles, where a large number of the workers are women and first- or second-generation immigrants. Traditionally seen as 'hard to organise', these workers have been targeted through community-level campaigns, such as Justice for Janitors (Wills and Simms 2004).

In the UK, in the last decade, there have been a number of similar initiatives, some productive, some less so, in what Holgate (2013) describes as a union 'turn' to community organising. These are discussed in more detail in the next chapter, but there is one area in particular, religion and faith groups, which has proved contentious and which speaks directly to our concerns in relation to the migrant women in our study. On the one hand, as Holgate points out, faith communities are often the most stable and enduring organisations in the community, sustainable 'safe spaces' in a hostile world, especially for migrants for whom they are often the main social networks linking them with others from their own national or ethnic group and can provide material support in finding housing, jobs and information on immigration issues (op cit: 257). On the other, as we have seen in earlier chapters, the patriarchal–religious codes at work can have severe detrimental and disempowering effects on the autonomy and agency of migrant women.

In attempting to deal with these sorts of issues, coalitions of unions and community organisations offers a fruitful approach. Community organising linked to norms of broad social justice campaigns and demands such as Kalayaan's[1] for rights for overseas workers and London Citizens' (institutionalised later as Citizens UK) Living Wage Campaign in London, which secured living wage agreements covering new jobs in the build up to the London Olympics (Wills 2004; Holgate 2015; Holgate et al. 2012a). This campaign was successful, both in its material aims, in building solidarity across diversity of class, faith, culture and generation (Wills 2009a) and in seeking to engage members in political action over common concerns. This success laid the ground for further developing

[1] Kalayaan is a small London-based charity which provide advice and support to and campaigns for the rights of migrant domestic workers in the UK who have entered the UK legally. Kalayaan does not work with undocumented migrants. http://www.kalayaan.org.uk/ Accessed in September 2016.

these alliances, winning major improvements in the pay and conditions of around 5,000 workers in a wide range of employments. In exploring how people came to identify with each other and were mobilised and supported to act, Wills (2009b) identified as significant, 'unity across difference' or mutual differentiation whereby engaging people on the basis of their existing identities and attachments, to faith, trade union, school, university or community group, and through finding common ground and shared goals, and sharing experiences, nurtured an enlarged and additional identity as a member of London Citizens. This enabled the making of solidaristic political and social capital out of internal divisions; turning individuals into active citizens based on a 'new' identity politics (op cit 158). But it was not all roses; as Holgate (2009: 50) writes:

> The association between London Citizens and the trade unions has been likened to the early stage of a troubled personal relationship – sometimes on and sometimes off – with each party criticising the other. Trade unions have been suspicious of working with this broad-based and predominantly faith-based community organisation, finding it difficult to understand its democratic decision-making structure.

London Citizens, in its turn, was frustrated with the slowness of union politics and the way that unions seemed unable to respond quickly to new ways of campaigning that involved members of local communities.

More widely across Europe, RESPECT, a network of migrant domestic workers organisations in the EU, has been supporting campaigns for the rights of workers in private households. Especially, it promotes the idea of how voice and agency are crucial for advocacy strategies, self-representation and mobilisation, and has been allied with other groups in the UK, such as Kalayaan, and Unite the union (Schwenken 2003).

Another beacon is the International Domestic Workers' Federation (IDWF, iwdfed.org). From its beginnings as a loose informal network, it developed into a federation campaigning internationally to demand that governments ratify the ILO Convention 189 on decent work for domestic workers. In addition, it supported local action and campaigning in London with Justice for Domestic Workers (J4DW) to end the

tied visa system in the UK preventing overseas domestic workers from changing employers. By 2016, the IDWF had been going for only three years but had half a million domestic workers organised into 59 affiliates from 47 countries, mostly these were trade unions, but there are also associations and workers co-ops involved.

Nevertheless, it takes time and certain conditions to get to this level of organising (Ledwith et al. 2012: 192), and we now address aspects of the journey towards collective organising and mobilising made by the migrant women domestic workers in our study. In this chapter we focus on beginnings, on informal organising, moving to examine the role of communities, community groups and ethnic enclaves as important and sometimes transformative sites for migrant women domestic workers. We follow this in the next chapter where we explore the potential and actual role of trade unionism in the lives of migrant women domestic workers.

Organising and Mobilising

Some of the social movement groups mentioned above illustrate what have been identified as three key conditions for successful organising and mobilisation; 'communities of coping'; 'cognitive liberation' whereby people who consider themselves powerless and accept the rules which bind them, begin to realise their rights and demand change; and conditions in which that collectivism is sustainable (Jiang and Korczynski 2016). Yet migrant domestic workers have been identified as an extreme case, as unorganisable (from a trade union perspective).

In this discussion, two main aspects can be distinguished, each of which are themselves multi-dimensional, and which are inter-related. First, the structural position of migrant domestic workers in the labour force, and second, the subjective identity/ies held by migrant workers. We have already seen how isolated these women can be in the workforce, indeed not being identified at all as 'workers', holding multiple jobs geographically far apart, working in private households and in some cases having their passports confiscated by employers, together with the subordinate power relationships with their employers.

As discussed in previous chapters, these can add up to a subjective identity of low self-esteem, which also links to controlling marital relationships, the influence of religious and patriarchal cultural codes, and in relation to their migrant worker status, lack of fluency in the host country language. In addition, some scholars have identified a dual frame of reference held by migrant workers, whereby they may be more quiescent in accepting poor pay and conditions because they tend to compare themselves with their counterparts in their country of origin rather than other equivalent workers in their new country (Jiang and Korczynski 2016: 816). This outlook was both held and challenged by women in our study as we will see.

The three key strategies to address these barriers as identified above are: first, developing communities of coping, informal, oral-based networks through which migrant workers share the burdens of their working lives, pass on information about jobs, warn about particular employers; socialising the costs of emotional labour (Jiang and Korczynski 2016: 834). Secondly, it is necessary to experience cognitive liberation from a self-image of low esteem and powerlessness into consciousness development, understanding and framing of their position as exploited workers and their problems and difficulties whereby a social identity that was viewed as negative is seen more positively (Colgan and Ledwith 2000: 244). The third strategy is the development of associational organising of various forms: community groups, religious groups, trade unions. None of these strategies are straightforward and each encompasses features of opposition and conflict. They are related to the important question about where collective action comes from, and why it emerges in some communities and not others. Rational choice models suggest that collective action is almost always difficult to achieve: contributions to the collective or public goods are costly, but benefits are shared by all, so individuals almost always face an incentive to free-ride on the efforts and contributions of others (Olson 1965). Other researchers, however, view people as innately social and they construct formal and informal social institutions to reward collective action and punish free-riding (Desai and Joshi 2012: 1).

We now turn to our research to examine these.

Communities of Coping

Communities of coping are described by Korczynski (2003), as intimate, dense oral-based networks in which service workers turn to each other for emotional support. Given the structural constraints on migrant domestic workers already discussed, there were nevertheless informal opportunities for networking among the women in our study. In London, a joint interview was held with a divorced Turkish woman sharing a flat with a married Spanish woman. The women had a very good friendship, a sort of solidarity when it came to sharing housework. These two women were doing the same type of work for different agencies, and would discuss and compare their work and pay and conditions. Bulgarian women in London also networked closely within the Bulgarian immigrant community to find work in domestic and care jobs:

> Now on one hand I am going to houses for cleaning work, but I'm also hiring and directing Bulgarian cleaning workers to the clients. (Married Bulgarian Woman/London)

In Berlin a big employment agency offered sites for informal community organising, both in its head office in the central Kreuzberg district and in its more local branches. These were rooms in its office buildings reserved for rest breaks for agency staff, but which were also used by the migrant women care workers. For them it was a place to complete their work, fill in forms about where they went, how long they stayed in each house, which tasks they completed, which pills they needed to take to which patients on their next visit and so on. In their short visits to headquarters and branches, women were also asked whether they were available to change their shifts depending on the changing needs of patients and also in case of increased workload. While they were filling in the forms they chatted with each other, drank coffee and/or prepared the drugs and dressings for their next visits to patients.

It was also observed that the women coming from the same nationality and speaking the same language collectively worked to resolve their

job-related problems, first by talking between themselves and then, only after they reached agreement among themselves, taking the problem to the employer.

Another situation observed was of a Turkish migrant translating tax papers for a Kurdish woman, who although having been in Germany for over 30 years, had been unable to resolve the language problem; an instance of support but one which also meant that it was less likely she would be motivated to learn German.

Elsewhere however, as already pointed out, there was no such space. Women seemed to come in from one job and out to the next without time to stop and chat due to the constraints of geography and the tightly timetabled care jobs. The agencies run by Turks and Kurds in Berlin were much smaller and did not provide facilities, presumably having fewer resources, but nevertheless exemplifying the differences between the constraints of ethnic enclaves and the freedoms offered by a larger commercial operation with a particular set of values.

Others also emphasise the importance of 'community solidarity' and how collective social relations operate among migrant communities to develop work strategies, but also how these are also transactional (Erel 2009). While Erdemir and Vasta (2007) discuss how Turkish/Kurdish immigrants use primary social relations comprising family, friends and acquaintances in order to set up businesses, find work and gather information on economic opportunities, they also point out that there are certain expectations in return. These primary social relations 'provide the trust, security, protection and sometimes secrecy that Turkish and Kurdish immigrant workers need' in securing work, but can also be problematic in suppressing pay and restricting opportunities for paid work.

There are other problems in solidarity too, as Wahlbeck (2012) found among Kurdish refugee associations in London. The Kurds were highly politicised and those members of the community who did not identify with the differing political groups found that they could easily become marginalised. In such circumstances, whom do workers turn to when they have a problem and how does the notion of community solidarity work in practice (Holgate et al. 2012b: 598,599)? Also, solidarity takes many forms; as well as 'community solidarity', 'flexible solidarity' occurs where it is not simply about benevolence or

reciprocity and may be available only in times of dire need, or 'exploitative solidarity' whereby community members take advantage of others' vulnerability. This is particularly the case in terms of employment where business owners are part of the same community and where exploitation and discrimination occur in both class and gender relations (Holgate et al. 2012a: 598–599). It was clearly illustrated in the experience of an Armenian woman in our study interviewed in Istanbul:

> I am working at a home belong to Armenian people. Therefore I don't need to know Turkish for instance. But when matters come to providing personal services things get change, the behavior of your own people can easily change according to their class interests. You feel that your troubles are systematically being exploited. If you are an unregistered worker, your employer does his/her best to abuse this problem for his/her personal interests. (Armenian woman, Istanbul)

For some migrants, working and living in an ethnic enclave like this may also restrict opportunities to learn English, or German, and may perpetuate dependency on the ethnic community (Bloch 2013: 281), as with the Kurdish woman identified earlier who had lived in Berlin for 30 years.

Other interviews made for our study confirm these points. Kurdish migrant females in London and Berlin especially complained about the mistreatment and lower wages they were exposed to when they were working for Turkish speaking families:

> When I go to clean flats belonging to foreigners I am paid hourly wages (10 Pound per hour) which is something I really prefer to do. But in the homes of Turkish families, I am paid daily (35 Pound/day) wages which is quite disadvantageous. (Kurdish woman in London)
>
> I do not like to work with Turkish families because they humiliate domestic workers. Turkish elderly persons treat us as if we were their domestic servants. In such cases we usually make a phone call to the Agency so that a supervisor comes and explains our tasks to the clients. Actually our official tasks are to train them on how to live alone. However we are expected to clean houses or cook meals for elderly clients. However British people know very well what our tasks are. (Kurdish care worker, London)

In addition, Chhibber (2001) points out that migrant groups may also remain divided along the lines of religion, which contributes to low levels of participation in civil society organisations.

But for women who are isolated, the sites of their religion are important. Religious venues also acted as community organisations in all three cities in our research:

> I am not so religious. I don't go to church in Moldova but here in Istanbul Sundays are my weekly holidays that I don't have any place to go except church. (Moldova woman, Istanbul)

Similarly, for another Moldovan woman going to church fed her need to communicate:

> Going to church also means finding new friends or socialising especially in a foreign country where you don't know anybody. I have a serious language difficulty for the moment, because only for two years I am living in Turkey. Where can I go to satisfy the need of communication under these conditions?. (Moldovan sociology graduate, Istanbul)

Also, informal socialising, and just the experience of being in a different country, can be immensely influential:

> I am living and working in Turkey for five years. I am learning, I am watching free women and I am sure that I will not yield when I am back home. (Turkmen woman, Istanbul)

Community and Community Centres

Nevertheless, the presence of community support to different groups of minority ethnic workers and the steps taken by key actors to demonstrate mutual benefits of community and labour organisation joint working are also important in moving towards collective organising (McBride and Greenwood 2009; Perrett and Martinez Lucio 2006)

In our study in all three cities there were community groupings with which the women had relationships, and which themselves varied in type and levels of commitment and activism. At a fundamental level, the lack of language and/or law skills knowledge often means that new migrants are reliant on those in their community who can read, write and interpret for them. They also nurture the notion of belonging, becoming repositories of history, politics, current affairs and cultural identity. This is particularly the case with Kurdish immigrants, who as we have seen already tend to be highly politicised (Holgate et al. 2012b: 620). But there is also the danger that issues of class or gender, and associated power relations, become masked, ignored or marginalised as 'bigger' diaspora politics take precedence as these are seen as individual problems and not part of the wider collective struggle over national identity or nationalism (Holgate et al. 2012a: 601, 607, 608).

Community organisations are also important in that they provide facilities for the migrants' children and organise special events such as traditional folklore and theatre for adults, although not all relationships within communities are transactional:

> In our association I do all works with love. Because the working environment is so good, so friendly. (Kurdish woman, Istanbul)

In London, several research links were made through such centres, and some of the interviews were also held there. There were two Kurdish centres; Day-Mer[2] which organises an 'Annual Culture and Art Festival' and other local initiatives such as community – and family-oriented 'fun days' in London. Also in London there were religious community centres Cemevi[3] and the Britain Alevi Federation, which was also a political centre because of oppressive policies applied to the Alawite

[2] Day-Mer is the solidarity centre of Kurdish and Turkish Leftist Immigrants in London. http://www.daymer.org/ Accessed in September 2016.

[3] Cemevi is recognised as a communal space for secondary religious practices, instead of an alternative place of worship within Islam. See (Issa, T. 2016): '*Alevis in Europe: Voices of Migration, Culture and Identity*' Routledge.

population by conservative governments in Turkey for decades and also because the Alawite sect of Islam has traditionally had good relations with leftist organisations.

More than half of 20 Turkish and Kurdish women in this study were reached through Day-Mer and a few through Cemevi. All the women belonging to Day-Mer were active in attending and supporting Day-Mer's events, although their roles there replicated their domestic responsibilities at home. Sometimes they cooked special Turkish and Kurdish food, and sometimes they brought portable household effects from their houses. Their relations with Day-Mer were important, and reciprocal since their children went to Day-Mer after school to wait for their parents. For the Bulgarian women in London, the Bulgarian Cultural Institute[4] organises festivals, wine receptions and exhibitions for its members.

In Berlin, SIMURG, the Kurdish community centre,[5] offers a supportive social setting and advice for the Kurdish community in the city. Also in Berlin, a Kenyan woman explained that she belonged to a Kenyan association which she visited twice a month and took an active part in its activities. For her, this level of activity was sufficient and she thought that to become a member of a trade union would need more time. Some more Kurdish and Turkish women were approached for the research through a community centre which organises informative activities for its members.

In Istanbul contacts for the research were made through a women's migration association, relatives, friends and students of the researcher Gaye Yilmaz. One important organisation was IMECE.[6] At the time of the research in 2012, this was a women's organisation, but has now turned into a trade union of domestic workers. Since most of the foreign-born women in Istanbul were undocumented after overstaying

[4] See the website of Bulgarian Cultural Institute London. http://www.bcilondon.co.uk/ Accessed in October 2016.

[5] See SIMURG, Kurdish Community Centre. https://simurgberlin.wordpress.com/ Accessed in September 2016.

[6] IMECE, a Turkish word meaning 'self-help', is the name of newly established domestic workers' union. https://imeceeviscilerisendikasi.org/ Accessed in September 2016.

their visas, these women either did not go out of the house where they worked apart from going to their churches on their weekly days off. The four exceptions were Armenian women with children whose employers refused to house them together with their children. While these women were at work they left their children in an Armenian Church with a basement where children were schooled by Armenian volunteers. This undocumented status and the fear of being found out, limited their social networks to other undocumented migrants from their own country of origin and language (Bloch 2013).

> I am Orthodox. I was going to church when I was in Georgia. But here I am scared to go outside, because police may arrest and deport me. (Georgian woman in Istanbul)

In contrast, as we have already seen, a Kurdish woman in Istanbul had:

> No problem in joining in Newroz[7] celebrations, I have good relations with my political Party. Even, in a week I am going to Diyarbakir to attend in a meeting of our Party BDP. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

Subjective Identities and Cognitive Liberation

While being undocumented puts migrant women into the category of extremely difficult to organise collectively, it may also limit their self-identity and make it difficult for them to move to the sense of empowerment needed to seek for change. Social movement theorists refer to the need for 'cognitive liberation' (McAdam 1988), feminists to consciousness raising, political activists to praxis (Gramsci 1971)

[7] Newroz is the Kurdish celebration of the Persian New Year holiday 'Nowruz'. Kurdish Newroz coincides with the Spring Equinox, and is a festival celebrating the beginning of spring. Over the years, Newroz has come to represent new beginnings, as well as an opportunity to support the Kurdish cause. For these reasons, Newroz is considered to be the most important festival in Kurdish culture. Typically, the festival is celebrated in the days running up to the Spring Equinox, see The Kurdish Project.

and feminist labour studies scholars to union women's consciousness and activism and leadership development (Ledwith 2016; Colgan and Ledwith 2000, 2002).

Cognitive liberation is about the consciousness development among the oppressed regarding their condition and the realisation of the capacity for change. Such consciousness raising was central to women's movement, as it is also for other political change. The means is usually a collective form of pedagogic engagement, what the Brazilian political activist Paolo Freire calls 'conscienzitacao', a transformative dialogic pedagogy which has the power to transform (Ledwith 2006: 380). A good example from the USA was the strategy adopted by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in relation to home care workers in offering 'an identity as a worker . . . part of a giant work-force, doing important work that merits recognition, respect and decent standards', an empowering narrative for such women (Boris and Klein 2007: 177). And in Germany, the trade union ver.di developed a social recognition campaign for (mainly) women pre-school educators and workers, which was successful in raising the profile of the women's work (Healy and Bergfeld 2016: 52).

In their case study of the self-help group referred to earlier: Justice for Domestic Workers (J4DW) in London, Jiang and Korczynski (2016) found that J4DW provided a safe space for migrant domestic workers which was non-hierarchical with democratic structures built on trust, and where, crucially, 'politicised learning' took place. In this they partnered with the UK trade union Unite, which provided resources and support.

There is resonance here with our study. As a reciprocal arrangement with the London and Berlin immigrant centres finding women to be interviewed by Gaye Yilmaz, and as she is also an economics scholar, Gaye agreed to run weekly classes on Marxian economics.

> In that way I found it a great opportunity to become friends with the women participants of my classes, not only the domestic workers who agreed to talk to me, but also others who were not domestic workers but were relatives, friends who were doing domestic jobs. This free education was also highly effective for these women and helped them to

believe that as a researcher I was doing this work to make domestic workers more visible and also their demands.

In London, the three most popular demands by the women to improve their lives were: a higher minimum wage (15 women), public health and pension rights (6 women) and early retirement rights (6 women) for domestic workers. In Berlin, first among the women's demands was a higher minimum wage (13 women). They also wanted government respect for domestic workers (6 women), and shorter working hours for caring work (6 women). In Istanbul, removal of deportation (15 women) was ranked as the highest priority, followed by legal recognition for domestic work (12 women) and the right to public social insurance (5 women).

Collectivism and Collective Action

These conversations were also important in encouraging and sustaining women's collectivism and their possible mobilisation especially if they became able to organise around a common cause and a common identity within a framework that united them, as with the politically organised Kurdish women in each city. To be successful, organisational strategies must appeal to heterogeneous communities of women. As we have seen in previous chapters, women migrant domestic workers have deeply rooted identities as women, itself a profoundly complex category, which intersect with their migrant identities, also considerably differentiated. To make common purpose may require negotiation over demands other identities make, such as religion; in what was referred to above by Wills (2009b) as 'mutual differentiation' or as discussed by Yuval-Davis, an exchange of mutuality. Originating in Italian politics, this is known as 'transversal politics', whereby activists remain rooted in their main identity but are prepared to shift in the moment of mobilising around shared concerns (Yuval-Davis 1998). Such action can be routine or sporadic; it can take place through an organisation or a government structure or entirely informally; it can be localised or transnational; it can focus on the articulation of rights or the delivery

of services; it can be 'induced' from outside or, as is most often the case, it can evolve organically (Mansuri and Rao 2013). The connections between collective action and women's agency are complicated and context-specific, but as Fine (2007) argues, there should always be ways for centres of community to join with trade unions without sacrificing the structures and identity of their own groups.

We know that Turkish and Kurdish diaspora communities abroad mobilise around shared concerns, for example, the Day-Mer Women's Commission organises rallies and meetings against the massacres of women in Turkey. International Women's Day on 8th of March every year provides another opportunity for women belonging to different national and ethnic identities to join in solidaristic demonstration together.[8]

In the research discussions, and in response to the question: *'would you support any campaign which aims to improve working and living conditions of migrant domestic workers in the UK?',* many of the women expressed interest and keeness to be more active.

> I would strongly support such a campaign, I would distribute leaflets, organise publicity meetings in our associations and I tell this to all my neighbours and friends. (Kurdish cleaning worker in London)

And:

> Even to think about organising is really exciting. Of course I would support such a campaign. (Turkish woman in Berlin)

A few women were also interested in taking on leading roles:

> I would definitely support this campaign, even probably I would lead such an important campaign. (Kurdish woman in Berlin)

[8] Day-Mer Women Commission organises rallies and meetings against the massacres of women in Turkey, see Tohum Cultural Centre/DAYMER Women Commission http://www.daymer.org/content/womens-services Accessed in September 2016.

> Actually I don't want to stay only as a supporter, I want to become part of such a struggle. (Czech woman in Berlin)

However, they also have to contend with patriarchy. A Kurdish interviewee in Istanbul said that her brothers took her to Newroz celebrations but never to trade union labour day, May Day celebrations. The brothers and their sisters were all members of both the Kurdish Party and the Kurdish Community Centre, but the men privileged their political activity over that of their sisters, controlling her involvement in social, political or economic events.

Religion too has become a central category of political mobilisation and as we have seen in the contentious politics of the twenty-first century, religious groups may be a vehicle for collective action (Davis and Dhaliwal 2014). Nevertheless, as we have also seen in our study, religious patriarchal codes and practices are strong shapers of identity and are often in direct conflict with women's and gender rights. A strictly religious woman migrant in London responded to our interview question: *'would you support any campaign which aims to improve working and living conditions of migrant domestic workers in the UK?'* as follows:

> I would never support such a campaign. Because I believe destiny that any attempt aiming to improve actual conditions of us means rebellion against destiny or directly the God himself. (Brazilian woman, London)

Conclusions

As we move the discussion from the potential for moving from individualism, oppression and agency of female migrant domestic workers towards collective solidarities, it is possible to see that there is much going on. Two recent international successes have been the ILO Convention 189 on decent work for domestic workers, and the IDWF. More regionally and locally, the mobilisation of domestic and service workers in the USA provides shining examples, as do the cases of RESPECT in Europe, and Kalayaan and the J4DW campaign in London.

Nevertheless, it is also apparent that despite domestic workers fighting for better working conditions for more than a century,[9] this has not changed the informal and precarious nature of domestic jobs in many countries. New challenges are continuous and in the twenty-first century campaigning and solidaristic work have to adapt to take on the huge growth in migrant domestic work and workers.

Domestic workers remain vulnerable to abuse and exploitation because they are women, their work is 'women's work', often not viewed as proper employment and paid accordingly. It takes place in private settings, behind closed doors. Contracts are usually verbal, informal and established between employers who retain the benefits and privileges of class, race and citizenship, while domestic workers are racialised immigrant women, often undocumented and fearful of deportation. What is more, unlike women who work in factories or offices, domestic workers must do this job alone or in non-collectivised workplaces without socialising with their workmates. This all militates against domestic workers from seeing, learning, empathising and discussing with each other what to do to improve their working and living conditions. The battle for recognition and rights is well illustrated by the lateness of ILO Convention 189 (only in 2011) and at the time of this research, of the three countries in our research, only Germany had ratified it.

Against all of this, the challenge for domestic workers' mobilisation is formidable. However, as our evidence shows, it is not impossible. The social movement model of developing solidarity among migrant women through communities of coping, through joining and becoming active in faith and community groups, and especially taking part in activities of consciousness development can show a way forward

[9] See Jahmila Tahirah Vincent (2013): 'In Atlanta/USA in July 1881, twenty laundresses formed The Washing Society and announced that their membership would strike unless they were given a raise to a uniform rate of $1 for each dozen pounds of wash. They went door to door to build their ranks and used church meetings to spread the word, seeking solidarity among washerwomen and organising to win community support' in 'New York Domestic Workers: Non-Profits, Community Organising and the Implementation of the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights' Fordham University, Urban Studies Masters Theses.

for other groups. This does not mean to say that this is easy, and obstacles include patriarchal relations where kinsmen wield their gender power to prevent women's participation, and religious codes can preclude women's solidarity. Add to these problems competing solidarities based on diaspora, identity, race and ethnicity, politics and religion, which become exclusive, and can ignore or shut out gender or class-based organising. Another related concern is where business owners are part of the same ethnic enclave leading to 'exploitative solidarity' as was seen particularly among Armenian women in Istanbul.

Taking into account such barriers and also the heterogeneity of women and their multiple identities, any analysis needs to take into account and deal with the intersecting interests and seek for forms of reciprocity and willingness to engage with the 'other' through transversal politics in order to achieve gains which benefit all without compromising inviolable senses of self. Ideally this could be a dialectical mid-course which neither defers to diaspora politics of waiting until after 'the revolution', nor ignores class and gender aspects in identity struggles. And at a practical level there should always be ways for worker centres joining with unions without sacrificing the structures and identity of their own groups.

In the interests of migrant solidarity, all of this is important, especially for sustaining organisation and mobilisation. Some of the examples discussed here have managed to do so, such as Kalayaan and Citizens UK in London.

Using a social movement analysis, we have observed how among the women in our study, informal collective organising was at the early stages, strongly evident in communities of coping, and with some indicators of interest and willingness to move to more solidaristic and active mobilising to improve their pay and conditions of work. Their problems included the lack of interest or support for this among their ethnic enclaves, and the absence of easily available trade unionism. The next stage would seem to be a question of how to develop these links, especially how to make common purpose with campaigning groups and with the key institutions of organised labour: trade unions, and we turn to these questions in the next chapter.

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9

Migrant Women, Collectivism and Trade Unions

Introduction

The relationship between women and trade unions is an awkward one. The increase of women into workforces worldwide, the feminisation of work, the movement of women into labour movements have not been met with open arms by trade unions. Unions are 'mighty' organisations of workers, with complex bureaucratic structures and tendencies towards oligarchy. In old Europe, the home of trade union history and development, class-based unions have often shown ambivalence and difficulty in adapting to 'non-traditional' workers, displaying deep roots of racism and of hegemonic masculinity. For some old-school trade unionists, women, and those from different and diverse ethnic and racial groups, and sexualities, continue to be seen as 'other' (Ledwith 2016; Connolly et al. 2014; Martinez Lucio and Perrett 2009; Ledwith and Colgan 2002; Sinclair 1995).

Considering the crisis of trade unionism around the world in the face of neoliberal globalisation, increasing trade union action to embrace diversity would seem timely. But it does not adequately address the structural problems which stem from the move away from the collectivism of

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traditional workplaces where a mass of workers can be fairly easily organised, to the individualism of the twenty-first century. Here we have the rise of the 'new precariat' (Standing 2011), workers in precarious, zero-hour jobs in multiple, often small, workplaces, temporary and part-time. This world where workers lack a secure work-based identity, are employed part-time, often in several jobs at once, increasingly designated as 'self-employed' and without proper contracts of employment, signals huge challenges for traditional trade unionism. How to engage with migrant workers is a particular and major question, and dilemmas for unions have ranged from resistance, assumed assimilation, through total inclusion, to specific polices and structures to address their particular concerns (Roosblad 2000).

Unions have also been increasingly exhorted to adapt to the needs of these new groups of workers, including those central to this study; women and migrant and minority ethnic members. Certainly, unions have put into place extensive measures to encourage, support and recognise their increasingly diverse memberships. Indeed, many of the discussions about union renewal address the importance of women for trade union revitalisation (Bradley 1999; Kirton and Healy 1999), of migrant workers (Holgate 2003) and of black women – and how opportunities from increased workforce differentiation can lead to new forms of collectivism (Healy et al. 2004).

More recently, the forced migration of labour due to political unrest and conflict, family unification or economic necessity has also created new divisions of labour based on nationality, ethnicity and migration status (Massey 1995; Wills et al. 2010; Moore 2011). In doing so, the most vulnerable of workers – often new migrants – have attracted the attention of union activists, who are looking for ways of bringing them into union membership, recognising that their exploitation has a negative impact upon other workers and on wider society. So UK unions have recognised the need to (re)build links outside their direct constituencies, and there has been a shift – sometimes mainly in terms of rhetoric, but also in practice – towards greater engagement with local migrant communities (Holgate 2015). In some ways, these can also be seen as attempts to connect with the days of early trade unionism which had its roots in local communities.

Trade Unions in Three Countries

Trade unionism in the three countries represented in our studies is very different in each, historically and currently, although in none have the unions been overwhelmingly successful in engaging with migrant domestic workers.

In Britain, mass trade unionism originated in the factories and workplaces of the nineteenth-century industrial revolution when it was characterised by a myriad of localised and particular organising by industry, craft and skill. Despite some effective self-organisation into their own unions by women, the movement saw itself as almost exclusively male, and remains underpinned by masculine ideology and culture (see overview in Ledwith 2009). In the twenty-first century in the UK there is one confederation, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to which the majority of the 60 or so modern, certified,[1] trade unions belong. In 2014, there were 6.4 million members or 25 per cent of all employees, and of whom 55 per cent were women (Department for Business Innovation and Skills 2015). Union density was therefore a quarter, and has been falling continuously since its high point in 1979 when just over 50 per cent of workers were union members. The UK union movement has been trying a range of measures to renew and revitalise itself ever since.

German trade unionism began in its modern form in 1949, post-Second World War. It too has had falling union density; down to 18 per cent or around 8.1 million members in 2010 (Dribbusch and Birke 2012) organised into three large confederations, as well as a number of unaffiliated trade unions. By far, the biggest trade union confederation is the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB), whose eight affiliated trade unions each organise in a particular sector. A key feature

[1] TUC unions can be described as 'unionate' or radical, by defining themselves as a trade union, being formally certificated as a union, being independent of the employer, including financially, engages in collective bargaining on behalf of its members, is affiliated to the TUC, and to the Labour Party, and is prepared to take industrial action. See, for example Prandy et al. (1974) 'Concepts and Measures: The Example of Unionateness' *Sociology*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (September 1974), pp. 427–446. Unions which are formally certificated but not seen as fully unionate and are not TUC members include several white collar and professional organisations such as the British Medical Association (of doctors), and the Royal Colleges of Midwives, and Nurses.

of industrial relations in Germany is workplace codetermination in the form of works councils, and supervisory board membership in larger corporations. Of course, this sort of unionisation is completely outside the experience and reach of domestic care workers, and so the union for them would be the United Services Union, ver.di, where women make up about half the members. Ver.di was formed in 2001 through mergers of four unions covering public and service workers (op cit: 3) and has put in place equality and diversity initiatives as part of a strategy of union revitalisation (Kirsch 2013). At the time of writing, there were about 2.1 million members and it was one of the largest independent, individual trade unions in the world. As a multi-service trade union, it represents people employed in over 1,000 different trades and professions (Kummerling 2011: 10).

In Turkey, a military coup in 1980 put an end to union development for many years, including the banning of DİSK, the Confederation of Progressive Workers' Unions. Together with the new government policy of privatisation and liberalisation, the result was large membership losses, and a growth in the informal economy (Monks 2010). Yet by 2009 union density was recorded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security at a high 60 per cent. More realistic figures from the OECD (2016) put density for that year at 10 per cent, and it has continued to fall, as can be seen in Table 9.1. Turkish unions are tightly prescribed, and a democratic trade union movement has yet to flourish (Dinler 2012).

At the time of writing, there were three state-authorised union confederations for blue collar (waged) workers and three authorised confederations for white collar (salaried) employees in the public services. Beyond the authorised trade unions, there are several independent unions of which IMECE, the Domestic Workers' Union of Turkey, is one of the most important. IMECE was officially founded on 19 December 2013 and its first general assembly took place in June 2014. The founders of the IMECE were among a group of women coming from the leftist groups in the 1990s. Several of the Kurdish women in our study belonged to IMECE, before it became a trade union.

In Turkey, the unions are defined mostly as organisations of uneducated, middle-aged, male workers; the educated employees, and women and young workers were not usually involved in unionism (Bilgin 2010).

Table 9.1 Trade union density in the UK, Germany and Turkey 2002–2012

Countries	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
The UK	29.3	29.6	29	28.6	28.2	28.1	27.3	27.3	26.6	25.8	26.0
Germany	23.5	23.0	22.2	21.7	20.7	19.9	19.1	18.9	18.6	18.5	18.3
Turkey	25.1	22.3	20.0	16.8	14.3	12.3	10.7	10.2	8.9	7.8	7

The reasons for lower participation or even absence of women workers in Turkish trade unions are firstly, female workers are concentrated mostly in the informal sector. Secondly, because women had a clear productive role in the petty commodity production of family farms in agriculture, they cannot participate in industry or services as employees easily after they migrate to the cities. Thirdly, male domination and a traditional patriarchal culture is common in the unions, especially in decision-making and leadership. And lastly, the women cannot join in some important union meetings because of their domestic work, such as child care and cooking at home (Bilgin 2010: 76). In previous research with women health workers in Turkey, GY found that for the majority of respondents the most wanted provision in collective agreements was parental leave. This was followed by another parental issue, namely the provision on breast feeding leave (Yılmaz 2014: 109). Unlike unions in the UK and Germany, Turkish unions have barely engaged with newer workers from diverse groups such as women and ethnic workforce members, nor have they adequately addressed the issue of organising migrant workers. Instead, they concentrate on fighting against unfair dismissals of their members. A Kurdish woman in the study criticised Turkish unions as not being interested in organising migrant woman. If they did, she said, migrant women would be more likely to show an interest in the Kurdish question or would take part in the struggle for peace in Kurdish regions. In fact, KESK, a confederation of public sectors' unions, has a mixed membership structure; half leftist Turks and half Kurds. It has quite good relations with the Kurdish party political parties BDP and HDP, but it is not authorised to organise domestic workers because they are regarded as blue collar workers under Turkish legislation.

German and British unions have been attempting to stem the membership decline using variations of what could be called hybrid organising – a combination of bureaucratic principles and practice of trade unions together with the more fluid and less hierarchical processes of social movements. In the UK this seems to be towards community organising, whereas in Germany the reliance on social partnership and strong third sector institutions has made it more difficult to move in this direction, and there is no legacy of community organising. Nevertheless,

more recently, the US Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) – a network of community organisations started in 1930s in Chicago – has been working with unions in both the UK and Germany (Tapia 2013).

Unions, Community Organising and Migrant Workers

In the UK, as outlined in Chapter 8, there has been something of a 'turn' towards community organising (Holgate 2015). To some extent this is built on and extends revitalising organising initiatives of the 1990s in the USA, Australia and the UK which focused on like organising like, women organising women, ethnic workers organising similar sisters and brothers and so on – with some, but limited, success (Simms et al. 2012). The traditions of class-based workplace unionism run deep and are uneasy with the turn to identity politics (Simms 2012). For unions, the recognition that gender, ethnicity, race and sexuality are important signifiers among the changing workforce needs reinforcing. Members of diverse groups, including migrant workers, are not averse to becoming unionised. Given that being a migrant and a care worker took prime position in the women's sense of their selves in our study, it would seem that collective organising around these identities could only be productive.

The limitations of class-based unionism centred on workplace organisation have become both well established and are substantially debated (see Holgate 2015; Wills 2008; Moore 2011; for example). By contrast, moving into communities has not always been straightforward, but it has taken on some interesting forms, see examples in the USA, where Alvarez and Whitefield (2013) and Milkman (2006) have shown how reaching into communities 'exploded the myth' of migrant unorganisibility, mobilising by linking up with local communities and migrant networks (Moore 2011: 130). Also in the US, the case of the Justice for Janitors campaign with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) was built on high levels of migrant *and* class consciousness among Latin American migrant workers, and the involvement of activists with left-wing or union backgrounds were key in the success of the

movement (Moore 2011). This SEIU coalition with community groups has been able to organise 'tough to mobilise' groups like home care workers, mainly female and minority (ethnic) (Ledwith 2006: 96).

In the UK, the public services union UNISON, which among its constituencies, organises in care homes, set up a top-down migrant worker participation project, but as Waddington and Kerr (2009) found, few UNISON branches actually had links with community organisations, and the established structures struggled to accommodate the needs of these new types of worker. In Scotland, things worked the other way round, and more effectively, with the Overseas Nurses Network urging its migrant members to link with UNISON, encouraging them to become active and using UNISON premises for meetings (Moore 2011). In London, UNISON branches joined the London Citizens broad-based coalition to successfully campaign for a living wage in local hospitals (Holgate 2015), and later recruited a community organising coordinator to provide support for such initiatives.

Unite, the largest private sector union in the UK (www.unitetheunion.org), established a community organising department, which has had some success in local campaigning (Holgate op cit), and with migrant worker organising. It has also sponsored a United Migrant Workers Education Project, which is based on Freirian principles of conscientisation and empowerment, as discussed in Chapter 8 (UVWUNION 17th February 2016).

A third big UK union, the GMB, first of all carried out research, then trained staff officers, ran training in targeted mainly migrant or minority ethnic communities, and also set up projects, all resulting in what it called a 'model of community interaction' (Holgate op cit: 445–446).

Such moves were urged on by the UK union confederation, the TUC, which in a 2010 report advocated 'greater community engagement and partnership working between voluntary and community organisations and British trade unions' (Wright 2010: 8). The TUC itself recruited four community organisers to work in the field and also funded a couple of union/community projects. One of these projects, which involved a wide range of groups – local political, ethnic minority, religious and campaign groups – in events such as a making learning work festival,

community conferences, as well as advice and support, was seen as successful although while its consensus approach to organising was innovative, this clashed with the more conventional union methods of hierarchical decision-making (Holgate 2015).

In trying to evaluate these sorts of initiatives, Tattersall (2010; in Healy and Bergfeld 2016) argues that coalition success, the building of positive-sum relations, needs to be measured by two criteria: whether campaigns produce social change, and whether they sustain organisational strength over time, criteria we also saw in Jiang and Korcsynski's (2016) social movement model discussed in the previous chapter.

The UK

In Chapter 8, we reviewed new forms of organising ranging from informal communities of coping, associational organising in ethnic enclaves, migrant organisations, wider multi-identity community groups, and social justice campaigns, noting that in many of these there had developed a variety of relationships with established trade unions. In London, Unite was the main union which supported migrant domestic workers. We met with Unite's assistant general secretary (AGS) responsible at national level, and the regional official with responsibility in London for migrant workers. The AGS described the long struggle for overseas migrant workers in the UK from the 1990s, eventually succeeding in achieving a migrant domestic worker's visa, thus formally recognising their status. During the campaign, when huge numbers joined the union, they were undocumented but had a union membership card which was an important part of their fight for identity.

Unite has also worked together with J4DW, also discussed in Chapter 8, and continues to work with other campaigning groups, especially around the ILO convention 189 Decent Work for Domestic Workers, which is yet to be ratified by the UK. Meanwhile, campaigning around the convention has raised the profile and importance of the value of domestic work and the value of care work.

Unite organises a range of community events for these members, and also hopes that new members will join as a result. For example, on May Day every year Unite runs a rally and march in London – although we found that the women in our study did not know about this event:

> We organise huge rallies on May Day [*labour day*], and of course there are active groups that take part in it. For instance a Turkish delegation always takes part as a big group. Three years ago we organised a huge meeting for Justice for Domestic Workers, and domestic workers led the march. (Unite AGS)

But

> We know there is a gap here. We know it is needed and we want to broaden campaigns to all domestic workers whether they are migrant or not.

One problem was the difficulty of getting to migrant domestic workers in private households:

> . . . there are workers who do not know about unions and we haven't seen them in the marches, rallies and celebrations. But what I think this brings to light is where people are organised as a group it becomes easier to have links with a trade union. They are isolated as individuals. (Unite official)

Even when the union mobilises domestic workers for events, they join, but then they don't come back the AGS said. Her union also organises free weekend training courses for migrant workers, whether or not they are Unite members, on language, citizenship, IT and drama. Her view was that despite these difficulties the watershed moment was when she was appointed as regional women and equalities officer and the organising work with domestic workers started:

> Before that it would be very hard for anyone to know who to go to in the union. They hired me as a person who identifies with these women; I get this.

A key aspect of campaigning collectively is about domestic workers not being treated as slaves; '*namely they need respect for the job they are doing.*' Another issue is unpaid wages. The union has carried out surveys around such problems, and among the personal statements there have been shocking testimonies, for example, of serious sexual abuse.

UNISON, the second largest union with over one million members, organises primarily in the public services, although as a result of privatisation it has substantial membership in private companies, including care homes.

> Why do we organise migrant care workers? First of all because of the equality policy of the UNISON and consequently our attitude directs to those workers for they have equal rights to respect and being treated fairly. The second reason is that migrants are a large part of the UK working population. Now I am really talking about the private sector because 90 per cent of care provision in the UK is in the hands of private providers. About 20 per cent of all care workers in the UK are from outside of the EU. And they are not evenly distributed so for instance if you go to a care home you see that people working in the daytime are very often white working class women. If you go back at night, namely night shifts, they are mostly migrant workers. So, migrant workers are not evenly distributed in care homes. The numbers involved in the care sector altogether are huge; roughly speaking probably there are two million people who are working in the care sector in the UK. (Interview UNISON /Head of Strategic Organising)

From the perspective of traditional trade union structures, it is difficult to gain access to private homes to check, for example, on actual working hours done by domestic workers. It is particularly difficult to find out where and when serious abuse happens because very vulnerable workers are too scared to report to the authorities (ETUC 2005: 30).

It is equally true that many migrant women do not know the meaning of unionisation and view it as something that cannot be realised in a foreign country. The majority of women who participated in this research believed that '*trade union legislation in host countries does not cover migrant domestic workers*'. Further, cultural, gendered and religious codes also played a significant role for these women when thinking about whether or not to join a trade union.

Among the women in our study, a very small number had been union members in their home countries, with not many more having joined in their new, host country of migration. A total of eight women, Brazilian, Caribbean, Spanish, Belgian, Turkish and three Kurdish women reported that they had joined British unions. In Berlin, there were three women who joined German unions: Eritrean, Turkish and Kurdish. In Istanbul, however, among 40 respondents there was only one Kurdish woman who reported that she had been a union member in the past when she was working in textile factory.

Table 9.2 shows that over three-quarters, (79 per cent) or 95 of the women had never been a union member; some giving reasons such as:

> I don't have any idea about unions, either in Bulgaria or in the UK. (Bulgarian woman in London)

Also, unions as political organisations were not always popular among some of the women:

> Neither in Malaysia nor in London I was never unionised in my life. I don't like unions, because instead of improving conditions of working people they usually deal with politics. And I'm also scared to become member in TUs because if employers know that I have a Union they may not give me a job. (Malaysian woman in London)

Although for some of the Kurdish women, they were not political enough:

> Despite I am a political person I've never been organised in any union because British unions are not so political and visible in this country. (Kurdish female interviewed in London)

Table 9.2 Women migrants by unionisation

	London	Berlin	Istanbul	Totals
Unionised in the host country	8	3	1	12
Unionised in country of origin	5	4	4	13
Never unionised	27	33	35	95
Total	**40**	**40**	**40**	**120**

Others saw unions as endangering the complicated affective relationship they had as a care worker:

> I'm working with an agency which is very kind to me, it would be highly ridiculous for me to organise against this firm!. (Bulgarian woman in London)

But many had no idea of their union rights in their host country. Why? In some cases, their Kurdish community organisations had not put them in touch:

> I've never been organised in TUs, here in the UK, organising in the TUs is not so fashionable I think. What is more amazing is that there are associations we belong to that they do not inform and/or warn us about unionisation. If we're not unionised this is not our shame, it is the shame of political organisations we belong to. (Kurdish care worker interviewed in London)

But the privatised nature of their work was the first, and possibly the most obvious explanation, confirming the discussion with the Unite officials reported above. Most of the women also gave this as a reason, possibly feeding into their espoused lack of knowledge about trade unions in Britain. This mutual invisibility between unions and migrant women is a serious issue.

In some cases, pro-employer attitudes shown by some British unions resulted either with the decision to leave the union or the ending of their TU membership because of termination of their employment:

> I had been a union member in the past. But after I worked three years, epilepsy was diagnosed and the agency fired me despite I was unionised. I remember the meeting with management well. It was big shock for me when I saw that the union rep. was sitting just near the management, against me. At the end of that meeting I understood that my Union and Management had agreed that I needed to be fired long before our meeting. (Kurdish woman in London)

> I joined a British TU here in London, but when this trade union agreed with employer on restructuring we all were fired and my membership ended. (Kurdish woman in London)

Privatisation of her NHS job and the inability of her union to resist the new employer changing their contracts had been a big disappointment for another woman working in London:

> I have been member in a British TU, the GMB since 2005, almost for eight years. Before we were run by NHS by Government then organisation was privatized. In that time the GMB was involved in the matter but not fully by arguing that we didn't have choice. This behaviour of the GMB meant that the Union wouldn't fight for our rights although it promised us to fight. Indeed in the first three years the buyer did not change the contracts of staffs that this was something they committed to do in the beginning. But after three years our contracts were totally changed. The GMB fought against them but it was not able to change the plans of new buyer. (Turkish woman in London).

> Since unionisation also depends on the permission of husband in Islam this has a very negative impact on working women. On one hand they are deprived from collective tools like trade unions to protect their rights, on the other hand they are regarded as secondary which makes them much more vulnerable at work. (Turkmen woman in Istanbul)

May Days

One measure we used in the research was the women's participation in May Day, or Labour Day, celebrations in their host countries. This was something they knew well, especially the Turkish and Kurdish women, and a number of women did participate in May Day events, or had done so in their native country, especially those from former Soviet States and Turkey:

> Until communist regime changed we celebrated May Days with huge enthusiasm. We wore red t-shirts and went to Red Circle to celebrate May Days. Everywhere was covered by Lenin posters. After1989 May Day celebrations were among those abolished first. May be we were not aware when we were living in that period, indeed everything was different and perfect compared with what we have today. We had factories full with

> workers, hospitals, kindergardens, schools and transportation were free. People were happy, even I can tell you that my country was the land of smiling peoples. (41-year-old Georgian widow in Istanbul)

Some women in Istanbul were wary of taking part because of police attacks:

> When I was in Erivan, [*the capital city of Armenia]* I was attending together with my friends and brothers. But today May Day celebrations are not so strong. I am scared to join May Days manifestations in Turkey because we witnessed that police forces attack on the masses, clashes may happen, it seems very dangerous to join. (42 years old Armenian woman in Istanbul)

Some Istanbul women did attend May Day celebrations and also Newroz[2] (although the fear of police remained), but others did not.

> My husband regularly takes part in May Days and Newroz, but I don't. Because I am scared. I see from the media that political actions may end with clashes with police. I don't want to be arrested by police. However I regularly take part in the activities and seminars organized by the Party, BDP.[3] (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

Whereas others were perhaps braver or more willing to take risks:

> I go to every demonstration including Newroz, May Day and World Women days. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

Some respondents said that in their new countries they did not have anybody to go with to May Day rallies.

[2] Newroz is the Kurdish celebration of the Persian New Year holiday 'Nowruz.' Kurdish Newroz coincides with the Spring Equinox, and is a festival celebrating the beginning of spring. Over the years, Newroz has come to represent new beginnings, as well as an opportunity to support the Kurdish cause. For these reasons, Newroz is considered to be the most important festival in Kurdish culture. See The Kurdish Project.

[3] BDP: Peace and Democracy Party, political party of Kurdish people.

A key issue here for trade unions is that few of the women made the link between May Day events and trade unions, and instead talked about going to meet and see their friends; it was solely a social occasion.

In London although May Day celebrations were sometimes a part of their respective community organisations, they did not see this as a labour day activity either. Given that the unions, Unite in particular, organise May Day rallies on London's streets, clearly these have been invisible to the migrant women. In fact, as far as they were concerned, they thought that the British did not celebrate May Day:

> We used to go May Days when I was in Bulgaria. But I think there is not any rally or street meeting here. The British celebrate it like bank holidays! (Bulgarian female interviewed in London)

> I do not know whether British TUs organise rallies or celebrations on May Day. (Polish female interviewed in London)

> I've never noticed that British TUs organise rallies or street meetings on May Days. I think they neither advertise nor do anything on May Days! (Care worker aged 60, interviewed in London. Born in the UK but still self-identifies as Trinidadian. Formerly a union member)

A British-born Cypriot woman went further, saying that not only were unions not visible for unorganised workers in the UK, but that she did not even know the meaning of unionisation.

Another distinctive characteristic of why migrant females keep away from organising is the situations in which migrants find themselves. One of the Kurdish women interviewed in London said that she had never been organised into a union because she and her husband had to get into debt to go to the UK:

> I've never been organised in the unions. Because when I migrated to UK 12 years ago, I had to leave my children in Istanbul. Also I and my husband were in debt £17.000 to the agency which brought us to the UK. Our first 10 years passed with saving money for both the needs of our children in Istanbul and also to pay back our debts to the agency. So I didn't have time even to think about unions. I became nearly the slave of a few pennies here. I don't have time even to care for myself. (Kurdish care worker interviewed in London)

Even among those who had had relationships with trade unions, there was a lack of strong solidaristic feeling, often to do with the women's circumstances, including those patriarchal and religious codes we discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

In London among the 13 women who had/have relationship with trade unions, there were two Kurdish, two Turkish, two Brazilian, one Spanish, one Trinidadian, one Belgium and four Bulgarian women. Both the Bulgarians and the Trinidadian woman explained how in their home countries it had been obligatory for all workers to become member in trade unions as soon as they started to work. One of the two Brazilian women was strictly bound to her Catholic religion saying that although she was against trade unions her British husband had forced her to join. The other Brazilian woman who was an atheist explained that although she was a union member in Brazil she thought that joining a union was not easy for migrant domestic workers in the UK. One Alawite Turkish woman said that she needed to ask her partner before she became a union member. All the other atheists, which included Turkish and Kurdish women, said they did not need their partners' permission.

Germany

Since the DGB is the largest union federation, it was interesting to find that it was somewhat behind the curve when it came to organising migrant workers. To join a union, a worker must have a registered postal address and a bank account, and be a documented worker. In our interview with a DGB official responsible for migrant care workers, she explained that the union's approach was for the migrant workers to make the first move by going to the headquarters, explain their problems and seek help from DGB staff.

This official regretted that unions did not themselves attempt to find migrant workers and persuade them to become members, and while she thought it was not too difficult to join a DGB union:

> It is enough for migrants to have a home address and a bank account. On the other hand we know that the most tricky part of this procedure for

> migrants is to have a bank account because of the quite painful bureaucracy in Germany – particularly for migrant labourers.

This was because of the migrants' lack of fluency in the German language, they did not know the legal steps involved, they did not have money to employ a lawyer and so on.

The DGB's main project was related mainly to legal problems that migrant care workers faced such as unpaid wages, occupational accidents, retirement and accreditation of diplomas or discrimination disputes. The union also offered counselling services, however, it did not organise language courses for migrants or provide child care facilities, accommodation and so on.

The official explained that the priority of German TUs had always been to organise the traditional German workforce, not casual migrants, and was keen for the DGB to become more open:

'It is good to know that this problem has recently started to find a voice within the DGB although the organisation as a whole has not yet opened up sufficiently to discuss this matter.'

Her view was that the reasons why the majority of migrant care workers were not organised into German TUs, were

> probably because they know nothing about them, or they may have residential problems which is a must for membership, or they may feel that they would be excluded if they join TUs. Regardless of their excuses trade unions must do something to attract them.

She advocated the use of TV for German trade unions to become visible. This was important since migrant workers' ignorance about German unions stemmed partly from the fact that they did not really know about them:

> The reason of why migrant care workers do not tend to organise in Trade Unions is the lack of necessary information about unions. We know that most care workers did not have any relations with trade unions even in their home countries. Especially, those who are from Eastern Europe countries come to Germany on a particular contract to stay and work only for three or six months. (DGB official responsible from migrant care workers)

In such a short time period not only did this mean it was unlikely they would find and join a union, but these migrants experienced extreme exploitation:

> Such workers do not speak German, in such a short time they have little chance of finding a proper job, and all this makes their labour much cheaper than their counterparts who have been in Berlin longer. These workers usually end up caring for patients suffering from Alzheimers meaning that they have to work 24 hours day. (DGB official)

More than half of the women interviewed in Berlin in our study who had never been unionised asked the researcher whether there were competent trade unions in the field of care work in Germany. She told them about ver.di, and advised them to contact any colleagues who were already in a union.

Some of the women from previous Soviet States were familiar with trade unionism as it had been compulsory, for example:

> When I was working in the hospital I was organised into the Union, which belonged to State. This is obligatory for all working people in public works in Turkmenistan

However, migrant domestic workers' own organisations have been growing, such as Mujeres Sin Rostro and RESPECT[4] each of which was involved in initiatives regarding the legalisation of 'undocumented workers' (Gutierrez-Rodriquez 2010). In 2003, they started to talk with ver.di, about trade union membership for non-nationals and those without legal residency status, and to demand the same entitlement to employment rights and benefits as regular service sector workers.

[4] The Respect: European network of migrant domestic workers. RESPECT is the abbreviation for 'Rights, Equality, Solidarity, Power, Europe, Co-operation, Today'. The European RESPECT-network has been founded in 1998 by the Filipino-British NGO Kalayaan and Solidar, a Brussels based NGO with close trade union links. See Migration Citizenship Education http://www.migrationeducation.org/ Accessed in October 2016.

Until this moment 'undocumented migrant' workers were officially excluded from trade union membership. RESPECT (and see Chapter 8) and its support network succeeded in voicing 'undocumented migrant' workers' rights, leading to the establishment of an office for migration and labour in 2008 supported by the trade union ver.di (Gutierrez-Rodriquez 2010: 151, 152).

Nevertheless, and reinforcing the DGB officials' comments, some of the women in our study were confused about which unions organised which workers, what unions did for their members and what their requirements for membership were:

> I'm not unionised because I'm working for private firms. However some of my colleagues are unionised despite we're doing same job in the same company, but they are working for the state and I am working for a private agency/employer. (Turkish woman in Berlin)

> No, I'm not unionised and I know nothing about German unions. (Montenegro woman, Berlin)

As before, male kin, and husbands, were a barrier for several women who joined or wanted to join a union. This Kurdish woman described what happened after she joined a union without asking permission from him beforehand:

> It was too late when I understood that I had to get permission from him before I was unionised. First I accepted to join the union and then I told him in the evening. I remember we had a big fight. He got crazy. (Kurdish woman, Berlin)

For others patriarchal attitudes were also a barrier, as were 'greedy' domestic responsibilities and outside work which took up all their time:

> I am not organised in any union. But I know that Ver-Di is the competent union for organising care staff. I had too many responsibilities both outside and also inside home as my husband used to do nothing. So I didn't have time either for thinking about TUs nor being active member in TUs. (Kurdish woman)

While some others thought that they did not need unions at all:

> I've never been organised in a TU. I don't know why, probably I never needed to. (Bulgarian woman in Berlin)

> I am part of a private insurance system that if I have, for instance, a work accident this firm must pay my all costs. Therefore I don't need a Trade Union. (Polish woman in Berlin)

However, on the positive side, following these sorts of discussions with the researcher, GY, there were four women in Berlin who were thinking about joining and maybe becoming active:

> I didn't think about it in the past. But now, your questions motivated me to think this. I'm seriously thinking now and will search how, where with whom I must do it. (Serbian woman in Berlin)

And those who were interested in picking up past union threads, but were warned off by agencies or employers:

> I intended to join in TUs many times, but I couldn't do it till today. I have many friends who work for TUs or some are active members in TUs. However I must tell you that TUs must privilege immigrants because most of us are unable to pay the fees which are highly intimidating. (Iranian woman in Berlin)

> Yes, I was member in the TU of nursing workers affiliated in the biggest confederation CGIL in Italy. But here, I am not organised. First I would like to know more about German Unions and the legal collective rights of care workers. I think German Unions responsible for care workers are not so visible, otherwise I would see them. I was thinking to join Ver.di this year, but I spoke to the staff in the agency I work with, and I was told that I must keep away. (Italian woman in Berlin)

Only one woman (Kurdish from Turkey) had been involved in trade unions all her working life; in her country of origin and two countries to which she had migrated.

> Yes, I am one of the founders of KESK and its affiliate Union SES. I was also a Union member when I was in Austria, and even got on a two year training course on trade unionism in Austria. I was a Union member for a total 10 years in Turkey, 8 years in Austria and I've been member of Ver. Di in Germany for 3 years, since 2011. (Atheist Kurdish woman in Berlin)

And their fears and experiences in their country of origin migrated together with them:

> I've been thinking to become member for a long time. But I'm scared if my employer fires me if I am unionised. (Turkish woman in Berlin)

Turkey

In Turkey, there is no legislative restriction specific to migrant workers and Article 51 of the Turkish Constitution says that all working people have right to set up and to join trade unions. However, this should not be read as migrant workers finding it easy when they try to join trade unions. Two field studies conducted by Gokbayrak and Erdogdu in 2008 and Toksoz in 2013 found that Turkish trade unions did not include migrant workers, so much so that migrant care workers knew nothing about their basic rights including the right to organise collectively.

There are three points to add to those above. First, unlike those who were interviewed in London and Berlin, foreign-born females interviewed in Istanbul were undocumented migrants who are unable to go outside of the villas in which they were working because of the fear of deportation. As an IMECE union lawyer confirmed, any attempt to join a union would mean arrest by police:

> Even if implementation problems were properly handled neither IMECE nor any other Union would again be able to recruit them if they do not have a work permit.

Meanwhile, however, IMECE was running a project on foreign born care and cleaning workers aiming both to make them visible and to get

the deportation of migrants removed from the system, and was working especially with Syrian migrants/refugees:

> Already a special work permit only for Syrian migrants has been prepared by Turkish Government. Together with the entrance of thousands of Syrian females into the care and cleaning market the amount of casual work has rocketed.

The union was planning to demand the same for all other foreign born females without a work permit:

> As soon as we saw that this special work permit for Syrians was given we resumed the right to claim that if the Government is able to do this it may well do the same for other migrants.

But, the government had proposed that the employment of care and cleaning workers should be via temporary work agencies. For IMECE, this brought both risks and opportunities:

> It is risky because unionisation of those who are rented to private houses by temporary agencies is almost impossible because of the fact that there are thousands of workers from various sectors in the portfolios of these agencies.

More collective organising was needed, irrespective of the sectors they belong to, and opportunities also came because female care and cleaning workers might be able to get rid of being defined as a category outside the working class. This imprisoned them in work, deprived of collective rights:

> Nevertheless we are seeking a more safe way to recruit them.[5]

In Istanbul, the President of DISK, the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions was interviewed. He confirmed the general view that

[5] Cited from the interview with the lawyer of IMECE.

despite a decision to specifically focus on domestic workers and to organise joint campaigns with the ILO/International Labour Organization, ITUC/International Trade Union Confederation, and the ETUC/European Trade Union Confederation, no concrete steps had yet been taken to realise these aims, even though it was estimated that there were more than a million migrant care workers in Turkey:

> The most basic excuses for DISK – are increased pressures of the AKP Government on workers in general and women in particular in addition to the rapidly changing political agenda in Turkey. Our fiscal and human resources are not sufficient to mobilise cadres to recruit one of the most casual layers of the working class. Another barrier which prevents care and cleaning workers being unionised is the nature of this job – that each employer has a single employee which is something quite unusual in traditional labour processes. Imagine a country where 15 million workers are subjected to a very speedy turnover meaning that they seem employed at one moment and they seem unemployed at another moment. This information also confirms the general belief that labour statistics are not reliable.

A few of the women in our study, from previous Soviet States, as with their sisters in Berlin, had been familiar with unions in their home countries.

> When I was working in Armenia as a chemistry engineer I was member of a TU and attending meetings, seminars and May Days. Until I lose my job I stayed as organised. (Armenian woman in Istanbul)

> My whole life in Georgia passed as a unionised worker. (Georgian woman in Istanbul)

But for some their relationships with unions were equivocal to say the least:

> There were state unions which without exception were under command of Moldovan State till early 1990s. Very few people had willingly become a member in these highly manipulated organisations. If we had democratic

> unions of course I would like to become member, together with my husband. (Moldovan woman in Istanbul)

The political dimension of unions was important in another way, among Kurdish migrants:

> I don't know Turkish trade unions well, but I know that existing TUs have no interest in migrants in general. Because they are not part of the struggle of Kurdish peoples as well. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

Overall though, once again, as in London and Berlin, migrant women care workers in Istanbul had little knowledge of unions:

> I don't know how trade unions are doing but I guess there is not any union regulation in Turkey that covers also migrants. Because if there was, migrant workers' working conditions wouldn't be so much precarious. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

And

> Turkmenistan is quite different. There is no union. Because people are not able to come together to defend their rights. I am surprised when I see TUs are able to challenge even prime minister here. This is something impossible to see in Turkmenistan. We, Turkmen peoples are just like sheep. (Turkman woman, Istanbul)

Even if they were aware of unions, the women did not see them as a place for them because they were precarious workers:

> I am not unionised. My job is irregular, I am given a job i.e. today, but no guarantee for tomorrow or the day after. TUs don't want to organise irregular workers like me; because they don't have any interest to organise low wage, insecure workers, they must receive affiliation fees regularly. (Kurdish woman in Istanbul)

This was a common response, and the issue of having to pay regular union subscriptions was also raised. And once again greedy work precluded the idea and the practice:

> I have never been organised in any Union. I am working 12 hours/per day and seven days/per week. I am very busy, therefore I've never thought about it. (Kurdish woman, Istanbul)

Conclusions

When it comes to migrant women domestic workers organising into trade unions, there are some key problems. These have to do with the two main parties in the relationship; the unions and the women themselves. In several cases, each reported that the other was invisible.

In each of the three countries in this study we can see that on the whole the unions have not really got to grips with this group of what they refer to as difficult to organise. They find it problematic to accommodate precarious workers anyway in their structures which were mainly founded on the full-time industrial male worker. Trying to find potential members among women who work in private households requires a completely different approach. As suggested in this chapter, a social movement approach would seem to have potential.

In the UK the union 'turn' has begun to recognise the need to rebuild outside their traditional constituencies with some shifts towards greater engagement with local migrant communities. In London there have been some effective initiatives where unions such as Unite have combined with community organisations, like London Citizens/Citizens UK and Justice for Domestic Workers. But there have also been tensions over structural issues such as methods of freewheeling grassroots organising versus the local union branch, and culturally the participation of faith groups has led to uneasiness among labour organisations with an ideology based on class. Joint working also seems to be more difficult where community organisations have an ethnic identity and ethnopolitical basis, such as the Kurdish groups discussed in this chapter.

In Germany, the fact that migrants seeking to join unions were expected to make the first moves and go to the union, is a huge ask of such women, for whom language and customs in a new country are already difficult enough to cope with. On the positive side, it does seem that in the DGB there are union officials sensitive to these issues, and ver.di has developed some initiatives with migrant groups. Turkey lags behind however, with Turkish unions barely engaging with new workers from diverse groups such as women and ethnic workforce members. Nor have they addressed the issue of organising migrant workers, including those without a work permit. They are not unaware of the problems, but as the Turkish president of DISK pointed out, individualised domestic work with a high level of labour turnover, would have any highly structured labour movement struggling.

But without labour unions advocating for migrant workers, how are these women (and men) to find out about their rights, including the right to organise collectively? Sometimes faith communities will step into this gap, and often ethnic communities do so, although as we heard from one Kurdish woman in London, her Kurdish community group did not inform her and her colleagues about trade unions.

To the women in our study all of this renders trade unions more or less out of sight, including May Day celebrations which occur on the street, but which the women rarely associated with unions. Even some of the small number who had been union members in their native lands were now unenthusiastic about unions, and some women thought they did not need them anyway. Those who were aware of trade unions viewed them as having no interest in migrant workers.

Important factors which militate against women migrant domestic workers developing a collectivist solidarity and joining a union are similar to those traditional barriers; greedy lives where patriarchal and religious codes demand that women do all the housework and domestic responsibilities as well as paid work outside. Other hurdles include irregular work which makes paying a regular union subscription difficult, work in private households, and for the undocumented workers, an almost complete absence of support, or indeed any expectation of such. Fear was felt by others too; of being intimidated by employers or agencies, or of losing their job. Additionally, among the women in this

study, patriarchal and religious norms which required consent from male kin to join unions, were especially strong.

However, there was also a group of women who, once introduced to the idea, showed keenness to join and become active. These are the potential union activists and a possible vanguard for bridging the gap between the individualism inherent in their isolated mode of working and the collectivism of informal self-organisation and community organising jointly with trade unions which can achieve outcomes like the increased pay and conditions reported here in both London and Berlin.

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10

Prospects for Women Migrant Domestic Workers?

Introduction

In constructing this book, we have identified and discussed several layers of what it means to be a migrant domestic care worker for women from many national, religious and cultural backgrounds working in London, Berlin and Istanbul who were interviewed in the years 2012–2014. These interviews offered the prospect of a form of comparative study using the women's narratives to explore six intersecting regimes of migration, gender, family, religion, paid domestic work and collective organising. The women came from 28 different nationalities and ethnic groups, and were affiliated to 10 different religious sects within Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Paganism, as well as a group of atheists.

We have delved into many parts of their lives, and here we examine these further to see how we can understand them better. Instead of categorising the migrant women's experiences, narratives and identities produced through typologies, we aimed to explore them through broader overlapping regimes. Also, too often migrant domestic workers are presented as victims, with limited or constrained agency, and in some ways, so they are. Yet if we can see the richness of their lives as well as the

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drudgery, and from this tease out potential re-evaluation by both the women themselves, and also within the research findings, maybe there are better prospects for their futures, and if not their own, those of their children/the next generation. For example, third-generation women in our study identified themselves not as British, or German born, but as migrants still, an identity they held with pride. A Caribbean woman in London claimed she was part of three generations of women doing the same job: 'Imagine, three generations, more than 50 years!' We are only too aware of the difficult and complex lives of these women but think it worthwhile to discuss our conclusions from a position of optimism by examining how multiple relations of domination constitute women's lives, and politically, the possibilities for and the need to develop political strategies based on these. This approach also speaks to the idea that such research can aim to make more marginal voices speak 'not just of themselves but of and for "others" in the world' (Plummer 2001 in Erel 2009: 5–7).

Wanting to be true to our aims and our ontological and epistemological standpoints, as far as possible throughout the book we have addressed these issues through the voices and stories of the migrant women, in what they have to say about how their lives are structured and experienced through the regimes listed here. We have done so using a feminist lens, foregrounding our interest in women's empowerment, 'conscientisation' and liberation. This necessarily entails critical analysis of the lives of the women in our study, especially the patriarchal and religious cultural codes which constrain them. On the other hand, we also recognise that living their lives within particular national, cultural and religious identities and enclaves can provide security for those who might be more vulnerable to sexism, racism and exclusion without such protections.

Intersectional Analysis

We present our findings through an intersectional analysis, taking as our focus the series of regimes within which the women in our study live their lives, and which we have examined through the chapters, each

addressing a particular dominant regime together with overlapping relationships with others. In doing this, we have linked analytical levels of structure and subjectivities or agency (Carbin and Edenheim 2013). As set out in Chapter 1, we used the term regime to mean the organisation and corresponding cultural codes of social practice in which the relationship between the social actors is articulated and negotiated. In particular, we found that two dominate: regimes of gender (cultural and structural) and regimes of migration (structural and cultural), which while conceptually separate, coexist for the women, and in turn are inflected through and with the other regimes, especially religion and patriarchy. In this study, gender regimes emerged continuously throughout, where gender forms a patterning of difference and domination through distinctions between women and men, which is integral to all social processes.

Regimes of Migration and Regimes of Gender

Regimes of migration are fundamental for migrants in every way; where they go, what the rules are, who they contact, where they live, what work they do, their relations with their own families and their national or ethnic communities, both at home and away. These regimes have been our prism for examining the lives of the migrant women in our study. Overall, migration systems at the level of the state are characterised by ambiguity about managed migration schemes which mainly target highly skilled and professional immigrants, but also unmanaged migration where a lack of controls offers a sort of haven for particular migrant groups as well as labour market plasticity. Women have become a significant force among migrant workers, carving out a particular niche in the high-demand-led sphere of domestic and care work. This is attractive to migrant women because of its low barriers to entry, sometimes including accommodation, especially for the undocumented, and most significant of all replicates women's 'natural' domestic and caring skills. As we discussed in Chapter 4, paid domestic work is more than just another labour market. It demands flexible and experienced workers able to integrate themselves in the households of their employers, and

especially in carer roles, carry out intimate, personal, body and emotion work – skills which in recognised professions, such as medicine, are trained and duly rewarded. The irony is that in spite of migrant women taking on hard to fill jobs by doing this crucial work, they remain classified as low-skilled, and characterised by precarious working conditions, an absence of employment protections and low pay. This is an exclusive relationship, where the migrant domestic worker regime meets with and is driven by gender politics and patriarchy; regimes of gender in which household and care work can be seen as the expression of a specifically gendered cultural script. The concept of migrants constructed as *other* also plays an important role in construction of their work (Dyer et al. 2008) and their class position. For women who had had professional qualifications and careers in their home country, ending up as a domestic worker was a seriously downward move in terms of class, as pointed out by this Polish woman in London; 'Of course no British psychologist would work for care agencies'. With the exception of only a few, the women confessed that they wouldn't be doing this work in their home countries. It must have been especially galling that in their new roles as migrant domestic workers they had become the working-class paid servant of their middle-class professional sisters.

Early on, in discussing women's motives for moving abroad, it became clear how women's migration was shaped at this intersection of regimes; gender relations saturated everything. Whether pushed or pulled to migrate, the actions of the women in our study were informed by the patriarchal and religious cultural codes that they had grown up with. Sometimes the decision to migrate was their own, to follow their dreams of a better future, but much more often it was not a personal choice, but part of a family strategy. For some women migration was at great personal cost; being compelled to give up higher education degree programmes and professional careers. We heard stories from young unmarried women under strong family pressures to migrate in order to meet the health expenses of their parents, sisters or brothers, or to pay educational expenses for their nieces and nephews. Other women had to leave their children behind to be cared for by other women. This compulsion was the outcome of family strategies and in line with patriarchal and allied religious codes, in which as women they were always subordinate to male kin.

One key illustration was the sending of remittances back home to family to pay for their basic needs, and for toys for their children. In some cases when they sent money home to buy a house/property, the women could not even do this in their own name, by right; the properties were registered to their husbands/brothers and belonged to these kinsmen, as explained by the Moldovan woman: 'Although my husband doesn't work, all properties we have are officially registered to him, not to me.' Another indicator was the way in which women accepted that their men must be more powerful, more privileged, happier, than they themselves, sometimes to prevent their partners' humiliation, often in order to keep the peace in their relationship. There was little about their own happiness.

Things were especially complicated for the women in our study in Istanbul since half of them were undocumented due to the punitive system of 90-day visas which presented huge ruptures to their lives and families. These included women whose main motivation was economic hardship at home and who would not have migrated anywhere if they had been able to survive in their own countries. Six were Armenian women who had bachelor degrees in various academic disciplines like chemical engineering, educational sciences, international law, and international relations: 'I studied and graduated from the faculty of International Relations when I was in Armenia. But I am working in care jobs here in İstanbul'.

Family Regimes, Religious and Patriarchal Codes

The power over women generated at the juncture of gender and migration regimes became particularly explicit in Chapters 6 and 7 through the examination of how religion and patriarchy combined in both the private, domestic sphere and the public realm of work and community, to position men as superior and women as subordinate. The processes by which these regimes shaped women's lives emerged in the women's stories about their religions and their familial relationships, not only in their home countries but also in their new ones. Even against widely

accepted claims that the lesbian or gay parent family presents an alternative family structure to the two-parent male/female model, we also witnessed that for women acculturated in patriarchal religions, gendered division of labour in the same sex home continued to be normal.

There was some loosening of ties in their new countries, and strict religious adherence was ameliorated when jobs came first, but its cultural codes, patriarchy especially, continued to shape the women's lives, including those who had become atheists. Thus cultural and religious patriarchy in all the religions represented (Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Paganism) to a greater or lesser extent, framed the belief that males should be the head of the family, the breadwinner earning the family wage and that women should obey their men, do the housework and defer to their male kin in their choice and place of work and whether or not they engaged in community, political or labour movement activities. These attitudes also spilled over to some of the atheist women, most of whom had rejected their previous religion. It was striking to note the strength of patriarchal codes and the resilience, in the twenty-first century, of the gendered hegemony of women's domestic role. All of these remained strong in shaping the identities of women in marriage, in the family and home, when doing housework, and in prioritising male promotion and job prospects. Although Alawite Muslims and some Christian women saw their particular religious codes allowing more equitable gender relations, and divorced and single women also felt less bound, nevertheless:

> Alawites believe that all housework inside the home is defined as the tasks of women in that women have to serve first the oldest man in her family, second to their husbands, third to their sons. My mum washed the feet of my father, she never used to take a seat at dinners or launches if men were present; the two chicken legs were always given only to the males in my family even if they were little boys. (Kurdish woman in Berlin)

On the debit side too, patriarchy additionally spilled over to the unmarried and the atheists in the study:

> In the last 15 years I tried to earn my bread alone and I saw that in labour market nobody did care about me, they offer good jobs only to males

> because I am a woman, because nobody expects me to bring bread to home, because bread winners are males in all religions. (Czech migrant, London)

Here we see how strongly gender, family, domestic work and religion intersect.

Migration and Regimes of Paid Domestic Work

Domestic and care work is a specific labour market, increasingly colonised by migrant women, and its particular characteristics, as identified by the ILO, involve tasks such as cleaning the house, cooking, washing and ironing clothes, taking care of children, or elderly or sick members of a family, gardening, guarding the house, driving for the family, and even taking care of household pets (Tayah 2016). These are all tasks also undertaken by native home care workers, and both groups share one unique characteristic: it is devalued work because it is done almost exclusively by women in the domestic sphere, and its worth is calculated ambiguously; does it create 'use-value' and not 'exchange-value', or both? As we argued in Chapter 3, with the rise of commercialised agency work, by setting up their own businesses, domestic workers are value creators in the wider sense, so we should identify them as productive workers as long as they are directly paid by capital (commercial agencies which are not funded by the state). Regardless though, their work remains categorised as low-skilled and low-paid, although as the main public sector trade union organising domestic/care workers in the UK asserts: 'The low pay and status of care workers is in sharp contrast with their level of responsibility and the skills they require to provide quality home care' (UNISON 2013: 12). Factors used in job evaluation of care work in the public sector in the UK include mental and emotional demands as well as physical demands and skills and the more common factors such as knowledge and responsibilities. Studies of employer assessment of emotional labour, a key part of caring work, have found that this is assessed at only a perfunctory level or lower (Mastracci et al. 2006). This lack of acknowledgement renders such labour invisible and contributes to

depressed wages of those whose jobs require it. Yet should these same factors be applied to the worth of a professional group such as doctors, a rather different picture might emerge (Holt 2010).

There is also a discussion around the idea of care work as a public good since it provides benefits far beyond the direct recipients (England 2005). But, the social good produced by good care is not captured and turned to profits and thus societies 'free ride' on the care provided by others (Dyer et al. 2008: 2031). Expand this argument, and we see in this affective labour, the twin notions of 'prisoner of love' where the intrinsic caring motives of care workers allow employers to get away with paying care workers less, and 'love and money' where markets are seen as antithetical to true care (England 2005).

Meanwhile, low pay and status in domestic/care work can be attributed to a complex perfect storm where patriarchy and gender meet caring as a particular type of labour, the gendered nature of which persists in the transition from familial duty to the commodified realm [Dyer et al p2031]. Further, it has also been argued that caring work is devalued by the associations between body work and dirty work. Rather than being rewarded for undertaking socially necessary and difficult work, workers are stigmatised by the work they undertake [op cit: 2037]. 'Migrant care and cleaning workers are treated as they were from bottom classes, I'm given separate plates, forks and glasses at homes where I work.' (Brazilian woman in London). Here this woman expresses women domestic workers' class position. Further, as their work is denoted as low-skilled due to its reproduction of women's natural caring skills, it is deemed unproductive. In turn, this view informs the concepts of the male breadwinner role and the family wage whereby women in any labour market are deemed to already have been paid for through their husband's wage and so their pay can be less.

One of the Kurdish women in London confirmed how this played out for her in her Alawite faith, adding that because they are beholden to their male kin, women cannot object when they are asked to work longer hours. This woman also stated that in her view, if a woman's labour is assumed as secondary, her primary target becomes keeping her job rather than fighting for better conditions of employment.

This whole regime can be illustrated by levels of pay of domestic workers. In a UNISON survey (2013) of its members working in homecare, over half were paid only between the UK national minimum wage (then £6.08) and £8 an hour, and 41 per cent were not given any specialist training for dealing with conditions such as dementia and strokes. From their own accounts, the pay of the women in our study was in the same ballpark.

Identity, Religion and Politics

Overall, the majority of the women identified their gender identity and roles in the family and in the wider society through religious patriarchy, which took priority. However, there were also two groups among the women whose respective communities/countries had been involved in either diaspora politics (Armenians in Istanbul) or national identity struggles (Kurds in all three cities). Although in the replies of the Armenian women in this study we could see no evidence of diaspora politics, over three-quarters of all the Kurdish women identified themselves with the Kurdish struggle in which some had been active, and indeed imprisoned. This political consciousness seemed to inform their sense of self, and this could be seen in the ways they prioritised themselves rather than their male partner, in contrast with the majority of the women. Ironically, the same Kurdish women also clearly stated that all housework was defined as female work in their respective religions and they alone did the housework in their home. We might explain these seemingly contradictory responses by reflecting that the research questions about future job promotion required 'imagination', while sharing housework or the gendered division of labour in their religions were their 'realities'.

Nonetheless, the women in London and Berlin were definitely more liberated than their sisters in Istanbul, especially the Kurds who were politicised and were slightly more likely to be either a member of or sympathetic towards joining a trade union, and displayed a mature gender consciousness, as did the atheist women.

Migration, Gender and Identity

Through the women's stories, we saw how the migrant women's experiences of discrimination were bound up with regimes of migration and identity, themselves integral to being a domestic worker. As put feelingly by a divorced Turkish woman in Berlin: 'Not only employers but also staff and patients make discrimination in relation to my religion, my nationality and my gender.'

Their identities were influenced through their migration in a number of ways. While remaining rooted in their national or ethnic identity, being a migrant had also strongly influenced their sense of self as well as their life experiences. Being a migrant worker was the most potent reason the women felt discriminated against and this was bound up with language skill, a significant formation within migration regimes, especially the relationship with self-esteem and identity, and the impact on the type and location of paid work and the lives they could lead. Among the women in this study those whose English, German or Turkish was poor or non-existent found themselves limited to working within ethnic or kinship enclaves, for example the Kurdish and the Bulgarian women in London. In Istanbul, undocumented women found themselves especially restricted, and so did some of the foreign-born women, such as the Armenian women who were confined to living-in in Armenian households where they could speak their own language. As language proficiency improved, women pronounced themselves increasingly empowered, and in some cases well integrated into their new country, reaching a 'peak' of fluency in two or more languages which enriched their stories of success in their new countries by showing their compatriots at home that they could now speak the host country language. Further, language fluency also opened the door to improved job prospects, and contributed to the human capital of those seeking English citizenship. In addition, there were the women who, especially in Germany, were undertaking professional training in care work, which also enhanced their prospects. Expanding human capital in these ways contributed to upward mobility, showing migrant women as active agents.

Conversely, however, the majority of faithful and strictly religious women tended to normalise precarity arising out of migration, domestic work and the secondary position of women in familial relationships. These women also held the view that natives had the right to dislike immigrants.

Type of Work and Working Conditions

The outcomes for women in domestic and care work are thus inextricably located at the intersection between regimes of gender and domestic/care work. The jobs of domestic workers in our study were mainly caring, for children and elderly adults, involving both emotion and body work, and in Istanbul it was mainly cleaning, 'the most dirty work'.

The realities of the work was described by some of the women and we can see this on a trajectory where cleaning was generally disliked, while caring provoked feelings of both hatred and love. Hatred was mainly directed towards the harsh working conditions such as 'call cramming' (UNISON 2013) where client care visits were limited to 15 minutes (paid) with 30 minutes for travel (unpaid). It was not unusual for a migrant woman working like this to make 30 such calls a day. Resentment and dislike was also directed at employers and agencies who only found fault, humiliated their employees or depressed pay through various means.

Domestic and care work took its toll in other ways too. Poor or degenerating health seemed to go with the job, especially for the older women who reported serious pains and health problems caused by their work; lifting and moving bed ridden and disabled patients and walking very long distances between clients. Work equipment, including chemicals, exposed women to 'economic violence' (Yalcin 2015).

There was an ambivalence and range of feelings about caring, especially the body work, from its role as a 'bloodsucking vampire' to contentment and affection. For some women there was a high level of intrinsic job satisfaction especially among those caring for children, and the women doing this work commonly expressed their love for the children they were paid to look after.

Regimes of Collectivism

Although migrant women domestic/care workers as individuals may well be able to improve their situations, it is collectively where there is greatest potential. In our study we saw how women organised together in different ways. We identified three main types. Informal communities of coping (Korczynski 2003), intimate, dense, oral-based networks in which service workers turn to each other for emotional support existed among the women in Berlin where they used the rest room at the agency which employed them, to discuss and agree the conditions they were prepared to work under, and make demands to the employer. This was informal and unstructured, but enhanced their social capital through the sharing of experiences about both their domestic and work situations. This form of self-organisation offers the potential for mobilising both as women and as workers. A second type of organising was more structured through existing ethnic centres of community and political activity, especially in Istanbul among the Armenian community and in London in the Kurdish centres – although their activism in these was limited to reprising their domestic roles in the home. The national identity struggle of the Kurdish community provided Kurdish women with a suitable environment to gain awareness of power relations and gender, which are the two imperatives for moving towards the collective organising of women. Nevertheless, patriarchal codes remained influential in the level to which the women were allowed, or personally felt comfortable, to take an active part, and there was no evidence that the women used their ethnic associations as the basis to improve their pay and conditions of work. If they really wanted to do this, they would need to have either organised within their communities – their communities of work as in Berlin, or their community organisations or both, to galvanise solidaristic action with the relevant trade union, or indeed become members themselves. As the Unite union official reminded us, 'as individuals they are isolated'. But the evidence in others' research, and here in our study, is that both parties seemed to be invisible to the other. A few women in our research had joined a union, but found it failed to live up to expectations, either not being political enough, or not supporting the

members sufficiently in difficult situations such as privatisation and redundancy. Yet, in interview discussions with the researcher other women showed enthusiasm for joining and becoming active in unions once they knew more about them.

The Researcher Role

It was notable that in this study, the role of the researcher was an important influence on the knowledge and consciousness development of some of the women she interviewed. Through serial and group interviews there were opportunities for exchange of information, especially about the type and availability of trade unions. In addition, the deal with ethnic centres in London and Berlin for Gaye to reciprocate by teaching classes on Marxian economics and on Political Economy was an important catalyst for further conscientisation, and these courses also provided further opportunities for migrant women to meet and develop awareness, and consider collective action.

Finally

Finally, the women's accounts throughout our study continue to raise questions about the extent to which women on their own can exercise agency, mount challenges to their subordination at home, at work, and subvert the hegemonies of regimes of migration, gender and patriarchy. A handful of individuals had found ways to do this, gaining qualifications, citizenship, setting up their own business running domestic workers. Others had developed gendered alliances in finding and sharing work, over pay and conditions, filling in forms, sharing their own childcare. A few were considering unionisation and collective organising. Meanwhile, in their many everyday actions the women were able to exercise agency and resistance including subverting parental attempts to control their religious observance from afar, challenging husbands at the domestic level, and employers at the workplace. Going further may not yet be

part of their strategy; in the status quo in the home, in ethnic enclaves, especially for those migrant women without language skills and the undocumented, security of the known may outweigh the risks involved. In all of this the context of women's migration was important. In London and Berlin, where secular perspectives lined up more readily with attitudes and gender rights frameworks, the women were living in work and equality cultures which valorised the dual earner, and the German regulation of and training offered for care work provided opportunities for progression and for job satisfaction, and for extending their networks to a wider and more diverse range of colleagues and friends to construct unity across difference. Opportunities for collective self-organisation or joining a trade union were marginally better in London than in Berlin, where to become a member entailed hurdles that few migrant women were likely to be able to surmount. Istanbul was very different in all of these respects, offering no opportunities except as a safe haven for the undocumented, especially through their ethnic enclaves. For us, the most significant finding from our study was that despite migration loosening cultural and familial ties for the migrating women, the power of religious and patriarchal beliefs remained deeply rooted, and these continued to shape the women's identities and realities at home, in the family and in the wider world. Migrant women domestic workers remain an oppressed class.

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Appendix

Migrant Women Domestic Workers; London, Berlin, Istanbul
Interview Schedule of Questions for Respondents

Biographical
Name:
Country of origin:
Education:
Age:
Work:
Union:

Part: I Family Relations

Are you married? Living with a partner? How long?
Married Divorced Single Living with Partner Widow

Do you have children?
Ages In your home country or living with you in the new country?

Does your partner/husband share/d the problems he faces/ed at work with you?
Yes No Don't know

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How do you react?
Does your partner ask you when he decides/ed to change his job?
Yes No Don't know
Does your partner interfere with your choice on changing or getting a job?
Yes No
Do you share the problems you face/d at the workplace with your partner?
Yes No
If yes, How does he react?

Have you ever have to keep something such as sexual harassment at work a secret from your partner?
Yes No
If you are asked to work at night shift how do you react?
If your partner does not allow you to work at nights what do you do?

When you hold back/do not do' because you are tired or do not have the heart to do housework because of the demands of your job or union tasks, how does your partner react?

If you tell your partner that you cannot sustain doing work both inside and outside the home, how does he react?
Tells you to leave job
Offers to share house work with you
Offers to hire a domestic worker
Explains why you have to do both
Please briefly explain your answer

Whose promotion at job makes you happier: your partner's promotion or your own promotion?
Partner's Mine Both Don't Know
Please briefly explain your answer

Part: II Unionisation

Have you ever been organised in any trade union (where, when, how long?)

Does union legislation/rights equally cover migrant domestic workers in the country where you are currently located?

Yes Partly No

Do you have to get permission from your partner before you join a union?

Have you and your partner regularly taken part in May Day and similar celebrations organised by your respective Unions?

Yes No

Who cares for the children when you are involved with union tasks?

Grandmother
Grand children
Neighbours
Babysitters
Other [please describe]

Does your Union/Association organise meetings and seminars at times when female members are able to take part ?

Yes No Don't know

Does your Union provide opportunities such as language training or child care facilities, especially for migrant members

Yes No Don't know

Which times and frequency are more convenient for your attendance in these actions and activities and why?

At the weekends
After 6pm
Once in a month
Twice in a month
Once in a week
At any time and any frequency

Part III Religion and Culture

What is your religion?
How do you define yourself regarding with your religion?

What are the tasks of woman at home in your religion?

To bring up children
Cooking
Laundry
To do cleaning
To do what necessary for the guests
Caring for elderly parents
Helping children to do their homework
To give basic rules of culture to the children

What are the tasks of woman at home in your culture?

Who is the "breadwinner" at home according to your religion and culture?

Woman Man

What are the implications of that on your job and employment decisions?

You accept work with lower wages more easily

You don't object when you are asked to work longer hours

If your employment is assumed as secondary, does your primary target become to stay employed rather than the conditions of employment

Do your relatives abroad/at home expect you to fulfil your religious obligations?

Yes No

Part: IV Relationship between Being a Migrant and a Domestic Worker

How long you have been doing this job?

Which is the paid work that you dislike/hate to do (ironing, cleaning windows etc.)

What are the working hours?

Are you covered by a public insurance system?
Do you have any sickness which may be associated from the work you have been doing?

Have you ever thought that women other than non-migrant domestic workers are luckier than migrant female domestic workers?

Yes No

Do you think that your employer discriminates against migrants?

Yes No Don't know

İf yes, how does is this discrimination reflected in your daily life both at the workplace and in the home?

What are the good things about being a migrant worker and what are the difficult things?

What are your expectations about the legal rights of migrant workers from the host country government?

Would you give any support to the campaigns which may be organised to improve working and living conditions of migrant domestic workers? How?

Glossary

Original Spellings	Spellings Used in Ms
Turkish	
Boğaziçi University	Bogazici University
Çelik, N.	Celik, N.
Çoban, C.	Coban, C.
Dedeoğlu, S.	Dedeoglu, S.
DİSK	DISK
İçduygu, A.	Icduygu, A.
İslam	Islam
İstanbul	Istanbul
Journal Yeni Dönem	Journal Yeni Donem
Kaşka, S.	Kaska, S.
Keleş, Y.	Keles, Y.
KOÇ University	KOC University
TÜVASA	TUVASA
Yılmaz, G.	Yilmaz, G.
German and Other Languages	
Anlaufstelle für PendlerInnen Ausländischer	Anlaufstelle fur PendlerInnen Auslndischer

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Beschäftigung	Beschaftigung
Böhning R.W.	Bohning R.W.
Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch	Burgerliches Gesetzbuch
Düsseldorf	Dusseldorf
Gächter, A.	Gachter, A.
Heinrich Böll Stiftung	Heinrich Boll Stiftung
Körner, T.H.	Korner T.H.
Kümmerling, A.	Kummerling, A.
Ministerium für Generationen	Ministerium fur Generationen
Möllenbeck P. Ewa	Mollenbeck P. Ewa
Però, D.	Pero, D.
Pflegehilfskräfte	Pflegehilfskrafte
Teilhabe Für Migrantinnen	Teilhabe Fur Migrantinnen
Wahlbeck, Ö.	Wahlbeck, O.

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