

Abstract

**The impact of migration regimes on the concentration of migrants
in paid domestic work**

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The growing concentration of migrants in the domestic sector is usually pointed to as one of the most visible trends of contemporary paid domestic work in Europe (UNHCR, 2011; ILO, 2013). However, wide differences exist between European countries in the number of migrant domestic workers, which, according to the EU-LFS, varies from little more than 1% in some Eastern European countries to 65% in Cyprus and 50% in other Mediterranean countries. Indeed, in the latter countries the employment of female migrants in the domestic, childcare and elderly services assumed enormous proportions, so that in these countries the domestic sector is the one where migrant women concentrate most (Lutz, 2008).

The main changes compared to older forms of mobility of domestic workers concern both the new geography of migration of domestic workers to Europe (which follow a pattern from East to West and from South to North) and the new ‘profile’ of domestic workers (international migrants, instead of internal migrants, more and more educated, coming from urban areas and from a middle-class background) (Lutz, 2008; Morokvasic, 2004, Sarti, 2008).

Scholars have identified some factors that have contributed to the concentration of migrants in the domestic sector. Among the most relevant ones is the rationale of a global *push-and-pull* model, where the enormous increase of labour supply on one side of the world (due to economic reasons) meets the growing demand for domestic labour in the richer parts of the world, including Europe (Lutz, 2008). The growing demand for domestic labour is in turn determined by the combination of societal changes, such as the increased female participation in the labour market, the demographic transformations, and the persistence of poor wages and working conditions in the sector.

Without neglecting the importance of such other factors in explaining not only the increased concentration of migrants in paid domestic work, but also the significant differences between European countries, in this paper we focus on the migration regimes as an explanatory factor, which are often recognised as having an impact on the arrival of migrant domestic workers in Europe. Our research questions then regard 1) whether indeed migration regimes have an (empirically measurable) effect on the presence of migrants in the domestic sector, 2) what kind of effect it is, and 3) whether this effect may be accounted for explaining cross-country variations.

However, assessing the impact of migration regimes on paid domestic work may turn out to be a challenging task. A first difficulty researchers meet is how to operationalize and measure migration regimes, since scholarship does not offer an unambiguous definition. A second issue concerns the lack of indices and indicators suited for comparative purposes, that can be used to empirically analyse such regimes. Furthermore, uncertainty regards what is to be measured, whether their output, i.e., the policies issued, or their implementation, or still their outcomes.

Our strategy of analysis consists of two steps, the first aimed at operationalising the concept of migration regime, while the second targeted at assessing its impact on migrants' paid domestic work. As for the first one, we built a typology aimed at identifying groups of countries that behave similarly with respect to this regime. In fact, migration regimes, as they are usually analysed, do not refer specifically to domestic workers and none of the existing typologies specifically takes into account the increased demand for domestic workers in many European countries. Our typology in turn was developed using the MIPEX and the IMPIC databases, which measure respectively the integration and the admission dimension of migration regimes. As a result, we got a 4-fold typology, which groups countries according to being either old or new immigration countries, and to the degree of integration/openness.

The second step of our analysis consisted in a set of multilevel logistic regressions on the EU-LFS data, aiming at assessing the effect of the migration regimes typology on the concentration of migrants in the domestic sector in European countries, as well as measuring the intensity and the direction of this effect.

Our hypotheses address two different sides of this analysis, the first (of a methodological kind) for validating the typology as an analysis tool, while the second (of a substantive kind) for assessing the role of migration regimes. Therefore, our hypotheses are as follows:

Methodological hypotheses:

- Hp1.1: clusters better predict the share of migrant workers in the domestic sector (as opposed to migrants in other sectors) than the raw indices scores (even in interaction between them), for both genders.
- Hp1.2: clusters better predict the ethnic composition of the workforce in the domestic sector than the raw indices scores, for both genders.

Substantive hypotheses:

- Hp2.1: since EU-LFS data only refer to regular labor market, a higher proportion of migrant instead than native workers is to be found in the domestic sector in countries in which migration policies foster integration and openness (clusters 4 and 5)
- Hp2.2: for the same reason, the proportion of migrant vs. native domestic workers is lower in countries where low integration and low openness prevail (cluster 2)
- Hp2.3: However, since in high integration countries migrant workers can access more easily other sectors of activity than the domestic one, as compared to countries with low integration, the share of migrant workers in the domestic sector in clusters 2 and 3 is higher than in cluster 1, 4, 5

On the methodological side, our results show that the typology of migration regimes allows a better insight into the allocation of workers into the domestic sectors than the two indices on which it is based (MIPEX and IMPIC), as considered in interaction.

On the substantive side, some differences are found by gender, which is somehow to be expected, given the high share of women as opposed to men in the domestic sector (86% vs. 14% respectively). Overall, in regimes with highest openness and integration the probability to have migrant domestic workers vs. natives is higher. In migration regimes with most

developed integration policies, migrants are more likely to be found in the domestic sector (vs. other sectors), which means that higher integration does not decrease segregation in the labour market.

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