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Artigos

Social bias within the institution of hired domestic care

Global interactions and migration

Preconceito social dentro da instituição de cuidado doméstico contratado

Interações globais e migração

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Abstract: The paper presents a critical analysis of the institution of hired domestic care in the context of global capitalism. The author starts with outlining the context of late modern society in the European and Anglo-American regions in which global inequalities and intensive enlargement of capitalism bolster a market model of care and consequently also the institution of hired domestic care which increasingly involves migrants. From the perspective of Critical theory she analyses the possible variations of relationships between domestic worker and employer within the institution of hired domestic care. And she concludes that the institution of hired domestic care necessarily involves social bias which reproduces social inequalities as well as traditional gendered division of labour and institutionalised servitude.

Keywords: Care. Hired domestic care. Recognition. Global interactions. Social inequalities. Migration.

Resumo: O artigo apresenta uma análise crítica da instituição da cuidado doméstico contratado no contexto do capitalismo global. A autora começa por esboçar o contexto da sociedade moderna tardia nas regiões europeias e anglo-americanas em que as desigualdades globais e o aumento intensivo do capitalismo reforçam um modelo de mercado de cuidados e, consequentemente, também a instituição de cuidados domésticos contratados que cada vez mais envolve migrantes. Do ponto de vista da teoria crítica, ela analisa as possíveis variações das relações entre trabalhador doméstico e empregador dentro da instituição de cuidado doméstico contratado. E ela

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conclui que a instituição de cuidados domésticos contratados envolve necessariamente preconceito social que reproduz as desigualdades sociais, bem como a tradicional divisão do trabalho de gênero e a servidão institucionalizada.

Palavras-chave: Cuidado. Cuidado doméstico contratado. Reconhecimento. Interações globais. Desigualdades sociais. Migração.

During the 20th century we saw substantial changes in the gendered social patterns and the position of women in society. These changes are among the most fundamental changes accompanying transition from modern to late modern society. However, a paradoxical situation arises when the same processes create for some groups of women, advantaged along class, "racial"-ethnic and geopolitical intersecting axes of privilege, more space to make autonomous decisions about their private lives by hiring domestic workers, while marginalized groups of women occupying underpaid reproductive jobs, are captured in a vicious cycle of exploitation in their struggle for livelihoods. The market model of care in the current context of global capitalism creates a sector of second-rate employment that is characterized by employing migrants and women from disadvantaged groups and shows limitations with regard to recognition of care in the logic of costs and profits. Although not all domestic workers are necessarily migrants, the migrant domestic worker figure can be seen as a paradigmatic example of recent trends.

In the following article, I discuss the institution of hired domestic care, and more specifically I focus on unqualified domestic work and care, thus leaving aside professional domestic health care. The institution of hired domestic care is a class and gender-based form of relationship. Currently, it is increasingly migrants who work as domestic workers.[1] The transnational care practices bring into this institution another layer of global social inequalities. Just as employing domestic workers by individual households is not a historically new practice, the fact that the work is largely done by migrants, including internal migrants, is not new either (Sarti, 2008). The starting point of my analysis is the context of late modern transatlantic modernity developed mainly in the European and Anglo-American economic and cultural regions,[2] which

[1] The ILO report estimates that in 2013 there were 11.5 million (transnational) migrant domestic workers globally which represents 17.2% of all domestic workers worldwide (ILO, 2015).

[2] Despite significant intra-European differences and inequalities, the main features of the socioeconomic development in Central Europe after 1989 copied the Western European trajectory and Central Europe and Baltic countries have become part of the West. I will refer to this entire region as European region.

is shaped by globalisation processes and growing global interactions. In this perspective we can see that while the institution of hired domestic care seemed to be on the verge of disappearance in developed industrial countries as the European-style welfare state unfolded, today we are witnessing its comeback. The institution of hired domestic care is a private form of care which blurs the boundaries between the household and the market introducing in intimate relationships market-like dynamics, influenced by changes in market relations in the context of neoliberal globalization.

In the first part of the paper, I outline the context of late modern society in the European and Anglo-American regions in which the intensive enlargement of capitalism and transnational care practices are involved in shaping the process of distorted emancipation. In the second part, I present feminist contentions about the implications and possibility of transforming the institution of hired domestic care. In the third part, I systematically analyse this institution and discuss various forms of relationships between domestic workers and their employers in relation to institutional conditions and to employers' attitudes. On the basis of this analysis, I show the drawbacks of the strategy to professionalize hired domestic care as a solution for remedying gender and social injustice present in this institution.[3]

Double misrecognition of domestic work and care

In developed industrial countries, many paid work opportunities opened to women of various socioeconomic statuses after World War II. However, women entered a labour market that is nowadays fundamentally different from both the socialist form of labour market and the previous capitalist form of Fordist labour market, which prevailed in Eastern and Western blocs after the Second World War. Both models, although to a different degree, were characterised by a relative social reconciliation guaranteed by the welfare state. The current labour market in both contexts is characterised by the phenomenon of deformalization, increasing uncertainty, restrictions in social benefits, negative flexibilization and work intensification (Beck, 2000; Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Sassen, 2000; Standing, 2014). In modern society in which money exchange became a prevailing form of social relationships, the idealization of care relations as outside the money system leads to obscuring women's exploitation under the mask of traditional gender relations. However, the growth of women's employment and the demand for care provided outside

[3] In this article I develop analyses which I formulated in an article in the Czech language (s. Uhde, 2012).

the family relations in European and Anglo-American regions went hand in hand with the establishment of global capitalism which led to the inclusion of care among other institutionalised activities governed by market norms and to the commodification of care.[4] Moreover, the commodification of care in the context of global capitalism reinforces the institution of paid care as a low-paid and precarious sector. The negative consequences of this development are distributed along class and "racial"-ethnic social structures: on one hand market caring services are financially accessible only to higher and middle classes, and on the other hand these jobs with disadvantaged and risk statuses are designed for women from minority groups and lower classes. The processes of marketization and commodification did not turn the private public: it is still private within a private economy.

Unless participation in the labour market represents the emancipation of the majority of employees (men and women), there is no reason to assume that the inclusion of reproductive activities in the structures of institutionalised activities in the labour market would directly lead to women's emancipation. The argument used in practical politics, i.e. that the creation of new jobs in the private sector of care services opens up work opportunities to a larger number of women and provides them greater economic independence, has proved to be misleading due to the creation of a care sector providing second rate employment, which is the typical form of employment for migrant workers and other marginalised groups of women. I call this development *distorted emancipation* which subordinates the notion of emancipation to market imperatives shaped by existing ownership structures and has led to the modification of class and cultural division of labour among women. While the stalled gender revolution[5] highlights the persisting gender division of labour and the rigid separation between the private and public spheres, a phenomenon which sociological analysis has analysed as a double burden for women, distorted emancipation refers to social inequalities resulting from the marketization and commodification of the private in late modern society. Distorted emancipation also refers to the situation when the emancipation for privileged groups of women is internally linked to and made possible by

[4] Nevertheless, I argue that there is a difference between commodification of care and financial reward for care. According to Elizabeth Andersen, "what confers commodity status on a good is not that people pay for it, but that exclusively market norms govern its production, exchange, and enjoyment" (Anderson, 1993, p. 156). The mere transfer of money does not necessarily lead to commodification: The transfer of money receives significance as commodification in relations governed by market norms. Thus commodification of care occurs in what I call the market model of care which can be contrasted to a public model of care.

[5] The concept "stalled gender revolution" was introduced by sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1989).

the structures of global inequalities. We can talk about pseudo-emancipation, because the processes creating distorted emancipation ultimately reproduce the traditional gendered division of labour – it is still mostly women who provide care. Thus, distorted emancipation represents a step backwards in that it prevents also the resumption of the stalled gender revolution (Uhde, 2016).

The social form of care is closely linked to structural, gender, economic, "racial"-ethnic and national inequalities. Domestic work and care, thus, represent a symbolic activity structuring the person's position in society. In modern society in general, reproductive activities have never been fully integrated among the socially recognized activities. Today, even if care becomes paid employment, it is undervalued which stems from the form of social recognition that is derived in late capitalist society from financial success, not social contribution. William Robinson argues that "intensive enlargement of capitalism" has become an essential strategy of profit accumulation in the transnational and global economy. This brings about the marketization and commodification of areas of social life that were previously excluded from the market relations (Robinson, 2004). Therefore, in late modern capitalist society we experience an extension of the achievement principle to include more aspects of social life. While the enlargement of the achievement principle had some emancipatory potential, it has been neutralized by the development of global capitalism. According to critical theorist Axel Honneth, the principal characteristic of the contemporary development of capitalist modernization is the tendency toward an ambivalent development: the same processes bring along progress in one domain of social life and regress in another domain, or positive developments for some groups are accompanied by negative consequences for other groups (Honneth, 2002). Stephan Voswinkel from Honneth's team argues that changing forms of paid work in late capitalist society trigger changes in the form of social recognition: the process of the achievement principle's enlargement is accompanied by its gradual erosion and reduction to financial success. According to him, today effort or sacrifice – previously socially recognized as obligation which was partly derived from social contribution – are redefined as means to reach atomized self-realization. As a result, even paid work is not a self-evident source of social recognition (Voswinkel, 2002).

The inclusion of care in paid activities did not redefine the undervaluation of reproductive activities. Recognition of work as obligation, which was gendered and racialized, only allowed for unequal esteem of care. Today even this kind of social recognition of care is limited by the eroded form of recognition of achievement while the gendered and racialized structure

of esteem has not been reinterpreted. The distinction between productive labour on one hand and reproductive activities (care and housework) on the other represents the first layer of the distribution pattern of social recognition that has been preserved in late modern capitalist society. Nevertheless, as a result of the reduction of achievement to financial success, a second layer is being established – distinction between work providing recognition and work not providing recognition. In this context the commodification of care thus contains a paradox: by opening certain possibilities of financial reward, it institutionalised double misrecognition of care as both non-productive work and paid work that cannot be a source of social recognition (Uhde, 2016).

The increasing number of migrant workers in this sphere has been an inevitable consequence of the interplay between global capitalism and structures of gendered inequalities. Transnational care practices represent a gender specific sector which mirrors that of construction workers, whose ranks in developed capitalist countries significantly consist of migrant male workers. In this context, the state is not a neutral actor. The immigration policies of individual states significantly determine the status of migrant workers who are employed as domestic workers. Pragmatic logic forms the background of this process because further cuts in public expenditure on care provision can be implemented by keeping domestic workers' costs low. Although a number of countries depend on the migrant labour to provide care in the absence of sufficient support of public care facilities, the protection of domestic workers' rights is low compared to other areas of work. Due to restrictive immigration policies there is a high rate of "illegal" migrants in this sphere. At the same time, the status of illegality of many domestic workers created by the state is used not to exclude them but to include them under unequal conditions (De Genova, 2002; Lutz, Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2010). Even if they have legally recognized status, the state institutions programmatically count upon and construct migrant women as a group for low-paid hired domestic care and work which reproduces and fortifies inequalities in salaries between citizens and non-citizens.[6] In this regime migrant workers are to a greater extent vulnerable to exploitation and human rights abuse (Kofman, Raghuram, 2015). The International Labour Organization has long pointed out the insufficient protection of domestic workers. *The Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers* (C189)*,* setting international standards for decent work conditions for domestic workers, was approved in June 2011 (ILO, 2011). Uruguay was the

[6] In geographically more compact regions such as continental Europe it often cements inequalities between neighbouring states which borders are crossed by migrants circularly (Kuchyňková, Ezzeddine, 2015).

first country to ratify the convention in 2012, followed by Philippines in the same year. The macroregion of Latin American and the Caribbean is the main driving force of the convention´s ratification (so far Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Uruguay and Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Panama have ratified the convention). Other countries, e.g. Brazil, approved the law which guarantees domestic workers equal labour rights compared to other workers (Dias et al., 2014). Italy and Germany were the first European countries to ratify the convention, followed by Ireland, Finland and Belgium. Establishing international standards for domestic work as an employment is the result of longstanding attempts to draw attention to violations of domestic workers' human rights, and the exclusion of work in the area of private households from labour law standards. Despite the undeniable positive potential of this Convention and other legal regulations in the short and medium term for tens of millions of domestic workers, the professionalization of the institution of hired domestic care presents certain difficulties in the long term since from an institutional viewpoint it predetermines the way to reproduce an institutionalised servitude in interpersonal relationships in late modern society.[7]

Restrictive immigration policies create an environment where individual households can profit from cheap domestic work (Anderson, Shutes, 2014; Lutz, Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2010). Although domestic work and care in general in many countries represents a fast-growing sector of informal and formal employment for local women as well, migrant women are becoming increasingly sought after due to the lower wages their employers pay them. The majority of the total number of migrant domestic workers works in high income countries where they also represent the majority of workers in the domestic work sector (ILO, 2015). However, the number of migrants in domestic work sector is rising also in Latin America where mainly women migrants from neighbouring countries enter the domestic work (Tokman, 2010). This trend highlights the tendency that the improvement of the status, wage and rights protection of local domestic workers brings more migrants into the domestic work sector. As argued by Ray and Qayum, "the household does not simple mirror the inequalities of society at large but it is a constitutive part of it, both reflecting and re-creating those inequalities" (Ray, Qayum, 2009, p. 199).

[7] Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum work with the term culture of servitude, which points to a society „in which social relations of domination/subordination, dependency, and inequality are normalized and permeate both the domestic and public spheres" (Ray, Qayum, 2009, p. 3). By an institutionalised servitude I am referring to the specific institutionalised manifestation of the culture of servitude in a particular sphere.

Different studies suggest that employers take advantage of their symbolic-economic unequal position mostly unconsciously (cf. Lutz, 2008; Búriková, Miller, 2010). Employers often morally legitimate their behaviour with an attitude they tend to define as "private charity." The moral attitude of private charity is based on the assumption that migrants need work to financially support their families in their countries of origin. Employers thus justify their participation in reproduction and in re-creating global social inequality. However, migration is not these women's free choice and it reflects the long term development of the global economy which has caused the disintegration of the state public sector in the developing countries and in poorest countries and regions of the world. At the same time, high income countries have profited disproportionately from this development through imports of cheap consumer goods, as well as through structurally forced migration, which represents a source of cheap labour for these states. Researches on migration have pointed out that economic and social migration has outweighed political migration (cf. Kofman et al., 2000). Even if domestic workers do not actively protest, because of the existentially experienced absence of other options, we cannot assume that they consent to the present-day order. Similarly, it is not possible to interpret the fact that some domestic workers adopt the positive self-image of entrepreneurs when they are selling services to their customers as a sign of agreement with the existing global order. This is more an attempt to protect personal integrity than a consensus with the status quo of the global order, as Helma Lutz (2008) points out. Conversely, for the majority of migrants working as domestic workers is a transitional strategy. The first step is to find employment providing accommodation in families, the next is to work for a number of families but to live independently which provides greater autonomy with respect to individual employers and the final goal is to find a job in another sector (e.g. Anderson, 2000; Lutz, 2011).

Intermediary agencies are another actor actively involved in supporting transnational care practices. They have taken advantage of the market opportunities and linked the demand for care in the wealthy countries with the demand for migration in poorer countries.[8] According to Yeates, the majority of these agencies operate at the local level, although there are also supranational agencies working through local branches and connected to

[8] The categories of wealthy and poorer countries do not necessarily reflect the distinction between developed and developing countries, etc. These categories acquire meaning in their mutual relationships. For example, in the context of transnational care practices, Czech Republic is considered a poorer country in relation to Austria or Germany, which are wealthy countries, but a wealthy country in relation to Ukraine or Philippines.

licenced networks (cf. Yeates, 2004; 2009). Fiona Williams further argues that it is currently possible to observe the gradual control of the "care market" by large supranational corporations, especially in the area of long term care for the elderly as well as childcare, resulting in the standards of care provided being further subordinated to the principle of effectivity and profit (Williams, 2011). If at a first glance it appears to be an effective interconnection of supply and demand, in reality it is the exploitation of global inequalities for the purposes of profit-making. Yeates adds that 'these linkages often do not simply respond to workers' demand for market access: they actively shape and mobilize labour migration" (Yeates, 2004, p. 385). At the same time, Yeates shows that these intermediary agencies in the USA and Europe are effectively connected to government programmes determining employment social security (i.e. work-to-welfare) and to the "state-led commercialization of social reproductive work" (Yeates, 2004, p. 384).

Feminist contentions about the institution of hired domestic care

The institution of hired care can take different forms which determine the dynamics of the relationships among domestic worker, employers and the person who is being cared for (or s/he is the employer). A fundamental factor, however, is the legal status of the domestic worker, whether she is an immigrant or not, with a work permit or illegally residing in the country, or whether she has the status of au-pair. Although there are differences in institutional conditions and lived experiences of migrant domestic workers, the interconnection between the marketization of care and migration tends to produce similar outcomes in terms of the structural position of migrant care workers (Williams, 2012).[9] Feminist researchers agree on a clear-cut rejection of the institution of hired care when it concerns illegal migrant workers, who may find themselves in the position of modern day slaves (Anderson, 2000; Anderson, Shutes, 2014; Ehrenreich, Hochschild, 2002; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Parreñas, 2001; Tronto, 2002). However, disputes have arisen over whether the formalization and professionalization of this institutional arrangement can bring about significant changes and provide domestic workers with respect

[9] A significant factor is also the job content, namely whether it applies only to caring for people, care and domestic work, or only domestic work. Another factor is whether the domestic worker lives in the family or not, and whether she works for one or more households as self-employed or as an employee of an intermediary agency. In general, it can be said that live-in domestic workers are the most vulnerable. The institution of au-pairs is exceptional in this group. Today, however, the au-pair structure is being transformed, and this transformation reflects the global and regional economic inequalities (cf. Cox, 2006; Widding Isaksen, 2010).

and recognition. On one hand, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001), Gabrielle Meagher (2002) and Helma Lutz (2011) are proponents of the formalization of the job of domestic worker as an answer to the exploitation and subordination domestic workers are often exposed to because they consider the abolishment of this institution unrealistic. On other hand, Shireen Ally (2009), Isis Duarte (1989), Bridget Anderson (2000) and Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum (2009) point out the limitations of the strategy to formalize and professionalise paid domestic work and the fact that this institution reproduces the structures of social and cultural inequalities in society. Joan Tronto (2002) goes further and formulates arguments to justify the rejection of the institution of hired domestic care. According to the authors who problematize the formalization of paid domestic work and care, this strategy reproduces in society the gendered division of labour and the liberal exclusion of care from the public sphere. Shireen Ally shows that the strategy of formalizing hired domestic work and care in South Africa has facilitated the rejection of the public provision of care and reinforced the status quo of social inequality: "Formalizing rights for domestics as workers cemented their position in the political economy of reproductive labour and constrained the possibilities for a more radical redistribution of care" (Ally, 2009, p. 190). According to Tronto, the institution of domestic care is inevitably unjust. Although she admits that the risks of exploitation and emotional manipulation are similar in other market based care jobs, she believes that these risks are higher when work is performed in the private setting of the employer's household due to the different institutional arrangement and to the expectations connected to this arrangement. Similarly, she points out that children who grow up with domestic worker are from the outset drawn into the structure of cultural and economic inequalities of society, and from an early age learn that they can treat people only as a means (Tronto, 2002).

The introduction of depersonalized contracts in private households is characterised by internally contradictory dynamics. Both employers and domestic workers, albeit in different ways, seek to reconcile such contradictory tendencies. Shireen Ally, on the basis of her research among domestic workers in South Africa, Raka Ray a Seemin Qayum on the basis of their research in Calcutta, India, and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, on the basis of her research in Los Angeles, USA, show that domestic workers do not primarily claim legal formalization. Contractual professionalization, which would ensure the formalization of the institution of domestic work as an employment, does not provide the domestic workers respect and does not recognise their individual subjectivity. For the domestic worker, a depersonalised and instrumentalized

relationship is a form of misrecognition. Although legally regulated relationships provide a certain level of protection against employers, they do not allow any room for informal negotiations which are available to domestic workers because these are personal and intimate relationships, which they can strategically manipulate. According to Ally, domestic workers are aware of their ambivalent position and prefer to maintain a certain distance in their relationships with their employers, but at the same time they want to control the degree of depersonalization of relationships (Ally, 2009, p. 113). Domestic workers reject a benevolent one-sided intimate relationship, and they perceive legal regulations as desirable if the latter leave them enough room and pursue their interests, not only increase the opportunities for employers to control their work. On the contrary, to a certain degree employers prefer unequal relationships since they want to control and legally ensure work performance, but are reluctant to concede the domestic workers their labour rights, including decent wage, holiday entitlement, etc. They expect from the domestic worker a loving and loyal relationship, even if they themselves prefer an impersonal and instrumental relationship.

Hondagneu-Sotelo presents the list of demands formulated by the *Domestic Worker's Association of the Coalition of Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles* (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001, p. 217): 1. respect, dignity as a person; 2. fair salary; 3. equal rights; 4. end of sexual harassment; 5. breaks and adequate working hours; 6. no leftover food; 7. sick benefits; 8. paid holiday; 9. health insurance; 10. social insurance; 11. end of discrimination of workers without papers; 12. recognition of domestic workers as professionals. In this case, professionalization appears in the last place. Natalia Martínez Prado who focuses on discursive analysis of claims of *Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Household Workers* argues that while the meaning of claims for recognition of household workers, visibility and valuation of their work is not the same for all involved actors (namely she focuses on jocistas and feminists), the overarching interpretation calls for recognition as human beings and their rights as workers not servants (Prado, 2014). Rhacel Parreñas pointed out that domestic workers take advantage of the intimacy of the relationship to gain material benefits; at the same time, it is thanks to this personal relationship they are recognized as human beings. Similarly, according to Hondagneu-Sotelo domestic workers prefer to have personal relationships because it provides them with recognition as persons whose identity goes beyond the identity of a domestic worker. Personal recognition by the employer is a condition for the employment to become a source of dignity for them (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001, p. 195). This is important

to them because they invest emotions and a part of their personalities in caring relationships. According to Parreñas, the Filipino domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles she interviewed interpret impersonal relationships as misrecognition "because being treated more coldly in the intimate space of a private home contrasts with the established norms of interactions among other inhabitants of the home and by default labels them as inferior" (Parreñas, 2001, p. 182). Although, according to Parreñas, domestic workers are aware of the illusory myth they are as a member of the family, they define a good employment as one where their employers behave towards them as if they were family members. However, Parreñas admits that the acceptance of such a myth often strengthens employers' authority. Ally places greater emphasis than Parreñas on the fact that this strategy of manipulating intimacy cannot simply be interpreted as a way to strengthen the position of the domestic worker in society since it is significantly limited by the structural inequalities, which constitute the framework of the relationship between employer and domestic worker.

The question remains, nonetheless, to what extent formal and contractual relationships are consistent with the recognition of personal relationships and mutual respect between the domestic worker and the employer in the context of deep structural, economic and cultural inequalities. The specific institutional arrangements of work in private households cause discomfort because the presence of a stranger in the private setting of the family undermines the interpretation of the nuclear family as a space for intimacy and romantic love. This discomfort then leads to the mobilization of ideologies of class, "racial"-ethnic, national and gender inequalities. A number of authors have focused on the intimate dynamics in which the domestic worker has to behave as if she were invisible and conform to daily rituals which have the aim of continuously affirming the subordinate position of the domestic workers, from separate living quarters to specific communication practices and to the disciplination of her body. According to Rollins in the USA (1985) and Bridget Anderson in Europe (2000), the act of hiring domestic worker confirms the upper class and cultural status of the employer. This explanation, however, does not fully cover the complex dynamic relationship between hired domestic workers and their employers, who have internalised the ideals of modern society based on demands for equality and freedom. Tronto sees in the fact that this type of work is performed in the private sphere of the home the main obstacle to removing subordination and exploitation from this institution. According to her, however, employers feel guilt and discomfort about the existence of these unequal relationships in the space of the private sphere of the family, which according

to her they solve either by enforcing intimacy or by instrumentalization, and by making domestic workers invisible as human beings (Tronto, 2002). This is also Shireen Ally's conclusion: "Employers strategically manipulate intimacy and affective relations, not only to mask the relationship as one of waged work but also to obfuscate the dramatic inequalities in the domestic employment relationship through tropes, especially of kinship, that suggest equality. Discomfort with the inextricability of domestic workers from their intimate personal lives, however, equally results in various attempts to create and maintain social and physical distance, often through dehumanizing practices" (Ally, 2009, p. 98).

The institution of hired domestic care

With regards to the main dimensions of the degree of personal stance and the degree of formalization of the relationship between the domestic worker and the employer, I distinguish in my analysis four major forms of relationships: the paternalistic and maternalistic relationship, the instrumental relationship, the relationship of contractual professionalization, the relationship of personalism. These forms of relationships are linked to four possible attitudes towards domestic workers: subordination, fictive reification, valuation of achievement, respect (see table 1). The dimension of the personal/impersonal attitude highlights the recognition of the person not only as a means but also as an end in itself versus the attitude to the person as a means only. The dimension of informal/formal relationships refers to the degree of legal grounding, the legalization of the employment status and the contractual definition of the job content.

Table 1. Forms of relationships between employer and domestic worker and the attitude towards the domestic worker.

	Personal	**Impersonal**
Informal	Paternalism/maternalism	Instrumentalization
	Subordination	*Fictive reification*
Formal	Personalism	Contractual professionalization
	Respect	*Valuation of achievement*

The maternalistic relationship of subordination

The first form represents the paternalistic and maternalistic relationship between domestic workers and the employers typical of the traditional culture of servitude where the employer treats the domestic worker as a servant. Paternalism refers to broader social structures which are a residue of the feudal society. It is a protectionist but control relationship of feign benevolentness thereby creating the illusion of mutuality in the relationship and of loyalty. Paternalism, nonetheless, represents a relationship of rigid hierarchy which only seemingly pursues the interests of the subordinate, and this pretence is used to establish the subordinate's commitment and devotion to the superior. Paternalism is also associated with the hierarchical structure of the patriarchal family. Given that the relationship between the employer and the domestic worker is almost exclusively a relationship between women, Judith Rollins uses the term maternalism (Rollins, 1985, p. 173-203). According to Rollins, maternalism is characterised by the fact that both women assume subordinate positions in society due to gendered structures; in this relationship, therefore, it is necessary to take advantage of class and cultural inequalities to confirm the superior status of the employer, who is responsible for domestic work and care in the household and who then transfers her responsibility to the paid domestic worker. This multi-level hierarchy is also involved in maintaining the low status of domestic work and care. According to Rollins, a maternalistic relationship is the form of relationship of an adult to a child or of a person to their pet: „While the female employer typically creates a more intimate relationship with a domestic than her male counterpart does, this should not be interpreted as meaning she values the human worth of the domestic any more highly than does the more impersonal male employer. Her ideas about the domestic are not different; her style and her needs are (Rollins, 1985, p. 186).

Rollins and other authors have described a number of practices which reproduce this maternalistic relationship in everyday interaction. It is a form of address which puts domestic workers in the role of immature and incompetent beings, a form of control over their behaviour and life, presenting them with valueless things (old clothes, leftovers, etc.), providing superior advice. Domestic workers can strategically take advantage of this maternalistic relationship for their own benefit, as indicated by Parreñas (2001) and Ally (2009), or they can perceive it as undesirable, a situation Tronto (2002) calls forced intimacy. Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) argues that the maternalistic relationship is more typical for employers who do not work outside the home, and who identify with their roles in the household from which they

derive their identity. Housewives largely try to keep control over the running of the household, a fact which has a negative impact on the quality of the working conditions for the domestic worker. This is also confirmed by Rollins (1985) who concludes that domestic workers prefer employers who are not at home during their working hours. According to Constable (2002), who also reached similar conclusions, the degree of job satisfaction depends on the possibility of making independent decisions about individual activities. According to Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001), working employers typically develop depersonalized relationships.

The instrumentalized relationship of fictive reification

The second form of relationship reflects the contemporary trend towards more impersonal relationships of employers who do not have enough time and do not consider the household a source of personal identity, as observed by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001), Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum (2009). The authors have noted that the greater the difference in status between employer and domestic worker, the greater the tendency to depersonalize the relationship. An impersonal and informal relationship is characteristic of instrumentalization, and it leads to the fictive reification of the domestic worker. A number of authors have stated that in such relationships domestic workers speak of being treated like objects, robots which only have to do their job and not bother anyone with their presence. Domestic workers interpret this requirement to be invisible as a misrecognition as human beings. This misrecognition is legitimized by the structural, economic and cultural inequalities of society and promotes the fictive reification of domestic worker.

When speaking about reification, I do not refer the classic definition which equates it with a commodity exchange. In this regard, I agree with critical theorist Nancy Fraser, who correctly argues that the classic definition of reification incorporates a conservative aspect which maintains the logic of women's subordination in order to criticize the capitalist system (Fraser, 1985). Unlike George Lukács, who in response to Marx identified the source of reification exclusively in a commodity exchange (Lukács, 1975), the feminist criticism of reification takes into account the complex interdependence of capitalist system and gendered structures of inequalities. Moreover, as Elizabeth Anderson argues the mere money transfer does not necessarily mean commodification (Anderson, 1993, see footnote 4). A feminist criticism of reification should not dismiss the idea of paying for care within the public model of care which is not governed by market norms. It also depends on the social structures, the institutional conditions and governing ideologies

which determine the social form of care. If the concept of reification is to contribute to the elaboration of a criticism of structural inequalities, including gender inequalities, in late capitalist society, it is necessary to specify the social conditions giving rise to reification tendencies in social relationships. Honneth's reformulation of reification within his theory of recognition is more suitable for a feminist criticism. Honneth argues that the reification attitude develops in social relationships led by "a correlative interplay of one-dimensional praxis and a set of ideological convictions" (Honneth, 2008, p. 81).

Honneth defines reification as forgetting the basic pre-epistemological recognition of the others. He argues that reification "can be understood as an atrophied or distorted form of a more primordial and genuine forms of praxis, in which humans take up an empathetic and engaged relationship toward themselves and their surroundings" (Honneth, 2008, p. 27). His aim is to provide a social ontological criticism of reification that is not based on moral claims. According to Honneth, reification obscures the source of our identity and cognition resulting from intersubjective, empathetic and engaged relationships with others (Honneth, 2008, p. 56). In other words, Honneth attributes positive moments of social development to struggles for intersubjective recognition. These relationships are disrupted by reification at the primordial level when some individuals are artificially excluded, discursively or materially, from the whole of humanity. Reification, according to Honneth, thus precedes – ontologically and not necessarily chronologically – the normative claims for equality or the recognition of specific individual characteristics.

Honneth, nevertheless, is aware of the fact that a complete denial of human qualities only occurs in extremely rare cases, and therefore he makes a distinction between reification and fictive reification: "[F]ictive reification – cases in which other persons are treated *as if* they were mere things – is part and parcel of some of the more intensified forms of human action … we are familiar with plenty of situations in which it appears that the other is nothing but an object to be dealt with at will, but these forms of reification have their stimulus in the fact that beneath the surface we remain aware of the ontological difference between persons and things." And he continues: "This action would have to become a lasting routine, for only this kind of habitualization has the power later to disable the antecedent stance of recognition" (Honneth, 2008, p. 157). Thus, although in most situations we are still aware of the human qualities in others, certain conditions may cover up a relationship of primordial recognition to such an extent that it is *as if* lost in the chain of routine and habitual practices which do not require an active

justification. Honneth mentions slavery or human trafficking as examples of real reification, while he uses the example of killing war enemies as an illustration of fictive reification – war enemies are killed just because people are able to act in a way that can be interpreted as a threat. As an example of fictive reification he also suggests pornography. Honneth, thus, expands and generalizes the concept of reification beyond the frame of economic relations which represent one of the spheres where reification may occur albeit in interplay with cultural and ideological factors.

I have identified structural tendencies of fictive reification in Honneth's sense in the informal and impersonal relationships of the institution of hired domestic care. This form of the relationship means that domestic workers are not only materially and emotionally exploited, but they are also treated in a highly instrumental manner as a means to fulfilling others' needs, and whose life outside the employer's household is often not taken into account. At the same time, their presence in the private household is justified by an ideological conviction of their inferiority and subordination. In the case of impersonal and informal relationships, both conditions giving rise to the reification attitude – the instrumental, one-dimensional praxis and the ideological legitimation of domination and subordination – tend to be common practice.

Professionalized valuation of achievement

Although Honneth agrees that contractual relationships prevent reification, he states at the same time that if one of the contractual parties is structurally hindered from enforcing the rights established in the contract, a reifying attitude may develop. Therefore, the third form of contractual professionalization still poses the risk of fictive reification specifically for migrant workers since their ability to enforce contractual obligations is structurally very limited because their residence permit in the country is often tied to a particular employment. Contractual professionalization of the domestic care as a profession is perceived by a number of authors as a way to improve the situation of hired domestic workers, whether they are migrant workers or not (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Meagher, 2002; Lutz, 2011). According to Hondagneu-Sotelo, the cause of the problems specifically connected to hired domestic care is the fact that this institution is not regarded as a real employment and that domestic workers do not enjoy equal rights. She argues for contractual professionalization pragmatically because without "a major restructuring of our society" this form of work will be still "one of the best sources of employment for many Latina and Caribbean immigrant women but also a necessity for many of the families who employ them"

(Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001, p. 210). In contrast, Shireen Ally points out that the formalization of the institution of hired domestic care as a profession obstructs any fundamental restructuring of society:

> […] the attempt to turn "servants" into workers through liberal democratic rights, rather than empowering domestic workers as a social class, facilitated a conservative care regime in the country. […] At the same time, the state had effectively crafted a system that formally regulated them as a supply of quality, affordable, in-home care to more privileged households, reinforcing social stratification (Ally, 2009, p. 16).

In the long-term perspective, the contractual professionalization of the institution of hired domestic care simultaneously reproduces injustice and reinforces the status quo of gendered division of labour. However, unlike Hondagneu-Sotelo, I argue that the realization of this step itself is unlikely without a deep restructuring of society. Firstly, as Bridget Anderson points out, professionalization is expensive (Anderson, 2000). Strengthening autonomy, rights, social security and increasing domestic workers' wages would probably lead to a reduction in demand because middle class households could no longer afford to hire domestic workers. Guaranteeing rights of marginalized groups would lead to a stronger articulation of claims for promotion of a public model of care. Secondly, as I have already mentioned, solely formal and impersonal contractual relationships are in conflict with the environment of the private household, and therefore they do not even represent the primary preference of domestic workers, who consider this type of arrangement only an instrumental valuation of achievement. A discrepancy of impersonal relationships in the personal space of the household makes instrumental valuation of achievement a form of misrecognition of their individual subjectivity. Thirdly, contractual professionalization entails only very limited progress for migrant workers whose possibilities to enforce contractual obligations are considerably narrowed due to restrictive immigration policies. Changing these complex policies would, however, require a transformation of the global order. Without a fundamental restructuring, this form exposes migrant workers to the risk of fictive reification, as I mentioned above.

If the job involves only cleaning and other housework, some authors see certain possibilities in professionalization through intermediary agencies, as suggested by Gabrielle Meagher (2002). Meagher, who discussed various arguments against the commodification of domestic work in the space of the private household, although she separated domestic work from care, sees the

difference between acceptable and unacceptable commodification of domestic work in the distinction between "a contract for service" and "a contract of service." While the first form is acceptable according to Meagher in that it requires a contractual definition of the contracted activities, the second form, based on the contractual definition of the relationship to the person providing the service should be rejected (Meagher, 2002, p. 60). According to Meagher, the critique of commodification and reification is not justified in the case of a contractual definition of specific activities, i.e. contracts for service. According to Meagher, this is also the contemporary trend in the market for domestic work where the relationship with the consumers is increasingly managed by the intermediary agency, which in the ideal case can provide decent conditions for the domestic worker regardless of the fact whether this work is performed in a private household. Nonetheless, this arrangement does not solve the problem of reproduction of unjust social structures where domestic work is systematically characterized as menial work for a specific group of women defined in terms of their class, ethnicity or nationality.

Nor does this possibility automatically lead to an improvement in the status of domestic workers due to structural inequalities in society and to the negative flexibilization and increase in job insecurity in the late capitalist society, all of which affects also self-employed domestic workers. Intermediary agencies can moderate domestic workers' vulnerability in the relationship towards their private employers, but as a consequence they expose them to other risks. Barbara Ehrenreich (2002) points to wage minimization, intensive Taylorization of work (disciplination and clearly prescribed work processes) and elimination of obligations linked to the work contract (by hiring employees for individual tasks or for a limited period). These forms of agency employment create exploitative work. Ehrenreich's arguments, therefore, question Meagher's proposition. Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum similarly reached the conclusion that "to the extent to which the personal is removed from the relations of domestic work, it may then come to resemble the more simple exploitation of a capitalist economy" (Ray, Qayum, 2009, p. 193).[10] The mere replacement of emotional relationships with a depersonalized contract is, therefore, insufficient and can paradoxically deprive domestic workers of the possibility of informal negotiations, which give them at least some power.

[10] The formulation "the more simple exploitation" used here refers to the relationships in the capitalist economy defined by the ownership of resources which are not modified by other relationships such as those of emotional dependency between the employer or person who is being cared for and a domestic worker.

Nonetheless, if the work includes care as well, removal of personal and intimate relationships is impossible in the space of the private household. Ally states that "[t]he ambiguities of intimacy in paid domestic work challenge assertions that paid domestic work is a form of work like any other. The intimate nature and setting of the work, the contradictions of intimacy and distance, the discomforts of affect, and the capacity of both workers and employers to feel ambivalence over their levels of feeling and unfeeling toward each other place limits to its formalization as a form of work like any other." (Ally, 2009, p. 116) Hondagneu-Sotelo, who defends contractual professionalization, wants to combine these formal relationships with a personal approach. I use her terminology for such relationships, which she calls personalism.

The personalistic relationship of respect

The fourth form represents, therefore, a relationship of personalism which combines both contractually defined employment relationships and a personal attitude towards domestic workers. This form potentially represents an arrangement whereby employers receive good care and quality work, while domestic workers gain respect in the sense that their work is valued and that they are recognized as human beings. This, however, presupposes equality in the relationship, which according to Ray and Qayum is illusory in the current circumstances: "Yet egalitarian treatment of the caregiver, which might help to achieve both the desired good care and a more contractual relationship, remains beyond the scope of the employer imaginary in Kolkata." (Ray, Qayum, 2003, p. 544) Ray and Qayum speak about employers in Calcutta, however, a number of other researches show that an egalitarian attitude is inconceivable for employers elsewhere as well, including employers in Europe (Anderson, 2000; Pérez, Stallaert, 2016). The problem is not only that higher classes are not able to imagine the situation where they would treat domestic workers as equals because of internalized class expectations and cultural hierarchies. The situation where someone performs domestic work for another person also problematizes the modern ideal of equality even in society with a stronger egalitarian ethos (see Widding Isaksen, 2010). Domestic work appears to be just as symbolic in the relationships between men and women as it does in the relationships between domestic workers and their employers. Thus, an equal relationship between the domestic worker and her employer depends on redefining the relationship between the private and the public sphere, redefining the cultural norms of intimacy and reinterpreting the gendered division of labour and the patterns of valuation.

If according to Bridget Anderson naturalized gendered ideologies and the professionalization of domestic work and care are internally contradictory (Anderson, 2000, p. 169), I argue that this only applies to a particular constellation of personalism. Completely equal, contractually defined, and at the same time personal relationships in the institution of hired domestic care are not compatible with the naturalized ideology of care and housework as feminine activities. If we look in detail at various relationship constellations, and Bridget Anderson does not make such distinctions, contractual professionalization alone, which does not presuppose either personal or equal relationships, is not yet incompatible with a naturalized gendered ideology. A naturalized gendered ideology is in agreement with professionalization itself because of class and cultural hierarchy between employer and domestic worker. Professionalization in this case presupposes having class and culturally defined competences and knowledge, and not necessarily competences defined as gendered, which can still be perceived as "natural women's competencies." The contradiction between a naturalized gendered ideology and the professionalization of domestic work and care only appears in the constellations where equal, contractually defined relationships would erase a "racial"-ethnic and class hierarchy. At the same time, it is true that without egalitarian social conditions, the institution of hired domestic care will not allow for reinterpretation of gendered patterns of the symbolical and material valuation of care and domestic work and for going beyond the institutionalised servitude.[11] Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) differentiates a pragmatic, personalistic relationship which she argues is characteristic of the attitude of employed employers to the domestic worker if her work includes childcare. According to Hondagneu-Sotelo, employers perceive a certain degree of personal contact as indispensable to ensure the quality care they expect.[12] Nevertheless, this relationship does not lead to the creation of an egalitarian relationship or to conditions of mutual respect as well.

Conclusion

I have argued that none of the four forms of relationships which can arise in the institution of hired domestic care fulfils the demand of an egalitarian

[11] This is also confirmed by the analysis of Pérez and Stallaert who show that the Belgian scheme for professionalization of domestic work does not guarantee migrant domestic workers equal treatment which still depends on attitudes of employers (Pérez and Stallaert, 2016, p. 165).

[12] Hondagneu-Sotelo calls this relationship instrumental personalism (2001, p. 174). However, I use the term pragmatic personalism to avoid conceptual confusion. Hondagneu-Sotelo does not differentiate the four forms of relationship according to two dimensions as shown in the table, and therefore her term instrumental does not relate to the dimension of formal/informal relationship and personal/impersonal relationship.

relationship between employers and domestic workers and domestic workers´ claims for recognition. Personal and informal relationships are characterized by a paternalistic and maternalistic relationship leading to subordination of domestic worker. Impersonal and informal relationships lead to an instrumentalized relationship which in turn establishes the conditions for the fictive reification of domestic workers. Impersonal and formal relationships create the conditions for contractual professionalization, but they only lead to a depersonalized valuation of achievement, which in late modern society is reduced to financial success and cannot provide domestic workers with symbolical or material recognition. Finally, personal and formal relationships, which allow for a relationship of personalism and potentially provide domestic workers with full respect, require an egalitarian social ethos and structural conditions of equality to fulfil this potential. Thus, even in the last case, truly equal, contractually defined and personal relationships within the institution of hired domestic care cannot be realised without fundamental systemic changes in society. However, such deep changes are likely to lead to the abolishment of the institution of hired domestic care as such because of its costs and intrinsic contradictions to the institutionalised servitude.

The critique of the institution of hired domestic care, however, does not imply the idealization of the traditional gendered relationships, where care is mostly unpaid and socially undervalued. In late modern society, care is provided outside the family and care workers expect social recognition of both their work accomplishments and their emotional relationship with those for whom they provide care. Thus, there are emerging articulations of struggles for recognition of care outside of the primary relationships of love and friendship but also beyond the mere valuation of achievement that dominates capitalist society (cf. Young, 2007). By their everyday experience of misrecognition marginalized domestic workers articulate new claims for social recognition of care that cannot be met with familialism or with the achievement principle.

The market relations are governed by distinct norms of efficiency and profit which are incompatible with values of care. The market model of care not only colonizes relationships of care with market imperatives, but it also embeds care in the unjust social structures where care is provided on the basis of ownership of resources, and not on the basis of needs. The market model of care, of which hired domestic care is a substantial pillar, not only reproduces existing social inequalities but it also reinforces the traditional gendered division of labour and institutionalised servitude. Contrarily to the market model of care the public model of care allows for gender, class and cultural egalitarian relationships, unlike the institution of hired domestic care.

Further, the material and emotional availability of care for all requires a system of public provision of care, which takes into consideration the needs for care of the lowest classes. The public model of care promotes responsibility for care not primarily on a family basis, but rather on a basis of solidarity, and it also takes into account the care needs of lower social classes and marginalised groups. While it addresses the social bias, however, it is still necessary to problematize gender bias within the public model of care and to revitalize the social struggle for recognition of care and its value.

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