

Migration and Female Labor Markets in the Context of Globalization: Latina Domestic Workers in Madrid and New York¹

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Introduction²

One of the unexpected consequences of the process of globalization currently underway has been the growth of traditional female labor markets, such as domestic service and prostitution. This trend has mirrored the expansion of female economic participation as a distinctive feature of urban labor markets, mainly observed in developing countries at least since the 1970s. The concomitance between globalization and the feminization of the labor market has also paralleled the exacerbation of job precariousness, the reinforcement of atypical forms of labor insertion and the polarization of the occupational structure, among other aspects. The link between these processes has been so close that among certain experts in economic dynamics, it has elicited first the reflection and subsequently the *re-examination* of whether feminization is necessarily synonymous with the flexibilization and deterioration of the labor market (Standing, 1989 and 1999).

Domestic service -an occupation whose obsolescence was earnestly prophesied as an inevitable result of modernization- figures among the sub-sectors of the tertiary sector that has experienced an unusual degree of growth in the main labor countries of reception, although it is obviously not the only one to have done so. Its expansion is related to factors involving both demand and labor supply. The former include the polarization of the occupational structure that accompanies tertiarization, population ageing, the crisis of the welfare state, growing female economic participation and the tendency towards the geographical dispersion of the family (Parella Rubio, 2003); and among the latter, the exacerbation of social inequality, the deterioration of the labor market caused by the restructuring of the productive process and the economic liberalization of Third World countries as well as growing dependence on remittances as a factor of macro and micro-structural stability.

On the basis of the analysis of a set of in-depth interviews carried out on immigrant domestic workers in Madrid (Dominicans) and New York (Mexicans), this paper seeks to highlight the differences and similarities in labor insertion between the two contexts of reception, as a means of exploring the more complex relations between globalization and the feminization of labor. The text is divided into four sections. The first explains the main

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links between the globalizing process and female labor markets in a general sense, paying particular attention to the *care work*; the second describes the particularities of Madrid and New York as contexts of reception. The third analyzes domestic service in both cities, on the base of an analysis of the labor insertion of the migrant women interviewed, flagging their differences and similarities. The fourth and last section discusses some of the research findings.

1. Globalization and Female Labor Markets

a) *Globalization and the Feminization of the Labor Force*

There are various factors behind the growing feminization of the labor force in the context of globalization³ On the one hand, there are the processes of change that concern both labor demand and supply and on the other, more short-term processes related to the impact of the macrosocial transformations of recent decades on migrant labor force receiving and sending societies. To a certain extent, the globalizing process has merely accentuated and/or boosted trends in social dynamics that were already underway.

Among other things, the processes of productive restructuring and the trend towards the spatial relocation of labor-intensive economic activities have contributed to the feminization of labor markets. The proliferation of in-bond assembly and re-export firms with a distinct preference for female labor, which has occurred to a greater or lesser extent in Latin American and other countries obviously reflects this.⁴ Economic globalization has been a concomitant process of the traditional tendency towards the expansion of the tertiary sector. Indeed, this has been the main pattern of urban labor markets in developed (and developing countries, albeit with differences in profile, momentum and intensity) after the acute process of deindustrialization that took place during the post-war period (Howes and Singh, 1995)⁵. In the case of Latin America, the tertiary sector accounted for at least 90% of the new jobs created during the last decade of the 20th century (Weller, 2004).

One of the distinctive features of the tertiary sector as a workplace is its marked heterogeneity, due to the coexistence of high quality sectors with good working conditions such as those that characterize productive and social services, and *survival* sectors, like commerce and personal services, in many of which poor working conditions prevail. (Oliveira and Ariza, 1998). This acute heterogeneity is one of the underlying causes of the tendency towards the polarization of the occupational structure observed in developed countries in the decades following the change of the economic model (Infante, 1999).

³ Over the past 30 years, the tendency towards the feminization of the labor market has been such that Guy Standing (1999:583) did not hesitate to say that the turn of century would represent “the end of the working man in the real, literal sense,” in which women would take on nearly as many jobs as men. Indeed, between 1970 and 1990, female economic participation increased in most parts of the world, and in those where it did not, levels were already high. In developing regions, the highest increases were recorded in countries in Southern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (Mehra and Gammage, 1999).

⁴ According to Guy Standing (1999), it is precisely the strategy of labor reducing costs that explains the majority of the geographical changes implemented in the world of production and employment.

⁵ Deindustrialization is understood as the drop in manufacturing employment, in relation to other economic sectors. Although this trend began to be observed in the 1960s in countries such as England and Sweden, it was not until 1973 that it was given a major boost (Ibidem).

Among the activities of the tertiary sector which emerge within the framework of globalization as the main spheres for female labor insertion are certain *pink collar*⁶, prostitution and domestic service, in the broad sense (Benería, 2003; Gillard, 2007; Ariza, 2004). The former are part of the trend towards the outsourcing of certain services in the telecommunications industry, medical and financial transactions, the postal service, insurance, airlines and railroad systems, among others. The most emblematic face of these pink collar jobs is provided by call centers, most of which are located in Asia, particularly India.⁷ In some of them, women account for up to 90% of the labor force employed in the sector (Gillard, 2007; Benería, 2003). But whereas the work performed by women in these activities is located in the middle sectors of services, prostitution and domestic service, which probably have a higher percentage of female workers, particularly migrant labor, undoubtedly correspond to the lowest strata of the tertiary labor pyramid.

b) The reactivation of domestic service on a global scale.

One of the most surprising phenomena of the evolution of labor markets in recent decades has been the reactivation of domestic service in certain labor receiving countries, which has reached a global level. This trend is even more striking in view of the fact that certain theoretical perspectives -particularly the theory of modernization- predicted the inevitable decline of its representation in the occupational structure until its gradual extinction, as the modernization process advanced (Coser, 1973; Milkman *et al.*, 1998)⁸. There are several factors behind the reversal of the downward trend in domestic service employment. The main factors, from the point of view of demand, are: a) the demographic ageing of central countries; b) the crisis or reframing of the welfare state c) the growth of proximity services (Parella Rubio, 2003); and d) the increase in female economic participation. Several of these factors are directly linked to what has been called the *care system crisis*. Critical factors on the supply side include: a) the profound social and economic erosion caused by the continuous economic ups and downs in migrant labor sending countries in recent decades, which has turned monetary remittances into a decisive factor of macro and micro structural equilibrium (at the household level); b) the consolidation of migration in the cultural *milieu* as the preferred channel of social mobility for a considerable part of the population of peripheral countries.

The expansion of domestic service in the past years is part of the process of internationalization of the reproductive sphere in the context of globalization (Salazar

⁶ Pink collar trades and work include administrative, sales and service activities, in a general sense (Gillard *et al.*, 2007).

⁷ In these cases, an attempt is made to take advantage not only of lower labor costs but also of an English-speaking labor force, and the reduction of transaction costs due to the difference in time zones. The consequence for the labor force is that many of the shifts are night shifts (Gillard, *et al.*, 2007).

⁸ By absorbing a significant part of reproductive work, domestic service would play a central role in the transition from a family economy to mass industrial production. The variations represented by the rhythms of the cycle (expansion/contraction) would in themselves be a function of industrialization and the related process of urbanization. Once a certain threshold has been reached, the increase would necessarily decelerate, in the same way as happens with urban growth. Thus, long-term fluctuations in domestic service would be indicative of the general transformations associated with development and modernization (McBride, 1976; Chaplin, 1978; Higman, 1993). For a critical review, see Milkman *et al.*, 1998.

Parreñas, 2001). As a result, the job of looking after one's closest relatives (children, grandparents, in-laws), cooking, cleaning and maintaining the home in a large part of the middle and upper social strata of some developed societies is carried out by a multiethnic mosaic of immigrant workers, most of whom are women. In a context of the sustained growth of female economic participation, the increase in the ageing population and the reframing of the welfare state, immigrant labor partially solves the tension between household's need for reproduction and market demands, given the prevailing sexual division of labor and the steady dwindling -if not disappearance- of the national labor supply for such activities.⁹

In certain Mediterranean countries such as Spain,¹⁰ for example, the rapid increase in the elderly population has exceeded institutions' capacity for response. A similar shortage occurs as a result of the insufficient provision of public care services -as regards both quantity and quality- for the child population, a feature southern European countries (Spain and Italy) share with the United States. The differences in the welfare systems, coupled with the neo-liberal policies of reducing public services in the various countries partly explain the type of reproductive activities performed by international domestic workers. Thus, for example, as Parella Rubio (2003:136) points out, the fact that France enjoys broad state coverage of daycare center services explains why the demand for immigrant domestic workers is restricted to housecleaning tasks, in contrast with what happens in Spain. It is no coincidence that the demand for domestic workers is concentrated precisely in the southern countries, in the case of Europe.

The importance of domestic service in certain metropolitan areas in the United States (Los Angeles and New York, for example) is due to analogous factors, with the nuance that in this case, the provision of public services for the sphere of domestic reproduction is even more limited while the private sector has greater scope for meeting these needs (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Esping-Andersen, 2002).¹¹ This is compounded by recent changes in the health care system that include reducing the length of hospital stays and privatizing certain services, which has translated into an increase in the demand for people -usually women- who can provide low-cost home care. The results have been two-fold: on the one hand, there has been an increase in the number of home health services agencies, which act as intermediaries between the state and the population, and on the other, there has been a rise in the demand for female migrant labor (Zimmerman et al., 2006).

⁹ In an effort to determine the actual scope of domestic service as a labor market for the immigrant labor force in Spain, both Colectivo IOE (1991 and 2001) and Parella Rubio (2003), emphasize that the native-born labor force continues to be a majority in the sector, although the relative importance of immigrants is increasing.

¹⁰ Spain is the European country with the greatest relative increase in the population over-65, which grew by approximately 7.4 million between 1982 and 2007, a period when the youth population fell from 25.7% to 14%. It has been estimated that by 2007 there were 5 Spaniards over 65 for every 4 under 15 (Efe, www.soitu.es/soitu). In 2003, the percentage of senior citizens aged over 65 in the US was approximately 12% (www.theusaonline.net).

¹¹ Although domestic service constitutes a very small proportion of the US labor force, it usually accounts for a larger share in key metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles and New York and has experienced an upward trend (Milkman, et al, 1998). Thus, in the case of this last city, census data show a positive variation of 24% in the size of the labor force in this occupation between 1990 and 2000 (Domestic Workers United & Datacenter, 2006).

These factors comprise part of what has been called the *care system crisis* (Ibidem), the most obvious expression of which are *care deficits*. The concept refers to the shortage or insufficient supply of paid services to cover the care needs of family members as well as the lack of care provision by relatives in the restricted context of the family world. (Zimmerman *et.al*, 2006: 20). It is within the framework of this crisis and the aspects mentioned above that the globalization of domestic labor and care services in acquires real meaning.

In contrast with the proliferation of pink collar activities as part of the growing feminization of services in the context of globalization, by virtue of which certain relatively more highly skilled jobs are outsourced to peripheral countries, in the case of the expansion of domestic service, the working-class population moves to central countries to obtain the monetary remittances that income differences appear to promise. This confirms the structural link between female migration and domestic service (Ariza, 2008).

2. Latina Domestic Workers in Madrid and New York

On the basis of the life histories and work experiences of a set of female immigrant domestic workers in Madrid and New York, this section analyzes the differences and similarities between the two cities as contexts of reception (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990:85¹², highlighting their implications for the female labor force. The workers interviewed belong to two different groups of Latin American nationals: Dominican workers were selected in Spain, and Mexicans in New York¹³.

In addition to the aspects discussed earlier (high immigration, pronounced ageing, growing female participation, the reframing of the welfare state, Madrid and New York share another two analogous features as contexts of reception, namely: 1) the existence of restrictive migratory policies regarding migration from Southern countries; and 2) the

¹² As it is known, this concept constitutes an analytical matrix for understanding migrant's means of incorporation in the host society, in which various probable courses are established depending on the characteristics of the state policy on migration in each setting (greater or less openness), the labor market (positive or negative discrimination), and the type of ethnic community (working class or professional, non-existent) (Ibidem).

¹³ The selection of countries is due to both academic and personal aspects. The United States and Spain are key destinations for immigrants from Mexico and the Dominican Republic, respectively. The Mexican migratory flow does not require any justification. Its proximity to its northern neighbor and its massive scale make it relevant on its own. As for the Dominican Republic, the emergence of Spain as the second destination for international migration is related to the diversification of migration since the mid-1980s, after when it has steadily increased. The analysis of the labor insertion of the migrant labor force into domestic service in Spain provided a typological point of contrast in that there is an official recruitment policy for this sector, which is the main doorway to the labor market for female immigrants. Moreover, since the 1980s, Dominicans have been among the typical ethnic groups in this labor market. Since the 1990s, New York has become one of the main destinations for Mexican migratory flows. Like all large cities with a strong migratory presence, domestic service is one of the main occupations in which women are engaged, particularly since the international relocation of the manufacturing industry in recent decades. Other aspects including the characteristics of the migratory flows and family structures in the countries of origin lend the comparative exercise analytical relevance. Lastly, the personal factors are related to the fact that the Dominican Republic is my country of origin while Mexico is the place where I work as a researcher.

inclusion of domestic service in a special status in the set of labor relations. We will focus on these aspects later on.

a) Migratory Policies

Despite a number of significant nuances and differences, since the early 1980s and until the beginning to the XXI century, the two countries have implemented border control policies aimed directly at containing the flow of immigration from Third World countries. Although these policies began much earlier in the case of the United States, given its long tradition of immigration, the second half of the 1980s, specifically 1987, witnessed a major change. Neither the Spanish nor the US policy escape the structural tension between the requirement to resolve the need for a cheap labor force for the most labor intensive sectors and the reinforcement of border control to prevent the Third Worldization of receiving societies, and the shared tendency to implement measures to ensure immigrants' social integration as a means of offsetting the social tensions caused by the structural contradiction of migratory regulations (Calavita, 2006).

Spanish migratory policy parallels the process of integration into the European Union and is designed to control the flow of labor migration and provide security, in other words, exclusivity as regards the benefits citizenship affords European nationals. In fact, the process of integration into the European community is a factor that has decisively conditioned the measures taken. The year 1985, when the first Law on Aliens was passed, marked the start of a long process of closing Spanish borders. Since then and during the twenty years that elapsed until 2005, this law has been formulated or reformulated at least four times and there have been five processes of regularization, the last of which, in 2005, was the most wide-ranging of all.¹⁴

Some of the most important measures were taken in the early 1990s, specifically in 1992 and 1993, when a legal distinction was made between European Union and non-European Union foreigners (or citizens of *other* countries), followed by the implementation of the quota system, better known as the labor contingent program. On the basis of the latter, the state established annual quotas for foreigners that would be legally admitted according to the labor needs by industry and province, for which the national labor supply was insufficient. It was also the time when citizens of certain Latin American countries, including Dominicans, were required to have visas (Colectivo IOE, 2002).

The “codified contingency” scheme (Calavita, 2006) of Spanish migratory policy is primarily based on the needs of the labor market and in itself, constitutes an instrument for labor flexibilization (Colectivo IOE, 2002; Parella Rubio, 2003). In essence, it is designed to ensure that citizens from “third countries” admitted through legal channels are primarily

¹⁴ 1991 saw the first Spanish worldwide political declaration on immigration, with visas being established for Moroccans. In 1992, a distinction was made between European Union and non-European Union foreigners while a year later, in 1993, an immigration quota system was implemented. In 1996, the 1985 Law on Aliens was reformed and in 2000 a new immigration law was passed, followed by another one in 2003. Each of the legal modifications or initiatives has been simultaneously or consecutively accompanied by a process of regularization. The last of these was carried out in 2005 and 690,679 petitions were received, 88% of which were granted. For the first time in the recent, intense history of immigration to Spain, Latin Americans (Ecuadorians), followed by East Europeans (Rumanians) overtook Moroccans in the number of applications submitted (Colectivo IOE, 2002, Kostova Karaboytcheva, 2006).

workers. The aspect that best expresses this conditionality is the subjection of residence permits to work permits and viceversa. The temporary nature of work permits, with a duration of one year, lends migratory status the character of permanent contingency (Calavita, 2006). Five continuous years of residence and work permits are required to be able to qualify for permanent residence. Unlike other immigrant groups, by virtue of traditional colonial links, Latin Americans have the privilege of being able to obtain Spanish citizenship within a relatively short period of time, provided they are able to prove continuous legal residence in the country for a period of two years. However, the largely informal insertion of immigrant workers and the scant regulation of many jobs in which this type of labor force is employed (domestic service, construction, farm work, the hotel business) makes it difficult to achieve the amount of continuous work required by law.¹⁵ Thus, for example, during the period from 1997 to 2000, a time of high economic growth and employment, the average annual unemployment rate of non-Communitarian foreigners was 18.9%, two percentage points above the rate for Spanish nationals (Izquierdo, et al, 2003).

Despite efforts to channel non-Communitarian labor immigration and prevent the growth of the underground economy, Spanish migratory policy has encouraged the existence of large volumes of irregular immigrants, estimated at 1,145,641 in early 2006 out of a total of 3,884,573 registered foreigners, in other words, 29% (Kostova Karaboytcheva, 2006:14). In fact, the legal entry through a system of quotas of poorly skilled workers willing to earn low salaries, together with the existence of a significant number of immigrants in an irregular situation¹⁶ depresses the salary levels of the labor force as a whole and contributes to the flexibilization of the labor market. These aspects prove the ineffectiveness of Spanish migratory policy in managing the entry and legal stay of immigrants from so-called *third* countries (Izquierdo et al, 2003).

Despite having some substantial differences, US migratory policy has proved no more successful. Trapped in the contradiction between economic pragmatism and attempts to avoid antagonizing nativist political forces, US migratory measures have oscillated between reinforcing border control, exceptional periods of legalization and specific concessions to the economic sectors with the greatest needs for cheap labor, particularly agricultural businessmen in the southern states (Calavita, 1989). The institutionalization of the border began in 1965, when the United States unilaterally ended the *Bracero Program*¹⁷ and, on the basis of the Immigration Reform Act passed that same year- established a system of immigration quotas by country, accompanied by the

¹⁵ A look at the percentage distribution of regularization applications by activity and the economic sector in which immigrants are employed shows the continuous relevance of domestic service as the main workplace for the female immigrant labor force, followed by the construction sector in the case of men. The respective percentages by economic activity are: domestic service, 31.67%; construction, 20.76%; livestock raising, agriculture and hunting, 14.6%, the hotel business, 10.36%, among others (Kostova Karaboytcheva, 2006: p. 17).

¹⁶ An immigrant in an irregular status is any foreigner whose situation is not entirely in order, either because he lacks a residence and work permit, or because despite residing legally in the country, he engages in a form of employment without the corresponding authorization (Izquierdo, 1991; quoted by Kostova Karaboytcheva, 2006).

¹⁷ In effect between 1942 and 1964, the inter-government program for hiring temporary farm workers, known as the Bracero Program, hired over 3.3 million Mexicans in the 1950s alone (Galarza, 1964, quoted by Paz Trigueros, 2008).

legalization of certain immigrants and the systematic deportation of those lacking legal documentation (Durand and Massey, 2003; Paz Trigueros, 2008)¹⁸. The 1987 Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act (CIRA), regarded as the most integral since the mid-20th century (Calavita, 1989), increased border control measures, legalized a significant number of immigrants and, as additional aspects introduced a temporary workers' program and a system of sanctions for employers that hired immigrant workers without legal status, the latter proving extremely ineffective, as one would expect. In short, the set of migratory policy measures taken during the post-*Bracero* period gave rise to a long process of growth of undocumented immigration and helped weaken the eminently temporary and rural pattern of migration that had hitherto characterized the flow of Mexican migration into its northern neighbor. According to Passel's estimates (2005), undocumented immigrants have exceeded legal ones at least since 1995 and began to experience greater relative growth from the 1990s onwards. By 2004, it was estimated that there were approximately 35.7 million migrants, 29.0% of which were undocumented, virtually the same percentage as irregular migrants in Spain; over half, i.e. 57% of the last are Mexican. During the four year period from 2000 to 2004, 85% of Mexicans entering the United States were undocumented (Ibidem).

With the exception of the temporary workers' program, mainly oriented towards farm work and certain poorly skilled, non-agricultural activities (H2-A and H-2B visas) and the program to encourage highly skilled immigration (H-1 visas), established in 1990¹⁹, the United States –unlike Spain- has no state policy for legally recruiting mainly unskilled workers based on the needs of the various economic sectors. Temporary programs for unskilled workers do not provide a fast track to permanent residence, although there are exceptions.²⁰ As in countries in Southern Europe, the enormous demand for workers for the lower non-manual sectors of the economy is significantly based on the provision of migrant labor, both documented and undocumented. In contrast with the Spanish case, in the United States, access to permanent legal residence is primarily obtained: 1) through family links, based on the priority given to family reunification ever since the 1952 migratory reform, endorsed in 1987; 2) through the temporary program for highly skilled workers, after certain requirements have been met; 3) through the sponsorship of an employer who does the necessary paperwork with the National Immigration and Naturalization Service, either because the foreigner is in the country and wishes to change his status or because he is an illegal resident and wishes to obtain a permanent visa, although this route is not entirely free of obstacles. 4) As a result of

¹⁸ As Paz Trigueros reports (2008:122), the establishment of quotas on the basis of the 1965 migratory reform sought to limit the number of Mexican migrants to 66,000 annually, achieving successive reductions until it reached 20,000 in 1976.

¹⁹ H2-A visas, for which there is no quota system, are granted to farm workers for a year, which can be extended for another two years; H2-B are granted to temporary non farm workers for activities such as gardening, forestry, the hotel business, construction, stables, sports instructors, seafood processors and others and can also be extended for two years after the first one, although they have an annual quota of 60,000 visas. Conversely, H-1 visas are given to highly skilled workers; after some requirements permit access to permanent residence and, in the medium term, to citizenship. Two thirds of H-1B visas are for Asians and a fifth for Europeans (Paz Trigueros, 2008).

²⁰ There is an annual quota of 10,000 visas, which would grant access to unskilled workers that have legal status and are actually living in the country, with certain restrictions (see Wasem, 2005).

meeting the minimum requirements for time spent on US soil established during exceptional periods of legalization and amnesty.²¹ Although once permanent legal residence is obtained, it is not subject to engaging in employment and, after five years of continuity, paves the way for citizenship, there are no routes to permanent residence that are not derived from the main channels just mentioned, among which blood links are by far the most important. Thus, of the 946,142 permanent residence visas granted in 2004, 65.6% involved family links (Wasem, 2005). As many studies have shown, rather than curbing immigration, migratory policy measures implemented in the United States in recent years have simply encouraged it, thereby boosting the sustained increase in the proportion of undocumented workers in the universe of the immigrants, as we saw earlier. The large number of undocumented workers during the post-Bracero period, accelerated since the 1990s, has taken place within the context of the resurgence of nativist rhetoric and the criminalization of immigrants that has reached a paroxysm as a result of the events of *September 11*.

In short, the parallelism between Spanish and US migratory policy is based primarily on: reinforcing border control from the second half of the 1980s onwards, aimed primarily at curbing the immigration of unskilled Third World workers; 2) selective openness to legal labor immigration among certain sectors, which is more restrictive in the US than in Spain; 3) the structural tension between the needs of the labor market and the dominant political forces of each of these societies. Conversely, their differences are based on: 1) the main axis on which their migratory policies are based: in one case on the needs of the labor market (Spain); in the other on family ties (US). 2) the small number of routes US migratory legislation permits for unskilled labor to obtain access to legal residence, although once this is achieved, they have more prerogatives and 3) the permanently contingent nature of legal residence in Spain, indissolubly linked to proving one's employee status. A no less important difference is derived from the different scale of the migratory process in the two countries, given the United States' importance in geopolitics and the world economy. Although in percentage terms, both countries have a more or less similar percentage of foreign population, 11.3% in Spain in 2008 (Afp, Reuters, Notimex, DPA, PL, 2008) and 13% of the United States in 2006 (excluding Puerto Rican nationals, calculations undertaken on the basis of the *Current Population Survey*), they total 5 million in Spain and 35.7 million in the US ! Let us now focus on the labor aspects that frame domestic service in both contexts of reception.

b) The Exceptional Status of Domestic Service in the Labor Market

In both countries, domestic service enjoys a special status due to the labor legislation which simply weakens workers' negotiating power and depletes their working conditions. The following table summarizes the central aspects of this exceptionality within each country's legal regulations:

²¹ As Wasem points out (2005), there are four main principles governing US policy on permanent residence: 1) family reunification; 2) the admission of immigrants with particular skills for which there is a demand; 3) the protection of refugees; 4) the diversity of admissions by country of origin.

Special Status of Domestic Service	
Spain*	United States**
Subject to civil jurisdiction. Lack of compulsory written contract and annual validity of verbal contract. Tacit renewal of contract in the absence of explicit opposition from either of the parties.	The National Labor Relations Act does not permit the right to organize to obtain more favorable working conditions, in that it excludes them from the employees' statute.
Salary equivalent to interprofessional minimum, but a 45% discount included for board and maintenance.	Food and living expenses deducted from salary-on the basis of a written agreement between the two parties, in the case indoor domestic workers. Amounts clearly stipulated by law.
40-hour working week maximum. Lack of regulation of <i>hours of presence or availability</i> of worker in employer's home when no specific work is to be done. Limit of 80 hours overtime a year, paid at 75% of normal salary.	40-hour working week maximum. Domestic workers are excluded from the right to charge overtime, according to <i>Fair Labor Standard Act</i> . In the case of New York, the state establishes a minimum salary and overtime payment for all workers, including domestic workers, but restricted the scope for domestic workers by demanding a shift of over 44 hours a week in order to qualify for this.
Discriminatory coverage in special regime for domestic service in social security: fewer benefits and more requirements.	The work of childcare and accompanying the sick and elderly, listed under the category of "personal attendants" is considered "casual" by the <i>Fair Labor Standard Act</i> , meaning that it is not included in federal regulations concerning minimum salaries, the maximum number of hours or overtime.
Existence of vacations and annual bonuses (two half-monthly salaries) that are lower than the number received by other workers. Entitled to 36 hours' weekly rest, of which at least 24 should be consecutive.	Excluded from benefits such as: vacations, sick days and notification of dismissal.
Right to enjoy the same holidays, vacations and paid leave stipulated in the General Work Regime.	The employer must collect and send 12.4% tax to federal government, equally divided among the parties, provided the worker's annual salary exceeds a previously stipulated amount.
Affiliation to and registration in Social Security is only the employer's responsibility in the case of full-time workers.	Excluded from Occupational Safety and Health Act.

* Drawn up on the basis of Colectivo IOE (1991), “Trabajadoras extranjeras en el servicio doméstico en Madrid, España”, Documento de Trabajo, Madrid, Spain, and Parella Rubio, Sonia (2003), Mujer inmigrante y trabajadora. La triple discriminación, Anthropos, Barcelona.

** Drawn up on the basis of: Domestic Workers United & Datacenter (2006), “Home is where the work is: Inside New York Domestic Industry”, New York; Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001), Doméstica. Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence, University of California Press.

The exceptional nature of domestic service in both countries merely expresses the ambiguity in which it has historically been placed by the private nature of the sphere in which the activity is undertaken: the household sphere, a fact that favors the naturalization and subsequent devaluation of the reproductive tasks it entails, classifying them as non work. It clearly expresses the mediation of gender construction in the sexual organization of labor.

The information contained in the previous chart provides an idea of the similarities and dissimilarities between the rules governing domestic service as a labor market in the two countries. In general terms, the similarities concern: 1) the establishment of a formal limit to the number of hours of work per week, which in both cases is 40; 2) the introduction of conditional requirements to enjoy social security, either as regarding access, contributions or the type of benefits to which domestic workers are entitled. In the United States, access is only feasible when the annual income earned by domestic workers exceeds a set level²². In Spain, other conditional clauses are established, which legalize de *facto* discriminatory practices (a maximum limit of 70% for retirement pensions, having worked for a minimum of 15 years and being over the age of 65, Colectivo IOE; 1991; Parella Rubio, 2003). In both contexts, regulations become even more exceptional when they attempt to regulate the status of live-in domestic workers, thereby giving rise to a pattern of intrasectorial segmentation of occupation: internal versus non-live-in workers. It is quite clear that the further one moves into the domestic family sphere, the more exceptions the rules establish regarding the formal regime governing the labor force as a whole.

At least from the legal point of view, this greater relative exceptional nature makes live-in domestic workers more vulnerable in the United States than in Spain. Thus, at the federal level and in accordance with the *Fair Labor Standard Act*, live-in domestic workers are totally excluded from the regulations concerning minimum salaries, weekly hours of work and overtime payment. This exclusion also includes a sub-group of non-live-in domestic workers, those classified as personal assistants (*personal attendants*: “baby sitters,” and “companions” of the sick and elderly), dedicated primarily to care work, unless they are capable of proving that they spend 20% of their working week on cleaning

²² As Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001:263) states: “...The Social Security Domestic Reform Act of 1994 established that wages paid to domestic workers are subject to Social Security and Medicare taxes only for cash wages of \$1,000 or more per year....By raising the ceiling on the amount of pay required before employer compliance is mandated, the federal government, in effect, reduced the number of employers that who must comply with Social Security and Medicare...”

activities inside the home²³, allowing more internal differentiation among domestic workers. In the case of the United States, these general federal regulations may be modified by state initiatives. Thus, New York state extended the payment of minimum salaries and overtime to all domestic workers, whether non-live-in or live-in, at the same time as it raised the number of hours after which overtime should be paid from 40 to 44 for live-in domestic workers, thereby maintaining the segmentation between live-in and non-live-in workers (Domestic Workers United & Datacenter, 2006).

In the case of Spain, the greatest relative exception established by formal regulations in the case of live-in domestics is expressed in the rule stipulating that employees must "be present for a certain number of hours" in the home, even when they are not performing a specific task. In other words, they must be totally *available* to meet employers' requirements even when they are not performing a specific task. This clause permits a *de facto* violation of the total number of working hours, which can be extended according to the employer's wishes. In the case of Spain, however, the rest of the formal legal regulations cover live-in domestic workers, as opposed to the United States, where the number of exceptions is multiplied. Another way in which the regimes of the two countries coincide is the stipulation that food and lodging be discounted from their salaries, which once again places these workers below legal minimum salaries.

Lastly, a major difference between the two work environments is the lack of paid vacations, annual bonuses and holidays covered, in the case of US society. US government laws only oblige employers to pay for time that has effectively been worked. According to Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001), the lack of paid holidays, vacations and paid overtime is virtually institutionalized in this labor market.

One can infer from the issues discussed earlier that although in both contexts, the regime of exceptionality governing work places domestic workers at a considerable disadvantage regarding their labor rights, despite its acute irregularity, the legislation governing the Spanish labor market provides slightly more protection than that of the US labor market.²⁴ This difference is undoubtedly due to the greater currency of the free market doctrine in the main center of attraction for world immigration and the fewer prerogatives and scant redistributive effects its welfare state offers the working population.

It is important to note that the contrasted aspects only refer to the formal normative regulations that attempt to regulate this labor market, which are very different from the reality in which it takes place. It is a well-known fact that in a secondary labor segment characterized by acute informality and strong racial and gender components, there are very few available mechanisms and even less inclination to enact the positive aspects of the regulations. If, in addition to this scenario, we add the vulnerability entailed by migratory status, we obtain a more complete image of the complexity surrounding the exercise of domestic service in the current global context.

²³ It is interesting to note, as documented by Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001:262) that the reason why the Fair Labor Standard Act was modified in 1974 to include domestic workers in the payment of minimum salaries was the attempt to prevent them from being eligible for welfare funds.

²⁴ In the case of Spanish society, for example, this vulnerability is revealed when one compares the working conditions of Spanish and foreign domestic workers, which shows a consistently greater relative precariousness in virtually all the indicators used (Colectivo IOE, 2001)

3. Being a global domestic worker: the task of serving others in Madrid and New York

This section contains the preliminary results of the comparative exercise carried out on the basis of the analysis of in-depth interviews and the work experiences of immigrant domestic workers interviewed in the cities of Madrid (Dominican) and New York (Mexican). The reflections it contains attempt to highlight the specific characteristics each context of reception lends this activity.

We will use the prevailing segmentation in the sector between live-in and non-live-in female domestic workers to describe the working condition of the immigrant women interviewed. The latter can also be sub-divided into fixed workers and workers by hours, depending on whether they work continuously in a household or in various households for a set number of hours. From the point of view of certain analysts, this main dichotomy reflects the distinction between performing the activity in conditions resembling servitude or in conditions resembling salaried work (Colectivo IOE, 1991). The three categories can be combined, because on her day off, a live-in domestic worker could work in a home by hour, whereas a fixed non-live-in employee could work in either one or various homes, either when she finishes her days' work or in her free time. It goes without saying that live-in workers have far fewer possibilities of combining labor categories, although this does occur.

This first analytical axis (live-in versus non-live-in workers and their sub-types) can be interpreted in a *continuum* describing successive situations ranging from greater to less domesticity: from a live-in to a non-live-in worker by hours in various homes, through various categories of fixed non-live-in worker (in a home, with or without combining this with working by hour or in various homes without occupying a fixed position in any of them.) We can superimpose another analytical axis on top of this one, focusing on the degree of differentiation or superposition of the reproductive tasks women perform. A maximum degree of differentiation would imply performing a single activity, such as cleaning, for example; a minimum degree would entail the superposition of various tasks, whose extreme would be established by the situations in which women perform the main tasks of reproduction in a single home or as a result of working in several: ranging from clothes washing, cooking, and ironing to tending children, the elderly, sick or handicapped. The superposition of these two analytical axes yields the spectrum of working situations into which female workers can insert themselves, as shown in the following diagram:

Diagram 1
Forms of Insertion into Domestic Service by
by axes of differentiation*

Degree of Domesticity or Appropriation of the Person

Maximum (+)

Minimum (-)

Degree of task differentiation	Minimum(-)	LIVE-IN (cleaning+cooking+looking after children and/or old people)		
		LIVE-IN (only looking after children or the elderly)	FIXED NON- LIVE-IN IN A HOUSE (cleaning and cooking or looking after children/old people)	FIXED NON-LIVE- IN IN TWO HOUSES (cleaning and cooking in one, just looking after children or old people in another)
	Maximum (+)			NON-LIVE-IN BY HOURS (Only cleaning)

* The diagram is made only for analytical purposes and those not
contains all the variable empirical situations

a) *Work in a situation of confinement: live-in domestics*

"...Every day I had to thoroughly clean a room, even if it was already clean, I had to thoroughly clean a room every day... And I had to clean all those window panes...whether or not it rained... And the floor was damaged, but she wanted me to make that floor shine. I lasted five years there, working myself to the bone..."

²⁵ Agustina, Dominicana, 55 years Madrid

"...Here, if you don't work, you can't live...you can't eat and you don't have anywhere to live, so you put up with things. Because you're frightened, you don't know your way around, you don't know the language..."

Gertrudis, Mexican, 29 years old, New York

Regardless of the context of residence, whether it is Madrid or New York, working as a domestic employee in a situation of confinement entails the worst working conditions. This is, to a certain extent, the inevitable correlation of the environment of vulnerability provided by the lack of independence due to living and working in the same place. As Anderson points out (2003:3), the work "contract" established in these situations tacitly - albeit not explicitly- includes the appropriation of the *person* who performs the activity, not simply her services or work force. This situation is revealed, for example, in Madrid or New York, when the families for whom the women work take them along during vacations. This is obviously linked to the socio-economic level of the household where they work, which, in these cases, tends to be high.²⁶

Of the possibilities of being inserted in the labor market described in Diagram 1, live-in domestic workers are located at the left end of the continuum of the two axes of differentiation pointed out, one in which the situation of maximum domesticity (internal confinement) coincides with that of the least differentiation (or maximum superposition of tasks (top left box). Indeed, in most cases, women in this category have to perform several if not all reproductive tasks: cleaning, cooking, and tending children or the elderly. However, the private, unregulated nature of the domestic sphere creates a variable margin of discretionality for the type of tasks that can be *legitimately* demanded. The interviewees' accounts yield a variety of domestic tasks such as: bathing the dog, feeding the ducks or chickens, taking children to the park, accompanying old people on their visits to the doctor, accompanying them while they watch television, sleeping in the same bed or room with them, helping children with their homework, breastfeeding them in the early morning and playing with them.

Five indicators will be used to assess the characteristics of work in this category: 1) the degree of control exercised over women, in terms of supervising the tasks they perform,

²⁵ All quotes from interviews have been translated from Spanish.

²⁶ Our interviews reveal situations in which Mexican women were taken as far away as Hawaii while Dominican women were taken to Marbella and Benidorm.

2) the intensity or length of the working week (number of hours per week), 3) the level of internal segregation, understood as the extent to which their mobility and access to spaces or household equipment is restricted (areas for sleeping and moving around, access to the phone, TV, eating food, etc.); 4) the type of interaction that prevails with one's employers' in the family sphere (minimal or instrumental, diversified and/or affective), an aspect that tends to be linked to the previous indicator; 4) the existence of some form of work benefit (social security, vacations).²⁷

In both work contexts, the United States (New York) and Spain (Madrid), virtually all live-in domestic workers perceive a high degree of supervision of the tasks they perform -which they bitterly resent- tasks they undertake during exhausting working weeks of no fewer than 60 hours. This, in turn was accompanied by high, varying levels of internal segregation. Once they have completed their domestic chores, women's mobility is usually restricted to the room in which they sleep. They can move through the different parts of the house providing they are carrying out a particular chore. The aspect that undoubtedly best denotes the pattern of intradomestic segregation and the need to establish limits is the requirement to wear uniform, absent in most of the middle class yet still common among the upper classes. Once again, there is a considerable margin of variability and indetermination, which may give rise to situations of overt abuse and mistreatment.²⁸ Thus, for example, although the verbal contract governing work in most cases in Madrid stipulates that live-in domestic workers must have access to the phone, our interviewees describe family contexts that ignore this rule, thereby considerably increasing the female workers' level of isolation. When this occurs, they are only allowed to receive calls, not make them and have to wait for their day off to be able to communicate by themselves with relative or friends.

Situations of high internal segregation are usually accompanied by limited verbal interaction and mainly instrumental communication related to the work process, an aspect which is also resented by these female workers. It should be pointed out, however, that these women also restrict the type and level of interaction they establish with household members, particularly their employers, giving rise to a pattern of verbal exchange in which an attitude of caution and self-protection prevails. This self-restriction and limitation also extends to the consumption of food and other aspects of the family environment. One should not forget that the level of isolation is much greater among Mexican workers in New York because of the communication barrier caused by their ignorance of the language.

The situations of greatest emotional involvement occur when the reproductive tasks involve looking after children, particularly if this spans several years of the infants's

²⁷ Given that the analysis of the information gathered is still underway, the reflections contained in this paper are based on the systematic analysis of a sub-set of 24 interviews, 12 in each country, chosen to reflect the greatest diversity of situations from the universe interviewed, meaning that they are merely tentative in nature. This reflection is based, however, on all the fieldwork carried out, given that the main researcher personally conducted all the in-depth interviews. The field work design included carrying out in-depth interviews in the cities of destinations (Madrid and New York) and ethnographic observation and interviews with key informants in specific localities of sending countries (Mexico and Dominican Republic).

²⁸ The literature on the domestic service performed by international migrants is filled with this type of examples, which are also often found in the accounts by our interviewees and constitute an everyday part of the field work with international domestic workers.

lives and is established at an early stage. This may lead to the emergence of a series of tensions in the competition between models of motherhood (employer versus employee) which we will not deal with here, yet which have been the subject of attention among experts on the issue (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997). Other situations in which significant emotional ties may be established include the care of the elderly, particularly if they are functional, live alone and receive few visits from immediate relatives. The affective link created in this way may significantly contribute to reducing domestic workers' levels of internal segregation and isolation, by bringing them a little closer to the fiction of being *another family member*²⁹ (Young, 1987).

Contrary to what one might expect, enjoying legal migratory status (i.e. having a work permit) and written contract, does not exempt Madrid immigrants from any of the extremely precarious labor conditions described earlier. Indeed, the legal formalization of the work relationship implied by a written contract may constitute a card that can be played against female workers by expanding the everyday demands of the family surroundings to extreme limits. A legal situation of this sort accentuates the working character of the relationship, blurring its somewhat ambiguous family nature which may -paradoxically sometimes- give rise to a certain laxness in the domestic work sphere³⁰.

When all the above factors: long working days, acute internal segregation, high levels of control over the person and work process, and scant personal interaction combine negatively, they may -depending on certain factors (such as social networks and psychic structure, for example)- lead to depression, and even psychosomatic manifestations that can be attributed to the high stress levels caused by the combination of these factors. According to one of our key informants, depressive emotional states are recurrent in the universe of live-in immigrant domestic workers, although the majority go undiagnosed³¹.

Although in most of the conditions of live-in domestic workers examined to date there are very few differences between the two reception contexts, creating a sort of *equality of precariousness*, differences emerge when we assess the existence of employment benefits and the impact of the two countries' migratory policies on migrant women's possibilities of mobility and inclusion in other working activities. Thus, the payment of social security, salary bonuses during the year and vacations is common practice in the Madrid labor market, particular workers are legal, live-in domestics or fixed live out ones. As established by the current regulations explained earlier, employers are obliged to register their employees with the social security system as well as providing paid vacations, bonuses and rights, only if they are live-in domestic workers. Neither to

²⁹ In this sort of affective relationship with persons of the third age in a domestic environment marked by acute ethnic and class asymmetries, situations occur in which elderly men establish strong links with immigrant women and promise to reward them in their wills. Disappointment and resentment occur when, as a result of the death of these men, they either discover that they were made false promises, or that the men's relatives prevent the wills from being enacted. Conversely, on other occasions, the surviving descendants voluntarily offer women that have given their services to their relatives or loved ones, whether they are elderly or terminally ill, some form of financial compensation. These aspects illustrate the complexity involving care work as a labor activity, particularly when it occurs in the familial domestic setting, the main sphere of affectivity.

³⁰ This is the case of one of our interviewees, who was admitted on the basis of the quota (contingent) policy and has extremely precarious working conditions: a 72-hour working week, extreme internal segregation and no personal interaction.

³¹ Interview with psychologist at VOMADE (Dominican Mothers' Voluntary), Madrid,

say that these rights can be and often are violated. Insofar as renewing one's work permit is linked to the requirement of covering social security quotas, immigrants (or their employers, because this can be negotiated) are obliged to comply with this in order to avoid lapsing into an irregular situation. As we saw, these aspects are absent from the US regulations relating to domestic service, since the law only stipulates payment for hours worked and does not include vacations or holidays. In most cases, the women interviewees said that when they took vacations, they stopped earning money since time spent on vacation was not paid.

Although within the universe of the domestic service labor market in Madrid, situations of migratory regularity and irregularity combine, both the successive periods of regularization and the Spanish state's express policy of recruiting unskilled labor for domestic service (and for other economic sectors with a shortage of unskilled labor), open up possibilities of inclusion (albeit marginal) and diversification into other labor activities. The Spanish state demands that immigrants work for a minimum period of time as domestics, after which they are allowed to legally perform any other type of work for which they are qualified. That is why domestic service constitutes a legal doorway for immigrant workers to the Spanish labor market, although the instability of the activity often threatens their ability to retain their work permits and therefore, their regular migratory status. This constitutes a crucial difference between Spain and the United States, whose policy of criminalizing migration has created an enormous captive Mexican labor force with very few possibilities of legal inclusion. In the US, both aspects of migratory policy and the labor laws governing domestic service, examined earlier, together with the language barrier, make Mexican women relatively more vulnerable in the already highly precarious domestic labor market in the context of globalization.

b) Work with external residence: Non-live-in domestics

"..The first day I went to that house, she said: "I don't like people just superficially cleaning, eh, you're not getting away that easily or I won't hire you"...and the first day, she spied on me and before I knew it, she was right behind me, but then, since the house stayed clean, the woman asked me to come in every three rather than two weeks, as people usually did..."

"...If I'd been able to speak English, I would be working in about 15 houses by now..."

María, Mexican, 25 years old, Long Island, New York

In the universe of domestic service, non-live-in workers have a certain intragroup heterogeneity depending on the type of work "link" they have with the family spheres where they work. Thus, "fixed" non-live-in domestics have a continuous working commitment to one or two homes where they go every day or several times a week. Depending on the labor conditions agreed on in terms of working hours and salaries, they can combine this activity with limited "hours" of work in one or several houses to complement their monthly or weekly income. At the same time, non-live-in domestics

who are paid by the hour are less tied to a particular domestic sphere and plan their working days on the basis of a small number of hours (usually three, although this varies according to the size of the house) in various homes.

As can be seen from Diagram 1, when one moves from one end to the other of the job scheme, from domestic work in a situation of confinement to domestic work with independent residence paid on an hourly basis (lower right square), this tends to reduce the degree of domesticity and at the same time increase the level of differentiation between tasks. In the middle, there is a variable combination of situations for fixed non-live-in workers depending on the degree of continuity of their working commitment to one domestic space or two (whether they go every day or a number of days during the week), and whether they combine this with working by the hour in one or several homes.

Generally speaking, as we move from one end to the other of the diagram of labor insertion, there is an increase in the risk of instability for migrant women, together with a potential decrease in salary. Paradoxically, then, despite offering ostensibly worse working conditions, live-in domestic service affords security as regards income and job stability (unless they are blatantly not paid or fired), a not inconsiderable advantage in a highly informal market plagued with uncertainty such as this one. This aspect undoubtedly partly explains why women, particularly migrants, spend many years in the situation of confinement in domestic service, since it is the scheme that is best suited to the logic of maximum savings that determines short-term migratory projects, even though the latter may subsequently prove to be less brief than originally planned.

In keeping with this analytical scheme, the situations of greatest risk of job instability correspond to those of women that work by the hour in various houses, where they usually do the cleaning, since this enables the employer to modify the demand for work with greater discretionality.³² These women try to offset the decrease in their earnings by increasing the number of hours worked, since in fact, extending their working day is the only means that both fixed non-live-in domestics and those that work by the hour have of increasing their income and offsetting the higher costs of non-live-in domestic work.

In the same sense, when we move through the jobs in the diagram described from the situation of live-in domestic to non-live-in domestic worker paid by the hour, the superposition of tasks tends to decline, or rather, their differentiation or relative specialization tends to increase. Although among non-live-in domestics paid by the hour tends cleaning tends to predominate -a situation that entails a minimum superposition of tasks- in the case of fixed external workers, varying degrees of superposition may coexist, given the various possible combinations between fixed work and work paid by the hour. In our interviews, we have situations in which, for example, a domestic worker may have two or three jobs: from Monday to Friday, she cooks and cleans in one house for eight hours while at the weekends, she looks after children and cooks in another. In another case, the

³² In residential areas such as Long Island, for example, the demand for migrant labor is subject, among other things, to the presence or absence of employers, which in turn is determined by the seasons. According to the information gathered in the interviews, the demand for labor falls sharply in the winter, for both female and male immigrants, since home owners, usually affluent persons, move to warmer places such as Miami and all the labor they employ in the domestic sphere, for the upkeep of the garden or roofs (men) or inside their homes (women) is left without a job. In this context, many men choose to return to Mexico and come back just before spring.

woman cleaned in the morning and took her employers' daughter to school, then looked after the girl's grandmother at another house nearby, picked up the girl from school and gave her lunch at in the first house and in the afternoon, cleaned in other residential area of Madrid.

Thus, although they gain independence and differentiation of tasks by specializing in cleaning, non-live-in workers paid by the hour experience a higher risk of job instability, with the subsequent loss of potential income. In this respect, it appears that among the jobs covered by the spectrum of possibilities of labor insertion for domestic workers, as we have discussed, the status of the fixed worker in a house, combining with working by the hour in other homes, offers an intermediate point of "balance" between the loss of autonomy (giving up oneself) represented by live-in domestic work, job instability and the relative differentiation or superposition of chores.

Using the same indicators as in the case of live-in domestics (control, working week, segregation, interaction and benefits), we can attempt to outline the working conditions that prevail among this sub-set of workers. Although partially offset by the change of activity implied by living out, the segregation or differentiation of spaces continues to be a factor in the universe of non-live-in workers, since employers clearly delimit the areas the women are allowed to enter and in some cases, the utensils or equipment they are permitted to use. One aspect in which this segregation is obvious is the pattern of setting aside a different area for eating food, although there are households in which domestics are included at the table when everyone sits down to eat ³³ Another common denominator is the tacit rule prohibiting the use of the telephone or the establishment of a particular toilet for domestics and so on. In the case of non-live-in domestics, the type of interaction (instrumental or personal) depends on many factors, the most decisive of which is perhaps the nature of the reproductive task they perform (care vs. cleaning) and, to a lesser extent, the length of time they have worked for a particular household, among other things. What we can say is that independent residence entails greater emotional autonomy for the women and therefore less need for personal interaction and affective proximity.

As can be seen from the textual quote reproducing a fragment of the interview with a Mexican immigrant in New York at the beginning of this section, independent residence does not necessarily go hand in hand with less control over the work process. María, our interviewee, is a non-live-in domestic who works by the hour and is nevertheless subjected to a considerable degree of supervision on the part of her employer. In her case, the paradox is that when she manages to meet the standards of cleanliness required by her employer, she begins to be required for longer periods, which in turn leads to a reduction of her income. Thus, control, segregation and exchange, as distinctive dimensions of domestic labor, continue to exist in non-live-in domestic work, or by hours, albeit with

³³ One factor we referred to earlier that undoubtedly makes a substantial difference in the exercise of this activity is the socio-economic sector in which they provide their services. Unfortunately, for reasons of space, we are unable to deal with this systematically within this text. Nevertheless, field observation suggests that the higher the socio-economic level, the greater the tendency towards intradomestic segregation, whose most symbolic expression is perhaps the obligation to wear uniform. These aspects may in turn be mediated by the "household management model" signed by each female employer, as established by the members of Colectivo IOE (2001) in their exhaustive research on the labor market for female immigrants in Madrid.

variations due to a set of factors ranging from idiosyncratic or personal to socio.structural (social class, for example) that affect the dynamics of a labor market whose hallmark is precariousness and the wide margin of discretionality protected by the consecration of private family space.

One difference we found between Dominican non-live-in domestic workers in Madrid and their Mexican counterparts in New York is the length of the working day. The patterns that emerges from the analysis undertaken to date is that Dominicans have systematically longer working weeks than Mexicans. Taking the 40-hour week as a parameter, a threshold shared by the two countries, we found that, with very few exceptions, in our universe, the Dominicans interviewed tended to place themselves above this range, whereas Mexicans placed themselves below or around it, despite the relatively better conditions regarding migratory policy and labor laws afforded by the Spanish market, as we have been discussing. Our interpretative hypothesis is based on: a) the differences in the socio-demographic profiles of the women in the two national groups interviewed, which in turn derive from the different family structures in these countries, Dominican Republic and Mexico; b) the distinctive characteristics of their international migratory flows. High marital instability, the high percentage of consensual unions and the considerable presence of extended families and female headship distinguish the Dominican pattern of family formation from the Mexican one, in which there is a larger relative proportion of nuclear households, and less marital stability, extended households and female headship (Ariza and Oliveira, 1997, 2007).

From our point of view, this aspect combines with the distinctive features of both migratory flows: the flow of Dominicans to Spain is still a primarily female migratory trend, albeit with a tendency towards masculinization; while the flow of Mexicans to the US is predominantly male, due to the historic importance of the rural migration of males, although there has been an upward trend in the presence of women. Thus, although the migration of Dominican women to Madrid fits in better with so-called independent migration, that of Mexican women of New York is closer, at the aggregate level, to the traditional pattern of associational migration, in which women follow the male household head. These two factors combine so that in the universe of Dominican workers interviewed there are more female heads of households, women who have been separated, single women, with or without children and divorcees, than among Mexicans, where married women with children prevail. This aspect leads them to have more independent working lives and therefore longer working weeks, insofar as they are the main providers (Oso, 1998). Indeed, the presence of a high proportion of female household heads in the set of female immigrant workers in Spain has been a distinctive feature of the Spanish labor context, far more predominant in the case of Dominican immigration, which can partly be attributed to the encouragement of the demand for labor (Oso, 1998).³⁴ Moreover, these differences reflect the higher participation of Dominican than Mexican female labor in the work force at the aggregate level, which several of the aspects discussed here influence (Ariza, 2000).

Lastly, however, what are the distinctive features that both cities lend the work of the non-live-in domestic workers interviewed? In the case of fixed domestic workers, once

³⁴ On the basis of the 1991 Regularization Survey, Oso (1998:238) finds that: "...Dominican Republic is the country with the highest proportion of workers with dependents (84%). It is therefore a type of migration consisting mainly of female household heads..."

again, Madrid stands out in the area of benefits: paid vacations, a one-month bonus and sometimes the payment of social security although -as we have seen- by law this payment is only an obligation for employers when the women are live-in domestics. Vacations are usually given for a whole month, sometimes distributed into two fortnightly intervals (in August and December) although not always; extra annual payments correspond to a monthly salary divided into two moments. This does not mean that there have not been situations in which none of these prerogatives have been provided or female workers have been deceived with impunity by having social security payments deducted from their salaries, even though they are not in fact registered with Social Security. These situations do occur, particularly when migrants are in an irregular status and have just arrived in the Spanish labor market from their countries of origin, but the legal context, in terms of both work and migratory policy, is different, which involves significant consequences for the migrant labor force. As was analyzed in the case of live-in workers, despite the fact that Spanish migratory legislation constitutes an instrument of flexibilization of the labor market and prolongs the contingent nature of migratory status, it provides more real opportunities of legal labor insertion for domestic workers with the subsequent benefits in terms of possibilities of diversification to other lower echelons of the service sectors and even of naturalization and family reunification in the medium term.

4. Some final reflections

The goal of the comparative exercise carried out in this paper has been to systematize the differences and similarities in the exercise of domestic service in Madrid and New York as contexts of reception for female immigrant labor. To this end, we have used the specific analysis of life histories and forms of labor insertion of a set of Latina women (Dominicans and Mexicans) interviewed in Madrid and New York between May 2006 and April 2007.

The underlying analytical objective was to understand the complex relations between globalization and female labor markets in the current context, since domestic service is one of the sectors that has experienced an unexpected reactivation as the main sphere of work for the migrant labor force in several first world societies. Rather than summarizing the findings on the implications of both contexts for the female migrant labor force we would like to reflect on the significance of the internationalization of this labor market in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

It is a well-known fact that domestic service has historically played a key role in the profile of female labor in the general sense, particularly among migrants. To a certain extent, its importance in the context of globalization merely reinforces the validity of an old structural link. But what elements does the current context introduce into the exercise of the most *female of all occupations*? Generally speaking, crossing an international border creates a context of vulnerability for unskilled migrant workers, not only because they are subject to the jurisdiction of another state or because the moment they cross it, they may infringe the rule of law but also because they are the object of ethnization as a distinct minority, with all the implications this involves.

From the point of view of work, as the analysis suggests, the fact that the domestic space is the area in which they engage in their paid activity creates particular conditions that hardly favor migrant women's social citizenship. The combination of gender condition, class (unskilled workers), the domestic environment and the lack of belonging (migratory status) may entail a number of negative consequences. It has similar and in many cases,

probably worse implications than piecework at home (home subcontracting) as a type of work once had. Recent years have seen an enormous effort to analyze the nature of the labor they perform -known as *care work*- to remove it from the invisibility to which it has been condemned by the naturalization of the familial sphere as a workplace. Among the pending issues in this reflection is the dilucidation of the contradiction implicit in the paradox that is the *others*, those from “third countries,” which governments attempt to keep out, who meet some of the needs for care and affection in the most personal and closest of all worlds, that of family intimacy. Beyond domestic service, the fact that in the context of globalization, the domestic sphere has gained strength as the *locus* of reproduction of the migrant labor force, both female and male (gardening, and household repairs) warrants further reflection (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2008).

In most cases in the increasingly abundant research on the internationalization of domestic work –including this paper- analysis focuses more on the elements shaping the demand for labor and the conditions in which this activity is carried out in the receiving countries, than on their implications for the sending communities, families or countries of origin. This imbalance can be explained by the fact that causal pre-eminence is given, whether implicitly or explicitly, to the economic processes of central countries in the creation of changes, but this approach is incomplete.

The internationalization of domestic service within the context of globalization not only reflect the demographic and economic changes of the central countries but also the existence of a labor force in the peripheral countries which, in growing numbers, is prepared to take the risk of emigration. Since domestic service is a labor market with relatively inelastic demand, we need to answer the question of why precarious international labor, in its various forms (agriculture, construction, etc.) has become the preferred form of social mobility for the populations of these countries, since the growth of international precarious labor -combined with gender- is the analytical context where we must examine the reactivation of domestic service at the global level.

Unfortunately, as shown by the field experience carried out in the two sending countries, at the community level there is a growing conviction that it is only through labor insertion as international workers that one can achieve one's project of social mobility. Does an explanation focusing only on the corrosive impact of recent economic policies on societies of origin suffice to clarify the pre-eminent place acquired by precarious international labor as the choice of social mobility for broad social sectors of peripheral countries?

From the women's point of view, insertion into domestic service in an international space constitutes a means of generating income which -at least at the outset- is chosen to meet the social reproduction needs of the context of origin. Whether women lead migratory displacement or follow their husbands and relatives, migration often creates a gap between economic (destination) and social reproduction (origin) with lasting effects on intrafamilial dynamics that has seldom been studied, with the possible exception of Parreñas (2005). Women usually generate income outside their home countries, but in most cases all their effects and goals of material improvement are focused several thousand miles away in their neighborhoods and places of origin, the most emblematic expression being the construction of a house and the continuous drain on their savings due to sending remittances to solve their relative's everyday emergencies. The long periods of separation between family members, the impossibility of grouping them all together in the place of reception, the fracture in affectiveness caused by the everyday absence of the

main caretakers and the redistribution of children among the extended family create specific asymmetries and tensions about which little is known. And we could continue to list the aspects of social and family life of the sending countries and communities affected at various levels by this particular form of labor insertion. These aspects illustrate part of the complex processes that surround (and are to a certain extent triggered by) migration as an intrinsic part of its exercise.

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