

Helen Schwenken, Lisa-Marie Heimeshoff (Editors)

Domestic Workers Count: Global Data on an Often Invisible Sector

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Helen Schwenken & Lisa-Marie Heimeshoff

Domestic Work: A Significant Sector

Domestic work is a global phenomenon and in many countries indispensable for the economy outside the household to function. Domestic workers are employed for cleaning, child-minding, gardening, servicing or care-taking of elderly people in all kinds of private households. The ILO estimates that globally over 100 million people work in domestic services (ILO 2008). In spite of the salience of this sector, data on the number of domestic workers is rare. Due to the high degree of informality, reliable numbers are difficult to collect and compare. Nevertheless, estimations exist.

Different definitions of domestic work co-exist (see ILO, 2010b for an overview). In its International Standard Classification of Occupations, Groups 5121, 5131, 5133, 9131, ISCO-88, the ILO describes, for instance, a “domestic worker,” a “household worker,” and a “domestic helper” as a person employed part-time or full-time in a household or private residence. Domestic workers may be for example cooks, servants, nurses, child minders, carers for elderly or disabled persons, chauffeurs, porters, or gardeners (cf. Caritas Internationalis 2009). In article 1 of the draft convention “Decent Work for Domestic Workers”, the ILO states: “(a) the term ‘domestic work’ means work performed in or for a household or households; (b) the term ‘domestic worker’ means any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship; (c) a person who performs domestic work only occasionally or sporadically and not on an occupational basis is not a domestic worker” (ILO 2010c, p. 12). The exact definition of a “domestic worker” was one of the most controversial items on the agenda of the International Labor Conference (ILC) in June 2010. Questions arose such as “Are the employers of those employed by an agency the households or the agencies?” or “What does ‘occasionally’ or ‘employment relationship’ mean exactly?”. During the ILC, the employers’ group attempted to restrict the definition, while the workers’ group advocated for an inclusive definition. They referred to the fact that the sector is characterized by a huge variety of concrete employment relations that often move between formal and informal, legal and irregular, but that workers’ rights need to be granted for all workers.

Data on domestic work: a word of caution

Data on domestic workers is not always reliable and numbers on domestic workers are often based on estimates because of the large gray area in which it takes place. Estimating the size and defining the workforce to be counted in the informal sectors of the labor market are well-known challenges in labor economics, gender, and development studies (cf. Feige 1990, Benería 1992, Chen, Sebstad & O'Connell 1999). It has been criticized since the 1970s that women's work tends to be underestimated in labor force statistics and undervalued in national income accounts (Benería 1992). There are a number of reasons for this; one is the informal character of a part of women's work. This is also the reason why domestic work is difficult to put into accurate statistics. Feige identified four forms to assess "underground economic activities" (1990, pp. 991-993). All of them can be found in domestic work: (a) the "informal economy" as all economic activities that evade the cost of social security systems or that are excluded – this is the case for domestic work in most countries – from national labor laws; (b) the "unreported economy," in the common case employers evade fiscal regulations or paying social security benefits; (c) the "unrecorded economy" such as avoiding reporting the employment of a domestic worker to government statistical agencies or declaring a lower amount of wages than actually paid. A general problem in this regard is the valuation of household production – that seems to be relevant for household services paid in kind, performed by e.g. distant family members or foster children – it is estimated that it can account to up to 25-50 percent of the recorded Gross National Product (Feige 1990, p. 992); (d) the "illegal economy" in the form of trafficking of domestic workers or forced labor among (child) domestic workers. Despite these problems, significant theoretical, conceptual, and methodological progress to better account for women's work has been made in recent decades (Benería 1992, p. 1551ff.). Given the general improvements in labor statistics on accounting for the informal sector and the increasing political attention of domestic work, official labor statistics are likely to be more accurate on this sector in the future.

Numbers on domestic workers we obtained are sometimes difficult to evaluate, as definitions vary (and are very often not made explicit) and the sourcing process is not always the same in every study. Also, in calculating national estimates, not all areas of a country are necessarily surveyed or sometimes data for urban areas are extrapolated to the national level, even though the number of domestic workers is usually higher in urban than in rural areas. This of course influences the estimate for the total number of domestic workers in that country. There is also a difference between the number of domestic workers and the number of employment relationships, because in many countries, such as in

Europe or India, domestic workers tend to live-out and have a number of part-time positions.

As a first step of this data collection we consulted official labor statistics. Official data was accessed through the ILO Department of Statistics' LABORSTA database (Table 2B, total employment, tabulation category P "Households with Employed Persons", see also ILO 2010b, p. 6) and in some cases through national statistical databases. Counting domestic workers, the ILO Department of Statistics, refers to employment in private households. If not indicated otherwise, data on employees from statistics on total employment has been used. However, while LABORSTA data may appear accurate, it is often characterized by the same challenges as mentioned above and relies on the quality of national statistics that are fed into the ILO database. When working with the existing statistics it is also difficult to disaggregate the category "household." More information on sources and methods of ILO's LABORSTA data can be found online: <http://laborsta.ilo.org/applv8/data/SSMe.html>.

For this data collection, we further contacted several hundred unions and organizations working with and for domestic workers. Many of them were able to provide data estimates for certain countries or regions or other valuable information. Additionally, we referred to existing publications on domestic work which cite numbers of domestic workers or other characteristics of the sector. These estimates and information were particularly useful for questions of employment practices, conditions and wages paid, and questions regarding context such as legal provisions and political reforms in the field of domestic work. This type of data was less useful for estimates on total numbers of domestic workers.

In case we encountered contradictory data, which indeed happened frequently, we either made the contradictions explicit or referred to the source with a higher degree of plausibility. We also noted obvious or presumed data shortcomings, such as the non-counting of irregular migrant domestic workers, but we were not always able to elucidate or quantify the number of over- or underreported domestic workers. Therefore, the data used in this study allows for providing an idea of the number of persons working as domestic workers worldwide, their wages, and other dimensions of their work. However, users should bear in mind the difference between official statistical data and estimates as well as the general challenges in obtaining reliable data in such an informal and for a long time neglected sector of the labor market.

The claim of this publication is therefore not to provide authoritative labor statistics on domestic work, but to serve as an inventory of existing data, estimates and qualitative information on domestic work worldwide. In order to allow other researchers and statisticians to follow-up on these data, the sources of estimates and information are provided.

Total numbers of persons working in domestic work

Especially significant is the domestic work sector in the Gulf countries, with 1.2 to two million working in Saudi Arabia (Human Rights Watch 2007). In the Middle East, female migrants alone make up six million domestic workers (ICFTU 2002). In India, official estimations talk of 4.75 million workers employed in private households (ILO 2010a). Also in East Asia and South East Asia, domestic work is an important sector of employment. In China, an estimated 20 million people work as domestic workers (ILO 2009). For domestic workers in Indonesia, estimates range between 2.2 million (LABORSTA) and 2.6 million (ILO-IPEC 2004). According to LABORSTA, in 2008, 253,000 people worked as domestic workers in Malaysia.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, domestic work is very common as well. The higher the number of affluent middle and upper classes in the country, the more important is the domestic service sector (Tokman 2010). In Chile, 310,351 workers were employed in private households in 2002, in Brazil, 6,732,000 persons and in Uruguay 128,200 were working in private households in 2007 (LABORSTA). For Mexico, LABORSTA calculated 1.85 million employed in private households (2008). In Nicaragua, 117,400 persons were working in private households (LABORSTA 2006), and 194,600 in the Dominican Republic (LABORSTA 2007). While there is an increase of domestic services in for example European countries, the situation remains stable in Latin America and the Caribbean.

On the African continent, official data exists for several countries as well. In 2005, in Ethiopia, 248,600 people were officially registered as being employed in the domestic work sector (LABORSTA). In Egypt, the total number of domestic workers in 2007 was 51,600 (LABORSTA). In domestic work, 103,900 people were employed in Mali (LABORSTA 2004). In South Africa, the domestic work sector employs more than 1.2 million (LABORSTA 2007) and is the largest single sector of women's employment (Ally 2009).

Country	Total	Men	Women	% of total employment	Female DWs as % of female employment
Saudi Arabia (2008)	876,596	319,794	556,802	11.0%	49.7%
Spain (2008)	752,600	53,000	699,600	3.7%	8.2%
Malaysia (2008)	253,000	29,400	223,600	2.4%	5.9%
Namibia (2004)	24,100	4,100	20,000	6.3%	11.9%
Canada (2008)	72,800	2,500	70,300	0.4%	0.9%
Brazil (2007)	6,732,000	418,000	6,313,000	7.4%	16.4%

Table 1: Persons Employed by Private Households (LABORSTA, own compilation)

In Europe, rough estimations for female irregular migrant domestic workers alone arrive at one million (Pannell & Altman 2007). LABORSTA data points to 752,600 persons employed in private households in Spain (2008), 607,900 in France (2008), 138,000 in the UK (2008), 68,500 in Greece (2007), 42,100 in Belgium (2008), 16,000 in Poland (2007) and 6,600 in Serbia (2008). However, a closer look at the data of Italy, for example, shows the difference between these official statistics and estimates including irregular workers. The LABORSTA data for 2008 calculates 419,000 persons employed in private households, but estimations go up to 1.2 million domestic workers in Italy (IRENE & IUF 2008). The same is true for Germany: while there are 40,000 officially registered domestic workers according to the 2000 Socioeconomic Panel, more than 1.1 million people are estimated to be employed without paying into the social security system in private households in 1997 (Schupp 2002).

The United States estimates for domestic workers range from 1.5 million (Ratner 2008 citing the Census Bureau) to 2.5 million domestic workers (Shenker 2010). Canada records 72,800 persons employed in private households (LABORSTA 2008).

In Australia, in official census data from 2006 16,173 people are registered as domestic cleaners. Overall numbers on domestic workers are probably much higher, because domestic workers employed as caretakers or gardeners would have to be included, as well as informal work. In the Pacific Islands, domestic work plays a role, too. In Papua New Guinea, 15,523 people were working as domestic workers in 2000 (LABORSTA).

Besides the total number of domestic work employees, another form of measurement is the total number of households employing a domestic worker. In Nairobi alone, it is estimated that around two million households employ a domestic worker (Family Health International 2009). In Singapore, one in seven households employs a foreign domestic worker (Iredale & Piper 2003). In Palau, one in five households employs a domestic worker (Nero et al. 2000). There is a numerical difference between households and domestic workers, particularly in those countries in which domestic workers work on an hourly basis in a number of households at the same time. Therefore, the estimations for Germany go up to four million households (Cyrus 2009), but there are clearly not as many domestic workers.

As part of the total work force

The domestic work sector is especially important in developing countries, where often 4-10 percent of total employment is domestic work; however, in some developed countries more than two percent of total employment takes place in this sector as well, e.g. 4.4 percent in Cyprus, 2.3 percent in France, or 3.7

percent in Spain, among others (LABORSTA 2008). In some countries of the Global South, estimations for the percentage of work force in this sector can be significantly higher. In South Africa, about 9.4 percent of the total workforce work as domestic workers (LABORSTA 2007). In Kuwait, 21.9 percent of total employment takes place in private households (LABORSTA 2005). In Latin America they constitute on average 5.5 percent of the urban workforce, but 12.2 percent of the female urban workforce; one out of each 6.6 female workers is occupied in domestic services (CEPAL 2009; Tokman 2010).

The informal character of domestic work

A large part of domestic work takes place in the shadow economy. One reason is that the employer and the domestic worker both save paying taxes and social security benefits. Migrants without legal status and without recognized formal skills, who otherwise have limited chances to enter the labor market, can find work in the domestic service sector. In the U.S., an estimated 23 percent of those in private household employment were unauthorized immigrants in 2008 (Passal & Cohn 2009). Up to 30,000 domestic workers are estimated to work in Jordan without proper documentation (ai, 2008).

Women in domestic work

In most countries, women comprise the vast majority of employees in the domestic service sector (usually more than 80 percent of people working as domestic workers). In countries such as Spain (LABORSTA 2008), Bolivia (LABORSTA 2007) or Chile (LABORSTA 2001) more than 90 percent of domestic workers are female. In Namibia, of 24,100 domestic workers 20,000 are women, i.e. 83 percent (LABORSTA 2004), whereas in Mauritius even 88.5 percent of persons employed by private households are female (LABORSTA, 2001). Domestic work in the Philippines is performed also mostly by women: 84.8 percent of domestic employees are women (LABORSTA 2008). However exceptions in some countries exist and household employees are predominantly male, often young men and boys, like in Tajikistan, where in 2004 a total of 2,400 men were reported to be employed in private households and only 1,000 women (LABORSTA). Reasons to employ male domestic workers can be manifold: It can be a colonial legacy that male servants in some contexts have a higher status than women; in other contexts women's employment is restricted (in general, for specific tasks or in certain spaces); it might also be the case that the society considers male DWs "feminized" through their profession; and in some instances male DWs might be employed due to issues of jealousy of the woman in the house not to have younger women present (see also chapters on Africa and CIS). In recent years it can also

be noted that migration into domestic work becomes an option for men as there is a clear demand for DWs in the Global North. The construction of femininity and masculinity in and through domestic work is therefore not a unified one, but depends on the context and changes over time. Nevertheless, male dominance is the exception as domestic workers are mostly female.

Internal and international migrants in domestic work

Not only is domestic work a feminized sector of the economy, but it is also often characterized by a large number of migrants working in the field. Two different migration trends lay the foundation for migrants' employment in domestic work: (a) A number of countries – e.g. in the Gulf, but also in the Global North (e.g. Canada, UK) – have specific temporary labor migration schemes for domestic workers or care-takers. These migration schemes either function on an individual basis or they are large-scale and state organized contract migration programs. (b) The second migration trend refers to regular and irregular migration of mostly women, often but not exclusively into neighboring countries or within regions. Migrant women from 'old' migrations, such as the guestworker programs in Europe, and 'new' (pendular) migrations, such as migration from Eastern to Western Europe after 1989, find employment in private households. Because of the informality of the domestic services sector and the increasing demand (aging societies, lack of childcare facilities, increased women's employment in middle classes), migrants are able to work even without formal skills and legal status in the country.

In Argentina, 78 percent of women immigrants are employed in domestic services; in Costa Rica and Chile respectively 47 percent and 37 percent, of whom most are coming from neighboring countries (Tokman 2010). Whereas in some countries migrant domestic workers migrate internationally, in other countries, internal migration from rural to urban areas takes place. This is for instance the case in Kathmandu in Nepal, where internal migrants find work in private households (C-WISH 2009). Human Rights Watch estimates that 160,000 migrant domestic workers are employed in Singapore and 300,000 in Malaysia (HRW 2006). In Jordan, more than 40,000 migrant domestic workers are registered with the Ministry of Labor; however, another 30,000 foreign migrant domestic workers are estimated to work in Jordan without valid documents (ai 2008).

Studies for Latin America show that there is no competition between local and immigrant domestic workers as the activities are segmented. Most Peruvian domestic workers in Chile work full-time as live-ins and have considerable years of schooling, while the majority of Chilean women have a low-income background and work as live-outs (Tokman 2010). Due to rapid urbanization, fewer local women tend to work in the sector and are replaced by immigrant women.

The domestic sector is hence dominated by female migrants, a group often marginalized and with few (labor) rights. Worldwide, 17-25 million female migrants are estimated to work in the sector (Pannell & Altman 2007).

Employment status and wages paid for domestic services

Wages paid are usually low both in absolute terms as well as compared to other occupations, even to other low productivity activities. Incomes earned in domestic services in Latin America reach 40 percent of the level of incomes earned as an average by the working population (Tokman 2010, p. 4). Further, there is a gender pay gap: The average income of women working in urban domestic services in Latin America is 73 percent of that paid to men in the same occupation (ibid., p. 5).

The domestic service sector is characterized by heterogeneous work conditions. Whereas some domestic workers work full-time, others are employed part-time. Estimates by the National Domestic Workers' Movement for India show that around 20 percent work full-time (Devos 2010). In Italy, on the other hand, most women domestic workers work full-time (D'Alconzo et al. 2009).

Additionally, domestic work can be differentiated between live-in and live-out employment situations. This influences wage. The average wage for domestic work is € 750 for a 55 hour work week per month in Italy, but live-in domestic workers earn around € 1200 (Scrinzi 2008). In Israel, immigrants often work as live-in domestic workers, earning € 450-550 a month plus additional benefits (Mundlak & Shamir 2008). For live-in workers, employers can deduct money for room and board from the wage. For instance, in Spain, up to 45 percent of pay is deducted (Albarracín 2002); in Cyprus, 10 percent for accommodation provided and 15 percent if food is also provided can be deducted from pay (Georgiou et al. 2007). Wages sometimes tend to be extremely different in the same location. A case in point is New York City where the hourly wage ranges from US\$ 1.43 to US\$ 40 (€ 1.07-29.91), while the median is US\$ 10 (€ 7.48) (Domestic Workers United 2006).

Some countries have minimum wages for domestic workers. For instance, the minimum wage for domestic workers in Tanzania was set in 2008 at around \$60 per month (€ 44.87) (Grumiau 2009). In Portugal, € 475 per month was set as the minimum wage (Alves 2010). South Africa also introduced a minimum wage for domestic workers, which was in 2009 between ZAR 1,097.40 (€ 111) and ZAR 1,340.95 (€ 135) (Department of Labor 2010). Nevertheless, despite the existence of a minimum wage in several countries, domestic workers often earn less, because domestic work is frequently informal.

Conclusion

Data regarding domestic workers is difficult to obtain and to compare because of different definitions of domestic work in various countries, as well because of its informal character. Nonetheless, domestic work is a significant sector in many countries, especially in a large number of developing countries.

Aside from the informal character of domestic work, domestic work is mostly performed by women. This feminized and informal sector offers jobs to internal as well as international migrants. Due to aging societies in developed countries and cut-backs in welfare state provisions, where commodification of social and public services takes place, demand for domestic work is on the rise.

To better acknowledge the importance of the domestic work sector, domestic workers need to be included into national labor laws. So far, statistical data is not collected systematically by the relevant statistical bureaus all over the world. This needs to be changed in order to follow future developments and to be able to ensure the protection and the monitoring of the rights of domestic workers.

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Africa

With regard to the phenomenon of domestic work, Africa is different from other continents such as Europe, in that most of the domestic workers are local-born and not immigrants. Africa shows some similarities to countries in Asia and Latin America as many persons move from rural to urban areas to take up domestic work positions; also numerous Africans move to other continents in pursuit of employment. Ethiopian migrants are for example employed as DWs in Lebanon, Yemen and in other parts of West Asia (Jureidini & Moukarbel 2004, p. 586) and North African women in Southern Europe. The domestic work roles performed across the whole continent include cleaning, looking after children and cooking. Africa is similar to all other continents insofar as there are more women than men who work as domestic workers (DWs). Interestingly there are some North African countries where there are more men than women DWs. As in other world regions, it is difficult to access accurate statistical data.

A common practice in almost all African countries is using family members as informal domestic workers. When young girls are taken from their families in the rural areas to the urban areas to work for their relatives in return for school fees, accommodation and food, this practice is disguised as ‘fostering’ (Opokua 2010). Ultimately when workers that are not related to the family are sometimes seen or treated as ‘part of the family,’ their employers do not see the need to pay them in cash and register them formally (IDWN 2010).

Four African regions, namely Northern, Western, Eastern and Southern Africa, and one island nation, are studied. Notably, the Central African region has features similar to Western Africa and is thus deemed to be covered under the latter. The data collected includes the number of DWs, ratio of female to male DWs employed in private households and the proportion of total workforce and the wage details, if available, in the countries examined. Notably, solid data on the DWs residence status and ages as well as on temporary or on fulltime employment etc., were not available.

Northern Africa

Whereas most DWs in Africa are women, according to official statistics for **Egypt** and **Algeria**, male domestic workers outnumber women: In Egypt, 71 percent (36,600 out of a total number of 51,500) were men (LABORSTA 2007); in Algeria 55 percent are men (19,200 out of a total number of 34,900) (ILO 2004).

The male dominance is likely to be the result of several factors. One reason may lie in perceptions dating back to colonial times in which male servants were regarded to be of higher status. Work done by women is also often not considered to be work. An underreporting of women DWs may exist as well as an interpretation of Islam that restricts women's employment. However, the latter position is challenged by the fact that Saudi Arabia has many migrant women employed as DWs and another Muslim country, **Morocco** has 119,800 DWs out of whom over 101,200 were women and only 18,600 men (LABORSTA). The reasons for male employment in domestic work need further investigation.

Most domestic workers in Northern Africa earn slightly more or below the minimum wage. For example the minimum wage in **Egypt** has been 35 Egyptian pounds (€ 4.63) per month for over 26 years, despite a rise in the price of food and other commodities (Sparks 2010; McGrath 2010). As a result many Egyptian and other North African women migrate to Asia (the Gulf states) to work as DWs. Egypt along with Ethiopia and other states at one point banned female nationals from travelling alone abroad for work largely due to the harsh experiences from the Gulf States where reports of physical and sexual abuse are widespread (Jureidini & Moukarbel 2004, p. 590). Human Rights Watch reports high numbers of abuses faced by DWs in Northern Africa and also in the Gulf states (Human Rights Watch 2008).

Country	Total	Men	Women	% of total employment	Female DW as % of female employment
Egypt (2007)	51,600	36,600	15,000	0.2%	n.a.
Ethiopia (2005)	246,600	23,100	225,500	0.8%	1.5%
Mali (2004)	103,900	18,800	85,100	4.4%	8.7%
Mauritius (2008)	19,100	2,200	16,900	3.7%	9.5%
South Africa (2007)	1,244,000	180,000	945,000	9.4%	16.7%
Tanzania (2006)	701,500	138,200	563,300	3.9%	6.1%
Uganda (2003)	111,100	39,500	71,600	1.2%	1.5%

Table 1: People employed by private households in selected African countries.

Source: LABORSTA, own compilation.

Western Africa

For **Mali**, with a population of more than 10 million inhabitants, LABORSTA reports 103,900 DWs employed in private households, out of whom 18,800 were men and 85,100 were women (LABORSTA 2004). Altogether these DWs made up 4.4 percent of the proportion of total workforce by 2004 with the female proportion at 8.7 percent. The lowest paid DW earned around FCFA 9,000 (€ 10) per month which is low when compared to wages in the formal private enterprises, where the average salary is about FCFA 111,000 (€ 123) per month (Global Policy Network 2003). Similarly in **Ghana**, a country with nearly 24 million people, DWs earn less than the minimum wage. According to the IUF African regional coordinator for DWs, Vicky Kanyoka, “there is at least one domestic worker in each house and a large house could have as many as six” (2010). The DWs earn around GHS 5.6-15 per month (€ 3-8.5). In **Benin**, a cleaning woman earns 5,000 CFA francs (€ 7) per month (ICFTU 2002, p. 3).

Sierra Leone has around 8,289 people employed as DWs in private households, of which 3,983 are men and 4,306 are women (LABORSTA 2004). These DWs make up 0.4 percent as proportion of the workforce. Most DWs, including young girls, are recruited through relatives and work for free or for payment in kind in the form of food and accommodation. When recruited through an agency, DWs in **Togo** are paid at least € 15 per month with the recruiting family paying the agency a commission of € 7 per domestic worker plus € 18 per year in fees (IRIN 2008). These fees, according to one employment agency founder, are meant to help the agency assist the DW in case of difficulties. Nevertheless, it is evident from the wages received that DWs continue to be exploited in Togo. As elsewhere in Africa some of the worst culprits are the very agencies that are meant to assist DWs (ibid.). Regarding time of payment, **Cote d'Ivoire** has legislation guaranteeing regular payment of domestic workers' wages and prohibits mere in kind payment (accommodation and meals) (ILO 2010, p. 43-44). Section 32.3 of the Côte d'Ivoire Labour Code provides that salaries must be paid at regular intervals that may not exceed 15 days. In **Burkina Faso**, according to section 113 of the Labour Code, monthly payments must be made promptly within eight days of the end of the month.

Eastern Africa

Eastern Africa, like Southern and Western Africa, has a large number of DWs. The **Kenyan** government and other groups studying the issue estimate that almost two million households in Nairobi employ cooks, gardeners and maids (Hughes 2008). DWs in Kenya earn around KES 1000 to KES 1500 (approximately € 9-13.60). Kenya's minimum wage for DWs is set at KES 6,270.60 (€ 57)

per month but this is rarely enforced (ITUC 2010; Hughes 2008). In Nairobi, a DW could earn around KES 1,782 to 3,500 (€ 18-35) (Hughes 2008).

In **Uganda** more than 111,100 DWs were employed in 2003, 39,500 men and 71,600 women (LABORSTA). Altogether, DWs made up 1.2 percent of the entire workforce (LABORSTA). In 2007 the salaries earned range from 6,000-12,000 Uganda Shillings (€ 2.60-5.20) (Ilakut 2007). In Kampala, the capital, some DWs earn up to 100,000 Uganda Shillings (€ 34) depending on the income of the employer, the bargaining power of the DW and the recruiting agency.

Tanzania had 701,500 DWs in 2006 working in private households, of whom 138,200 were men and 563,300 were women. These made up 3.9 percent of the total workforce, 6.1 percent of the female workforce (LABORSTA). In 2008, the minimum wage for domestic workers was set at the equivalent of 88,908 Tanzania Shillings (€ 46) (Grumiau 2009). Nevertheless, most DWs continue to earn wages far below the minimum wage ranging from around 7,409 to 16,300 Tanzania Shillings (€ 4–8) (Kanyoka 2010).

In **Ethiopia** 248,600 people were employed in 2005 as DWs in private households; 23,100 men and 225,500 women (LABORSTA). This accounts to 5.26 percent of the total workforce in the entire country, wherein 9.78 percent of the female and only 0.7 percent of the male workforce (ILO 2010, p. 6). However, these statistics are based on the number of DWs in cities; therefore the numbers are likely to be much lower and result in 0.8 percent for all of Ethiopia, with a percentage of 1.5 percent of all women employed as DWs (LABORSTA). Thousands of Ethiopians move from rural to urban areas such as Addis Ababa for domestic work (IRIN 2004). Unlike some of the other African states, there is no national minimum wage. Public servants, the largest group of wage earners, earn a monthly minimum wage of approximately 320 Birr (€ 20.70), while DW earn far below. Many DWs are children who work for as little as 17.4 Birr (€ 1) per month, with some getting just food and accommodation as payment in kind (IRIN 2004). According to Sophie Joy Mosko of Save the Children-Sweden, "child domestic work [in Ethiopia] is not only widely accepted but often considered as a better alternative for children coming from poor families" (IRIN 2004).

Many Ethiopians escape poverty by working as DWs in the Asian Gulf states. They are recruited under a restrictive sponsorship system (the *khafala* system) that binds their legal residency permit to the sponsor. They earn around 367-551 Dirham (€ 70-115) (Fernandez 2010, p. 251). Ethiopian DWs are perceived as the lowest in status in the labour market for foreign domestic workers, compared to Filipino women who earn around € 155-270 (Jureidini & Moukarbel 2004, p. 590).

Southern Africa

In 2007 the number of DWs was estimated at 1,244,000; 299,000 men and 945,000 women (LABORSTA; ILO 2010). The government figure from official registration of DWs for the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) though is set at more than 1 million, but there are likely more DWs as there is a high non-compliance rate, a growing number of undocumented migrant DWs and high incidents of inaccurate statistical reporting (Musi 2010, p. 1; Department of Labour South Africa 2010a; Hertz 2004, pp. 1, 8). Female DWs amount to circa 16 percent of the entire female workforce (LABORSTA, WIEGO 2008, p. 2 citing IRENE 2007, ILO 2010, pp. 6, 41). The percentages are likely higher due to the inaccuracies in recording. Domestic work is clearly the largest single sector of women employment (Ally 2009, p. 2) and the actual number of DWs could potentially be twice the number estimated. Nonetheless these figures reveal that DWs represent around 9.4 percent of all formal and informal employment (of the total workforce) in South Africa (LABORSTA 2007).

According to a 2000 South African government study, 80 percent of DWs earn less than € 77 a month and 35 percent earn under € 34.80 a month (Gilson 2000). South Africa's introduction of minimum wage regulations for DWs (My wage South Africa 2010) contributed to the increase of some DWs' wages as shown by the reported UIF registration rates at 25 percent as of September 2003, a five-fold increase over the previous year, despite substantial apparent non-compliance (Hertz 2004, p. 8). In 2009, the minimum wage was between ZAR 1,097-1,341 (€ 111-135) (Department of Labour South Africa 2010b). Despite the existence of a minimum wage in South Africa, some DWs still earn less than the minimum wage because of informality and working for multiple employers, and for less than a full working week (IDWN 2010).

Another contributory factor to low wages stems from the contradictions between labour and migration laws. While immigration law aims to keep irregular immigrants out of the country, labour law guarantees everyone the same rights regardless of migration status (Makanga 2010). Migrant DWs receive lower wages since they do not want to attract undue attention to their status. Most of the migrant DWs are usually from South Africa's neighbours, for example Zimbabwe. Under the special visa dispensation Zimbabweans could enter South Africa and work for a total of three months before renewing their temporary permits (The Zimbabwean 2010). These DWs include former professionals in fields such as education and business who cannot find adequate work in their profession (Munakamue 2010, pp. 4-5).

In **Zimbabwe**, young women often migrate from rural areas to be employed as domestic workers in urban centres (Masimba 2009). Wages earned range from

7,466 to 18,665 Zimbabwe Dollars (€ 15-39) per month. Payment in kind e.g. school fees paid for young girls working for their relatives is also a common mode of remuneration as in other African countries (Munakamue 2010, p. 8). Zimbabwean nationals working as DWs in South Africa often employ other Zimbabwean DWs to take care of their families. In **Botswana**, 25,200 people were employed as DWs with 7,200 men to 18,000 women in 2006, making up 4.7 percent of the entire workforce (LABORSTA). The proportion of women employed as DWs is 7.0 percent out of all female workers in 2006 (LABORSTA).

In **Namibia**, out of 24,100 DWs, 20,000 are women while 4,100 are men. DWs make up 6.3 percent of the total workforce, and 12 percent of all women in the workforce are employed as DWs (LABORSTA 2004; Shevajali 2008). A DW can earn around N\$ 36 (€ 4) a day; although N\$ 72 (€ 7) a day is, according to one agency owner, a decent wage (Shevajali 2008). Like elsewhere in Africa, DWs' salaries depend on the employers' own monthly salaries, their employers' willingness to pay, the DWs' bargaining abilities and recruitment agencies that may or may not be involved. **Lesotho** has an estimated 26,500 DWs out of whom 4,500 were men and 22,000 women in 1999 according to ILO findings; 4.3 percent of the total workforce were employed as DWs and out of the entire female workforce 8.1 percent were DWs (LABORSTA). In **Angola** 7,000 people work as DWs, which is 0.5 percent of all urban employees (Klaveren et al. 2009, p. 21). DWs usually receive wages below the minimum wage.

Island Nations

In **Mauritius**, there were around 19,100 DWs employed in private households in 2008, 85 percent of them women; a total of 3.7 percent of the total and 9.5 of the female workforce are thus DWs (LABORSTA 2001, 2004). The Domestic Remuneration Act determines the basic wages for domestic employees. Irrespective of the Act and the set minimum wages, wages earned by DWs in Mauritius are low. With respect to the nationality of the DWs, given the location of Mauritius, it is not clear how many DWs were migrants from Asia or from India specifically.

Conclusion

The data shows that many people in Africa are employed as DWs with women taking up the largest proportion of the workforce when compared to men. DWs continue to earn lower wages, usually below the states' minimum wages (where available) and are exploited by both employers and employment agencies in all African countries. Governments' setting in place minimum wages for DWs helps protect and regulate the wages received by DWs as seen in South Africa. Unfortunately, since not all governments have these regulations in place and those

states that do are often unwilling or even unable to have labour inspection of DWs and other forms of enforcement, DWs earn low wages and other DWs are paid in kind. It is common for employers to employ family members as domestic workers all over the African continent and payment in such cases is usually in kind. More research is needed to establish the number of child DWs, migrant DWs and those that are informally employed. These categories of people are most vulnerable and are likely to face worse conditions of employment as they are not sufficiently provided for under the law and state policies.

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Asia

A.H.M. Belayeth Hussain

The Middle East and West Asia

The most prevalent cases of the growing employment of migrant domestic workers, the majority are women (ILO 2010a, p. 6), are in the Middle East and the Gulf countries. This phenomenon started following the oil boom during the 1970s (Gamburd 2009, p. 9). In the last 25 years, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) received workers mostly from the non-GCC Arab countries (Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Yemen) and from Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka) (ibid., p. 11). Recently, CEACR (Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations) of the ILO has drawn attention to the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers, the lack of legislative provision and the undervaluation of their work (ILO 2010, p. 17). In the Middle East, only in Egypt DWs have access to some kind of social security support (retirement pension); in other countries there is no support at all (ibid., p. 59). Women domestic workers in the Middle East and West Asia, except Iran and Israel, are not covered by maternity leave legislation (ibid., p. 64). Following the decent work agenda, the ILO announced its Asian Decent Work Decade from 2006 to 2015. In the negotiations for an ILO Convention “Decent Work for Domestic Workers”, some Middle Eastern countries opposed to put a convention into place (UCANEWS 2010).

According to the ILO Bureau of Statistics Database LABORSTA, the total number of registered domestic workers is 29,583 in **Bahrain**. Among them, 21,921 are women and 7,662 are men. A Bahrain based human rights organization mentions that the number of migrant workers is 50,000 (Bahrain Center for Human Rights 2007) which contradicts for example the World Report of Human Rights Watch. According to this source, the total number of migrant workers in Bahrain is 462,139 who are primarily from South Asia (Human Rights Watch 2010, p. 487). According to the ILO Bureau of Statistics Database of 2001, 10.2 percent of the total work force and 36.6 percent of total women work force are domestic workers in Bahrain. The wages vary from 35 to 50 Bahrainian Dirham (€ 68-98). Migrant workers often complain that some employers withhold their passports and stop paying their wages illegally (Human Rights Watch 2010). Yet,

migrant workers are not entitled to minimum wages in Bahrain because the government is worried that this might hinder Bahrain's competitiveness (based on cheap labour) in the Gulf region (Migrant Rights 2010a). In May 2009, the Ministry of Labour announced a proposed revision on Bahrain's *Kafala* sponsorships system – migrant workers are only granted legal entry when they have a 'sponsor', however, this dependency led to wide-spread abuse – in order to reduce the risk of exploitation and abuse of migrant workers (Human Rights Watch 2010, pp. 487f.). Despite the amendments of a new law in August 2010, migrant domestic workers are excluded from the reform, though they are in high risk of abuse and exploitation due to their isolation in private homes (ibid., p. 488).

According to the ILO Bureau of Statistics Database, the total number of domestic workers in the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** in 2008 is 236,545 (90,470 men and 146,075 women). In 2008, the total proportion of domestic workers shared 12.8 percent of the total workforce; and 42.4 percent of total women workforce (LABORSTA 2008). Human Rights Watch estimates that wage range from US\$ 109 to 150 (€ 81.50-112) in the UAE. Although the Labour Law of 1980 calls for the minimum wage, many domestic workers are subject to unpaid wages (Human Rights Watch 2010, p. 568). In general the human rights situation for DWs in the UAE leaves a lot to be desired: NGOs report about food deprivation, forced confinement, physical and sexual abuse against female domestic workers (ibid., p. 568). Most importantly, the standard contract for domestic workers induced in April 2007 offers some protection but does not limit working hours, weekly holidays, overtime pays, workers compensations etc. (ibid., p. 570).

The estimation of the number of women domestic workers work in **Saudi Arabia** varies between 1.5 million (Human Rights Watch 2008, p. 2) and 876,596 (LABORSTA 2008). The total number of foreign workers in Saudi Arabia is according the Human Rights Watch approximately 8 million (Human Rights Watch 2008, p. 2). The majority of the domestic workers originate from Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines (Human Rights Watch 2008, p. 2). Monthly wages range between US\$ 80-133 (€ 60-100). Migrant Rights states that there is no minimum wage in Saudi Arabia, and also the average monthly wage of a worker varies according to race, religion, nationality from US\$ 200 to 400 (€ 150-300) (Migrant Rights 2010b). Asian embassies report thousands of complaints from domestic workers who are working in Saudi Arabia (Human Rights Watch 2010, p. 548). Domestic workers are forced to work 15-20 hours a day, seven days a week, denied their salaries; they are frequently facing forced confinement, food deprivation, physical and sexual abuses (ibid.). Different types of abuses are beating, burning with hot iron, threats, insult, and humiliation by shaving heads, food deprivations etc. (Human Rights Watch 2008, p. 4). Recently, two

murder cases were reported against Asian domestic workers (one Indonesian and one Filipino woman) (Migrant Rights 2010c). Domestic workers, diplomats and Saudi officials underline the non-payment and underpayment as the most common complaint (Human Rights Watch 2008, p. 4).

More than one million foreign nationals work in **Kuwait**, that is more than 80 percent of Kuwait's total workforce (Human Rights Watch 2010, p. 529). Kuwait is the third largest employer of migrant workers in the Gulf (after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). Of the one million foreign workers, about 545,000 were domestic workers in 2007 (UNIFEM n.d., p. 95). But, according to Human Rights Watch, approximately 700,000 migrant women are working as domestic workers. Most of them are from Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, and the Philippines (Human Rights Watch 2010, p. 529). The majority of domestic workers are women, for example 82 percent of the ca. 200,000 Sri Lankan domestic worker (UNIFEM n.d., p. 95). Kuwait introduced some protective legislation (e.g. standard employment contracts since 2006, coverage by medical insurance) and set-up a new institution, the Bureau for Domestic Workers) (ibid., pp. 95-98). The Ministry of Interior set the minimum wage for domestic workers at US\$ 147 (€ 110) per month (to compare, the minimum wage for the public sector is US\$ 741 (€ 555) for bachelors and US\$ 295 (€ 220) for non-Kuwaitis) and recruitment agencies officially need to prove the payments (UNIFEM n.d., p. 96). Nonetheless, domestic workers are still excluded from the main labour law and the social security insurance scheme (ibid., p. 97) and the working conditions are not unlikely other Gulf regions: Common complaints from domestic workers are confinement to the house, long working hours without rest, unpaid wages, verbal, physical and sexual abuses (Human Rights Watch 2010, p. 530). Further, they are not allowed to change employers (only after their 2-year contract is completed and the original employer agrees to the change). That adds to the vulnerable situation of many domestic workers (UNIFEM n.d., p. 97). Many domestic workers protest to their respective embassies. In 2009, the Indonesian embassy banned further migration to Kuwait due to complaints from its labourers (Human Rights Watch 2010, p. 530). An alliance of Filipino migrants groups claims that Kuwait and Syria are not safe for domestic workers (Migrant Rights 2010d). Migrant Rights states that almost every other day a domestic worker commits suicide in Kuwait (Migrant Rights 2010e). Most of the suicides and suicide attempts are committed due to the migrant domestic workers' exclusion from the protection by the Kuwait labour laws.

The data on women migrant domestic workers in **Jordan** is inconsistent: While the Ministry of Labour counted 36,223 legally registered women migrant domestic workers and ca. 15,000 undocumented workers, data provided by the Domestic Helpers Recruitment Agencies Association indicates a higher number,

between 60,000-70,000 workers, both officially registered and undocumented (UNIFEM 2010). 98 percent of all women migrants are working in private households in 2006 (UNIFEM n.d., p. 89). Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Egypt and the Philippines are the main countries of origin of domestic workers (Frantz 2008, p. 608). Sri Lanka is one main sending country, because other sending countries from Asia including Bangladesh, Nepal, India, and Pakistan restrict their female migration (Frantz 2008, p. 611). Nearly 70,000 foreign domestic workers are employed in Jordan and every 11th Jordanian family employs a domestic worker (Frantz 2008, p. 609). The wage for a domestic worker is approximately US\$ 150-250 (€ 112-187) per month; however there are cases where DW receive just US\$ 80 (€ 60) (UNIFEM n.d., p. 91). New regulations on domestic workers have been recently introduced: In 2003, the Ministry of Labour started regulating employment agencies and adopted after a multi-stakeholder initiative a “Special Working Contract for Non-Jordanian Domestic Workers” (ibid., p. 89, see a replicate on pp. 178-181); in 2006, the Ministry of Labour started to inspect employment agencies and set-up a Directorate for Domestic Workers to receive and follow-up complaints (ibid., p. 92f.). In 2009 domestic workers were included into labour law. The new legislation contains for example clauses regarding regular payment of salary, sufficient living quarters, and medical facilities (Human Rights Watch 2010, p. 525). However, despite the improvements, some essential rights including the freedom of movement are still restricted and the government fails to protect workers from long working hours and different types of abuses (ibid., p. 525). Under the new laws, the Ministry of Labour also suspended the licenses of four recruitment agencies and warned eight others over violation of labour laws (ibid., p. 525). Human Rights Watch concludes that there is no significant change in Jordan’s human rights policies and practices. Migrant Rights, for example, reported that two Sri Lankan household workers in Jordan committed suicide due to poor working conditions in July 2010 (Migrant Rights 2010f). During the last few months the Directorate of Public Security listed at least 18 suicide attempts among domestic workers in Jordan (Migrant Rights 2010g).

Data were not available on **Oman** which is one of the member states of GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council). Oman is also one of the receiving countries of foreign labours chiefly from South Asia, Egypt, Jordan, and the Philippines (Freedom House 2010a). Oman’s 2003 labour laws define employment conditions for citizens and foreign workers but it did not cover domestic workers (Freedom House 2010a). In many cases employers stop paying the salaries, forcing them to work under slave-like working conditions (ibid.). Oman does not have a law against sexual harassment in the workplace and that is why sexual and physical abuses of female domestic workers are very common; unfortunately no report is found that supports action from the government side (ibid.).

In **Qatar**, around 72,780 workers were officially employed in private household in 2007 (28,973 were men and 43,807 were women, LABORSTA). Other relevant data on wages and working conditions are not available. Women are under-represented in the workforce, but most female foreign labourers are domestic workers (Freedom House 2010b). Under a decree the sponsor must provide adequate accommodation and medical facilities to the workers (ibid.). Despite the progress in Qatar's regulatory amendments, employers often restrict the free movement of women domestic workers (ibid.). Migrant Rights reports about a Filipino woman being raped by her employer; according to Nepalese embassy in Qatar, 40 Nepalese died in traffic accident, 23 in work-related accident, 14 from drowning, nine committed suicide; a total 175 Nepalese died in 2010 in Qatar (Migrant Rights 2010h, 2010i).

For **Iran**, the number of 19,000 domestic workers (0.1 percent of total workforce) is given in the 2008 ILO Bureau of Statistics database. Among them 5,000 were men and 14,000 were women. Women domestic workers shared 0.4 percent of total women workforce in Iran. There is no data available for the wages of domestic workers. The data for **Iraq** are rather similar to the ones for Iran: 9,700 persons (6,200 men and 3,500 women) were employed as domestic workers in 2008 (LABORSTA). Women domestic workers shared 0.2 percent of total women workforce in Iraq. Wage data for Iraq is not available.

The ILO Bureau of Statistics database lists 46,200 workers (4,000 men and 42,200 women) in private households in **Israel** in 2008. 1.7 percent of the total workforce and 3.3 percent of the total women workforce were domestic workers (LABORSTA 2008). A significant number (12,000) of foreign workers come from Nepal and work as care givers in households (Migrant Rights 2010j). Mundlak and Shamir (2008) estimate that migrant domestic workers receive € 450 to 550 monthly including benefits (insurance, meals and housing etc). Other wage data indicate that Nepalese care givers in Israel earn US\$ 700 to 900 (€ 523-673) per month (Migrant Rights 2010j). As in most countries, migrant workers' advocates denounce cases of ill-treatment of domestic workers as well as a political and legal context that does not sufficiently protect migrants (Migrant Rights 2010k, 2010l).

Lebanon's CEDAW report accounts for 89,794 migrant domestic workers in 2005; 96 percent of all persons in the sector are women and in total 109,440 work permits were granted for migrant workers (referred to in UNIFEM n.d., p. 99). The main countries of origin are Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Ethiopia (ibid.). An ILO-study found that Filipino labourers face different abuses: accusation of stealing, confinement, food withheld, overwork, pay withheld (22 percent), physical, sexual (17 percent) and verbal abuses (17 percent) (Jureidini 2002). Human Rights Watch reports on exploitation and abuse by employers including

excessive work hours, non-payment, and restrictions on their liberty (HRW 2010, p. 533). Although, in 2003 the Ministry of Labour signed Order No. 5 that regulates recruitment agencies (UNIFEM n.d., p. 101) and in January 2009, the same ministry introduced new standard employment contracts, enforcement is lacking (Human Rights Watch 2010, p. 533). Certain legal regulations – such as that abused and run away domestic workers are subject to detention and deportation, because the validity of the visa is tied to the employer – facilitate continued abuse and vulnerability of the workers (UNIFEM n.d., p. 102).

Around 100,000 persons were working as domestic workers in **Syria** in 2009. Their monthly wage ranges from US\$ 100 to 200 (€ 75-150) (UNIFEM n.d.). The human rights situation in Syria is deteriorated (Human Rights Watch 2010, p. 555). Apart from significant numbers of Palestinian (0.5 million) and Iraqi (1.5 million.) workers, mainly Asian migrants work as domestic workers in Syria (Katta & Hussein 2010, p. 598). Foreign workers do not have the right of association; they are excluded from Syrian Labour laws and subject to bad working condition and abuses (ibid., p. 597). In most Arab countries, migrant workers are classified as ‘migrant’ under the Foreign Ministry, but not under the Ministry of Labour (ibid., p. 598). Syrian Labour Law (no. 24) of 2000 covers the minimum wage for the workers, including domestic workers, but working conditions are mostly regulated by their contracts at the workplace (ibid., p. 598).

Yemen is the poorest country in the Arab peninsula and a mostly labour sending country. The only data available stems from 1999 when officially 5,618 persons (3,371 men and 2,247 women) were working in private households (LABORSTA 1999). De Regt (2006, p. 6) points to the problem that most domestic workers are undocumented and therefore invisible in statistics. They originate from Ethiopia, Somalia, Indonesia, Philippines, India and Sri Lanka (ibid. 2006, p. 10). According to Yemen’s Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, only large families with sick and handicapped member are allowed to employ women domestic workers (ibid., p. 12). Wages for domestic workers vary from US\$ 20 to 250 (€ 15-187) per month depending on the city where they work, the sending country, the type of contract and their residence status (ibid.).

South Asia

In **Bangladesh**, about 2 to 3 million domestic workers are employed in private households, among them 80 percent women and many of them rural to urban migrants (The Daily Star 2009). Further, referring to NGO reports, Akter (2006, pp. 3-22) adds two million children who are involved in domestic work. Domestic work in Bangladesh is not covered under labour law. The Domestic Workers Rights Network (DWRN) in association with the ILO is working on the right of

domestic workers in Bangladesh (The Daily Star 2009). No wage data on domestic work is available for Bangladesh and Bangladesh does not offer minimum wage protection for domestic workers (ILO 2010, p. 40).

There are many different figures for the number of domestic workers in **India**. The total number varies from 1.5 million to 20 million domestic workers depending on the data source. According to Gothoskar (2005, p. 30), 1,248,473 domestic workers or 1.48 percent of the total workforce, are employed in India. The National Domestic Workers' Movement in India has organized two million domestic workers and children. Also the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is actively working on the organization of women workers in the informal economy including domestic workers (IDWN 2010). Domestic workers face potentially many problems: extreme insecurity, sexual harassment and vulnerability, physical and verbal abuse, very low and cuts in wages, heavy and increasing workloads, long working hours with no holidays and occupational health problems among many others (Gothoskar 2005, p. 35). Domestic workers in India are not included in many different purviews of the labour laws and child domestic workers are also excluded from the Child Labour Act 1986 of India (ibid., p. 37). There are estimations on full and part time employment among domestic workers: 20 percent (90,000) are full time and 80 percent (500,000) are part time workers (Devos 2010). There is no reliable wage information for domestic workers. One reason is that India does not include domestic workers in the minimum wage protection (ILO 2010, p. 40).

LABORSTA does not mention any data for the employment of domestic workers in **Sri Lanka**. Though, many Sri Lankan nationals are working as migrants in the Middle East. Some scattered information on Sri Lanka is available, for instance that women domestic workers are covered by the maternity leave legislations in their country (ILO 2010, p. 64). In **Pakistan**, estimations range up to 8.5 million domestic workers (GN-LEAR 2010). Other data on Pakistan is not available in the dataset. Despite the absence of statistical data, it is evident that the domestic working sector is the largest employment sector in Pakistan (Shahid 2007, p. 1). The most influential daily newspaper in Pakistan, Dawn, says domestic working sector in Pakistan has little scholarly and media attention (DAWN.COM 2010). This claim is true at least when we see there is hardly found any statistics on Pakistan's domestic workers. Pakistan does not cover domestic workers under minimum wage legislation (ILO 2010a, p. 40).

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Bahri Gültekin

East Asia and South East Asia

One characteristic of domestic workers (DWs) in Asia is that a significant part of them migrates to another country for work. China is the exception where a majority of DWs are migrating internally from rural to urban areas (ILO Office for China and Mongolia 2009, p. 1). The Hong Kong-based Asian Migrant Centre (AMC) estimates that over four million persons work as migrant DWs in Asia (GN-LEAR 2010). In East Asia, the major countries of origin of DWs are the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam. It is not uncommon that DWs are being exploited and abused at their work place. Some employers keep the passports and visa of migrant DWs. In the event of problems, the DWs become trapped in the households (AFP 2007). Common for some countries in East Asia is the contradictory class mobility of educated women. Filipino women may experience upward and downward mobility at the same time: their financial status rises through labour emigration, but their social status – as a DW in comparison to their previous work such as a teacher – sinks (Parreñas 2001, p. 150).

Country	DWs Wages (estimates)	General Minimum Wage (MW)
Cambodia	€ 7.50-10/month	€ 40/month
Hong Kong	€ 340/month	MW set (2010) but no amount
Indonesia	> € 43/month	€ 43-90/month
Malaysia	€ 93-140/month	No set MW
Philippines	€ 310/month	€ 6.4/day
Singapore	€ 155-270/month	No set MW
South Korea	€ 1.18/hour	€ 2.60/hour
Thailand	€ 24-72/month	€ 3-5/day

Table 1. DWs wages and set minimum wages in Euro (estimates).

Source: US Department of State (2009). Minimum Wages.

East Asia

The highest amount of DWs can be found in the largest country of East Asia: **China**. Out of a population of 1.4 billion, 20 million workers are employed as domestic workers, 90 percent of them are female (ILO Office for China and Mongolia 2009, p. 1). These workers are often not well educated and migrate from the rural to urban areas (ibid.). According to Cindy Fan, an important as-

pect of migration in China are social networks: Fellow villagers inform others in the village on how to find a job in the urban areas; in the cities there are also domestic work agencies that charge matching fees from the employee and the employer (2004, p. 296). China has almost no foreign DWs. The situation in **Taiwan** is the other way round: out of 170,000 to 200,000 DWs in total, 120,000 are legally employed as migrant domestic workers (Lan 2002, pp. 171-172). They come as contract workers mainly from the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia. In **Hong Kong** about 230,000 migrant DW are employed (Kim 2010, p. 52). DWs earn around HK\$ 3.400 per month (around € 340) (GN-LEAR 2010). A new minimum wage law has been set, but the amount has yet to be determined. A committee appointed by the government will recommend the hourly wage (Ng 2010). On the role of the Hong Kong administration opposing views are reported: Kim states that it is “one of the few destination countries where migrant domestic workers enjoy full and equal statutory labor rights and benefits as local workers” (Kim 2010, p. 52). Current policy is that all DWs and employers enter into a standard employment contract that includes the wage, provision of free food and accommodation, medical treatment and return passage (Hong Kong, Immigration Department 2010). In case of problems, DWs can refer to counseling and conciliation services, call a telephone hotline and seek legal redress (Kim 2010, p. 52). On the other hand, Hong Kong is often considered discriminatory because of the highly flexible contracts of DWs that require them for example to leave the country within two weeks when the work contract has expired, unless the DW can immediately find another employer (Hong Kong, Immigration Department 2010). DWs are also being excluded from applying for permanent residency (ibid.).

In **South Korea** (total population: 48.9 million) about 150,000 DWs are employed (LABORSTA 2008, National Statistics Agency quoted in Kim 2010, p. 12). The large majority are women, around 5,000 are men (LABORSTA, IMF 2010). However, migrant domestic workers are to a large extent omitted or hidden from the data; local NGOs estimate that the number of undocumented migrant DWs – mainly Filipina and Chinese – amounts to two up to three times the number of registered DWs (Weekly Dong-A, 25.04.2006, No. 532, quoted in Kim 2010, pp. 8, 12). Only ethnic Koreans (mainly Korean-Chinese) are entitled to officially take up employment as DWs; their live-in employment is facilitated through recruitment agencies within the framework of the Visit Employment System (Kim 2010, pp. 12, 14, 49ff.). Unlike in other countries, 90 percent of all DWs are over the age of 40 (40-49 years: 29 percent, 50-59 years: 33 percent; over 60 years: 34 percent, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family 2005, quoted in Kim 2010, p. 12). The comparatively high age of Korean DWs can be explained by the fact that domestic work seems to be the only occupation for older and low-

skilled women to take up after having been housewives, working in other services (cleaning, restaurant) and in factories (Kim 2010, p. 12). As in many countries, DWs in South Korea used to be (until the 1970s) teenage girls and young women migrating from rural to urban areas and living in the households of the employers. Employing married women on a part-time basis (*pachulbu*) became common especially since the 1980s (ibid., p. 13). Today, most of the national DWs still work part-time in more than one household (ibid.). DWs are not included into the definition of ‘worker’ in the Labour Standards Act (ibid., pp. 34-36). Around 75 percent are not signing an employment contract (ibid., p. 39).

In **Japan**, DWs are not covered by the Labour Standards Act because employing DWs or relatives does not count as a business under the Act (ibid., p. 55). Kim (2010) states the difficulty of finding statistical data of DWs in Japan. Unlike other countries where the employment relation is between the DW and the private employer, in Japan there are companies that provide part-time domestic work services, which are covered by the Labor Standards Act. In Japan, there is no visa category for foreign DWs. Still, there are exceptions for diplomats who are allowed to employ or to bring DWs from abroad. It is rumored that even though it is illegal, around 3,000 foreign DWs are employed by expatriates and foreign government officials. Not much is known about working conditions of DWs. There are reports about difficult working conditions (such as long working hours, isolation, employers being authoritarian, no guaranteed minimum wage) and a common problem is that foreign DWs are not covered by social security provisions and health insurance (ibid.).

Country	Total	Men	Women	% of total employment	Female DWs as % of female employment
Malaysia (2008)	253.000	29.400	223.600	2.4	5.9
Philippines (2008)	600.000	262.000	1.467.000	5.1	11
Thailand (2008)	196.100	21.300	174.800	0.5	1
Vietnam (2004)	241.100	97.400	143.700	0.6	0.7

Table 2. Persons employed by private households in selected countries.

Source: LABORSTA.

In **Mongolia**, in 2008 around 11.800 DWs were employed, half of them men (LABORSTA). There is no data on the DWs’ wages in Mongolia, but the minimum wage is set at 108,000 Mongolian tögrög per month (around € 73) for public and private sectors.

In **Nepal** (total population: 30 million), around 150,000 DWs are employed (Population Reference Bureau 2010). Seventy percent of Nepal’s DWs are under

the age of 18. According to the National Child Labour Survey undertaken in 1997, child labour is a big issue in Nepal. Around two million children out of the total approximately six million children between that age of five and 14 are economically active. Another factor may be the civil wars in Nepal: Parents sent their children away from rural areas to protect them according to the ILO-IPEC Subregional Information System on Child Labour (2009).

South East Asia

On the number of DWs employed in **Sri Lanka**, no reliable information is available. However, Sri Lanka is well-known as a country from which women emigrate and work as DWs abroad: which total more than one million. Around 100,000 of these DWs work in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (Gamburd 2009). Sri Lankan DWs abroad make up 15 percent of the Sri Lankan total workforce. The remittances – 15 billion Euros per year in – sent back home are a major contributor to the economy. The DWs overseas financially support around 20 percent of the total Sri Lankan population (4 million out of 19.5 million total population) (Frantz 2008, p. 609; Gamburd 2009, p. 61f.).

After the growth of **Thailand's** economy, women who were assigned to household work were taking up full-time employment outside of their homes, thus increasing the demand for DWs. The Thai labour law does not cover domestic work because it has been deemed as informal work. As of 2010, no systematic collection on the number of Thai DWs exists (Boontinand 2010, p. 5). In 2009, 129,267 foreign DWs had been registered, 100,000 of these DWs are migrant workers from Burma (Punpuing et al. 2005, p. 2). Their salaries range from 1,000 to 3,000 baht monthly (€ 24-72), which is 50 percent less than the minimum wage in Thailand (Thailand Board of Investment 2010). Because of high poverty in Burma and military conflicts, women leave their families and drop out of school to work, despite poor wages, as DWs in Thailand (Panam et al. 2004).

LABORSTA accounts for 14,525 DWs in **Cambodia** in 2008. They work for an average wage of 40-60,000 riel per month (€ 7.50-10); only the garment sector has a minimum wage of around € 40 a month (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor 2009).

Even though **Vietnam** mostly “exports” DWs, in particular to Malaysia and Taiwan, 241,100 DWs are still employed in private households domestically; a relatively high number of 100,000 are male DWs. According to Angsuthanasombat (n.d., p. 2-3), female migrants are vulnerable to risks of labor export, such as exploitation or sexual harassment. In 2006, a sudden increase in “exported” male DWs has been recognized (ibid., p. 9). This increase of male migrant domestic workers might be explained by the assumption that men are less vulnerable. Sin-

ce Vietnam is new to the inter-Asian migrant labour industry, they had not set up systems to protect its citizens from exploitation and abuse (AFP 2007).

Perhaps the most prominent country of origin of migrant DWs is the **Philippines**. Unlike Vietnam, the Philippine government has set up an elaborate labor emigration apparatus: To protect DWs from abuse and exploitation abroad, they are required to sign contracts that keep certain standards and to participate in pre-departure trainings. Despite these measures, the exploitation and abuse is widespread and the government seems to prioritize the revenue of remittances sent by migrants over real protection (Rodriguez 2008). Although the Philippines is a major source for DWs for other countries, the ILO estimates that 1,729,000 DWs are employed in Filipino private households (LABORSTA 2008), which constitutes 5.1 percent of the total workforce. Many DWs who work abroad leave their own families and elderly behind who need to be taken care of. They usually pass this task over to other family members or hire low-income DWs for their own families in the home country. Besides this, it is common among upper-middle class and upper class households to employ household workers. These factors could explain the high number of national DWs (UNFPA 2006). Filipino DWs earn around € 310 per month (GN-LEAR 2010); the minimum wage is set differently in various places in the Philippines (DOLE 2011).

Coming to the biggest country in the region, **Indonesia** (total population: 238 million) has around six million DWs working abroad (GN-LEAR 2010) and 2.6 million DWs working nationally (not including Aceh, Maluku and North Maluku, 2003 data from ILO-IPEC, quoted in Nuryati 2010, p. 9). GN-LEAR estimates up to four million DWs working domestically (2010). About a third of them are child and youth domestic workers between the age of 12 and 15 (Nuriyati 2010, pp. 4-11). The actual percentage of child DWs depends on the province. The province of Bengkulu in Sumatra is reported to have the highest fraction with 68.7 percent (ibid., p. 10). DW working in the urban centers have migrated internally, coming from poor, rural areas. Eighty percent of DWs work full time and stay at the employer's house, only 20 percent work part time (ibid., p. 8; Milasari 2010). The general minimum wage varies from 500,000 to 1,100,000 rupiah per month (ca. € 43-90) depending on the area in Indonesia. However, 72 percent of the domestic workers interviewed in a survey conducted by Rumpun Gema Perempuan in 2008 earned less than 300,000 rupiah (€ 24.90) a month (Milasari 2010). Labour law interpretations exclude domestic workers (Nuryati 2010, p. 11f.), but there are national laws that might be applicable for DWs' protection. In addition, DWs and DW advocates – such as the 2004 founded JALA PRT, the National Advocacy Network of Domestic Workers – also push for regulations on the provincial as well as on the city and district level to protect DWs (ibid., p. 13f.).

In **Malaysia**, 250,000 DWs originate from Indonesia – 90 percent of all DWs (Human Rights Watch 2004). They work for 400 to 600 ringgit (€ 93-140) a month (UCAN 2010; Committee for Asian Women 2009, p. 3). The government of Malaysia is often accused by NGOs of being compliant to modern slavery, especially to abuse and exploitation of Indonesian migrant DWs. The high vulnerability of migrant DWs, the lack of legislation and local policies supporting the employer make DWs seem more like property instead of human beings (Women's Aid Organisation 2002).

Harsh working conditions and no protection of migrant DWs are also a characteristic of the sector in **Singapore**. 170,000 DWs are being employed, 160,000 of which are foreign DWs mostly from the Philippines (Gee 2010). The percentage of the DWs out of the total workforce of 3.1 million is around 6.3 percent (ibid.). The estimated wage for DWs differs: John Gee (2010) reckons a monthly starting wage of US\$ 300-350 (€ 232-270), whereas a report provides a lower estimate of US\$ 200-230 (€ 155-178) (GN-LEAR 2010). According to the Human Rights Solidarity Singapore report (2001), the DWs are not protected by the Employment Act and the employer can cancel their contracts at any time without prior notice. Due to a labour contract system, almost no DWs work informally in Singapore. Working permits are granted under strict conditions: Employers have to pay a deposit of S\$ 5,000 (€ 2,885, Ministry of Manpower 2011) and if the foreign DW breaks any of the given rules, such as “not to get pregnant” or “not to get married”, the employer has to repatriate the DW or s/he will lose the deposit. The deposit system used to be intended to protect the DW, but in effect it leads to the opposite (Human Rights Solidarity Singapore 2001).

Conclusion

A majority of DWs in Asia are female and many are migrants. The lack of protection through laws in the home and host countries makes it easier for employers and recruitment agencies to abuse and exploit DWs. Employers can easily fire and send back the migrant DWs, often supported by local policies. Many countries in East Asia also do not have clear minimum wages, so the pay seems very arbitrary and depends on the employer. Further research is needed on DWs in countries such as North Korea or Japan. From the information gathered, it seems that the Philippines undertake the strongest efforts to protect their DWs abroad, but in reality, these programs and instituted ‘labour export’ programs along with laws still do not stop the exploitation of DWs. As visible from table 1, there is a large gap between DWs wages and the minimum wage in East Asia. Some set minimum wages are low or even non-existent. The wages for DWs vary enormously and more data is needed to get a more robust overview.

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Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

Domestic work (DW) is an important part of the labour economy, CIS countries not being an exception. However, due to the fact that the majority of domestic workers are not registered and because of the common hardships in monitoring the labour market, statistical information on the domestic work sector of the aggregate employment in the CIS countries is very scarce.

In **Russia**, LABORSTA accounts for 43,000 persons (LABORSTA 2008) being employed by households in 2008 (total population: 142 million, total number of employed persons: 70.6 million). Of these 43,000 DWs, 21 percent are male and 79 percent are female (ibid). Other sources referring to data from the *Federal Migration Service* (FMS) count up to 4,000,000 foreigners working for private individuals in Russia (RIA Novosti 2010). Most of these migrants work unauthorized and originate from CIS countries. Given the extreme spread of existing data, data on DW in Russia in general should be treated with caution. An argument in favour of the rather high number is presented by Pachenkov: After the collapse of Soviet Union, the demand for domestic workers increased in Russia, partly due to erosion of child care services provided by the state and also due to increasing labour standards (Pachenkov 2010, p. 4). However, it is not always immigrant women who perform DW. Childcare is often provided by elderly (female) family members, i.e. grandmothers. Their activities are neither registered nor remunerated, thus they do not fall into the scope of this statistical overview of *paid* domestic work. In terms of labour migration from CIS countries to Russia, labour migrants from Belarus, Ukraine and ethnic Russians from Moldova are considered to have higher chances of landing a household job position than other CIS labor migrants (Pachenkov, 2010, p. 6). According to UNIFEM CIS, a share of women migrants occupying domestic work niche is as high as 80 percent, that is to say that 80 percent of all female migrants work as DWs (UNIFEM CIS 2009).

The ILO database provides no data on domestic work for **Ukraine**. As for the countries' own employment statistics, domestic work is not listed as a separate sector. The informal sector is equally gender-segmented as the formal sector: while women tend to work on a regular and part-time basis in private households

(caring, cleaning, cooking), men work unsteady, but full-time in sectors such as construction and repair (Williams & Round 2008). What is noteworthy is that large numbers of Ukrainian women emigrate to engage in care work and domestic work. Important destinations are Poland (where Ukrainians constitute the largest migration group), Italy and Austria (ibid., p. 145). Between 1994 and 2001, one out of ten households “sent” a household member abroad for work (Kindler 2008, p. 145).

Employment statistics on **Belarus** offered by LABORSTA are outdated, latest indicators dating back to 2002. These indicators are not inclusive of domestic work statistics.

A total of 24,400 people are reported to have been employed by households in **Kazakhstan** in 2008, making up less than one percent of overall employed population (LABORSTA 2008). Female domestic workers account for 73 percent of domestic workers (ibid.).

In 2008 of 2,184,300 totally employed people in **Kyrgyzstan**, 15,400 were registered as domestic workers (LABORSTA 2008). This makes up for less than one percent of the total employment figure. There is no data as to the male-female ratio of domestic workers. It is a known fact that a lot of Kyrgyz people migrate in hopes of finding a job in CIS. However, the problem of a lack of a statistical overview remains.

In **Tajikistan** 3,400 people of 2,452,600 overall employed persons accounted for the domestic work sector (LABORSTA 2004). According to these official figures, more men than women are employed in the sector. In absolute terms, 2,400 of them are men and 1,000 are women, making up 70 and 30 percent respectively (ibid). The male dominance can either be explained by an undercounting of DW in general and in particular of women, by the fact that household work is oftentimes performed by female family members or by comparable factors – higher status of male DW, restrictions in women’s employment – such as in some of the East African countries.

There is no information available for **Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan**. According to ILO, in **Georgia** a total of 11,200 people were employed by households, making up less than one percent of totally employed population (LABORSTA 2007). These domestic workers’ labour force was composed of 1,400 male and 9,800 female workers (ibid). A total employment of 1,188,500 was reported for **Armenia** in 2007, of which 4,200 (500 men, 3,700 women) are households employees (LABORSTA 2007).

In **Moldova** 4,500 workers were employed by households in 2008, 600 male and 3,900 female workers (LABORTSA 2008). Given the total employment of 1,251,000, this makes up for less than 1 percent of total employment (ibid).

From the legal perspective domestic workers are extremely vulnerable in all CIS countries, because there are very few legal regulations in that area, especially if workers are undocumented migrants. Russia, Moldova and Kazakhstan are the only three countries covering domestic workers in the legal provisions on minimum wage (ILO 2010, p. 40). In May 2010, the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed amendments to a law in Russia that legalizes the status of certain labour migrants, among them up to four million DW (RIA Novosti 2010). From 2011 onwards, migrants coming from former Soviet Republics to Russia to work for private individuals as nannies, carers or housekeepers can enter on a visa-free basis and can receive a special work permit or patent (RIA Novosti 2010, Lenta.ru). The permit is valid for a period between one and three months and may be prolonged for up to one year; after that period a further extension is possible (ibid.).

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Europe

In Europe, domestic work is not only a significant sector of work, but it is also an important part of the shadow economy. Some sources report an estimate of 70 percent to 80 percent of undeclared, irregular jobs in the domestic work sector in Europe (Mather 2005, p. 11). In particular, Western Europe is a receiving region of domestic workers, but Poland, for instance, is also a destination for migrants employed in domestic work. This field of work also offers employment to irregular migrants.

This chapter gives an overview of available data on domestic workers in Europe divided into regional groupings: Western Europe, the Baltic countries, the Balkan countries, Cyprus, and Turkey, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Nordic countries. For some countries, namely Monaco, San Marino, Estonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Romania, Sweden, and Iceland, data is not available.

Western Europe

In particular, many domestic workers are employed in Western Europe. Large numbers are reported for countries such as Spain, Portugal, Italy, and France. ILO data for **Spain** indicates that 752,600 people were employed by private households in 2008 (LABORSTA).¹ Artiles cites data from the Spanish National Institute of Statistics, which calculates 682,000 domestic workers for 2005 (2006). A minimum of 90 percent of domestic workers are female (Artiles 2006; Galotti 2009, p. 4). Most of them have at least a secondary school education and are married (Artiles 2006). Overall, 8.2 percent of female employment and 3.7 percent of total employment takes place in private households (LABORSTA 2008). For migrants, this field of work is especially important: 52.2 percent of women and 22.3 percent of men employed as domestic workers are immigrants (Artiles 2006). From those persons registered for social security, 57,289 (35%) are

¹ The ILO Department of Statistics, LABORSTA, publishes data on employment in private households. The year in the citation is the year for which the data was retrieved. Data on employees from statistics on total employment has been used if not mentioned otherwise.

migrants (Albarracín 2002). Altogether, 49.6 percent of domestic workers are immigrants (Artiles 2006). Most of the migrants in domestic work in Spain come from South America (especially Ecuador and Colombia), but Romanian immigrants also make up a significant share (14.5 percent) of domestic workers in Spain (ibid.). The Spanish trade union CCOO estimates that 80,000 women migrants are employed with correct documentation and another 25,000 without as domestic workers (ICFTU 2002, p. 1) – a rather low estimate given the previously mentioned data. Other statistics indicate that 30 percent of irregular women migrants (i.e. around 15,700) work in domestic services (Miguélez 2005). In total, 85 percent of the domestic work is estimated to be informal according to Fernando de León Columbo, Head of the Labor Department of the Municipal Authority in Vilafranca del Penedes (Mather 2005, p. 19). However, other authors believe the proportion of informal employment in the sector to be much lower, about ten percent, because the legalization of immigrant workers in 2005 has decreased the level of irregular employment (Artiles 2006). Compared to most countries, domestic work is a well-researched topic in Spain. Therefore, more information is available: six percent of domestic workers live on the premises. 24 percent do not live on the premises, but work for only one employer, whereas around 70 percent work by the hour for more than one employer (Albarracín 2002). Wages for domestic workers living outside of the workplace are between € 4 and € 8 (ibid.). Live-in domestic workers earn from € 360 to € 540, but up to 45 percent are deducted for board (ibid.) and 54 percent make less than € 300 in a month (Miguélez 2005). In Spain, irregular work in domestic services is mostly part-time work for women. 30 percent of irregular female domestic workers work less than 10 hours per week and 32 percent between 11 and 20 hours per week (ibid.).

In **Portugal**, in 2008, according to the ILO, 175,500 persons worked in private households. For 2009, the National Statistics Institute calculates 149,800 domestic workers (Alves 2010). Most of the domestic workers are female, though data differs: LABORSTA counted 2,000 men in 2008 and the National Statistics Institute 700 in 2009. Employment in private households makes up 3.4 percent of the total workforce and 7.2 percent of the female workforce (LABORSTA 2008), pointing to the importance of this work for women. The minimum wage in this field of work is € 475 (Alves 2010).

Numbers for domestic workers in **Italy** vary widely, but it can be said that a significant number of persons are working in that field. The statistics of the ILO accounted for 419,000 employees of private households in 2008 (LABORSTA) and the National Institute for Social Security (INPS) calculated 460,000 in 2006, but the Statistical Institute (ISTAT) believes more than one million people could be working as domestic workers (Galotti 2009, p. 4). Similar estimations come from

Mather (2005, p. 38) and the Filcams-CGIL trade union (Smet 2000, p. 16) who also refer to one million domestic workers. Eurofound has estimated up to two million jobs (2007). Regarding the proportion of women and men in the sector, Scrinzi points out that around ten percent of declared domestic workers are men (2008, p. 31), which is a bit lower than the ILO data with 49,000 or respectively 11.7 percent (LABORSTAT 2008). Of the 460,000 domestic workers calculated by the INPS 87.5 percent are female (Galotti 2009, p. 4). Unlike for example in Germany, most domestic workers work full-time and live in the employer's household (D'Alconzo et al. 2009, p. 11). Employment in private households accounts for four percent of female employment and 1.8 percent of total employment (LABORSTAT, 2008). Similar to many other European countries, domestic workers in Italy are often immigrants. Estimates range between 46 percent and 90 percent, depending on the definition of immigrant. Mather mentions 90 percent of domestic workers are immigrants (2005, p. 38). INPS calculates 73 percent foreign domestic workers in 2006 (Galotti 2009, p. 4), Galetto 80 percent non-nationals (2007). Filcams-CGIL refers to 480,000 migrant domestic workers out of 1 million domestic workers total (Smet 2000, p. 16) and Scrinzi cites the ISTAT (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica) with 500,000 documented foreign domestic workers employed (2008, p. 31). Kontos et al. estimate that 600,000 irregular migrants work in domestic and care work (Kontos et al. 2009, p. 44). Taking a look at the importance of informal work in domestic employment, estimations indicate that 75 percent work undeclared as domestic workers (Mather 2005, p. 11). Similarly, Scrinzi determines irregular work in the field to be 77 percent (2008, p. 31). For one hour of work, domestic workers earn between € 5.50 and € 7. Live-in domestic workers receive around € 1,200 (ibid.). There is a minimum wage for domestic workers of less than € 550 per month (ibid.).

Whereas official data by the ILO calculates 607,900 persons employed in private households in 2008 in **France** (LABORSTA), the French Household Cheque System (CESU) alone counts 1.6 million persons employed by private households in 2006 (Pape 2010, p. 5) and since undocumented migrant workers are not included, the actual number of domestic workers is probably higher (Mather 2005, p. 30). About 82% of the employees of private households are women (LABORSTA 2008). Based on official ILO data, 2.3 percent of the total and 4.1 of the female work force are working in private households (ibid.). In France, a collective bargaining agreement exists for domestic workers (Mather 2005, p. 17). The median pay of a domestic worker is estimated to be € 457 per month (Dussuet in Mather 2005, p. 12).

In the predominantly English-speaking countries of Western Europe, domestic work is also an issue. In **Ireland**, data by the ILO comes to 10,100 persons working in private households, 600 of them men (LABORSTA 2008). 0.5 percent

of the total and one percent of the female workforce is employed by private households (LABORSTA 2008). Most foreign domestic workers come from the Philippines, Brazil, China, Ukraine, and India; the majority work without permit (Smyth 2010). Only 251 work permits were issued to migrants for domestic work (ibid.). Interviewees in a study earned mostly € 600 to € 1,000 per month (Migrant Rights Centre Ireland 2004, p. 14). Since 2007, a code of practice is in place for domestic work in order to protect persons employed in private households (Smyth 2010).

For the **UK**, the ILO calculates 136,000 persons, 53,000 of them men, employed in private households (LABORSTA 2008). Estimations regarding migrant domestic workers range between 14,300 in 2000 (Kofman et al. 2005, p. 14) and 100,000 persons (Kontos et al. 2009). In 2009, 14,898 migrant domestic workers have been granted entry to the UK according to the Home Office in the UK (Brown 2010, personal communication). The most important sending country is the Philippines: more than one third of newly applying domestic workers came from this country (ibid.). In the formal labor market, only a small number of domestic workers live on the property of the employer (Sellers n.d.). For many persons, especially for women, domestic work is a second job (around 10,000 of the ones formally employed) (ibid.). Of female employment, 0.6 percent work in private households and 0.5 percent of the total workforce do (LABORSTA 2008). After continuously having a visa as a domestic worker for five years, a domestic worker can apply for settlement in the UK (Brown 2010, personal communication). Since 1998, migrant domestic workers can change employers, making them less dependent on their employer (Anti-Slavery n.d.). Migrants in care work in private homes earn £ 100-500 (€ 118-589) per week (Gordolan & Lalani 2009, p. 34). On average, registered domestic workers earn £ 8.70 per hour (€ 10.30) (Sellers n.d.).

Data exists also for the Benelux countries. Like in many other countries, estimates of domestic workers vary widely in **Belgium**. LABORSTA counts 42,100 persons employed in private households in 2008. According to Galotti only 20,000 domestic workers are employed in Belgium (2009, p. 4), but Bert Vannetelbosch from the CSC Food and Services trade union refers to 100,000 domestic workers (cited in Mather 2005, p. 21). The union ACV-CSC also refers to 100,000 domestic workers, but these are only the ones employed through the voucher system (Pape 2010, p. 10). About 50% are organized in unions, because through the Belgian system every employee has the right to a € 60 check, which can be only used with the unions and is only paid to union members (ibid.). The vast majority, 89 percent (Galotti 2009, p. 4) to 91 percent (LABORSTA 2008), of domestic workers are women. 1.9 percent of the female workforce is employed in private household and 0.9 percent of all employees (LABORSTA 2008). According

to ORCA, 1,069 persons were registered as domestic workers in 2008 (2010, p. 8). Through a voucher system households purchase tax-deductible vouchers that they use to pay the domestic worker. The domestic worker receives money for the voucher from the agency she or he is working for (Galotti 2009, p. 7).

Official data and estimates also vary widely for the **Netherlands**. The ILO calculates 6,000 employees in private households (LABORSTA 2008), but CNV estimates that 1.2 million households employ a domestic worker, mostly informally (2005, p. 8), pointing to a much higher number of domestic workers. A study by the FNV trade union federation from 2005 shows that domestic workers earn € 8.90 per hour on average and the average working time was 11.5 hours per week for 2.3 employers (IRENE & IUF 2008, p. 78).

For **Luxemburg**, ILO statistics indicate 4,600 persons working in private households (LABORSTA 2006). 97.1 percent of employees in household activities are female (Broeck 2008). Employment in private households made up 1.4 percent of the total workforce in 2006 (LABORSTA).

Data for the rest of Western Europe have to be considered with caution due to the small size of the countries. LABORSTA counts 1,334 persons employed in private households in **Andorra** (2007) and 100 persons for **Malta** (2008).

Baltic Countries

Not much data is available for the Baltic countries yet. According to the ILO, in **Latvia**, 4,400 persons were working in private households in 2008, i.e. 0.4 percent of the total workforce (LABORSTA). In **Lithuania** in 2008, 3,700 persons were employed by private households, 2,700 of them were women, 0.2 percent of the total and 0.4 percent of the female employment (LABORSTA 2008).

Balkan Countries, Cyprus, and Turkey

Like in the Baltic countries, in the former Yugoslavian countries, numbers of domestic workers are comparatively low, but it has to be acknowledged that women from these countries do work as domestic workers and elderly care-takers abroad. In **Croatia**, 4,200 persons were working in private households in 2006, 3,700 of them women and 0.3 of the total and 0.5 of the female workforce (LABORSTA 2006). Data for **Slovenia** shows that in 2007 around 1,000 people were employed by private households, most of them female (LABORSTA). In **Serbia**, 6,600 persons are working in private households, 5,000 of them women (LABORSTA 2008). In **Montenegro**, LABORSTA data shows 100 people employed by private households (2003). Numbers of domestic workers are low, 700 persons, in **Macedonia** according to official statistics (LABORSTA 2008).

Available data on domestic work in **Bulgaria** is a decade old. 1,591 persons, 908 of them women, were employed in 2001 in private households (LABORSTA). According to this data, employment in the domestic work sector is not as significant as in many Western and Southern European countries. Only 0.1 percent of total employment takes place in private households (LABORSTA 2001). However, with progression of the transformation from a socialist economy, it can be expected that domestic work has increased over the past nine years.

On the Balkan Peninsula, **Greece** shows an especially significant domestic service sector. In 2007, 68,500 persons were employed in private households, 4,500 of them men (LABORSTA 2007). According to a representative survey, 57.2 percent of immigrant women work as cleaners and domestic workers (Lampousaki 2008). Many domestic workers are migrants from Albania. Estimates regarding the number of immigrants – female and male – in domestic work talk about 200,000 people (Kontos, et al. 2009, p. 44), pointing to the likelihood of the official data from LABORSTA underestimating the actual number of domestic workers in the country. As part of the total workforce, employees of private households officially make up 1.5 percent, as part of the female workforce 3.6 percent (LABORSTA 2007).

The domestic sector in **Cyprus** has been a topic of several publications. According to the ILO, 16,900 people work in private households, of which 16,700 are female (LABORSTA 2008). Another publication arrives at an estimation of 12,300 for 2003 (Stavrou 2007). Roughly half of all registered migrant workers are women in the domestic work category (Mackay et al. 2009, p. 12). Stavrou calculates that 99.5 percent of domestic workers are migrants (2007). Of her (low) estimation of 12,300 domestic workers 12,236 are foreigners. Christodoulou and Skarpari arrive at a number twice as high for migrant domestic workers, i.e. 25,000 (2007). An article by Kontos et al. also varies significantly from Stavrou's and the official data, referring to 35,000 migrant domestic and care workers in formal employment alone (2009, p. 44). Overall, one can say that in Cyprus, domestic work plays a significant part in the workforce as 4.4 percent of the total workforce and 9.8 percent of the female workforce are employed in private households, according to official data (LABORSTA 2008). Wages for domestic workers are set by the government at € 262 in 2008, a third of a living wage (Mackay et al. 2009, p. 12).

For 2004, LABORSTA finds that 182,000 persons are employed in private households in **Turkey**. 62,000 are men and 120,000 are women. As part of the total workforce, 0.8 percent, of the female workforce 2.1 percent work in private households (LABORSTA 2004). In Turkey, migrant domestic workers earn \$ 400-650 (€ 308-500) per month, whereas Turkish domestic workers earn between \$ 700 (€ 539) and \$ 800 (€ 616) per month (Akalin 2007, p. 224).

Central and Eastern Europe

In **Austria**, 11,800 persons were employed by private households in 2008 (LABORSTA). Based on the data collection of the ILO, Galotti concludes that 95 percent (11,200) of employees in domestic work are female (2009, p. 4). The number of registered domestic workers comes to 5,000, but up to 300,000 undeclared domestic workers are employed in Austria according to the ETUC-report on domestic work in Europe (Anderson cited in Mather 2005, p. 11). The Hamburg Institute of International Economics believes that estimates between 35,000 and 90,000 irregular migrants work in private households (2009a, p. 4). Another article cites the number of people working informally in the domestic sector at 60,000 to 170,000 people (McKay et al. 2009 pp. 36-37). Wages can be € 800 for an irregular live-in domestic worker from Romania, as one newspaper article points out (Meyer-Timpe 2007).

In **Germany**, LABORSTA data indicates 216,000 people working in private households in 2008. 15,000 of these employees are male (LABORSTA 2008). In the data of the Socioeconomic Panel, 40,000 people were registered as domestic workers eligible to social security (Cyrus 2009, p. 59; Schupp 2002). However, these numbers are very low. The Hamburg Institute of International Economics estimates 50,000 to 145,000 irregular migrants working in care; however, this number is not limited to private households and excludes migrants working in cleaning jobs in private households (2009c). As numbers of undocumented migrants are only estimates, some speak of up to two million migrant domestic workers employed undeclared (Kontos et al. 2009, p. 44). Since this work happens in a private environment outside of controls, undocumented migrants can earn money in this field with a lower likelihood of being discovered. Germany has a migration program for domestic helpers from several Central and Eastern European countries; however, in 2009, only 1,571 domestic helpers came via this program (Raabe 2010, personal communication), because irregular work pays better and detection is uncommon (Cyrus 2008, p. 187). Around four million German households at least occasionally employ a domestic worker – mostly part-time (Cyrus 2009, p. 59; Schupp 2002). One newspaper article reports salaries of € 700 to € 1,400 for irregular live-in domestic workers in Germany (Meyer-Timpe 2007). In interviews, undocumented migrant domestic workers and advocates mention hourly wages of € 8-10 (field work 2010), but some undocumented migrant domestic workers agree to lower wages than that.

Estimations for domestic workers in **Switzerland** vary between 100,000 according to Ismail Türker, Secretary of the Interprofessional Workers' Union SIT (Mather 2005, p. 36) and 250,000 (Jaun & Alleva 2007, p. 1; Pape 2010, p. 11). Official ILO data accounts for 61,000 persons employed in private

households, with 52,000 (85 percent) of them being female (LABORSTA 2008). Other data says 90 percent of them are female and also 90 percent of them are migrants (Mather 2005, p. 36). The Swiss Federal Office of Statistics registered 53,000 domestic workers in 2005, with 84 percent of them being female (Jaun & Alleva 2007, p. 1). 38 percent of the work volume in domestic services is done by foreigners (ibid.). Of the estimated 100,000 undocumented migrants, half are estimated to work in domestic services, according to Türker from the trade union *Syndicat interprofessionnel des travailleuses et travailleurs* (SIT) (ibid., p. 2). About 80 percent of domestic workers work only part-time; therefore the average working time per week is only 13.8 hours (ibid., p. 1). 1.4 percent of the workforce is employed in domestic services and 2.6 percent of the female workforce (LABORSTA 2008).

In the former socialist countries in Central Europe, numbers of domestic workers are rather low compared to Western European countries. Official statistics of the ILO count around 3,000 persons employed by private households in the **Czech Republic**, around 2,000 of them women (LABORSTA 2008). However, these official numbers are questionable. The Hamburg Institute of International Economics estimates that 12 percent of irregular migrants in the Czech Republic work in the domestic sector (2009b). With an estimated number of around 195,000 undocumented migrants in the Czech Republic, it would mean that about 23,400 undocumented migrant domestic workers are employed in the Czech Republic (ibid.). Furthermore in the Czech Republic, locals are employed as domestic workers. Despite the low employment of domestic workers compared to Western European countries, the numbers of domestic workers can be assumed significantly higher than the LABORSTA data. In **Slovakia**, according to official data 5,700 persons worked in private households, 200 of them were male (LABORSTA 2008). For **Poland**, the ILO calculates about 16,000 employees in private households, of which almost all are female (LABORSTA 2007). The Polish Central Statistical Office, on the other hand, accounts for 136,000 domestic and related helpers, cleaners, and launderers in the private sector in 2008 (2009). As the Polish Central Statistical Office in the category includes cleaners and launderers in the private sector, but does not include housekeeping and personal care workers, this explains the large difference in numbers. As part of the total workforce, 0.1 percent, and 0.2 for the female workforce works in private households (LABORSTA 2007). Again, more Polish women work in domestic work and private care work, but outside Poland. Like in other central European countries, the number of domestic workers in **Hungary** seems low. Official statistics account for 1,900 persons employed in private households, of which 1,500 are women (LABORSTA 2008). Time-use studies indicate that Hungarian and Slovenian women spend the most time on reproductive work

compared to other European countries, around four hours per day (Aliaga & Winqvist 2003).

Nordic Countries

In **Norway**, 2,000 people are working in private households, according to ILO statistics (LABORSTA 2008). They make up 0.1 percent of the total workforce (LABORSTA 2008); however, due to rounding problems, with this low number, the data is not very accurate. In **Finland**, around 8,000 people are employed by private households (LABORSTA 2008). Unlike for most other countries, the official data shows a more equal share of employment in domestic work for women and men. In 2008, about 4,000 women and 4,000 men worked in private households (LABORSTA 2008). This sector employs 0.3 percent of the total workforce and 0.3 percent of the female workforce (LABORSTA 2008). In 2007, LABORSTA calculates 3,900 persons working in private households in **Denmark**. 300 of them are men (LABORSTA 2007).

Conclusion

Generally, one can say that in Europe, domestic work is an important part of the economy especially in Western and Southern Europe. In countries such as Spain, Portugal, France, Cyprus, and Greece, but also in some other countries, domestic work gives jobs to a significant part of the workforce. In the post-Communist transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe, official numbers for domestic workers are much lower. Some of them as for instance Poland are also sending countries of domestic workers to Western countries. As a gendered sector of the economy, women especially find work in this field. In many countries mentioned in this chapter at least 80 percent of employees in private households are female. Also domestic services offer jobs for migrants including undocumented migrants, as work is often not registered with authorities. Unfortunately, while in some countries like Spain and Italy thorough research has been conducted on the topic, data on domestic work in some other countries is rare and could not always be found.

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Latin America and the Caribbean

In Latin America, domestic work is historically common and until today employment numbers remain stable. Ethnic and gender discriminations show a similar historical continuity (Chaney & Garcia Castro, 1989). In countries with significant indigenous or Black populations, women and girls from these communities are often employed as domestic workers. However, the global economic crisis has hit the sector and domestic workers tend to be forced to accept worse conditions (Bautista, 2010).

Data on household workers exist for most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The most important sources are national labour force surveys that report to the ILO LABORSTA and data from the regional CEPAL (2010). Definitions of domestic workers may differ from country to country, which makes comparisons sometimes difficult. As with all data on employment that to a significant extent takes place in the informal sector and in a sector where (undocumented) migrant domestic workers are employed, caution is necessary.

In Latin America and the Caribbean about 15 million women domestic workers are employed by private households (Blofield 2009, p. 158). Domestic workers constitute on average 5.5% of the urban workforce, and 12.2% of the female urban workforce (Tokman 2010, p. 3; CEPAL 2010). In **Mexico**, LABORSTA calculates that 1.85 million persons are employed in private households (2008, for more data on Mexico see the chapter on North America). In **Nicaragua**, 117,400 persons were working in private households (LABORSTA 2006), while in **Panama** there were 77,400 persons (LABORSTA 2008). In the urban areas of **Peru**, 423,400 domestic workers were registered (LABORSTA 2008), and in **Brazil**, more than 6.7 million (LABORSTA 2007) persons. In **Chile**, 310,351 workers (2002), and in **Uruguay** 128,200 were working in private households in 2007 (LABORSTA). Data on the **Dominican Republic**, for example, illustrates problems of data coherence (Cuervo Franco 2010, p. 25): LABORSTA reports 194,600 persons working in private households (2007). The National Survey of Household Income and Expenses 2007 (ENIGH) counts a total of 213,722 domestic workers (5.6% of the total population employed; 206,355 women and 7,367 men). Researchers working with data from the National Labour Force

Survey 2007, that is undertaken by the Central Bank, account for 230,667 female domestic workers (5.7% of the total employed population) (Duarte et al. 2010, p. 10, quoted in Cuervo Franco 2010, p. 25). In total there is a mismatch of around 35,750 workers between the different sources, which is common when data from different sources are compared.

While there is a sharp increase of domestic services provided in for example European countries, the situation in Latin America is characterized by only moderate increases. In **Mexico**, for example 1.7 million domestic workers were employed in 1998 (LABORSTA), ten years later it was 1.85 million. The increase in **Costa Rica** though is noticeable: in 1998 a total of 77,900 domestic workers were reported to LABORSTA, while ten years later 119,000.

Country	Total	Men	Women	% of total employment	Fem. DW as % of fem. employment
Brazil (2007)	6,731,000	418,000	6,313,000	7.4%	16.4%
Chile (2002)	310,351	28,683	281,668	6.1%	15.8%
Costa Rica (2008)	119,000	8,400	110,600	6%	15.2%
Mexico (2008)	1,851,800	151,200	1,700,600	4.2%	10.3%
Nicaragua (2006)	117,400	22,600	94,800	5.6%	12%
Panama (2008)	77,400	8,600	68,800	5.8%	13.8%
Peru (urban) (2008)	423,400	21,900	401,500	4.5%	9.3%
Uruguay (2007)	128,200	11,600	116,600	8.6%	18.5%

Table 1: Persons employed by private households in selected countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (source: LABORSTA, own compilation); for data of total and female employment for all countries see CEPAL 2010, cuadro 18, 18.2.

As in other parts of the world, child labour in domestic services is prevalent in Latin America, though there is a tendency towards domestic workers being older and better educated than decades ago. The ILO reports 175,000 children under 18 to be employed in domestic service in Central America; alone 38,000 children between the age of five and seven in **Guatemala** (UN 2010, para 22). The United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery notes that “poverty will make parents involuntary accomplices to the exploitation of their own children. In **Haiti** [...], parents from poor families will often send one or more of their children to stay with more affluent families, who may be relatives, family friends or complete strangers. In its idealized form, the practice should ensure that the host family takes care of the child and pays for its schooling, while expecting the child in return to take up a modest set of household chores. In reality, the majority of the estimated 150,000–500,000 so-called *restavèk* children in Haiti are exploited in domestic servitude. [...] The practice is so associated

with abuse that the word *restavèk* (which literally means ‘to stay with’ in Haitian Creole) has become a pejorative term” (UN 2010, para 38) (see also the chapter on Africa for the related phenomenon of “fostering” and domestic work).

The domestic work sector is clearly dominated by women, to give examples: 96.4% of all domestic workers are women in **Bolivia** (LABORSTA 2007), 95% in the urban areas of **Peru** (LABORSTA 2008), 93% in **Costa Rica** (LABORSTA 2008) and 91% in **Chile** are women (LABORSTA 2001).

The ethnic and racial stratification is another characteristic of the sector. Many domestic workers are migrants in Latin America, international as well as rural to urban migrants. In a number of countries, the sector has changed its composition: less and less “local” urban women work in the sector, but also the internal migrants tend to become less, while international migrants, to a high extent from bordering countries, tend to replace them. In a survey of nearly 2,250 domestic workers in Latin America in 2004, 77% were internal or international migrants (Goldsmith 2007, para 30). In **Costa Rica** 47% of women immigrants are employed in domestic services, in **Argentina** and **Chile** 39% and 37% respectively, in the **Dominican Republic** 20%; 86-96% of these migrants are coming from neighbouring countries (Tokman 2010, p. 20). The ethnic segregation of the labour market is significant, in **Chile** 70% of all registered Peruvian women work as domestic workers; Peruvians make up 80% of all immigrant domestic workers (Staab & Maher 2006, p. 92). Studies show that due to segmentation there is almost no competition between local and migrant domestic workers. Most Peruvian domestic workers in Chile working full-time as live-ins, are young and educated, while the majority of Chilean women have a rural, low-income background, are older and work as live-outs (Tokman 2010, p. 21). For example, 60% of the Peruvian domestic workers in Chile and only 18% of the Chilean domestic workers are live-ins (ibid.). However, despite the ethnic segmentation of the labour market and the existing demand for migrant domestic workers in many Latin American countries, migrants are confronted with widespread racism.

A lot of women also emigrate from Mexico, Central and Latin America to, for example, the U.S. or Europe where they find work as domestic workers. In Spain, around 84% of all **Ecuadorian** women immigrants with a work permit worked in 1999 as domestic workers (13,000 Ecuadorians were legally registered at that time) (Gratton 2007, p. 589). In the new millennium the female dominated influx increased significantly. For example, in 2004 an estimated 470,000 Ecuadorians, circa 275,000 of them undocumented, were living in Spain. “They became domestics almost as if this occupation were pre-ordained. Those aged 15 to 64 represented about one per cent of the population of that age [...]. But they represented five per cent of all domestic servants, five times the expected share”

(Gratton 2007, p. 589). Though the example of Ecuadorians in Spain may appear extreme, domestic work has indeed become a “niche” for women immigrants in Europe; in particular if they lack legal work and/or residence permits (see the chapter on Europe).

There is a similarity between most Latin American countries in so far as labour law treats domestic workers differently from other workers (Blofield 2009, p. 163): The minimum wage for domestic workers is often set lower than the general minimum wage (the extreme case is **Paraguay** with 40%). The legally allowed maximum working hours are longer than for other workers in almost all Latin American countries (exceptions: **Bolivia** and partially **Peru** since 2003, urban domestic workers in **Uruguay** since 2007). **Mexico** and **Brazil** (and **Peru** and **Bolivia** until 2003) allow a 16-hour workday; in **Mexico**, this contradicts the constitutionally granted eight-hour workday for all citizens. A 15-hour workday is allowed in the **Dominican Republic** and **Venezuela**; **Guatemala** and **Honduras** allow 14-hour workdays. Further, household workers often do not have (equal) rights to maternity leave or freedom of association. In **Venezuela**, **Paraguay**, **Honduras** and **Guatemala** the employment codes “even maintain what could be considered feudal clauses, e.g. mandating respect of the employee toward the employer but not the other way around” (Blofield 2009, p. 159).

Despite existing discrimination, in a number of Latin American countries reforms of employment legislation for domestic workers have been initiated or finalised. Blofield identifies two strategies to formalise employment rights for domestic workers: the first is to promote an issue-specific bill on domestic workers, the second is to advocate for special clauses on domestic work to be added to the general labour legislation or the constitution (2009, p. 160). Six Latin American governments have reformed domestic work laws since the major wave of democratization. Three countries granted equal rights to domestic workers (**Bolivia**, **Colombia** and **Uruguay**), while the other three (**Brazil**, **Chile** and **Peru**) installed partial reforms. Bolivia, Peru and Uruguay introduced issue-specific bills, in Brazil and Chile the reforms were part of broader constitutional or labour reforms. In **Mexico**, **Costa Rica** and **Guatemala**, bills have been proposed but have so far not resulted in new regulations (Blofield 2009, p. 161, for an overview on the reforms see pp. 164-5). A legal challenge might also be that historically domestic work was often not considered a labour issue, but as in the **Dominican Republic**, a family issue that was covered by family law, which explains the long-lasting exclusion from labour law (Cuervo Franco 2010, p. 29).

The legal insecurity of domestic workers is reflected in their oftentimes poor working conditions with low social protection. A large part of the sector belongs to the informal sector; even if there are existing legal provisions. In **Brazil**, for

example, only 25% of the domestic workers have a social security pass *Carteira de Trabalho assinada* issued by the Ministry of Labour, 75% therefore fall out of formal labour relations (Creuza & Teodoro 2007). In 2004 the Latin American Confederation of Domestic Workers CONLACTRAHO surveyed 2,242 domestic workers in **Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Guatemala, México, Peru** and the **Dominican Republic** (quoted in Goldsmith 2007, para 28). Regarding the hours of work, 69.1% work more than 48 hours per week and 16.4% did not have a weekly day off. In the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Brazil, the majority earned less than the minimum wage. In the Latin American average, 19% of persons employed as domestic workers contributed to a pension fund, while on average 47% of all urban wage workers and 24.5% of all wage workers in informal enterprises contribute to a pension fund (Tokman 2010, p. 12). According to ILO data from 2006, only 10.3% of the domestic workers had health protection and/or a provision for a pension; the coverage was highest in **Chile** with 40.7%, followed by **Costa Rica** with 17.2%; it was lowest in **El Salvador** (8%), **Mexico** (1.5%), **Peru** (1.9%), **Paraguay** (2.5%) and **Ecuador** (2.5%) (Goldsmith 2007, p. 28). Women domestic workers tend to have a significant lower coverage rate than their male counterparts, and migrants again a lower coverage rate than “local” women domestic workers (Tokman 2010, pp. 13, 21). The sector is therefore characterized by rigid though informal hierarchies according to gender, national origin, ethnic and racial ascription.

Wages paid are usually low both in absolute terms as well as compared to other occupations, even to other low productivity activities and in other parts of the informal sector. Incomes earned in domestic services in Latin America reach 40 percent of the level of incomes earned as an average by the working population (Tokman 2010, p. 4). In **Mexico**, the minimum wage is set at US\$ 5 (€ 3.85) per day, but it does not include domestic workers; the average wages paid for a live-out domestic worker are US\$ 6-8 (€ 4.60-6) per day, the live-in worker earns around 200 US\$ per month (Bautista 2010). CONLACTRAHO though calculated that a living wage would account for US\$ 25 (€ 19) per day for a live-out domestic worker and US\$ 600 (€ 462.50) for a live-in worker (Bautista 2010). Further, there is a gender pay gap: The average income of women working in urban domestic services in Latin America is 73% of that paid to men in the same occupation (Tokman 2010, p. 5). From live-in domestic workers, a part of their wage may be deduced for food and accommodation. The Labour Code in the **Dominican Republic** (Art. 260) allows for 50% of the salary to be deduced (Cuervo Franco 2010, p. 30). Employers do not necessarily comply with assurances made in oral or written contracts and the legal regulations, yet the authorities do not enforce them and many domestic workers are not aware of the rights they have (Bautista 2010). One strategy of domestic workers’ unions and self-organizations,

such as in Mexico City, is to get involved in the placement of domestic workers and inform employers about their obligations and the domestic workers about their rights prior to negotiating with the employers (Bautista 2010).

The legislative reforms that are taking place in many Latin American countries, even if in many cases slow and not granting equal rights at the end, can be regarded as one successful result of comparatively strong unionization and organizing processes among domestic workers. In many Latin American countries, domestic workers have started to unionize almost ninety years ago, for example in **Chile** since 1926 and in **Brazil** since 1936. Regionally, CONLACTRAHO, the *Confederación Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Trabajadoras del Hogar*, binds together the activities, exchanges experiences and lobbies nationally, regionally as well as globally for the rights of domestic workers.

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North America

Domestic work is an important occupation for millions of people in North America, the vast majority of them women. It is furthermore a significant reason for international and internal labour migration. This entails movements from the Philippines, the Caribbean and Europe to Canada and the United States, but also migration within North America, especially the migration of Mexican women to the USA and internal labour migration inside Mexico. In Canada and the United States, the domestic work sector is dominated by documented as well as undocumented migrants (Labadie-Jackson 2008, pp. 7, 12). As characteristics and regulations differ significantly between the three North American countries, Canada, the USA and Mexico are examined individually in this chapter.

Canada

In 2008, 72,800 people were officially employed as domestic workers (DWs) in private households (LABORSTA 2008). Whereas women amount to 97 percent of DWs, they make up only 0.9 percent of the total female working population (LABORSTA 2008). Within the past four decades, the Canadian demand for DWs has substantially increased, which coincides with an increasing number of Canadian women entering the workforce (Cohen 2000, p. 76). As the demand could not be met by national DWs, the employment of migrant DWs has gained importance as a private “solution”. It has been criticised that the need for DWs results from the lack of public elderly- and childcare (Arat-Koc 1989, p. 33; Cohen 2000).

In the 1950s and 1960s, Canada actively recruited migrant DWs and controlled immigration under the *Domestic Worker Program*. Under this programme single women between 18 and 40 years, in good health condition, good education and without dependants were allowed into Canada as landed immigrants, if they would spent at least one year as DWs. This, however, turned out to be ineffective in order to satisfy the growing demand for DWs: Because of the bad working conditions they found, most of the women left their jobs once they had fulfilled their one-year contracts (Arat-Koc 1989, pp. 45-49). To solve this deficiency the Canadian government introduced temporary work permits in 1968, allowing migrant DWs to work only for a specific period of time, for a specific employer

and in a specific occupation. Since then, DWs come as guest workers, not as immigrants, and neither have any rights to stay in Canada in case they do not fulfil their labour contract, nor to receive social security benefits or unemployment insurance and pension benefits (Hodge 2006, p. 62).

Currently, immigration to Canada takes place under the 2001 *Immigration and Protection Act*. Its central component is a points-based selection system, which bases the selection of immigrants on educational and occupational qualifications and investment potential, thus putting so-called “unskilled” workers at significant disadvantage (Elrick 2007, p. 2; Goldring et al. 2007, p. 9). This is why DWs enter the country mainly through complementary *Temporary Foreign Worker Programs* (Elrick 2007, p. 8). Since 1981, over 5,000 women per year have gone to Canada under the *Foreign Domestic Movement Program* (FDMP) and the 1992 *Live-in Caregiver Program* (LCP). In 1992, 68 percent of the DWs who came were from the Philippines (Pratt 1997, p. 161; Hodge 2006, p. 61). Until today, the majority of participants in the LCP have been women from the Philippines and the Caribbean (Goldring et al. 2007, p. 21). Unfortunately, there is limited coherent statistical data on DWs in Canada. Figures for 1995 stated that 11,000 households were employing foreign live-in DWs (Cohen 2000, p. 76). Around one third of all non-permanent residents who worked as DWs in Canada in 2006 were employed as live-in caregivers¹ (Statistics Canada 2010). In 2009, around 6,200 foreign live-in DWs were officially residing in Canada (CIC 2010a). It is estimated that the actual number of foreign DWs is much higher, because some of them are so called “non-status” immigrants, who entered the country legally as visitors, but overstayed their visas and thus do not possess a valid residence and working permit (Goldring et al. 2007, p. 1).

Under the Live-in Caregiver Program, DWs are not only required to live in the households of their employers, but also need to have at least twelve years of education and six months of domestic training (Hodge 2006, p. 61; Cohen 2000, p. 76). DWs and employers have to sign a mandatory employment contract, which defines conditions of work regarding the DWs’ duties, their salary, hours of work, but also the employers’ legal responsibilities. They receive a work permit that has to be renewed every year and can be prolonged twice (CIC 2009a, p. 33). In case DWs leave their job because of bad working conditions or any other reason during the time they work under Live-in Caregiver Program, they lose their right to stay in Canada, unless they are granted a new work permit that enables them to be employed in another household (ibid.). DWs used to be able to apply for a

¹ This holds for 7 % of Canadian-born and new immigrants in the same occupation as well as for 5 % of established immigrants (Statistics Canada 2010). Wages primarily differ between workers with live-in/live-out status and to a much lesser extent between Canadian-born and foreign-born DWs. Wages of live-in workers are decisively lower than those of live-outs (ibid., chart 13).

landed immigrant status under the Canadian points-based system if they have worked full time as live-in caregivers for two out of three consecutive years. It is only after fulfilling these requirements that DWs have a right to family unification. During their stay under the Live-in Caregiver Program, DW face constraints on bringing their dependants to Canada (Hodge 2006, p. 62–63).

In April 2010, the Live-in Caregiver Program regulations were changed. The time within which live-in caregivers can complete the employment requirement was extended from three to four years. Furthermore, DWs can choose between 24 months and 3,900 hours of authorized full-time employment and do not need to undertake a second medical examination when applying for permanent residence (HRSDC 2010b; CIC 2010b). Besides, employers are now responsible for covering the caregiver's health and workplace safety insurance. It is prohibited to recoup these costs from the employees. This also holds for transportation costs for bringing caregivers into Canada as well as for any fees paid to recruitment agencies (HRSDC 2010a). The reform has been lauded as a major improvement for live-in DWs by the Canadian Immigration Centre (CIC 2010b). It can be perceived as an attempt by the Canadian government to impair the continued pressure from different Filipino-Canadian organisations and the Filipino community in Ontario and other parts of Canada, who have been struggling against the program for the last two decades (Kalayaan Centre 2009; Filipinenses 2010). The changes in 2010 have, however, been rejected by these organisations, as the major characteristics of the program – live-in requirement, temporary migration status and employer-bound working permit – have not been touched at all. The Filipino groups criticised the reforms as only serving to justify the continuation of the program (SIKLAB & Philippine Women Centre 2010).

Although the Live-in Caregiver Program is run by the Canadian government, general labour standards for domestic work are not regulated on the federal, but on the provincial level. This is why minimum working conditions vary between the Canadian provinces – consistent labour standards for DWs or a standard minimum wage are non-existent. Minimum wages per hour ranged from CAN\$ 5.55 (€ 4) in Nova Scotia and CAN\$ 8 (€ 6) in British Columbia in 2002/2003. Quebec with a minimum wage of CAN\$ 292 (€ 215) per week and a regular workweek of 49 hours (data for 2003) ranges in between, so does Alberta with its minimum wage of CAN\$ 1,124 (€ 830) per month (CIC 2009b, p. 25-26). For those provinces without a minimum wage, a wage rate to be paid by employers is set by *Human Resources Development Canada* (ibid.). There is no available data in how far these minimum wages are respected by employers of DWs.

Provinces differ even more with regard to overall labour standards for domestic workers (for further information see CIC 2009c). Quebec can be named here as a rather positive example, which, however, still possesses some unfavourable

regulations regarding DWs' rights. Quebec's *Act Respecting Labour Rights* (ARLR) entails the obligation for employers to provide decent living conditions to live-in caregivers and since 1997, it is prohibited for employers to require pay for accommodation and boarding from their live-in domestic workers (ARLR 2009, §50.0.1). Besides, employers of DWs are obliged to facilitate access to French courses outside regular working hours (CIC 2009b, p. 28). One of the biggest advances has been the withdrawal of the exclusion of DWs from general labour rights regulations. Today, Quebec's DWs² are included in these regulations, which also grant them the right to join trade unions. Furthermore, in case of unlawful dismissal, employers can be ordered to pay compensation equal to the wage and other benefits a DW would have received within a maximum of three months³ (CIC 2009b, p. 28). Like Quebec, Ontario started to cover DWs in an *Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act* in March 2010 (EPFNA 2010).

The situation is more severe in other Canadian provinces. In Alberta, DWs are not fully included in labour standards regulations; provisions regarding working hours and overtime pay do not apply to DWs. In the province of New Brunswick, DWs have absolutely no protection under provincial employment regulations, which makes the Live-in Caregiver Program mandatory working contract important. DWs who do not work under the Live-in Caregiver Program have no legal protection (CIC 2009b, pp. 24-25).

Besides these rather specific points, there are some issues that can be concluded in general: The particular requirement to live in employers' households and the constant risk of deportation due to the lack of a landed immigrant status puts DWs in an extremely vulnerable position (Hodge 2006, p. 63). Despite labour regulations that envisage a written labour contract, in which working standards and mutual obligations are stated, and the theoretical improvements that have been reached by the amendment of the Live-in Caregiver Program, live-in DWs are particularly prone to being abused or massively exploited by their employers. The Canadian government is sharply criticised for not ensuring sufficient protection to live-in caregivers and facilitating violence against women through the Live-in Caregiver Program by associations such as the National Alliance of Philippine Women in Canada (PWC 2009). Legal requirements, e.g. concerning private accommodation or paid working hours, are not always met and there are high barriers to reporting possible infringements. For instance, in order to complain to *Immigration Canada*, workers have to face an often

² With the exception, however, of employees "whose exclusive duty is to take care of or provide care to a child or to a sick, handicapped or aged person [...]" or whose "duty is performed on an occasional basis" (ARLR 2009, §3).

³ Still, collective bargaining cannot take place in practice, as this requires the certification by a majority of employees of the same employer (ILO 2010, p. 94).

unaffordable fee of \$ 100 (€ 75). Furthermore, the bureaucratic processes following such complaints can take up to two years. Finally, DWs often refrain from complaining, as they do not want to attract attention of the government which might jeopardise their future immigrant status (Stiell & England 1997, p. 349). Correspondingly, data on any kind of abuses of DWs is rare. In reaction to the problematic situation of female DWs, the *Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence against Women and Children* (METRAC) published a brochure containing basic information on DWs' rights and sanctuary places in order to support DWs against abuses (METRAC 2008).

The United States of America

Estimated numbers of DWs in the United States of America vary between 1.5 million (Ratner 2008) and 2.5 million (Shenker 2010, personal communication L. Heimeshoff). It is furthermore estimated that around 30 percent of the registered DWs are migrants (Human Rights Watch 2000). The actual percentage is likely to be even higher, given the significant amount of unauthorised work in this sector; domestic labour is often provided by immigrants residing in the U.S. without either living or working permit (Parrott 2007, p. 6). Approximately 23 percent of DWs employed in private households in the USA are supposedly unauthorized immigrants (data for 2008, Passal & Cohn 2009, p. 16). These figures also explain the broad range between the estimates of the overall number of DWs in the United States.

The majority of DWs in the U.S. are women of colour (NDWA 2010). Statistical data for New York states that around 99 percent of DWs are foreign-born, 95 percent are people of colour and 93 percent of all DWs are women (DWU/Data Center 2006, p. 2). As in many other countries, domestic work in the United States is a highly racialised and gendered work sector (NDWA 2010).

Domestic work is often the first job for (female) migrants who come to the United States (BCJ 2007, p. 61). Many of these workers remain in this sector for long periods, often staying with the same employer (DWU & DataCenter 2006, p. 2). This does not necessarily result from good handling of DWs by their employers or emotional bonding of care takers to their charges (Anderson 2000, p. 176), but can also partly be explained by the fact that many DWs either fear to lose their work visa⁴ or deportation⁵, if they report abuses by their employer (Bonato et. al. n.d., p. 12).

⁴ This holds for DWs working for diplomats (A-3 visa) or representatives of an international organisation (G-5 visa), as well as for temporary migrant DWs promising to remain in this specific field of work (B-1 visa - temporary visitor for business). DWs who are in the U.S. as temporary migrants face high burdens for complaints, as there is no special visa option automatically available in such cases. If they leave their jobs or get fired by their employers for

Like in Canada, domestic work has constantly gained importance over the last decades. It has been reported that the number of DWs in the U.S. has been rising since mid 20th century, when native-born white women increasingly started entering the productive workforce (Wilson & Wilson 2000, p. 1). This trend is still continuing currently, as middle-class and even working-class households recently started to employ DWs (BCJ 2007, p. 61; Ratner 2008). Domestic work is not only important because of its increasing quantity, but also because of the fundamental role for the U.S. economy as a whole, enabling employers to put their whole effort in the primary labour market. Despite this significant position, DWs have been largely ignored and DWs have remained excluded by almost all labour regulations and protections:

- The *National Labor Relations Act*, which grants U.S. employees the right to organise, specifically excludes DWs from its definition of “employee” (NLRA, Sec. 2., §152).
- *Civil Rights Laws* that prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, or national origin do not cover DWs, because their work places are too small (BCJ 2007, p. 63; DWU & DataCenter 2006, p. 3).
- DWs are excluded from the *Occupational Safety and Health Act* (OSHA, 3.6).
- The *Fair Labour Standards Act* that sets the minimum wage rate, maximum hours and overtime pay includes DWs since 1974. It does so, however, only if their work is performed on a “casual” basis and thus excludes babysitters or part-time caretakers for elderly (DWU/DataCenter 2006, p. 3).

Besides these legal cleavages, the precarious situation of DWs’ daily work life has been shown recently by various research (BCJ 2007; DWU & DataCenter 2006; Bonato et. al., n.d.). It has been reported that over 26 percent of DWs in New York earn wages below the poverty line (US\$ 5.16-8.97 (€ 3.85-6.71)) or even below minimum wage (US\$ 5.15 (€ 3.85)) and an additional 41 percent earns low wages (US\$ 8.98-13.46 (€ 6.72-10.07)), less than what has been considered to be a livable wage of more than US\$ 13.47 (€ 10.07) (DWU & DataCenter 2006, p. 2). Wages tend to be extremely different in one location. In New York they range from US\$ 1.43-40 (€ 1.07-29.91), while the median is US\$ 10 (€ 7.48) (ibid., p. 16). These differences arise from the lack of labour regulations and the nature of

reporting violations, the *Department for Homeland Security* (DHS) can decide on its discretion to grant these migrants a new residence and work permit. Even if, however, DHS allows the DWs to stay in the U.S., their work permit can expire. DWs employed by diplomats are furthermore precluded from remedies for abusive actions as their employers are protected by diplomatic impunity (Bonato et. al. n.d., p. 12).

⁵ This holds for the huge number of DWs working without legal permits once their undocumented status is exposed by their employers or discovered. Consequently, they do not have any possibility to complain about sexual harassment or economic abuse (ibid.).

how domestic work is organised – wages and working conditions are negotiated from household to household (BCJ 2007, p. 61).

Half of the DWs who participated in a survey by *Domestic Workers United*, state that they often work overtime, i.e. more than 50-60 hours per week; two thirds reported that they sometimes or never receive any overtime pay (DWU & DataCenter 2006, p. 2). Another major problem in the daily work of DWs is that they are being asked to fulfil various jobs, even though they were hired only for one (BCJ 2007, p. 62). This includes additional work for someone other than the actual employer. Around one third of these DWs experienced verbal or physical abuse by their employers. Finally, a big problem is the lack of health insurance and work place benefits. Less than a half of DWs in NY receive paid sick days and only one out of ten receives health insurance from their employers (DWU & DataCenter 2006, p. 2).

Despite this rather severe situation for DWs in the United States, several examples show that organising of DWs has been successful in recent years. In California, DWs have been organised by a strategy of the trade union confederation *AFL-CIO* that did not only aim to build on the cooperation of DWs themselves, but also on communication with employers. Whereas initially there had been fear that such an organisation could lead to a decrease in working hours, employers were finally convinced that better working conditions for DWs will finally result in a better quality of aid provided (ILO 2010, p. 97; see also Delp & Quan 2002). Another example for successful organisation of DWs is CASA de Maryland that was founded in 1985, by DWs in Montgomery who established a working place cooperative that informs Latina women in Spanish of their rights and has been successful in requiring employers of DWs to grant decent working conditions (ILO 2010, p. 98).

After seven years of organisation of DWs in New York and their cooperation with unions, employers and other organisations, the state Senate passed a bill of rights for DWs in June 2010 that requires employers to pay livable wages including overtime pay, to offer paid holidays, vacation and sick days as well as to give an advance termination notice and paid severance (Hobden 2010). Furthermore, DWs have to be granted at least one day off per week (Ruiz 2010; see also DWU & DataCenter 2007, p. 3). One month later, the New York State Legislature passed the *Domestic Workers Bill of Rights*, thus turning NY into the first US-state that officially recognises DWs' rights (DWU 2010).

Mexico

In Mexico, around 1.85 million DWs are employed in private households (LABORSTA 2008), more than 90 percent of which are women. This amounts to around 4.5 percent of the overall and 10 percent of the female economically

active population (ILO 2010, p. 6). In contrast to the United States and Canada, foreign-born DWs depict a minority of all DWs in Mexico. Instead, Mexico is a major country of emigration to the United States (Fitzgerald 2008, p. 2), where many female Mexican migrants take up jobs as DWs. Inside Mexico, internal migration is one of the primary characteristic for domestic work: About 80 percent of the DWs in Mexico are indigenous women from the poorest rural parts of Mexico⁶, who migrate to the larger cities in order to improve their opportunities to economically support their families (Fox 2005). These indigenous women often do not speak Spanish as their first language. Many of them start working at a very young age, i.e. between 12 and 15 years. On average, they receive only three years of schooling – despite the legal school-leaving age of sixteen –, thus suffering high rates of illiteracy (BBC Mundo 2006; Henkel 2010).

Despite the continuous huge share of indigenous DWs, there has been a development within the sector in recent years. Given high unemployment rates in times of crisis, young people, who finished their studies, as well as professional women between 50-60 years, increasingly started to take up jobs as DWs (Organización Editorial Mexicana 2009).

One of the biggest problems of DWs is that domestic work is not recognized as real work. Although DWs are explicitly integrated into the Mexican *Ley Federal del Trabajo* (Federal Labour Law, LFT) in Chapter XIII, this does not elaborately define labour rights of DWs, but leaves regulations rather underdetermined. Whereas the law prohibits any verbal or physical bad treatment of DWs (Art. 337 I), prescribes sufficient breaks to eat and drink (Art. 333) and a comfortable and clean room to sleep for live-in DWs (Art. 337 II), it neither regulates working hours, nor determines a minimal salary (Ley Federal del Trabajo, Art. 331-343). This is why an extensive reform of Chapter XIII has been demanded (Union Nacional de Trabajadores 2007), and is yet to be realised (Organización Editorial Mexicana 2009). The same holds for a minimum wage for DWs that has already been determined by the National Commission for Minimum Wages, but has not yet come into effect (ILO 2010, p. 46).

Still, even in those cases, where the Mexican law already makes provisions for DWs, these requirements are not always fulfilled (Fox 2002). This can be explained by the fact that many DWs as well as employers do not even know the legal provisions regulating domestic work. The majority of abuses are not reported, nor persecuted, even when they are reported (BBC Mundo 2006). The low importance of the existing legal regulations is also reflected by the fact that only 5 percent of the nearly 2 million DWs in Mexico possess a signed labour contract

⁶ This is even more striking with regards to the fact that the overall percentage of indigenous in the total population of Mexico is 11% (Fox 2005).

(ADITAL 2010). Correspondingly, unjustified dismissal (without severance pay) is a common problem (Iglesias 2010).

The Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Domestic Workers (*Confederación Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Trabajadoras del Hogar*, CONLACTRAHO)⁷ points out that the majority of DWs in Mexico suffer discrimination, economic exploitation and sexual abuses (CONLACTRAHO 2010; Pérez Ocaña 2002). This is supported by statistical data. 41 percent of all DWs receive less than the minimum salary⁸ (ibid.). It is estimated that a common monthly salary for live-in DWs does not exceed 1,000 pesos (€ 58) (Fox 2002), despite the fact that many of them work up to 14 or 15 hours a day, 6 days a week (Henkel 2010). It has been reported that young girls working as DWs sometimes do not receive more than 35 pesos (around € 2), for working more than 12 hours per day (Organización Editorial Mexicana 2009). Furthermore, data from the *Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación* (National Council to Prevent Discrimination) reveals that nearly 80 percent work without receiving any benefits and around 96 percent of DWs do not have any access to health care services (Rubí 2010). Since 1984 the Mexican social security law inhibits DWs affiliation in this obligatory regime (Pérez Ocaña 2002). Even though LFT defines some obligations for employers in case of illness – they are required to pay up to one month of salary and have to provide medical assistance (LFT, Art. 338) – existing regulations systematically discriminate DWs. Consequently, only 0.01 percent of these DWs receive social security benefits (ADITAL 2010). In case of illness or pregnancy, DWs rarely receive any assistance, because employers fail to pay health insurance or social security contributions. Many DWs are unable to retire, as they have no entitlement to pension benefits (Iglesias 2010).

Some years ago, DWs in Mexico started to organise, fighting not only to improve their legal situation in the future, but also to ensure better working conditions to DWs right away. In 2000, the *Centro de Apoyo y Capacitación para Empleadas del Hogar* (Centre for Assistance and Training of Domestic Worker, CACEH) was founded in Mexico City. Besides the organisation of workshops on workers' rights, CACEH serves as a placement agency for DWs offering a guaranteed minimum daily wage (Fox 2005).

⁷ Founded in 1988, CONLACTRAHO unites 30 organisations from 14 countries, including Mexico and Canada. It seeks to demonstrate the problematic situation of DWs and fight for better working and living conditions (Meier 2010). With reference to Mexico, CONLACTRAHO demands a separate labour law for DWs. Until today the legal initiatives did not succeed (Henkel 2010).

⁸ Since January 2010 the official minimum wage is around 55 Mexican pesos (SAT 2010) (€ 3.30). As DWs are excluded from the official labour law, this amount only serves as orientation.

Conclusion

Statistical data regarding DWs in North America has shown that with regards to the share of migrants, the extent and nature of existing labour laws and DWs' rights, there are prominent differences among Canada, the U.S. and Mexico.

In Canada, with its active importing policy of DWs and its encompassing requirements, domestic work is comparatively regulated. These regulations do not always benefit DWs, though. The LCP live-in requirement makes female DWs prone to exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, migrant DWs are systematically discriminated, face high burdens and enjoy only few entitlements compared to other, highly skilled migrants. Finally, federal regulations are restricted to foreign live-in DWs. Provincial labour regulations differ within Canada, with some rather positive examples and other provinces that restrict DWs' rights.

In contrast to this, in the U.S. nearly no regulations on domestic work exist. DWs are excluded from almost all labour regulations and protections on the federal level, including safety and health care provisions. In July 2010, however, the state of New York passed a *Domestic Workers Bill of Rights*. Another characteristic of domestic work in the U.S. is the high rate of unauthorised migrants employed in US-American households. This poses a particular problem for the compliance with DWs' rights, as any complaint about violations of labour or human rights by unauthorised migrant workers may lead to deportation of these workers. This makes a great number of people, who actively support the US economy through their work, particularly prone to economic and sexual abuse.

Mexico's labour market demands for DWs, is mostly satisfied by internal migration. More than 80 percent of DWs are indigenous women, who often start working at a very young age. They consequently leave school early. One of the biggest problems is the lack of access by a majority of workers to social benefits or health care services, which often prevents elderly workers from retiring.

It can be concluded that – despite huge differences – all three North American countries need to amend their legal provisions regarding DWs and improve protective measures in order to effectively ensure DWs' rights.

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Oceania

Australasia

Official census data from **Australia** (population: 22 million) reveals that 16,173 people were registered as domestic cleaners (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006). In 2008, ILO put the total number of people employed and paid to do domestic work in private households at 2,100 (LABORSTA). Overall the number of DWs is probably much higher, because domestic workers employed as carers or gardeners were not included, neither were informal workers (IDWN 2010). The majority of domestic cleaners employed in private households is female (13,614 persons) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006). Given the ILO data, 0.02 percent of the total workforce is employed in the domestic work sector (LABORSTA). Australia, like Britain, has a special category of visa for domestic workers employed by professionals or by diplomats. Therefore a lot of migrant Asian women are working as DWs (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2010). The wages paid to DWs in Australia were difficult to trace, but the Australian minimum wage is set at 544 Australian dollars per week (€ 376) (Work Barometer 2010).

New Zealand data shows the challenge of accurate statistical data: a total of 18,000-20,000 workers are categorised as home based care workers (Burns 2007 cited in Callister, Tortell & Williams 2009, p. 10), while the ILO accounts only for 2,200 persons employed in private households in 2008 (LABORSTA); those DWs that were actually paid for their services within private households are even less, 1,800 (LABORSTA). With respect to official registration of DWs, the 2006 census shows that there were 342 domestic housekeepers, 1,143 domestic cleaners and 2,702 nannies (Callister, Tortell & Williams 2009, p. 10). The different sources agree on the fact that the majority of DW are women. Out of a labour force of 1,867,179 the percentage of DWs employed in private households (total and paid) was 0.1 percent in 2008 and 0.2 percent for women (LABORSTA). The minimum wage is set at New Zealand Dollars 12.7 (€ 7.24) (Work Barometer 2009). However, there is a lack of data on wages actually paid. Out of all the registered DWs, the majority of the domestic housekeepers (67 percent), domestic cleaners (74 percent) and nannies (84 percent) were born in New Zealand (Callister,

Tortell & Williams 2009, p. 10) – migrants are therefore the minority. Nonetheless, it is likely that the increase in paid domestic workers in the near future will be also be met by migration from the neighbouring Melanesian countries and from Asia (ibid., pp. 36-39). Paid domestic work has been treated a private matter in New Zealand, with the law not interfering (Callister, Badkar & Williams 2009). New Zealand's position of not supporting a Convention for DWs at the International Labour Conference in 2010 is probably a result of New Zealand as not having any legislation that protects the human rights of domestic workers (Communicating Labour Rights, interview with Marilyn Waring, 2010).

Melanesia

Vanuatu has a population of 215,000 people, employing 1,500 women as domestic workers (Bowman 2009, p. 70). In **Papau New Guinea**, 15,523 people were DWs in 2000 (LABORSTA). Out of the total workforce, 0.7 percent, were employed in private households (LABORSTA). The minimum wage is Papau New Guinea Kina 22.96 (€ 6.70) per week (Papau New Guinea High Commission, 2001).

Microasia

Of all registered workers in the **Marshall Islands**, one employee is registered as a DW (Marshall Islands 2007). In **Palau** (19,409 inhabitants), an estimated one in five households employs a domestic helper (Nero, Murray & Burton, 2000, p. 326). Out of these DWs, around 600 were migrants (ibid., p. 339). Increasingly these foreign workers replace children and youth working as DW (ibid., p. 343).

Polynesia

In **Samoa** private households, around 2,877 people (or 5.7 percent of the total workforce) were employed as DWs in 2001 (LABORSTA). In **Tonga**, 1.8 percent of the total workforce (610 people; 260 men and 350 women) were employed as DWs within private households (Tonga Department of Statistics, 2003; LABORSTA). In more recent findings, the ILO puts the percentage of female DWs, as part of female workforce, at 2.5 percent (LABORSTA).

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Domestic work is one of the oldest and for many women the most important occupation. It is a global phenomenon and in many countries indispensable for all sectors of the economy to function. Domestic workers are employed for services that include cleaning, child-minding, gardening and taking care of elderly people in all kinds of private households. Nevertheless, data on domestic workers is scarce and often scattered over various publications and in national census data. In order to contribute to quantitative knowledge of the domestic work sector, this book provides statistics and context on the number of domestic workers worldwide. Sorted by regions, numbers of women and men employed in this sector and, where possible, percentages of domestic workers as part of the total work force in each country are presented. Systematic statistical data is needed in order to develop policies that ensure the protection of domestic workers worldwide and to include their rights into national labour laws.

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