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University of Turku



THE LAYERS OF INEQUALITY IN
PAID DOMESTIC LABOUR:
A GLOBAL STUDY ON DOMESTIC
WORKERS AND PRECARIOUS WORK

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines inequalities in paid domestic labour from a global comparative perspective. I approach the subject through three different layers that represent the factors identified in previous studies as shaping paid domestic labour and the position of domestic workers in the labour markets: 1) the structural layer that refers to the socio-demographic developments and structural mechanisms in the society, 2) the individual layer that includes the characteristics of persons working in domestic service and the occupation, and 3) the policy layer that comprises the political economy of paid domestic labour and the policies influencing the employment of domestic workers. The dissertation consists of three international peer reviewed articles that each tackles one of the layers from a comparative perspective. For the empirical analyses three types of data are used: international databases of macro-level indicators (World Bank, International Labour Organization), micro-level survey data (Luxembourg Income Study) and policy documents.

In recent years, paid domestic labour, that is, household work that is performed in private households has become a widely studied subject in social sciences particularly in research related to gender, care and migration. Currently, domestic service is promoted across countries not only as a way for upper and middle income households to reconcile with work and family life but also, as one of the growing sectors of employment that is supposed to provide job opportunities particularly for women, lower educated individuals and migrants.

The results of the first article, a quantitative comparison of 74 countries, show that higher income inequality within countries and higher proportion of migrants in a country are associated with higher prevalence of paid domestic labour. The five-country comparison of the second article demonstrates that precarious employment conditions (measured here by part-time employment, low wages, short job tenure, and unemployment experience) are more prevalent in paid domestic work compared to other industries. Furthermore, the results show that across welfare regimes, working in the paid domestic sector increases the risk of working in precarious employment settings. The results of the third article covering domestic employment policies in OECD countries show that policies related to domestic service may have a significant impact on the dynamics of the sector and the precariousness of workers' employment, and how welfare states across world regulate (or disregard regulations) the sector of domestic services reflects the position of domestic workers in these labour markets.

Thus, the three different layers – structural, individual, and policy – intersect in ways that contribute to maintaining the 'special' position of domestic workers across countries: the cultural undervaluation of domestic work, together with a strongly feminised workforce that consists predominantly of migrants, places domestic workers at greater risk of working under precarious employment conditions. Moreover, in many countries insufficient care provisions and general legitimisation of domestic workers' weaker employment conditions drive households to turn to private domestic and care services. The precarity of paid domestic labour derives partly from the multiple disadvantaged social categories of the persons working in the sector. Paradoxically, the reasons for the inequalities (gender, "race", class, cultural background or nationality) in domestic service are the same factors that account for their employment in the first place.

The issue of domestic workers' remuneration and employment conditions remains problematic, as it is directly linked to households' abilities to pay for these services. Particularly in countries where domestic workers are employed on a full-time basis and fill

gaps in public care provisions, this poses a real challenge if households do not receive support from the state. Thus, as paid domestic labour in the 21st century now seems to be living its new era through globalisation and as part of the neoliberal organisation of care, questions related to domestic workers' status and working conditions again become topical across the globe.

Key words: paid domestic labour, domestic workers, comparative research, precarious work, inequality, employment conditions

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tutkimuksessani tarkastelen palkattua kotitalouustyötä ja siihen kytkeytyvää eriarvoisuutta globaalista näkökulmasta. Tutkin tekijöitä, jotka vaikuttavat palkatun kotitaloustyön markkinoihin sekä alalla työskentelevien työntekijöiden asemaan. Analysoin näitä tekijöitä kolmen eri kategorian kautta, joita tässä tutkimuksessa kutsun kerrostumiksi: 1) rakenteiden kerrostuma viittaa sosiodemografisiin kehityssuuntiin ja yhteiskunnan mekanismeihin, 2) yksilöiden kerrostuma, eli kotitaloustyöhön ja alan työntekijöihin liittyvät ominaisuudet, sekä 3) politiikan kerrostuma, joka sisältää palkattuun kotitaloustyöhön kohdistetut poliittiset toimet. Väitöskirjani koostuu kolmesta kansainvälisestä vertaisarvioidusta artikkelista, joista jokainen käsittelee yhtä eriarvoisuuden kerrostumaa vertailevasta näkökulmasta. Tutkimuksessani hyödynnän kolmea erityyppistä aineistoa, joita ovat kansainvälisten tietovarantojen (Maailmanpankki, Kansainvälinen työjärjestö) makrotason indikaattorit, mikrotason survey-ainestot (Luxembourg Income Study) sekä poliittisen päätöksenteon tueksi laaditut asiakirjat ja raportit.

Kiinnostus palkattuun kotitaloustyöhön, eli kotitalouksissa suoritettavaan kotityöhön, on viime vuosina kasvanut merkittävästi sosiaalitieteen alan tutkijoiden keskuudessa etenkin sukupuolta, hoivatarpeita sekä maahanmuuttoa koskevassa tutkimuksessa. Kotitaloustyöntekijöitä on pidetty yhtenä ratkaisuna työn ja perheen yhteensovittamiseen varsinkin ylempi- ja keskiluokkaisissa perheissä. Palkatun kotitaloustyön sanotaan usein olevan yksi nopeimmin kasvavista toimialoista, jonka on tarkoitus luoda työpaikkoja ennen kaikkea naisille, matalasti koulutetuille ja maahanmuuttajille.

Väitöskirjani ensimmäisen artikkelin tulokset, jotka perustuvat 74 maan tilastolliseen vertailuun, osoittavat että korkeampi taloudellinen eriarvoisuus ja maahanmuuttajien korkeampi osuus väestöstä on yhteydessä kotitaloustyöntekijöiden suurempaan osuuteen työvoimasta. Toisen artikkelin viiden maan kvantitatiivinen vertailu vahvistaa, että työn prekaarius (työn osa-aikaisuus, matala palkka, työn kesto ja työttömyyden kokeminen) on yleisempää kotitaloustyöntekijöiden keskuudessa verrattuna muilla toimialoilla työskenteleviin. Tulosten mukaan kotitaloustyötä tekeillä on suurempi riski työskennellä prekaareissa työoloissa hyvinvointivaltio-regiimistä riippumatta. OECD-maiden palkatun kotitaloustyön politiikkaan keskittyvä kolmas artikkeli osoittaa, että poliittisella päätöksenteolla voi olla merkittävä vaikutus toimialan muotoutumiseen ja alalla työskentelevien työoloihin. Se, miten hyvinvointivaltiot säätelevät (tai eivät säätele) palkatun kotitaloustyön markkinoita, heijastuu myös kotitaloustyöntekijöiden asemaan työmarkkinoilla.

Eriarvoisuuden kerrostumat, rakenteellinen, yksilöön kohdistuva ja poliittinen, risteävät tavalla joka pitää kotitaloustyön ”erityisenä” alana kaikkialla maailmassa: kotityön kulttuurisesti vähäisempi arvostus yhdessä alan nais- ja maahanmuuttajavaltaisen työvoiman kanssa asettavat kotitaloustyöntekijät suurempaan riskiin työskennellä epävarmoissa työoloissa. Monissa maissa riittämätön hoivapalveluiden tarjonta ja kotitaloustyön heikomman aseman yleinen hyväksyntä kannustaa kotitalouksia kääntymään yksityisten kotitalous- ja hoivapalveluiden puoleen – mikä tarkoittaa usein epävirallisen työn teettämistä heikoilla työehdoilla. Kotitaloustyön prekaarius on kytköksissä moninaisesti eriarvoisessa asemassa oleviin sosiaalisiin kategorioihin, joita alalla työskentelevät edustavat. Paradoksaalisesti syyt henkilöiden eriarvoiselle

asemalle (sukupuoli, ”rotu”, luokka, kulttuurinen tausta tai kansallisuus) ovat usein samat kuin alun perin heidän palkkaamiselleen.

Kotitaloustyöntekijöiden palkkaan ja työehtoihin liittyvä keskustelu on haastavaa, sillä kyse on myös kotitalouksien kyvystä maksaa palveluista. Erityisesti maissa joissa kotitaloustyöntekijät työskentelevät kokopäiväisesti ja palkattu kotitaloustyö paikkaa hoivatarpeiden aukkoja, valtion tuen puuttuminen asettaa valtavia haasteita niin palveluita ostaville kotitalouksille kuin palveluita tarjoaville henkilöille. Kotitaloustyön ”uuden tulemisen” aikakautena, kun ala on vahvasti kytköksissä globalisaatioon ja myös tärkeä osa uusliberaalia hoivajärjestelmää, kotitaloustyöntekijöiden asemaa ja työehtoja koskevat kysymykset nousevat taas ajankohtaisiksi.

Avainsanat: palkattu kotitaloustyö, kotitaloustyöntekijät, vertaileva tutkimus, prekaari työ, eriarvoisuus, työolot

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List of original publications

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- II Jokela, Merita (2018) Patterns of precarious employment in a female-dominated sector in five affluent countries - The case of paid domestic labor sector in five welfare states. *Social Politics*.
- III Jokela, Merita (2017) The role of domestic employment policies in shaping precarious work. *Social Policy & Administration* 51(2):286-307

1 Introduction

In 2008, a Finnish women's magazine published a story titled 'The comeback of domestic servants' that told the story of a Finnish upper income family and their Filipina domestic worker. Her employer is quoted as saying 'Everything has gone incredibly well. Rhea [the domestic worker] is hard working and self-imposed, and things are being taken care of without any big fuss. She is present, but is also able to make herself invisible'¹. Rhea was hired by the family to take care of their household while the parents were both working long hours. The job was first listed with an employment agency in case a Finnish person would apply for it but the employer knew they would hire a foreigner: "Who would have responded to our needs? We wanted someone who speaks English, would live with us and work for minimum wage"².

I was reading the story of Rhea and her employer while I was living in the Peruvian capital Lima, where domestic workers – persons who perform domestic tasks such as cleaning, cooking, taking care of children and the elderly – are a common sight in private households. The story left me wondering about the striking similarities between the characteristics desired of the domestic worker and what I had heard when from those working in Lima – people who were hardworking, present, but at the same time inconspicuous – and the possible global connections of this phenomenon.

Thus in my dissertation, my aim is to scrutinise the contemporary phenomenon of paid household work by focusing on the relationship between inequality and paid domestic labour in current societies and more specifically, in what ways are inequalities and precarity sustained and produced in the sector.

In the 1970s, a number of Western social scientists predicted the disappearance of domestic workers. The economic development of societies, they argued, would make the occupation obsolete, and the stigma attached to paid domestic labour was too strong to keep attracting women in lower social strata to work in the sector to satisfy the demands of middle and high income households (Boserup, 1970; Chaplin, 1978; Coser, 1973). With the industrial development of countries and the transformation of work into wage labour, domestic service was viewed as something belonging to the pre-modern era. As Chaplin (1978) put it, domestic service was 'a prime indicator of the level and quality of industrialisation and modernization' (1978, pp. 105–106).

As recent studies have shown, paid domestic labour is far from disappearing (Anderson 2000; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Lutz 2011; ILO 2018). It is estimated that at least 70 million people around the world are employed as domestic workers in private households (ILO 2018). While the incidence of paid domestic labour is still highest in the region of Latin America and countries such as South Africa and India, domestic service has become an increasingly frequent occupation in affluent countries in the Global North, offering employment opportunities particularly for migrant women. It is suggested that the current expansion of paid domestic labour can be traced to a wider phenomenon of care work: for example, on the US Bureau for Labor Statistics' list of the 30 fastest growing jobs in the next 10 years, half are related to providing care for others³. A similar phenomenon can be observed across the world, as the proportion of elderly is growing rapidly, particularly in countries like Japan, Italy, Germany, and China (OECD, 2016). At the same time, households are increasingly becoming preferred sites of social reproduction – a trend that can be observed across welfare state regimes (Kofman 2014).

The growing demand for private domestic and care services is occurring in a time where the gap between the rich and poor within countries is said to be the widest in history (Milanović, 2016; OECD, 2015). The trend in income inequality that we observe globally is related to a wider question of class: it is suggested that the current phenomenon of paid domestic labour can be seen as a return to a servant society in a global form, challenging the prevailing Western narrative of a linear development towards egalitarian societies (Näre, 2016). This development is enforced by transnational migration of women from the Global South who are expected to fill the gaps in domestic and care services in the receiving countries (Parreñas Salazar, 2001).

Currently, domestic service is promoted across countries not only as a way for higher and middle income households to reconcile with work and family life, but also, as one of the growing sectors of employment that is supposed to provide job opportunities particularly for women, lower educated individuals and migrants. However, as will be shown in this dissertation, these social categories are both over-presented in domestic work industry and have a higher risk to work in non-standard employment settings with high job instability and low wage. Despite the development of welfare states both in the Global North and South, and general improvements in workers' positions in wage work, some of the pre-modern characteristics of paid domestic labour still prevail, though their extent differs greatly between countries: domestic workers often perform their jobs under paternalist employment relationships, working long hours and without paid sick leave or holidays. In Mexico, almost every fourth, and in Peru every third, domestic worker worked 60 hours a week or more in 2013 (Blofield & Jokela, 2018). Moreover, informal employment is common worldwide, and access to social security is often limited (ILO, 2013). In Europe, apart from home-based carers, domestic work, which is often performed part-time, creates different kinds of challenges. For example in the Netherlands, government policies in

fact legitimise unequal access to social protection in domestic service as long as the work is performed part-time (Van Hooren, 2017).

While a number of factors contribute to the prevalence and dynamics of domestic work in the 21st century, it seems that similar issues related to social and economic inequalities continue to characterise the occupation. It is this connection that I aim to address in my dissertation. In my dissertation, I will demonstrate that it is essential to approach the status of paid domestic labour in present societies not only as a matter of workers' (and human) rights, but more generally, as a question of social and economic inequality between rich and poor.

While the present phenomenon of domestic service is still strongly linked to social and economic inequalities and hierarchies, the basis of these hierarchies varies. In the Global North and in many East Asian countries, hierarchies in paid domestic labour are commonly created through globalisation and the transnational movements of people or regions, whereas in other countries, typically in the region of Latin America but also in countries like India, domestic work is performed by national migrant or ethnic groups that are often viewed as inferior in the society. Scholars focusing on global care migration have studied these inequalities in the transnational context, concluding that the phenomenon of paid household work is related to a wider global division that can be described as what Parreñas (2000) calls the 'international transfer of caretaking' and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2002) calls the 'new world domestic order', where affluent countries recruit migrant workers to fill the gaps created by the care deficit, while families in less affluent countries have to cope with informal care solutions.

In addition to global demographic and economic developments, paid domestic labour is increasingly shaped by public policies, particularly in European countries. An important question is how the phenomenon is enforced (or reduced) by these policies. In recent years, policy reforms regarding domestic employment have generated growing interest among social scientists who view the practice as outsourcing domestic work (Williams 2012; Morel 2015; Carbonnier and Morel 2015; Kvist 2012; Kvist and Peterson 2010; Hiilamo 2015; Calleman 2011; Näre 2016). These studies focus on the political economy of paid domestic work, highlighting the role of welfare states in promoting domestic services and structuring new welfare inequalities, particularly since migrant women occupy more than half the sector in some countries such as Spain and Italy (Leon, 2013; Shutes & Chiatti, 2012). In Canada and many Asian countries, migrant care worker programs play an important role in shaping the sector and sustaining the live-in domestic worker (who lives in the household of the employer) tradition. Against this backdrop, the current phenomenon of paid domestic labour is a significant subject of research in social policy and in the social sciences in general.

My dissertation belongs to the field of social policy but it also partly draws on the neighbouring fields of gender studies, migration and labour studies. Questions

of occupational inequalities and employment-related social protection, which are examined in this dissertation, are in the core of social policy research. I approach the subject by examining the inequalities in paid domestic labour through three different layers that represent the factors identified in previous studies as shaping paid domestic labour and the position of domestic workers in the labour markets: 1) the structural layer that refers to the socio-demographic developments and structural mechanisms in the society, 2) the individual layer that includes the characteristics of persons working in domestic service and the occupation, and 3) the policy layer that comprises the political economy of paid domestic labour and the policies influencing the employment of domestic workers.

The dissertation consists of three research articles and a summary article. The structure of my research follows the layer approach as each article deals with one layer: the first article is a global approach to the phenomenon of paid domestic labour and inequality where I *examined the factors that are associated with the prevalence of paid domestic labour*. Using macro-level data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank, the aim was to provide quantitative evidence on the push and pull factors of paid domestic labour and to test the link between paid domestic labour prevalence and economic inequality in global context. In the second article, I further deepened the empirical analysis on the linkages between paid domestic labour and inequalities by using micro-level data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) and looking at precarities on the individual level in five affluent countries and asked *whether paid domestic and care labour is associated with higher levels of precarious employment*. Drawing on policy documents and secondary sources from OECD countries, the third article addressed *the role of different domestic employment policies in shaping precariousness in paid domestic labour*. The aim of the third article was to understand the role of policy design in shaping paid domestic labour as an occupation and the position of domestic workers in the labour markets.

The contribution of my research is three-fold. First, while a number of studies have examined the different ways that inequalities are produced and reproduced in paid domestic labour, they tend to focus only on one aspect (structural mechanisms, individuals, or policies). In my dissertation I take a more holistic approach to the issue by combining these three 'layers' and thus, provide a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon by showing how inequalities are institutionalised through state policies and sustained by socio-demographic developments, and how these inequalities are reflected in higher levels of precarity in paid domestic labour compared to other occupations. Second, most of the research dealing with precarity and employment conditions in paid domestic work is qualitative and concentrates on one or few countries. My quantitative comparative focus complements earlier studies, and provides insights into the phenomenon at a global level. Third, unlike most comparative research in social policy, my dissertation extends its analysis beyond the traditional European Union and OECD groupings. This is particularly important as it sheds

light on the parallels regarding the position of domestic workers across the globe, and also highlights the differences between countries in terms of employment relationships, legal status, and employment conditions.

In the second section of my dissertation, I present the framework of my research, including the global distribution of paid domestic labour, and the historical context of the occupation and its relationship with inequality. In the third section, I summarise the key concepts of my dissertation and discuss the theoretical approaches regarding the relationship between paid domestic labour and inequality. The fourth section presents the research design, including a discussion on comparative research in the social sciences, and the definition of domestic work. In the fifth section, I summarise the results of the three articles that comprise my dissertation. Lastly, the sixth section is based on a discussion of the results combined with the theoretical framework, followed by conclusions.

2 Research framework

The interest in paid domestic work and domestic workers' societal position is fairly new in social research, and, as Sarti (2008) notes, before the 1990s, in Europe the subject was mainly left to historians. In European literature, it is often stated that the 21st century has seen a 'comeback of servants' (Anderson, 2000; Lutz, 2011). However, the time period without servants, was, in the end, not so long: although domestic workers had nearly disappeared in the Global North by the 1960s, at the latest, many countries' households started to employ domestic workers again in the 1990s (Platzer, 2006; Romero, 1998). In most parts of the Global South, the colonial tradition of having a maid in the household has been persistent.

In this chapter, I present the framework of my research: I provide an overview of the current distribution of paid domestic labour using a global comparison. Next, I present the social and historical context of paid domestic labour and the construction of inequalities related to the occupation in the Global North, followed by a description from the perspective of the Global South.

2.1 Current distribution and status of paid domestic labour in a global context

According to recent statistics of the International Labour Organization, 70 million persons across the globe work in paid domestic service (ILO, 2018a). However, unofficial estimates suggest that the number is closer to 100 million (ILO, 2013). The prevalence of domestic workers (here proportion of domestic workers of total employment) varies greatly across regions from 0.7 per cent in Europe and Central Asia to 3.6 per cent in the Americas and 5.8 per cent in the Arab States. Persons working in paid domestic labour are predominantly women: the proportion of female workers in the sector is 70 per cent, and in regions like the Americas, the share is as high as 92 per cent. The sector of paid domestic work employs a significant share of women, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean and also in the Arab States, where every fifth woman in the labour force is employed in domestic services. In a global context, paid domestic labour is closely linked with labour migration: according to ILO estimates, the 11.5 million migrant domestic workers in the world account for 7.7 per cent of all migrant workers (ILO, 2015)⁴.

Men make up a significantly smaller share of domestic workers compared to women. In some countries, mostly in Africa and in Asia, male domestic workers are hired to perform typical ‘feminine’ household tasks (Bartolomei, 2010), however, male occupations in paid domestic

Table 1. Global and regional estimates of the number of domestic workers in 2018 (in thousands)

	Number of domestic workers	Domestic workers as a share of the total labour force	Proportion in % of females among domestic workers
World	70146	2.1(3.8)	70
Africa	11693	2.6(4.8)	80
Americas	16503	3.6(7.7)	92
Arab States	3028	5.8(21.2)	54
Asia and the Pacific	36041	1.9(2.9)	57
Europe and Central Asia	53690	0.7(1.4)	89

Source: ILO (2018) Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work. Geneva: International Labour Office. Note: The percentages in parentheses represent the proportion female domestic workers comprise of total female employment (numbers of female domestic workers not shown)

labour more frequently comprise gardeners, chauffeurs, security guards, and maintenance workers. The more common jobs in the domestic work sector, such as cleaners, nannies, and other caretakers, are mainly occupied by women. Since a high proportion of domestic workers are women, and paid domestic work is strongly related to gender norms, research on this topic has typically focused on female domestic workers (see however, Bartolomei 2010; Näre 2010; Scrinzi 2010), which is also the case in my dissertation.

The origin of paid domestic labour varies across the world, with each country and region having its own past with the phenomenon. In order to understand the global dynamics of paid domestic labour, I will next present an overview of the historical context related to the sector. The section is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the historical context of paid domestic labour in the Global North, followed by a historical overview regarding countries in the Global South.

2.2 From servitude to service: the historical context of paid domestic labour in the Global North

Domestic service has existed in most parts of the world since ancient times. Historically, domestic work has its origins in international slavery and general servitude, but the dynamics of domestic work changed substantially with the period of

modernisation: wages and contractual agreements replaced slavery and other forms of bonded labour, and servants were increasingly viewed as employees (Moya, 2007). The paternalist relationship still remained strong, as domestic workers were often considered 'part of the family', and wages were often replaced by care, education, and training (Moya, 2007; Nagata, 2005). Until the 19th century, particularly in many European countries, domestic service in fact had an educational function: young women and men from lower and middle classes (or even upper classes as in the case of England, see Cooper 2005) worked as servants and apprentices to gain skills and knowledge from older generations. These life-cycle servants would serve in their master's home until they got married (Laslett 1965, 1977; Cooper 2005). Generally, domestic service was the job most commonly available for women at that time: in 1870, 50 per cent of women were employed in domestic service in the United States (Goldberg, 2015).

Entering 20th century, servants from the upper and middle class almost disappeared in Europe, and domestic service in middle and upper class households in the cities became a job typically occupied by lower class women from rural areas (Sarti, 2006b). At the same time, male servants became less common (Moya, 2007). Life-cycle service was largely replaced by wage labour (or lifetime service), something Cooper calls a shift 'from service to servitude': in the new era of industrialisation, there was no place for an institution that reinforced social networks and social gradations, and emphasised familial ties (Cooper, 2005, p. 383). The proletarianisation of domestic service in Europe was reached by the beginning of 20th century. According to Sarti, several factors contributed to this proletarianisation and feminisation of domestic service: industrialisation and capitalist development shifted many of the tasks typically performed by men away from households. Moreover, the household was increasingly considered as the 'kingdom' of women, which led to a growing demand for female servants. On the supply side, the demographic growth in rural areas pushed many rural girls to move to cities to take jobs as live-in servants in urban households (Sarti, 2006a).

During the first half of the 20th century, the status of domestic servants in Western countries slowly shifted from helpers to workers. Domestic workers' exceptional position was long reflected in the law: domestic work was either regulated through family policies or special laws (e.g. Germany's *Gesindeordnung*) that made servants subordinates of the households they worked in without giving them any legal rights (Sarti, 2005). Domestic workers' unions and organisations were formed in several countries to fight for the abolition of ancient servant laws and for equal rights for domestic workers (Goldberg, 2015; Schwartz, 2015). Their struggles to transform domestic work into an occupation like any other provoked strong resistance from employers and politicians (who often employed domestic workers themselves), who viewed the professionalisation of domestic service as a financial threat, and were reluctant to pay more for it. Interestingly, domestic workers rarely found alliances in other

women's (feminist) organisations that were formed during the same period (Rahikainen & Vainio-Korhonen, 2006; Schwartz, 2015). These organisations were often led by middle and upper class women who did not identify with lower class women's problems. A gradual shift from their status as servants to that of workers emerged in new legislation adopted across affluent countries. Still, domestic workers were often excluded from general labour laws and regulations on minimum wages and working hours did not apply to them.

With industrial development, domestic work as an occupation slowly started to disappear (Platzer, 2006). Women were supposed to take care of their households and work at the same time. Due to working-class women's extended labour market opportunities (restaurants, hotels), the supply of domestic workers decreased drastically (Platzer, 2006; Romero, 1998). New work opportunities were more attractive because they offered better working conditions than domestic service. This created a great concern among middle class families: for example, in 1930, Alva and Gunnar Myrdal suggested that the drop in birth rates among Swedish women was due to the lack of domestic workers (see Platzer 2006). Finally, the expansion of the welfare state, the increasing use of home appliances and public child care – particularly in Northern European countries – contributed to the drastic decline in domestic service that had occurred by the 1970s. As a result of the above-mentioned developments, a number of scholars predicted the disappearance of domestic workers. One of these scholars was Lewis Coser (1973), who claimed that not only economic development but the stigma and the nature of the occupation would make domestic service obsolete in present societies: 'Despite improvements in the working conditions of servants, and because none of these improvements [...] it has continued to be stigmatized [...] As a result only marginal, deviant, or in some other way disadvantaged persons are nowadays ready to accept it in America' (Coser, 1973, p. 39). Consequently, countries such as the UK, France, Spain and Italy started to recruit domestic workers from former colonies or with similar religious backgrounds, to satisfy the continuous demand for paid domestic labour. At present, colonial ties continue to remain crucial in the global movements of migrant domestic workers (Tronto, 2011).

2.3 The colonial legacy of servitude in the Global South and the global movement of domestic workers

In countries of the Global South, the origin of domestic service typically dates back to the era of colonialism. With the expansion of European colonization during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the colonizers took the European tradition of servitude with them to the Americas, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, and sometimes mixed it with the already existing traditions of household service (Haskins & Lowrie, 2014; Lima, 2015). In contrast to the European tradition during the same period, in which domestic service was often a fairly respected occupation (Kuznesof 1989),

servants in the “New World” were enslaved local women, men, and children, or they were recruited, traded, or kidnapped from other colonial territories to work as servants. As Kuznesof (1989) describes the situation of domestic servants in Peru: ‘[...] once the Indian woman began working in a Spanish house, she was often virtually enslaved, prevented from leaving or marrying’ (Kuznesof, 1989, p. 20).

After decolonialization, former colonies experienced changes in the servant system, since domestic workers were no longer employed by the colonizers, but in households of the new national elites and the emerging middle-class (Haskins & Lowrie, 2014). In some countries, domestic workers shared the same ethnicity with their employers, while in other countries servants were recruited from former colonies. For example, in South Africa domestic service maintained a strongly racial character that Gaitskell et al. (1983) referred to as a ‘black institution’.

In many countries of the Global South, domestic workers are today struggling with issues that are similar to those experienced by domestic workers in the Global North during the period of industrialisation, particularly regarding their status as workers. In a large number of countries, paid domestic work is still excluded from the general labour code (ILO, 2013; International Labour Office, 2016). As Valenzuela and Mora (2009) note in the case of Latin America, domestic workers’ unequal treatment is often not acknowledged as a problem by policymakers or by other actors of the civil society, except for the household workers’ own organisations. Similar challenges are encountered by domestic workers in the Global North, where the informal nature of the work (and often undocumented status of the migrant worker) maintains the domestic work sector invisible. During the last two decades, however, the situation has begun to change. In many countries, household workers, together with other marginalized groups, have started to build resistance, and are gradually gaining more awareness for their cause (Anderson Blofield 2012; Blofield and Jokela, 2018).

In recent years, a global movement of domestic workers has emerged that promotes the equal status of domestic workers as workers and migrant workers’ rights. Drawing strongly on the ILO ideology of fair globalization and decent work and after several years of campaigning, a coalition driven by NGOs and international labour federations managed to finally incorporate the issue of domestic workers on the International Labour Conference (ILC) agenda in 2010, and in 2011 in the same conference, the ILO convention 189 was accepted. The convention that has been ratified by 25 countries⁵ so far, has acted as a common goal for local, regional and international domestic workers’ movements worldwide (see Blofield & Jokela, 2018; Boris & Fish, 2014; Marchetti, 2018). Collective action is seen as an important step toward improving household workers’ working conditions and livelihoods. Nonetheless, paid domestic work continues to be a form of slavery in many parts of the world, and, despite the efforts being made, the subordination of domestic workers is accepted in society and in the general political discourse (Ladegaard, 2013; Varia, 2011).

3 Theoretical approaches

This chapter presents the key concepts used in my dissertation and outlines the theoretical framework of my research. I discuss the notion of paid domestic labour and its connections with the more historical concept of reproductive labour, followed by two other key concepts of my dissertation, precarious work and inequality. I then move to the theoretical framework of my dissertation that concentrates on the factors that sustain and produce inequalities and precariousness in paid domestic labour.

3.1 Key concepts

3.1.1 Paid domestic labour

A number of different approaches have been used to study the phenomenon of paid domestic labour. While some studies use the broader concept of paid domestic work that includes all housework (Anderson, 2000, 2015; Glenn, 1992), others focus more closely on the notion of care work (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenberg 2012; Bauer et al. 2014; Williams 2012; Hochschild 2000).

The notion of reproductive labour is originally a Marxist term that distinguishes the production of goods in the economy from the reproduction of the labour power that is needed for the maintenance of that productive economy – the latter is often referred to as unpaid women's work. During the 1970s, the term reproductive labour was used as part of a wider feminist debate on the relationship between production and reproduction. A wealth of literature dealt specifically with the gendered construction of reproductive labour inside the family, and the disproportional division of domestic labour between women and men (e.g. Mackintosh 1977; Benería 1979). According to Laslett and Brenner (1989), reproductive labour includes the following:

'how food, clothing and shelter are made available for immediate consumption, the ways in which the care and socialization of children are provided, the care of the infirm and the elderly, and the social organization of sexuality...and the organization of social reproduction refers to the varying institutions within which this work is performed, the varying strategies for accomplishing these tasks, and the varying ideologies that both shape and are shaped by them'(383).

However, the domestic labour debate that was initiated by American white feminists was later criticised for excluding the reproductive labour performed by extra-familial members in the household such as paid domestic workers. In the 1980s, another strand of literature extended the debate to paid domestic labour, and highlighted the gendered and racial character of reproductive labour and those who performed it (Molyneux 1979; Rollins 1985). One of the most influential scholars in this debate was Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1992), who argued that in the organization of reproductive labour, women from racial and ethnic minorities have historically been kept in a distinct place: ‘The racial division of reproductive labor’, she says, ‘is key to the distinct exploitation of women of color...It is thus essential to the development of an integrated model of race and gender, one that treats them as interlocking, rather than additive, systems’(116). Thus, as a global phenomenon that entails the movement of people from different ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds across countries, paid domestic labour and its social hierarchies are more complex than a simple reflection of gender inequalities.

Drawing on Glenn’s (1992) concept of the racial division of reproductive labour, Parreñas (2000) introduced the term ‘international division of reproductive labour’, which refers to the commodification of domestic work between women where ‘a privileged woman pays a migrant woman to perform her housework, and she in turn passes on her own household work to a woman left behind in her country of origin’ (Parreñas 2012, 269). Similarly, Hochschild (2000) coined the concept of the global care chain that has been widely used in the literature on migrant care work.

In recent years, the notions of care and care work have come to dominate the research on globalization and labour migration where care work is often studied as part of the “care diamond” (Razavi, 2007) or the “global political economy of care” (Yeates, 2005, 2011) that bring into the analysis both care givers and care recipients and the institutions involved in the organization of care. A number of recent studies investigate the different configurations of care provision, including the role and value of paid and unpaid care (Benería, 2008; Budlender, 2008; England, Budig, & Folbre, 2002; Folbre, 2006).

In my dissertation, where the focus is on persons who work in private households and perform domestic tasks, I mainly use the concept of paid domestic labour. I understand paid domestic labour in a broader sense as Glenn (1992) defines it, as an ‘array of activities and relationships involved in maintaining people both on a daily basis and inter-generationally’ (115). I chose this approach for my study as it refers to a variety of work tasks included in the realm of paid household labour, which may not always limit to care of persons but extends to all domestic tasks performed in private households. In section 4.5, I explain in more detail the definition of paid domestic labour that I use in the empirical analyses of the three articles.

3.1.3 Precarious work

In my research, I approach the phenomenon of paid domestic labour from the perspective of the workers. Previous literature on occupational inequalities has approached the issue by using concepts such as vulnerable employment, non-standard employment, irregular/informal work and precarious work. Vulnerable employment is a term used by international organizations such as the ILO and the World Bank to study the state of global labour markets. It includes own-account workers and family workers who are viewed as working in the most vulnerable forms of employment with high incidences of informality and low probability of benefiting from job security and social protection (ILO, 2018b, 6). Studies concentrating on the new forms of employment often use the term non-standard employment to refer to atypical employment relationships, part-time and short-term employment as opposed to the standard full-time, full-year permanent paid job (see Vosko et al. 2003).

To study the position of domestic workers in the labour markets and their employment conditions, I use the concept of precarious work that I understand as covering both the non-standard forms of employment but also the insecurity related to informal job contracts. A large body of literature has discussed questions related to precarious work and its different definitions (for an overview, see Vosko et al. 2009). The origin of the term lies mostly in post-industrial France in the 1980s, where the term *precarité* was used in political debates to describe changing patterns of work precipitated by neoliberal policies (Barbier, 2005).

Standard working contracts typical in the Fordist era were no longer the norm, and instead a variety of non-standard forms of work had emerged, causing uncertainty for workers. In sociology, precariat and precarious working conditions were often linked with the question of social exclusion and a wider shift in the patterns of employment, that is, the end of traditional work relationships and the centrality of wage relationships (see Munck 2013; Barbier 2005). In studies on precarity, two main approaches may be distinguished. The first views precarity as a general condition for certain groups of workers as the ‘new mode of dominance’ resulting from the fragmentation of the labour market and globalisation (Bourdieu, 1997), or the ‘new dangerous class’ (Standing, 2012), while the second approach emphasises the precarity of working conditions (Castel; Kalleberg 2009). Kalleberg (2009) defines precarious work broadly as ‘employment that is uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker’ (Kalleberg, 2009). Cranford et al. (2003) and Vosko et al. (2003) view precarious work as a ‘continuum’ that consists of four mutually exclusive employment forms: degree of regulatory protection, job permanency, control over the labour process, and income level (measured as hourly wage). In addition, they stress the importance of social context (e.g. occupation, industry, and geography) and social location (or the interaction of social relations, such as gender, and legal and political categories, such as citizenship) in shaping precarious employment.

The concept of precarious work is not without problems. First, critics argue that it is too often used as a synonym for non-standard employment (ILO, 2016). It is important to note that non-standard employment relationships may not always lead to precarity, but, as Kalleberg (2011) suggests, for some the risk is higher than for others: '[w]hile all jobs have become more precarious, some works have been less vulnerable than others, and the labour force has become increasingly polarized into those with more education and marketable skills and those without the human capital attributes' (15). Second, from a global perspective, the term precarity is blamed for not being able to grasp the Southern context, because it is premised on the Western formal employment contract (Munck, 2013). However, Munck's (2013) criticism is targeted at the concept of precariat, not the specific conditions and processes related to it. Consistent with Munck, Kalleberg and Hewison (2012) recognize that in developing economies precarious forms of work, such as informal work, are the norm, rather than an exception. As discussed above, the concept of precarious work is usually used in the Western context precisely to reflect changes to employment conditions and their causes. Moreover, Kalleberg and Hewison (2012) note that precarious work may not always refer to change, but may in other contexts also be viewed as a 'loss of conditions held or aspired for' (274).

In **articles II and III**, in which I use the concept of precarious work, I approach precarity in the sense of precarious employment conditions. I use a multidimensional concept of precarious work that encompasses various dimensions, such as non-standard employment, the nature of the employment relationship, informality, and low wages. However, due to data availability, there are some differences in the dimensions that I use to operationalize precarious employment in the two articles. In addition, I draw on Vosko's concept of precarious employment by examining the impacts of social contexts and locations – such as industry, the national context, gender, and migration status – on the various dimensions of precarious employment. Since indicators of precarious employment were not available in the World Bank data that I used for examining the global prevalence of paid domestic labour, the analysis of **article I** uses the concept of vulnerable employment to examine the association between employment structures and the prevalence of paid domestic labour⁶.

3.1.2 Inequality

Parallel to the concept of precarious work that is used in my research to analyse the employment conditions of domestic workers, I draw on the notion of inequality and its different forms in order to understand the broader mechanisms related to the status of paid domestic labour in current societies. I examine inequalities in paid domestic labour and their outcomes to the workers both from the economic and social perspective.

In the social sciences, inequality is usually understood as uneven allocation of resources based on social categories such as gender, ethnicity, occupation, education,

or class. Since the beginning of the 21st century, a wealth of literature has been devoted to studying the global mechanisms, causes, and effects of social and economic inequalities (Atkinson, 2015; Milanović, 2016; Piketty, 2014; Sen, 1999; Therborn, 2013; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Wider economic inequalities in a society are suggested as being associated with numerous social and health outcomes, including higher child mortality, obesity, and homicide rates, and lower life expectancy, social mobility, and trust (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Most of the recent studies on the mechanisms of inequality have concentrated on the role of market-level strategies, redistribution and labour market functioning in mitigating inequalities or conversely, widening the gap between the rich and poor. The weakening of labour market institutions and present inequalities are posited as being the result of precarious work and the dualism of the labour markets (Emmenegger et al. 2012; Prosser 2016). Moreover, some scholars of inequality outcomes concentrate on the effects of human capital, and argue that what matters is the inequality of opportunity: for example, in terms of access to education, whether we are all given the same opportunities (see Atkinson 2015). The human capital approach has been adopted particularly by international organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank, which use the notion of inequality of opportunity and social inclusion in framing their actions concerning issues such as business, women's employment, and children's education (OECD 2015; Mahon 2015, 2010). One of the most influential scholars raising the question of inequality as an issue beyond economic deprivation is Amartya Sen (1999, 2009), who highlights the importance of individual freedom, and views inequality as the deprivation of individual capabilities. He argues that inequality is about the unequal capability to fully function as a human being (2009: 414).

In my dissertation, **article I** takes an economic approach to inequality by examining structural factors and the link between income inequality and prevalence of paid domestic labour in global comparison. In **article II and article III** I explore both social and economic dimensions of inequality from the perspective of the worker by analysing the precarity of domestic workers in the labour markets in terms of wages, non-standard employment settings, unemployment experience and informality. Thus I discuss the different constraints linked to paid domestic work that prevent persons working in the sector from achieving and practicing their rights as citizens and workers, and so, in the end, from participating fully in society.

3.2 The layers of inequality in paid domestic labour

Numerous studies have dealt with the position of domestic workers, and their employment relationship and experiences in the workplace (e.g. Anderson 2000; Parreñas 2000; Romero 1998; Lutz 2011). These studies mostly conclude that domestic workers are one of the most precarious groups of workers in the labour markets. Based on mostly qualitative and theoretical research, I identify three types of factors

as contributing to inequalities in paid domestic labour (1) cultural, social, and economic structures, (2) individual and occupational characteristics, and (3) government policies. In my dissertation, I refer to these factors as the three layers of inequality, a framework that I elaborate further in section 4.

3.2.1 The structural layer: Social, cultural, and economic structures

Previous studies suggest that several global developments are associated with the employment of domestic workers. First, ageing populations and changing family dynamics, such as the shift from extended family to nuclear family, are creating gaps in care for the elderly that domestic workers are expected to fill (Lister et al., 2007). Second, also related to care, women's increasing labour force participation has intensified the need for private care solutions in countries where public care services are insufficient or where home-based care is desired over institutional care (Shutes & Chiatti, 2012; Yeoh & Huang, 2010). Third, in affluent countries, the tendency in governments' social policies has been to reduce the provision of public services, and instead shift the responsibility for care to households and markets. This trend is evident even in Nordic countries where care is traditionally provided publicly, but public care services particularly in elderly care have often been replaced by private care solutions. Along with these developments, the increases in economic inequality have led to situations in which an increasing number of wealthier households can afford to pay for private domestic and care services and offset the reduction in public services, while at the other end of the economic ladder, are the economically disadvantaged, mostly migrant women, who accept low paid jobs such as domestic services to enter the job market and to make ends meet.

The link between income inequality and paid domestic labour was first studied empirically by Milkman, Reese, and Roth (1998), who highlighted the importance of class in shaping the dynamics of domestic employment. Their study revealed that in the United States, regional differences in the size of the domestic employment workforce could be explained by the distribution of income between rich and poor households, proportion of female labour force that is foreign born, and maternal labour force participation. Milkman et al. referred to paid domestic labour as the "microcosm of growing class inequality between women", where professional and managerial women "can purchase on the market much of the labour of social reproduction" (p.485). In addition to income inequality, a large supply of female migrants in the workforce is viewed as contributing to the racial division of labour between white and racial-ethnic women (Glenn, 1992) and thus, sustaining social hierarchies that shape the position and employment conditions of domestic workers on the individual level, which I discuss further in the next section.

Furthermore, apart from global social and economic developments, feminist

scholars in particular highlight the importance of gender roles and gender related inequalities in a female-dominated occupation such as domestic service. Generally, across the globe, reproductive labour such as cleaning, cooking, and doing laundry, is still performed largely by women. The idea of housework as ‘women’s work’ remains persistent, even in Western industrialised countries where emancipation and gender equality are expected to be high. Gender stratification system theories, such as the devaluation thesis, suggest that our culture devalues women and any activity that is largely done by women (Cancian and Oliker 2000; England and Folbre 1999; England et al. 2002). While most of these tasks are outsourced to the state or the market, it is argued that our culture and norms related to gender and motherhood influence our attitudes towards paid care work (England et al. 2002). Hence, skills needed for caring labour are associated with mothering, and considered as something natural and therefore not worth decent remuneration (Steinberg, 1990).

In affluent countries of the Global North, inequalities related to work are said to be linked with the liberalization and dualisation of the labour markets to insiders and outsiders, and the rise of precarious employment conditions. In emerging countries of the Global South, it is estimated that almost half of all workers are engaged in vulnerable forms of employment, such as own-account workers (ILO, 2017). Widespread informality is described as being a great challenge, and one of the causes of labour market insecurity in domestic services. In Europe, undeclared work is especially prevalent in countries such as Italy and Spain, where over half the domestic workers are employed in the informal sector (Bettio et al. 2006; Schwenken and Heimeshoff 2011; Finotelli and Arango 2011). In the United States, undeclared jobs in domestic services are the norm, rather than the exception. This clearly puts workers in a very precarious situation, since without a written contract, they lack legal protection and work-related benefits, such as social insurance, paid leave, and holidays (Michel & Peng, 2012).

3.2.2 The individual layer: Individual and occupational characteristics

In addition to societal structures, a number of individual level factors may shape the position of domestic workers in the labour markets. Several studies have explored the experiences of persons working as domestic workers and the social hierarchies related to gender, ethnicity, race, and class that are said to be associated with an increased risk of exploitation in their workplaces.

Earlier, mostly American research on paid domestic labour focused on the employment relationship, and the power differences between domestic workers and their employers (Romero 1998; Rollins 1985; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002). These studies usually state that there exists a traditional paternal relationship between a domestic employee and their employer, in which the employee is not considered a worker, but rather a ‘member of the family’ who

provides help (Rollins 1985; Parreñas 2014). Generally, the family like relationship is viewed in the literature as a way for employers to exert power and exploit domestic workers (Parreñas Salazar, 2001) while other studies emphasize the complexity of the relationship and criticise the simple view of domestic workers as victims: In her study on migrant domestic workers in Italy, Näre (2011) found that not only do employers tend to transform the contractual relationship into a moral contract, but also the domestic workers often preferred “good” employers over those who paid more.

Furthermore, the studies point to the role of individual characteristics in shaping the employment relationship. Ethnicity and ‘race’ are often found to be significant to employers when determining the character of an employee and the quality of her work (Abrantes, 2014; Anderson, 2007; Maroukis & Triandafyllidou, 2013). Commonly, domestic workers from the Philippines are viewed as the most efficient workers (de Regt 2009). The preference of hiring someone from an ‘other race’ is illustrated in an employer interview reported in Anderson’s (2007) study: *‘It’s difficult having someone working for you from the same race because we have this idea of social class in our minds, don’t we? And that would be uncomfortable in your house. Whereas when it’s somebody from a different country, you don’t have all that baggage [...] There’s none of that middle-class, working-class, upper-class thing [...] it’s just a different race’* (252). Furthermore, since a large share of domestic workers are migrants, their position in the labour markets is predominantly shaped by immigrant status and citizenship (Triandafyllidou, 2013; Tronto, 2011). While citizens of the European Union are allowed to move and work freely inside the EU borders, nationals from outside the EU have to follow strict regulations when working in the host country. In the latter group, many choose to circulate between the home and host country, which is often the case for Ukrainian, Russian and Georgian women working in Italy (Marchetti, 2013). Moreover, undocumented migrants are often in the most vulnerable situation as they work in an already precarious sector with limited access to basic social services and strongly dependent on their employer (Anderson, 2010a; Maroukis & Triandafyllidou, 2013).

Moreover, an increasing number of studies concentrate on the legal aspects of paid domestic labour in general and the prevailing employment conditions in that sector. These studies often highlight the sector’s poor regulation, lack of written contracts, poor conditions, and the precarity experienced by domestic workers (Avril & Cartier, 2014; Lutz, 2011). Since paid domestic labour is performed in the private sphere, in other people’s homes, where working conditions are less easy to control, it is claimed that employers (households) are more likely to disregard formal regulations than in other employment relationships (Anderson 2000; Lutz 2011; Rollins 1985; Parreñas 2014; Lutz 2011; Avril and Cartier 2014; Bonizzoni 2013). Part of the problem is that households do not always consider themselves as employers, making them unaware of their responsibilities for making social contributions and contributing to other benefits for example. Previous studies also highlight the

unequal treatment of domestic workers, and differences in the levels of legal protection between countries of persons working in paid domestic services (Anderson, 2007; Gallotti, 2009; ILO, 2013).

The labour markets for paid domestic work are very heterogeneous, and this also applies to the forms of employment. Some domestic workers are part-timers with a second job, while for others paid domestic employment is a full-time job. The regularity of employment also varies, from temporary jobs of a couple of months' length, to permanent positions with domestic service companies or in private households. The heterogeneity of the sector puts workers in very different positions in terms of precariousness. Furthermore, some studies emphasise the variety of jobs and skill-levels in the care sector, and suggest that not all caring labour is equally vulnerable. As Duffy (2013) explains, '...paid care work has been divided into stratified occupational categories, and those defined as interactive have been typically associated with white, professional, or "semiprofessional" women, while those defined as support (and more "menial") have been associated with women of color and immigrant women' (Duffy 2011; Glenn 1992; Roberts 1997).

3.2.3 The policy layer: the political economy of paid domestic labour

Policies related to domestic work also shape paid domestic labour and the position of domestic workers. Previous research shows how the design of policies – or the lack of policies – may contribute to precarities in paid domestic labour (Jokela 2017; Hobson et al. 2015; Hellgren 2015; Van Hooren 2017). The interest in the institutional factors of paid domestic labour research is fairly new, and most of it focuses on European welfare states. In their comparative work on Sweden, Spain, and the UK, Williams (2012) and Williams and Gavanoas (2008) suggest that the intersection of gender, care, migration, and employment regimes shapes the demand for private domestic and care services.

In Nordic countries, the state is considered to be responsible for the organization of care, while in many Southern European countries the main responsibility lies with the family. In liberal welfare states, such as Britain, care needs have been considered to be best met via the market economy. Therefore, the demand for domestic services tends to be higher in Spanish and British households, with fewer opportunities for public care than in Sweden, with its extensive public sector (Williams and Gavanoas, 2008; Williams, 2011; see also Widding Isaksen, 2010). Consequently, as Bettio et al. (2006) describe, the new 'care mix' in Southern European countries has in fact created a situation where cheap foreign labour is replacing public services. In many countries of the Global South, in the absence of the public provision of care, domestic workers fill gaps as child minders, and carers for the elderly and disabled. Families who cannot afford to pay for care have to rely on their social networks (Razavi, 2007; Yeates, 2011). Often, these are families in which the mother has left the country

to take care of another family, creating a 'global care chain' (Hochschild 2000; Parreñas 2000). However, the relationship between paid domestic labour and the welfare state has become more complex due to the increasing for-profit provision and privatization of care services even in welfare states that are typically characterised by an extended public sector, such as in Nordic countries. Several studies show that there are signs of convergence concerning care provision and particularly the expansion of domestic and care services across Europe and also in countries of East-Asia (Lightman, 2017; Meagher, Szebehely, & Mears, 2016; Michel & Peng, 2012; Morel, 2015).

Not only do the institutional settings play a role in creating gaps domestic workers are expected to fill, they also contribute to the (lack of) recognition of domestic work as an occupation: as mentioned above, earlier research suggests that the demand for domestic services, especially in the Global North, is fuelled by neoliberal policies that favour the private over the public provision of social and care services, but also labour market policies that allow for more flexible work contracts and lower wages, particularly in the service sector (Anderson, 2010b; Carbonnier & Morel, 2015; Lister et al., 2007). Thus, as noted by Carbonnier and Morel (2015), in countries where welfare state institutions have allowed higher wages and less wage dispersion between the less productive service sector and the industrial sector (such as Continental and Northern European countries), the development of a service economy has been more constrained. In contrast, sustaining the informality of domestic service is argued to be strongly related to states' deliberate development of markets for the low-wage and low-cost labour force, and general enforcement of the polarization of the labour markets (Morel, 2015).

Immigration policies may shape the position of domestic workers' in various ways: some countries, such as Spain and Italy, have organised regulation campaigns to legalize the status of domestic workers in the country (Finotelli & Arango, 2011), while other countries, such as Canada and Hong Kong, have continuous migrant programs to recruit care workers from abroad, and particularly from the Philippines (Ladegaard, 2013; Pratt, 2005). While offering an opportunity to migrate for a large number of women, these programs are also criticised for their paternal nature, since they tie the migrant care worker to the employer, as in the case of Hong Kong. One of the most severe examples of how policies may sustain inequality in paid domestic labour and exploit domestic workers through legislation is the kafala system that exists in most countries in the Middle East, such as Lebanon and Saudi Arabia (Pande, 2013). Migrant domestic workers are required to have a sponsor (employer) to stay in the country, which means that they are legally tied to their employer.

It is widely argued that unequal policies for domestic service reflect the social attitudes towards domestic work and the legitimisation of these practices (Blofield, 2009; Kvist, 2012; Kvist & Peterson, 2010; Morel, 2015; Van Hooren, 2017). As Bernardino-Costa writes, 'The coloniality of power manifests itself daily for domestic workers in both the private and the public sphere. It has permitted the white elite,

identified with employers, to prevent domestic workers from receiving rights already won by workers of other professional categories' (Bernardino-Costa, 2011, p. 36). Thus, it is posited that the politics of paid domestic labour intersect with the social categories of the workers in the sector, thereby sustaining the politics of differentiation (Van Hooren, 2017).

4 Research design

My dissertation takes a comparative approach in all three articles. Thus, for the purpose of my research, it is necessary to discuss the framework and different approaches used in the field of comparative research. Next, I discuss the tradition of comparative research in the social sciences, present the data, and explain the methodological choices I made to undertake my dissertation.

4.1 Comparative research in the social sciences

Hantrais (2009) suggests that comparative research may broadly be defined as ‘studies of societies, countries, cultures, systems, institutions, social structures and change over time and space, when they are carried out with the intention of using the same research tools to compare systematically the manifestations of phenomena in more than one temporal or spatial sociocultural setting’ (2). In the empirical social sciences, comparative research became a frequently used method and tool of analysis around the 1970s, when it was applied by a number of scholars in works that later became classics in their field. These include Rokkan (1968) who compared nations, Kohn (1987) who conducted research on cross-national research in sociology, and Wallerstein’s (1978) study of world system theory. Later, comparative analysis was used to study societal phenomena related to class mobility (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1994), and welfare state development and reform (Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999).

Traditionally, and following Przeworski and Teune (1971), comparative research may be classified into case-oriented and variable oriented approaches. In the case-oriented approach, cases (e.g. countries) are understood as wholes, that is, as combinations of characteristics, whereas the usual goal of a variable-oriented approach is to ‘produce generalizations about relationships among variables, not to understand or interpret specific historical outcomes in a small number of cases or in an empirically defined set of cases’ (Ragin, 1987, p. 17). As Babones (2013) notes, in social research there has traditionally been a strong division in the literature between comprehensive three to five country case studies and more abstract comparisons of ‘as many countries as possible’ (Babones 2013, xvii).

In my dissertation, my aim is to combine the two approaches: **articles I and III** represent the variable-oriented approach and are based on an analysis of data from

as many countries as possible, while **article II** focuses on an analysis of the welfare regimes of five specific countries.

The comparative social sciences have typically analysed welfare states' institutional configurations – that is their models or 'regimes'. One of the most cited regime theories in the past three decades has been the 'The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism' by Gösta Esping-Andersen (1990) where he demonstrated that different political and historical developments in capitalist societies had led to the formation of three types of welfare states: Liberal, Social Democratic, and Conservative. Furthermore, a large number of other scholars have used the regime approach to study the outcomes of different types of welfare states. These include studies on gender and welfare states (Lewis, 1992; Orloff, 1993; Sainsbury, 1994), care regimes (Anttonen & Sipila, 1996; Bettio & Plantenga, 2004), and employment models (Prosser, 2016; Simonazzi, 2008).

While the regime approach provides a framework for studying a variety of policy outcomes and societal phenomena, it has also been criticised for several reasons. First, as demonstrated by Van Kersbergen and Vis (2015), it often involves the assumption that the world functions according to the welfare types, and hence welfare states are clustered into regimes without any strong theoretical basis (see also Emmenegger et al., 2015). Moreover, as Van Kersbergen (2010) notes, comparative politics in particular tend to deal with questions of cross-national variations rather than looking at similarities.

In this research, I use welfare regimes as an analytical tool in one study (article II) that deals with the association of paid domestic labour and precarious employment conditions in five welfare states. The aim is to identify not only the differences but also the common trends and factors associated with paid domestic labour across the countries. Articles I and III that explore the phenomenon more globally do not specifically draw on regime theory, however, they also deal with the interplay of different welfare state settings and their outcomes.

4.2 Research approach

In my dissertation, I examine the factors that produce or sustain inequalities and precarity in the sector of paid domestic labour. Based on previous studies, the research questions are tackled through three different 'layers' that form the point of departure for my analysis: 1) a structural layer, 2) an individual layer, and 3) a policy layer. Figure 1 depicts the three layers of inequality related to paid domestic labour.

Using a multidimensional approach to investigate factors shaping paid domestic work is not new in social policy research, where these factors are typically divided into macro, meso and micro level (Hobson & Bede, 2015; F. Williams, 2012; Fiona Williams & Gavanas, 2008). Similarly, drawing on the framework of Fraser, Meagher (2000) suggests that the economic and cultural injustices that domestic workers experience are shaped on both the interpersonal and societal level. Instead of levels,

in my research I use the concept of layers to analyse the inequalities in paid domestic labour. It is important to note that the layers are not hierarchical but rather overlapping: they may all influence the phenomenon simultaneously.

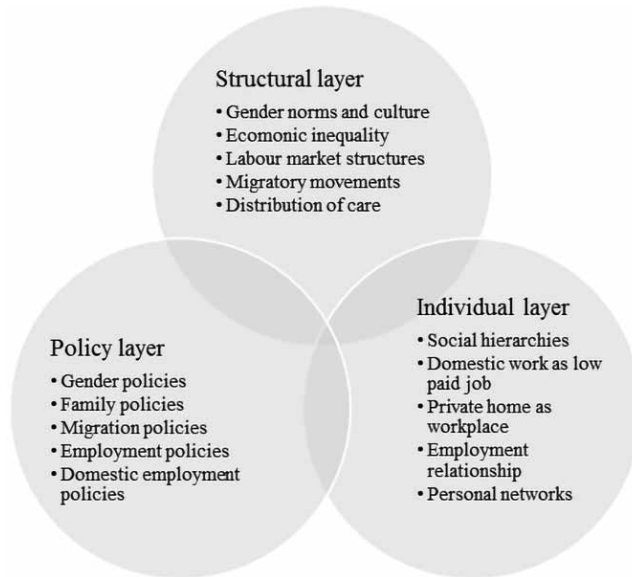


Figure 1. The layers of inequality in paid domestic labour

The first layer, the *structural layer*, is comprised of the ways that paid domestic labour is sustained in present societies, and the cultural, social, and economic factors that are connected with the prevalence and status of paid domestic labour. These include economic inequalities between and within countries that sustain the demand and supply of domestic labour, labour market structures, migratory movements and the distribution of care, and gender norms and culture that sustain the undervaluation of women’s work in the society. Labour market structures include the degree of segmentation of labour markets, and the extent of the informal economy and migrant labour force. The distribution of care refers to the ways in which care is typically organised in a country, and how it affects the demand for paid domestic labour and the position of domestic workers.

The second layer, the *individual*, represents the individual and occupational characteristics that contribute to the level of precarity in paid domestic labour: social hierarchies based on gender, ethnicity, ‘race’, citizenship, and class influence the position of an employee in the labour markets, by sustaining weaker and even discriminatory employment conditions, or preventing workers from seeking other employment opportunities. The fact that domestic workers perform their work inside private homes, where working conditions are less easily controlled, increases the risk of mistreatment and exploitation. Thus, since their work is not visible, and domestic workers often do not have access to collective bargaining, their relationship

with their employer plays an important role in how fair or precarious their employment conditions may be. Similarly, due to a lack of formal institutions, informal networks are often crucial for domestic workers. Third, the *policy* layer deals with the role of welfare state policies (or lack thereof) in enforcing or reducing inequalities in paid domestic labour. These include gender policies (e.g. women's employment patterns, gender segregation in jobs), care and family policies (e.g. who is responsible for the provision of care and how care is organised), migration policies (e.g. immigration regulations and programs), employment policies (e.g. programs targeting low paid jobs) and policies that are specifically designed for regulating the employment of domestic workers (e.g. tax rebates, vouchers, migrant care worker programs).

Each article in my dissertation deals with one layer and its relationship to the inequalities in paid domestic labour. I argue that the different layers simultaneously contribute to inequalities and precarious employment conditions in paid domestic labour.

4.3 Research questions and methods

The research questions addressed in each article are presented in Table 2. The overarching research question of my thesis is *what is the relationship between inequality and paid domestic labour in current societies, and in what ways are inequalities sustained in domestic service?* The first article takes a global approach to the phenomenon of paid domestic labour and inequality, while the second article focuses on precariousities at the individual level. The third article addresses the policies related to domestic work and precarious employment.

The research question in the first article is, *what are the factors associated with the prevalence of paid domestic labour?* I approached the question using linear regression analysis (OLS) and studying the association between seven macro-level factors and the prevalence of paid domestic labour in 74 countries. The factors included in the study were female employment rates, the proportion of the population that is aged, the proportion of migrants, vulnerable employment, gross domestic product, income inequalities, and the level of urbanisation.

In the second article, I examined *whether paid domestic and care labour is associated with higher levels of precarious employment.* Precarious employment was measured using an indicator comprised of four dimensions: part-time employment, unemployment experience, short job tenure, and low-wage work. The possible association was assessed in five affluent countries (Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain, and the United States), using logistic regression analysis.

The third article explored *the role of different domestic employment policies in shaping precariousness in paid domestic labour.* For this analysis, I first built a typology of existing domestic employment policies in Europe, Northern America, and East Asia. Using this typology, I then analysed the outcomes of different types of policies, that is, the ways in which they shaped the position of domestic workers in the labour markets.

Table 2. Summary of research articles

Title of the article	Research questions	Main results	Data and time period	Scope of the study	Methods
1. Macro-Level Determinants of Paid Domestic Labour Prevalence: A Cross-National Analysis of Seventy-Four Countries	What are the macro-level factors associated with higher paid domestic labour prevalence?	Higher prevalence of paid domestic labour associated with higher income inequality and proportion of migrant population	World Bank and ILO data base around year 2011	Global (74 countries)	Descriptive and multivariate methods
2. Patterns of precarious employment in a female-dominated sector in five affluent countries - The case of paid domestic labour sector	1) Is domestic and care work associated with higher levels of precarious employment conditions 2) What is the role of individual characteristics in shaping precarious employment	Precarious employment conditions more prevalent among domestic workers compared to other industries; Working in domestic service and care work and individual characteristics are both associated with higher levels of precarious employment.	Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) 2013/2014	Germany, Luxembourg, Spain, Italy and the US	Descriptive and multivariate methods
3. The role of domestic employment policies in shaping precarious work	How do domestic employment policies influence the position of domestic workers in the labour markets?	Policies mainly demand-driven, rarely address domestic workers' employment conditions; Domestic employment policies increase precariousness in paid domestic labour directly or indirectly.	National and international policy documents and reports; previous studies	Europe, Northern America and East Asia	Literature review, content analysis

4.4 Data and methods

The data used in my dissertation are derived from three different types of sources: World Bank and International Labour Organization (ILO) international macro-level statistical data, micro-level survey data from the LIS database, and secondary sources that consisted of government policy documents, previous studies, and reports. Next, I present each type of data in more detail.

4.4.1 World Bank and the ILO Databases

The analysis described in article I was based on data taken from two international databases, the World Bank indicators and the ILO. The World Development Indicators (WDI) database is a collection of development indicators compiled by the World Bank from international sources. These indicators are available in the World Bank's databank (databank.worldbank.org), which includes time series data on national, regional, and global indicators from 264 countries. Among others, this data covers indicators on education, the economy and growth, the environment, gender, health, poverty, and social development. It is widely used in quantitative macro-level research related to issues such as economic inequality, anti-poverty measures, female employment, and children's educational attainments. While the WDI has some limitations related to the standardisation and comparability of its data (World Bank, 2012, p. xxii), it is one of the few sources of macro-level data not restricted to wealthy countries (Babones, 2014).

For purposes of the first article, I use 7 indicators for 74 countries for the years 2006–2010. The indicators include female employment participation rates, the proportion of the population over sixty-five years of age, the proportion of migrants in the total population, the level of vulnerable employment, the level of the urban population, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, and the Gini index.

The numbers for domestic workers in the ILO database (ILO, 2013) used in my dissertation are mostly derived from official publications (censuses, labour force surveys, and household survey reports), and from ILOSTAT. ILOSTAT (www.ilo.org/ilostat) is an International Labour Organization (ILO) database containing labour statistics. Similarly to the World databank, the ILOSTAT data is based on secondary sources provided by national statistical agencies.

4.4.2 Luxembourg Income Study (LIS)

The Luxembourg Income Study (www.lisdatacenter.org) is an income database comprised of harmonised micro-level data from about 50 middle and high-income countries. The data include both individual and household level data on income, employment, social security, private transfers, taxes, contributions, and expenditures.

In my dissertation, the LIS data is used in article II for the empirical analysis of employment conditions and precarious work in paid domestic labour in five countries: Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain, and the United States. The advantage of the LIS data is that the datasets are standardised and harmonised specifically for the purpose of cross-national comparative research. However, the standardisation of different datasets also encounters some challenges, as the measurement and sampling methods used to compile the data may differ between countries and surveys. Still, the LIS data is one of the few existing databases for cross-national income and employment comparisons for all geographical regions of the world, and thus is widely used in research on the dynamics and mechanisms of inequality.

4.4.3 Policy documents and other secondary sources

For article III, I collected policy data related to domestic services in 13 affluent countries. These policies include tax credit schemes and voucher systems, and employment and migration programs targeted at domestic and care work. This information was gathered from official policy documents and laws posted on the websites of national institutions and organisations (for a full list, see Jokela, 2017). The criteria for selecting a source was that it had to be an official government source, either an original law on which the policy is based, a summary of the law, or an official presentation of the policy. Secondary sources (previous studies and reports) were used to analyse the impact of domestic employment policies on the precarity of paid domestic labour.

4.5 Definition and measurement of paid domestic work

Two of the articles in my dissertation are based on quantitative analysis that required operationalization of the concept of paid domestic work. While a number of different definitions have been used to identify paid domestic work (see ILO 2013), in this research I chose to use the industry-based approach that is also used by the ILO to identify domestic workers (ILO, 2013). This approach draws on the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), which defines all persons employed by private households as domestic workers.

Using quantitative data sources for studying paid domestic work is challenging for several reasons. First, using cross-national data always raises concerns regarding sampling and measurement, as there may be differences between countries' data collection methods. The data mainly include domestic workers employed by private households, and so excludes workers for private companies from the analysis. The second challenge is related to the extent of informal work: a large proportion of paid domestic work is performed in the informal economy, where neither employers nor

domestic workers pay taxes, or contribute to social security. Most of these workers are not represented in official statistics (ILO 2013; Schwenken and Heimeshoff, 2011).

The advantage the ILO data on domestic workers has is that they are mostly derived from national labour force surveys designed to include all forms of employment, whether registered or not (ILO 2013: 13). However, not all informal work is captured, as some non-registered workers may be reluctant to provide information about their jobs to a government official. Third, a significant proportion of domestic workers, particularly in European and East Asian countries, are undocumented migrant workers. Unfortunately, these workers are excluded from the sample, since surveys used to compile the ILO database usually rely on household registration data.

Since there are some challenges related to the documentation of domestic workers, it should be kept in mind that the data I use do not represent the full extent of the domestic services sector. Nonetheless, the data I use in my research are the most comprehensive data available for international comparison at this time.

5 Summary of research articles

5.1 Macro-Level Determinants of Paid Domestic Labour Prevalence: A Cross-National Analysis of Seventy-Four Countries

Global developments, such as ageing populations, migration, income inequality, a growing number of women entering labour markets, and changes in the provision of care, are said to be related to the growing demand for domestic workers. However, empirical quantitative evidence supporting these associations is scarce. In the first article I explore how macro-level factors related to care needs (female employment rates and the proportion of the population that is aged), labour markets (proportion of migrants and vulnerable employment), and economic characteristics (gross domestic product, income inequalities, and level of urbanisation) are associated with the prevalence of paid domestic labour. For this study, I use World Bank and ILO macro-level data for 74 countries.

The results of the study show that a higher prevalence of paid household workers is associated with greater income inequality, but also with a higher proportion of migrants. The association with income inequality remained unchanged, even after controlling for six other variables related to the demand and supply of domestic services. These findings indicate that income inequality is a crucial factor in determining the proportion of household workers in the labour force.

5.2 Patterns of precarious employment in a female-dominated sector in five affluent countries – The case of the paid domestic labour sector

The second article moves to the micro level of paid household work and examines the employment conditions of household workers. Previous research suggests that female-dominated industries, such as paid care work, are undervalued in our society, and hence they are often affected by precarious employment conditions. Furthermore, it is stated that due to its exceptional nature (performed in private households), precariousness is particularly common among women working in paid domestic

services, because the line between personal and employment issues is often blurred. However, case studies also show that there are notable differences in precarious employment conditions in domestic and care services that are related not only to the characteristics of the job, but also to the individual characteristics of the persons performing the jobs, thereby leaving some workers more exposed to precariousness than others.

Using the Luxembourg Income Study of Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain, and the United States from 2013 to 2014, this study compares the prevalence of precarious employment in domestic work, care work, and other industries, across five welfare states, and examines the impact of industry and individual characteristics. Using multivariate regression analyses I evaluate 1) whether domestic workers are more likely to work under precarious employment conditions compared to other elementary occupations, and 2) the role individual characteristics play in shaping precarious work. To better understand the inequalities related to precarious work, this study takes a multidimensional approach, and examines precarious employment conditions using an indicator of four factors (part-time employment, unemployment experience, short job tenure, and low-wage work). The results of my analysis show that domestic and care workers have a higher probability of working in precarious employment settings, with a particularly strong association for domestic workers. In addition, being female, younger in age, less educated, or an immigrant, increases the risk in all the countries examined.

5.3 The role of domestic employment policies in shaping precarious work

In the third article, I focus on policy reforms related to paid household work in affluent countries. Due to a rising demand for private domestic and care services, many wealthier countries have decided to develop the sector by introducing new policies such as tax rebates or voucher systems targeted especially at households, while other countries have begun to regulate the already existing informal work of migrant workforces.

In this article, I argue that while benefiting the households, the policy reforms have done little to improve the status of the profession and employment in the sector. This is shown by comparing the aims of the existing policies, and analysing the ways in which they shape the employment conditions in the domestic services sector. Drawing on secondary literature and policy documents, I identify five policy approaches commonly applied in affluent countries to regulate and develop domestic employment: (1) affordable services; (2) simplifying use; (3) regulating employment; (4) regulating labour migration; and (5) no policy. Based on a literature review, three dimensions of precarious work are studied: (1) the nature of employment (formal/

informal); (2) the employment relationship; and (3) the form of employment (temporary or permanent, part time or full time).

The results of my study suggest that policy design plays a crucial role in regulating employment conditions and determining the level of precariousness in paid domestic labour. I argue that policies targeted towards domestic services may contribute to an increasing precarity of domestic workers either directly, by encouraging informal and irregular work, or indirectly, through households (providing incentives for households that weaken employees' positions). Nevertheless, I also found positive measures that may allow creating more secure employment conditions in domestic work by formalizing the sector. Finally, despite some differences in the outcomes that result under the different policy types, the findings suggest that across welfare states, domestic employment policies are still mostly demand driven, and sustain the traditional, special nature of domestic work – often at the workers' expense.

6 Results and discussion

My aim was to examine inequalities in paid domestic labour and the ways that these inequalities are sustained and produced from global perspective. Earlier research suggests that paid domestic labour is strongly related to social hierarchies and categories in a society, and that this relationship creates inequalities that affect the status and employment of domestic workers. As I argue in my dissertation, the production and reproduction of these inequalities is three-fold: first, poor recognition of domestic work is associated with the wider phenomenon of the undervaluation of women's tasks. The inequalities are also linked to several global developments that fuel paid domestic labour, such as informal employment, transnational migration, and the income distribution between the rich and the poor: as I documented in my research, income inequality is one of the main drivers of the prevalence of domestic employment. These results confirmed the findings of Milkman et al. (1998), who studied the question in the US context. Moreover, similar to Milkman et al., I found migration to be another key contributor to the incidence of paid domestic work. In a global comparison, the lowest incidence of domestic workers (and income inequality) was found in Northern European countries, where care services are predominantly provided publicly, and the custom of outsourcing domestic tasks, such as cleaning, is less common. On the other end, the highest income inequality and prevalence of paid domestic labour was found in South Africa and many Latin American countries, where public care support is non-existent, and families are mainly responsible for the organisation of care. It should be emphasised that it was income inequality within a country, and not inequalities between countries, that was associated with the higher prevalence of paid domestic labour. Consequently, it may be argued that this result highlights the global pattern of this phenomenon, indicating that even in the post-industrial era, domestic work has not lost its historical link to economic inequality.

Second, earlier qualitative studies have shown that structural inequalities are reproduced in domestic service at the individual level (Lutz 2011; Näre 2013; Anderson 2000; Parreñas 2000). As the results of my quantitative comparison confirmed, precarious employment conditions (measured here by part-time employment, low wages, short job tenure, and unemployment experience) are more prevalent in paid domestic work compared to other industries. Furthermore, the results showed that across welfare regimes, working in the paid domestic sector increases the risk of

working in precarious employment settings. The precarity of paid domestic service derives partly from the multiple disadvantaged social categories of the persons working in the sector. Paradoxically, the reasons for the inequalities (gender, race, cultural background or nationality) in domestic service are the same factors that account for their employment in the first place. As Gurung (2009) puts it, domestic workers in the labour market become ‘ideal workers as well as victims’ (391).

Third, earlier studies in social policy highlight the role of policy design in shaping the situations of certain social groups in the society and legitimising their disadvantaged situation (Bacchi, 1999; Fawcett, Goodwin, Meagher, & Phillips, 2010). As my research showed, policies related to domestic service may have a significant impact on the dynamics of the sector and the precariousness of workers’ employment, and how welfare states across world regulate (or disregard regulations) the sector of domestic services reflects the position of domestic workers in these labour markets: on the one hand, policies may sustain the traditional role of domestic servants, as in the case of the care worker programs in Canada or Hong Kong, as ‘part of the family’, and contribute to the precarious position of domestic workers, which at its worst includes limited citizenship. Furthermore, as the German Mini Job system illustrated, policies may be designed to deliberately maintain low wages in the domestic sector by offering incentives to both employers and employees by regulating the employment conditions of the latter. I also referred to conditions in the United States to illustrate how ‘no policy’ sustains existing weak market regulations and the employment of (undocumented) migrant workers under poor employment conditions. In my dissertation, I focused on specific policies designed to regulate domestic employment, however, previous research has also highlighted the importance of the general migration, employment and care ‘regimes’ in shaping the demand and nature of domestic work in different welfare states (Williams and Gavanas 2008; Williams 2012; Margarita and Hobson 2015; Hobson et al. 2015; Parreñas 2017; Anderson 2010a).

Thus, the three different layers – structural, individual, and policy – intersect in ways that contribute to maintaining the ‘special’ position of domestic workers across countries: the cultural undervaluation of domestic work, together with a strongly feminised workforce that consists predominantly of migrants, places domestic workers at greater risk of working under precarious employment conditions. Moreover, in many countries insufficient care provisions (and legitimisation of the situation) lead to households looking for cheap solutions, which in turn encourages the informal employment (often undocumented) of migrants, and prevents workers from benefiting from formal employment contracts.

Similar to previous studies that have discussed the political discourse related to outsourcing domestic work (Morel 2015; Hiilamo 2015; Näre 2016; Van Hooren 2017; Kvist and Peterson 2010), the comparison of policies confirmed that domestic employment policies are primarily designed to benefit households that employ domestic workers. However, as I found in my research on affluent countries, policies

may also contribute to *reducing* the precarity of persons working in paid domestic service: household-targeted policies such as voucher systems or tax deductions aim at reducing undeclared work, which indirectly benefits domestic workers in the form of formal employment contracts. In contrast, when a domestic worker is employed directly by a household, their employment is typically not seen as contractual. Consequently, bargaining power becomes crucial, and is often also dependent on the worker's socioeconomic characteristics. Hence, it may be argued that the precarities in employment through enterprises tend to be related to general issues regarding wages and working hours in the sector, while in the traditional direct employment relationship, precarities are sustained by the very nature of the employment relationship, since workers have to rely not only on their own bargaining power, but on the 'good will' of their employers, that starts with having a written job contract. On the other hand, sometimes precisely because of the personalised nature of the job, 'being part of the family' may be viewed as a desirable working relationship at the individual level (Näre, 2011).

7 Conclusions

During industrialisation and urbanisation, domestic service was thought to serve as a ‘means of the modernisation of rural labor and particularly of women’, as Theresa McBride wrote in her study on the modernisation of household service (McBride, 1976, p. 117). In present societies, since a large proportion of women in most parts of the world are participating in the labour force, and the public provision of care services is limited, domestic workers are again expected to fill the gaps in care related tasks: for example, in the European Union, domestic service is being promoted as a future employment growth sector that will create long-term employment opportunities particularly for migrant women, of primary significance, relieve the ‘care burden’ on middle income households (European Commission, 2012; Morel, 2015). However, the unskilled image associated with domestic service remains persistent, and sustains the idea that it is a task anyone can perform. Unlike many other services, it is not regarded as worthy of decent remuneration. The results of my research indicate that most policies have hitherto deliberately promoted this idea – often as part of a wider agenda of expanding the low paid service sector – instead of enhancing the professionalisation of domestic work and improving the status accorded the occupation. Thus, drawing on my findings and previous studies on this issue, I argue that the inequalities in paid domestic labour are so strongly embedded in society that they have become institutionalized. Institutional inequality is also strongly present in many countries of the Global South, where the undervaluation of domestic labour is reflected in labour laws that exclude domestic workers or provide them with only partial protection and benefits. Moreover, despite different institutional contexts, the positions of domestic workers are similar across regions and countries and high informality and precarious employment settings are common across welfare regimes.

While this global comparison has the advantage of providing a comprehensive picture of paid domestic labour in current societies, it also has limitations. Due to the availability of proper statistical data, each article of my dissertation deals with a different set of countries. Nevertheless, the three different country comparisons, global comparison in article I, OECD comparison in article III and the five-country comparison focusing on Western welfare states in article II, allowed to explore the inequalities in paid domestic labour in three different contexts.

Moreover, as I relied mostly on official statistics, I could not include undocumented

workers in my research, so this research underestimates both the prevalence of paid domestic labour and precarious work in the sector. Thus, my research concentrates mainly on paid domestic labour performed in the formal sector. The use of official statistics also narrowed the focus of my empirical analysis to domestic workers employed by households, and excluded self-employment and enterprises. In addition, au pairs, who provide an important share of domestic and care work in Western European countries, could not be included in this study, as they are typically not identified as employees in labour statistics or other household surveys.

It is difficult to develop direct policy recommendations that would apply in the global context that is the scope of this research. However, some policy implications may be discussed. The results of my study show that policy design is crucial when shaping paid domestic labour. More attention should be paid to the mechanisms that promote fair working conditions for those employed in the sector, and monitoring the enforcement of domestic workers' legal rights. Moreover, the professionalisation of domestic service should be emphasised to decrease the dependency of domestic workers on their employers. This includes providing the training of specific skills, to raise the status of the occupation and the quality of the jobs available, which would also potentially lead to encouraging more households to invest in quality services. While domestic workers have organised unions in many countries, to date collective bargaining has been challenging, particularly in countries where employers consist of private individual households. Governments should find ways to promote dialogue between employers and employees, and involve both actors in policy processes.

While the global comparison of my study showed that higher income inequality is associated with higher prevalence of paid domestic labour, markets for private domestic services exist even in countries with low income inequality, such as Finland or Sweden. In the introduction of this dissertation, I cited the story of Rhea, a Filipina woman who was working as a domestic worker for a Finnish family. Domestic workers, especially those residing with the employer, are still a fairly marginal phenomenon in Finland compared to many other countries, however, the situation may change in the future with the expansion of for-profit provision and privatization of care services and the middle and high income households' increasing preference of purchasing domestic services from the markets.

Since it is based on occupational inequalities, the position of paid domestic labour and domestic workers is related to core social policy and social insurance issues in affluent countries, that is, who is entitled to protection in the workplace, and to what extent. In the global context, considering that social security and formal contracts are not always the norm in all countries, the unequal status of paid domestic labour is also linked to a wider discussion on legitimisation of social inequalities in a society and accepting poorer working conditions for persons from certain social categories. In the introduction to the dissertation, I discussed theories of modernisation according to which segment of paid domestic labour would disappear because

there would simply not be enough workers to perform the jobs, primarily because of the occupation's stigma, but also because of the low remuneration paid in this sector. The issue of domestic workers' remuneration and employment conditions remains problematic, as it is directly linked to households' abilities to pay for these services. Particularly in countries where domestic workers are employed on a full-time basis and fill gaps in public care provisions, this poses a real challenge if households do not receive support from the state. Thus, as paid domestic labour in the 21st century now seems to be living its new era through globalisation and as part of the neoliberal organisation of care, states should take greater responsibility for improving the status of the sector.

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Endnotes

- 1 Me Naiset 2008 'Kotiapulaisten paluu' Original text (own translation): 'Kaikki on mennyt uskomattoman hyvin. Rhea on ahkera ja oma-aloitteinen, ja asiat hoituvat ilman, että niistä tehdään numeroa. Hän on läsnäoleva, mutta osaa olla myös huomaamaton, Paula ylistää.'
- 2 Me Naiset 2008 'Kotiapulaisten paluu' Original text (own translation): 'Ja kuka suomalainen olisi vastannut toiveitamme? Halusimme englanninkielisen hoitajan, joka asuisi meillä ja työskentelisi minimipalkalla.'
- 3 https://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_103.htm
- 4 The numbers of migrant workers are based on the labour force participation rates of migrants from the OECD Migration database, and the ILO Global and Regional Databases on Labour Migration, and do not include irregular and undocumented migration.
- 5 For full list of countries, see Information System on International Labour Standards <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en>
- 6 The definition of vulnerable employment is based on the assumption that these two groups of workers are more likely to have informal work arrangements, do not have access to benefits or social protection programs, and are more at risk to economic cycles. The term is also used as an indicator of overall employment quality, as having a high number of workers in vulnerable employment normally indicates widespread informal work arrangements. See ILO 2010 and ILO 2012.

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