

Later-life care work migration:
Patterns of the reorganisation of informal care obligations in Central and Eastern Europe

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„Sometimes I think the same as my mother does: for foreign people I am available with heart and soul and with my whole body, day and night, but for my own mother in need of care, I never have time. That’s really sad.“

Maria from Slovakia, aged 40 years, divorced, son aged 16,
care obligations towards: son and mother

24-hour care workers from *Romania* and *Slovakia*
at an advanced age (40 to 60+)

- (1) Migrant care worker's informal care obligations at home
- (2) Reorganisation of informal care obligations at home:
childcare, older care and domestic work

-> *Global care chains?*

Context

- 24-hour live-in care work for older people in Austria (Regularisation in 2007; self-employment)
- Nearly 70% between 40 and 60 years of age
- Central and Eastern European countries of origin
- Intra-European circular migration (2-4 weeks)

Method

- 20 qualitative problem-centered interviews
- Women from *Slovakia (11)* and *Romania (9)*, live-in 24-hour care workers

Characteristics and informal care obligations

Socio-demographic characteristics

- Aged between 40 and 63 years
- Married (12) or divorced/widowed (8)
- Younger to teenage children, grandchildren

Informal care obligations at home

- Different types of care demands (practical, financial, organisational, etc.)
- Higher vs. lower intensities of care demands
- Multiple informal care obligations at home
- Higher care demands for women aged 40 to 50 years
- Transnational caregiving activities

Patterns of reorganising informal care obligations ^{1/2}

- **Multiple** care obligations of substitute caregivers
- **Men** as caregivers
- **Children** as caregivers

Patterns of reorganising informal care obligations 2/2

- **Grandmothers** as *carers* and as *dependents* in need of care
- *Unremunerated* and *remunerated* care provisions
- Emerging *care deficits* at home

- ***It's the family who cares***
 - Nuclear and extended family as main substitute caregivers
 - Different involvement of men and grandmothers
 - Global care chain ends in the home country
- ***Conditions impacting on the reorganisation of care***
 - Intra-family relationships, compliance, reciprocity, housing conditions
 - Culture and institutional care provisions
- ***National and transnational improvements in social support***
 - Financial necessity vs. lack of financial and institutional support
 - Care deficit vs. reconciling paid and unpaid care obligations across borders

„It doesn't help anything to stay at home because you need financial support. You need money [for example] to pay the residential care home, to pay for diapers, which are not paid by social insurance. That is why I have to go to work [to Austria]. Even if you would stay two months at home with your mother and provide care for her, it doesn't help anything, because you don't have the financial background you need to. That is sad.“

Michaela from Slovakia, 55 years, divorced, adult children,
care obligations towards: mother, grandchild, two quasi-family
members

Thank you!

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