Integration of new female migrants in the German labor market and society and German state policies on integration: A State of the Art

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Integration of Female Immigrants in Labor Market and Society. Policy Assessment and Policy Recommendations
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Introduction

The aim of this report is to outline the state of the art in research on the integration of ‘new’ female migrants in Germany. The report is conducted in the framework of the research project “Integration of Female Immigrants in Labor Market and Society. Policy Assessment and Policy Recommendations”. The German part of this project aims to analyze the integration processes of ‘new’ female migrants in both the German labor market and society at large, and to assess the impact of German integration policy. The first task of this report is to review key literature in this area and provide an overview of knowledge on the topic and review central debates, both empirical and theoretical. A further task is to identify knowledge gaps and to specify priorities for further research.

In what follows, after portraying the general characteristics of ‘new’ female migrants in Germany, we will take a brief look at theoretical developments in transnationalism, a concept being endorsed by many gender and migration scholars and under steady refinement. Then we will review empirical studies focusing on three different key groups: marriage migrants, migrant domestic and care workers, and female migrants in prostitution. This will be followed by a section on policy analysis affecting female migrants. We will end this report by discussing gaps in current available information and new research agendas.

1 Who are the ‘new’ female migrants?

Before we define the ‘new’ female migrants in our study, let us contextualize the field of gender and migration with an emphasis on Germany. Since the 1980s, feminist scholars have been critical of the lack of academic recognition for female migrants and their role in migration movements (Morokvasic 1984). Contrary to claims that the feminization of migration is a new trend (Castles & Miller 2003), women have always been in a migration stream. What is new is rather the recognition of women’s participation in migration, both politically and academically (Morokvasic 1984, Lutz & Morokvasic-Müller 2002), and the increasing autonomous migration of women in post socialist Eastern Europe in particular. The underlying interests of gender and migration scholars have been the deconstruction of gender-neutral assumptions in migration studies that had been based on the male migrant experience. These assumptions were criticized for their generalizing and androcentric nature (Lutz & Hildebrandt 1998, Lutz & Morokvasic-Müller 2002).

German feminist researchers have been examining gender specific aspects in migration since the late 1970s. They have long concentrated on the issue of tradition versus progressive orientations. In other words whether, and if so, how the migration process has changed gendered power relations within families (Ley 1979, Krasberg 1979). Ursula Apitzsch (1990, 1994, 1996) pointed out that modernization had been established as a process in the societies of origin prior to migration. This led to women taking active roles in migration and similar patterns among second-generation immigrants. The fact that immigrant women tend to coordinate their lives in order to accommodate their families does not necessarily mean that have they seek a return to their ‘traditional’ way of life during the settlement process. This family orientation has in fact had a paradoxical outcome: young female immigrants can demonstrate higher educational attainment than their male counterparts; this has also been referred to as the “dialectics of family orientation” (Apitzsch, 1990).

In an exclusionary discourse on immigration, immigrants tend to be seen as being oriented on their own cultural and religious traditions, a factor which stands in the way of successful social integration. However, this argument overlooks the theory that orientations towards religion and culture arise in the context of immigration. Traditional orientation and praxis are recreated in the process of immigration, by adapting and reacting to the material, social, historical, and biographical conditions of becoming a
member of a minority group in the destination country through immigration (Gültekin 2006; Inowlocki 2006, 2002, 2001)\(^1\)

Against a backdrop of gender and immigration studies in Germany, ‘new’ female migrants in our study are those who entered Germany as of the early 1990s. During the Gastarbeiter recruitment period, the sectors seeking the largest supply of foreign labor centered on industrial production. However, as these industries endured economic restructuring in the 1970s in response to the oil crisis, they could no longer create employment opportunities for newly arriving migrant women and men. Today, there is a large demand for recent female migrants in informal sectors, particularly domestic services and sex work (Alt 2003; Alt 2004b; Alt & Cyrus 2002).

Since the termination of the Gastarbeiter policy in 1973, there have been only limited entry categories to enable migration to Germany through an official channel. These entail family formation or reunification, humanitarian grounds, labor migration based on contractual, seasonal or specific vocational work, tourism, and higher education. Labor migration has been the exception rather than the rule since 1973. When a tangible demand arises in specific sectors, as recently witnessed in the information technology sector (the so-called “Green Card debate”), then workers may be recruited from abroad.

Migrant women entering Germany in recent decades have been confronted with a tight labor market, which offers them limited future perspectives (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration 2005). Sectors where the majority of female newcomers can be found are domestic services, hotel and restaurant trade, agriculture and the sex industry. These sectors all feature a high percentage of irregular employment (Krieger, Ludwig, Schupp and Will 2006) and are shunned by Germans and permanent immigrants as the work is dangerous, dirty and demanding with poor rates of compensation (see 2.2 for a detailed review).

Official statistical data depict the scale of regular migration flows. In terms of length of stay, at the end of 2005 there were approximately two million migrant women from EU and non-EU countries who had been living in Germany for a maximum period of 16 years (Kontos, Haferburg and Sacaliuc 2006). In contrast, with regard to numbers of irregular migrants, no reliable statistics are currently available, but experts estimate that there are between 500,000 and one million persons with this status living in Germany (Alt 2004a; Sinn, Kreienbrink, and von Loeffelholz 2006), however these estimates are not broken down according to gender (Ayres and Barber 2006).

New female migrants are composed of diverse groups with respect to migration motives, legal status and ethnicity, and research tends to focus on specific groups such as certain ethnic groups, particular types of migratory flows (for example, marriage migration), or distinct occupational groups (for example, domestic workers). Although this has led to an accumulation of knowledge about particular groups on the one hand, on the other hand, it has contributed to a fragmentation of information, as references to other groups are rare. Furthermore, studies are mostly case-based analyses and employ qualitative methods, for instance interviews conducted with female migrants and field experts such as counselors at NGOs, and police and customs officials.

Before we move on to a review of literature on this topic, we would like to offer a note of caution regarding the three ‘categories’ of migrant women we are looking at. Although we classify migrants into three groups, we do acknowledge that there are often overlaps amongst these categories. Moreover, scholars have pointed out that people often migrate with a combination of different motives and purposes (Morokvasic 1991). For example, a female migrant may be married to a German citizen and work as a caretaker for the elderly. This case would simultaneously fall into two categories, she would be a regular migrant in terms of immigration status but, having arranged her employment off the books, she would have an irregular employment status. A migrant woman may also enter Germany as a tourist and find a job as a domestic worker, but when her tourist visa expires she becomes an irregular migrant. She may later marry a German citizen. In this case, the legal status and the

\(^1\) Comparable processes of changing and recreating the meaning of cultural and religious traditions also take place among members of majority groups but are typically not considered to be a social problem (Gültekin 2006; Inowlocki 2006, 2002, 2001).
‘category’ of this woman change over time. Furthermore, an entry category and the official purpose of stay do not necessarily reveal the true motivation for migration. A migrant may enter Germany as a spouse, hoping to find a job. As these examples clearly show, the categories we employ are not at all precise and are inevitably arbitrary. Nevertheless, the use of categories still lends us a tool to map out the current state of affairs. Keeping the complexity of migratory flows in mind the following sections will, after sketching a theoretical discussion, review existing literature on marriage migration, migrant domestic/care work and prostitution.

2 Literature review

Theoretical debates: Transnationalism

It has become conventional to view immigrants as persons who have been uprooted and left home, confronted with integration into the immigration society. This tenet is predicated on a linear, unidirectional model of migration. However, scholars have closely examined migratory movements and revealed that migrants’ trajectories do not simply follow this notion of linear migration. Transnationalism represents one of the most recent developments in the field of migration research and, having attained its position of importance in migration studies in the US and UK in the early 1990s, it has been established in German academia (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc, 1994). Steven Vertovec (1999) defines transnationalism as “multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states” (p. 447), where the dynamic ties, linkages or networks can be of an economic, social, cultural and political nature.

The early concept received criticism from both advocates and opponents of transnational migration due to its lack of a well-defined theoretical framework and need for analytical refinement (Bommes 2003, Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 1999, Kivisto 2001), as well as its primary focus on settled immigrants (Morokvasic 2002, Rodriguez 2002). In fact, transnational migration still forms a highly fragmented field of study. Nevertheless, the viability of the concept is found in questioning the assumption that a migrant journey is a permanent and linear movement. Advocates emphasize the cross-border, back-and-forth and multi-directional movements of people, capital, goods and ideas, which are facilitated by current affordable communications (Portes et. al 1999).

The subject of transnationalism can also vary from “above” to “below”. Luis Guarnizo and Michael Smith (1998) warn against the romanticized tendencies of celebrating “transnationalism from below” as if migrant transnational practices were inherently counter-hegemonic. They point out the danger in accepting essentialized national identities in migrants without criticism, as these often underlie transnational migration practices.

Moreover, being ‘transnational’ could mean going beyond national belongings. This aspect of transnationality has not yet been subjected to in-depth research. Analyzing a political campaign for changes in immigration rules initiated by a migrant domestic workers’ group in London (United Workers’ Association, UWA), Bridget Anderson (2001) shows collective localized resistance to identities imposed from above (“illegal migrant” or “a member of a family”) in domestic workers of different nationalities and ethnicities. Hence transnationality has two dimensions: movements of people, capital, goods, ideas, and emotions across nation-state borders on one hand; and the formation of hybrid identities going beyond national and ethnic belongings on the other. Transnationalism captures the multiple linkages operated by migrants and the dynamics of social divisions predicated by gender, ethnicity and class in the migration process.

This emerging field of study has been explored by a number of scholars in Germany. Based on his research on Turkish immigrants and their successive generations in Germany, Thomas Faist (2000) advocates the concept of “transnational social spaces”. These consist of “combinations of sustained social and symbolic ties, their contents, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that can be found in multiple states. These spaces denote dynamic processes, not static notions of ties and positions. Cultural, political, and economic processes in transnational social spaces
involve the accumulation, use, and effects of various sorts of capital, their volume and convertibility: economic capital, human capital, such as educational credentials, skills and know-how, and social capital mainly sources inherent in or transmitted through social and symbolic ties” (Faist 2000, 199-200). Faist differentiates between space and place: whereas place denotes physical locations, space can encompass multiple physical locations, space embodies a social and symbolic meaning beyond territoriality. According to him, it is these imaginary transnational social spaces where migrants foster long-term linkages with family members across nation-state borders (Faist 2000, 45-6).

Similarly, Ludger Pries (2001) endorses the concept of transnational social spaces. He argues that, in the age of globalization, a decoupling process is occurring concerning geographic and social spaces, which used to be tied together or mutually embedded. Geographical spaces denote geographical and local surface (i.e. nation-states, communities, etc.), while social spaces are the stages for everyday life and encompass a wide spectrum of a person’s social world (Pries 2001). The mutual embeddedness of geographical and social spaces is disrupted by globalization, resulting in an emergence of transnational social spaces. Transnational social spaces are “pluri-local frames of reference which structure everyday practices, social positions, employment trajectories and biographies, and human identities, and simultaneously exist above and beyond the social contexts of national societies” (Pries 2001, p. 65). Thus transnational social spaces expand across several geographical spaces, linking several geographical localities.

In contrast to North American studies on transnational migration, which primarily focus on bipolar linkages of permanent immigrants to their home countries, back-and-forth movements characterize the European context. Central and Eastern European women take advantage of the freedom of movement within the European Union (EU) and cheap transportation costs, factors which allow them to circumvent emigration (Morokvasic 2002, 2004; for a more detailed review of empirical studies, see 2.2.3 in this report). Their circular movements, which have become a way of life for many Eastern and Central Europeans, are a particular form of transnationalism in Europe (Morawska 2000; Morokvasic 2003, 2004). These migration practices undermine the conventional notion of migration, which equates migration with immigration and assumes a linear process towards settlement and assimilation (Morokvasic 2003, 2004).

2.1 Empirical studies on new female migration

2.1.1 New female migrants and irregular migration

An irregular immigration status is an aspect that appears persistently and cuts across all three of the migrant groups dealt with in this report. Thus it is worthwhile to reflect upon discourses on illegality here. Different terms can be used to describe people without a regular immigration status: illegal, undocumented, people without papers or sans-papiers in French, and irregular are just a few. ‘Illegal’ is a word which is often used both in political as well as scientific discourses, but it is closely connected to a discourse which criminalizes human beings. However, human beings cannot be illegal by nature. Illegality is a not condition unique in its characteristics because human beings only become ‘illegal’ based on the legal framework of the nation-state to which they are migrating (Alt & Cyrus 2002; Schwenken 2006). In other words, the nation-state defines who is ‘legal’ and who is not, and thus ‘illegal’ is not a personal characteristic of a human being. We do not want to reinforce this criminalizing discourse by employing this term. ‘Undocumented’ is not a precise term either since the majority of migrants without regular immigration status have possessed some kind of paper at one point in time—be it a visa, a passport—but lost it due to expiration (Alt & Cyrus 2002). This means that they were once documented. Another term, ‘irregular’ is more accurate, being neutral in meaning, and avoids the criminalizing discourse of ‘illegal’. Therefore, in this report, we utilize the term irregular unless the intention is to emphasize the dominant discourse.

Illegality tends to be associated with ‘illegal’ entrance and stay, thus the lack of a right to enter and stay in Germany. However, it may take different and in fact multiple forms. As Alt and Cyrus (2002) point out, even if one has a visa or is entitled to enter Germany as a tourist without a visa, if s/he
works without a work permit, this person is ‘illegal’ in terms of employment status. One can also speak of “double illegality” if a person does not possess a valid visa and works without a work permit (Alt & Cyrus 2002, p. 142-43).

Official estimates on the number of irregular migrants in Germany are based on criminal statistics. According to the Federal Criminal Police there were 94,000 irregular migrants in Germany in 2001 (Heckmann 2004). Scholars estimate a higher number of irregular migrants: ranging from 100,000 to one million (Alt 1999; Alt 2003; Alt 2003; Alt 2004; Cyrus 2004; Sinn, Kreienbrink, and von Loeflefholz 2006). Most authors assume that there are more male than female irregular immigrants (Krieger, Ludwig, Schupp, and Will 2006), however, the structure of the informal market, especially in sectors such as domestic work, restaurants and the sex industry, which have a high demand for female migrant labor, suggests the opposite. Due to its large domestic service sector, Philip Anderson (2003, 2004) assumes that the majority of irregular migrants in Munich are female. Jörg Alt (Alt 1999; Alt 2003) compared the old and new federal states and found differences in the employment sectors seeking irregular migrant women. There is little demand for migrant domestics in (former) East Germany due to higher unemployment rates and a lower salary level. While in eastern Germany irregular migrant women are few, scattered throughout marginal labor market sectors including the construction sector, in western Germany they are numerous and more likely to be found in paid domestic work.

Literature is available on irregular migrants, frequently with a local focus (Alt 2003; Alt 2004; Alt 2004; Anderson 2003; Cyrus 2001; Cyrus 2004). Uli Sextro, Karin Asboe, Dietrich Eckeberg, and Jens Rautenberg (2002) conducted a study on the situation of irregular migrants in the federal state of Nordrhein-Westfalia. The study pays special attention to the social situation of migrants, the problems they are confronted with and their strategies for action. Central to their study were issues of human rights in relation to work, income, housing, health, and schooling for their children. They also formulated policy recommendations, which advocate an improvement in the situation faced by migrants and a legalization of their immigration status. (Krieger et al 2006: 20).

A study in Frankfurt am Main, carried out by Wolfgang Krieger, Monika Ludwig, Patrick Schupp, and Annegret Will (2006), delivers an overview on migrant life and working conditions, rendering the experiences of irregular female migrants visible. The study revealed just how precarious various facets of their lives can be due to illegality and other problems specific to irregular female migrants in domestic services, prostitution, hotel and restaurants and agriculture, and illustrated problems involved with seeking medical treatment in case of illness or pregnancy. The authors found that, with the passage of time, some of these migrants have been able to find better jobs and realize occupational mobility (2006: 20). While most studies on irregular migrants focus on their life conditions and tend to be descriptive, the study by Krieger and his collaborators (2006) also has a genuine policy focus, examining the ways in which institutions deal with irregular migrants, including the leeway local institutions show towards these migrants. The study closes with policy recommendations that take into account the need for protecting human rights through a range of measures: legalization, the improvement of institutional competencies (for instance through better legal literacy and foreign language acquisition), and increased funding for support institutions and anonymous counseling.

Irregular work by irregular migrants must also be regarded from the perspective of forced work connected to trafficking in human beings. In an exploratory examination of “forced work” in Germany prepared for the International Labor Organization, Norbert Cyrus (Cyrus 2005a) discusses the forced work of irregular female migrants in domestic service, prostitution, and production. This analysis is very important, as public debates have only addressed forced work in relation to migrant prostitution, although the new anti-trafficking legislation entails the exploitation of labor a phenomenon accompanying trafficking in human beings.

2.1.2 Marriage migrants

A large group of women entering Germany in the last decade were those immigrating as family members; in particular those intending to marry a German citizen or a migrant with a residence permit.
Migrants arriving in Germany for family formation or re-unification come predominantly from Turkey, the states of the former Yugoslavia, the Russian Federation, Morocco and Thailand. Marriage migration has increased in significance since the end of the 1970s. From 1996 to 2005, 163,769 women entered the country as the spouse of a German citizen and 188,012 as the spouse of non-German male (Deutscher Bundestag 2006: 100). Among some nationalities, women make up the majority of the migratory flow as a result of marriage migration. In 2002, 74% of the migrants from Thailand were female; other countries with a high percentage of women immigrants to Germany in the same year were Estonia (68%), Peru (67%), Lithuania (65%), the Philippines (64%), and Cuba (62%) (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration Flüchtlinge und Integration 2004: 27).

The reasons for marriage migration are contentious. Some authors see detraditionalization, the individualization of modern German society, and mass tourism as structural factors leading to marriage migration (Müller-Schneider 2000). Others, on the contrary, interpret a disproportionately high percentage of women among marriage migrants as a result of an adherence by German men to traditional gender role models in family life and their reluctance to accept emancipation among German women. Migrant women from South East Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, regions struggling with economic and social development, are typically thought to be docile and more willing to accept a subordinate position in marriage relationships (Beck-Gernsheim 1995).

When migrants come to Germany to marry migrants with residence rights, they rely largely on family arrangements and we can speak of broad family networking strategies (Straßburger 2003). Intra-ethnic, trans-state marriages appear in a high percentage (61.1%) among second generation Turkish migrants in Germany and these suggest strong networks with, and links to, the country of origin. As resettlement consolidates through intra-ethnic, trans-state marriages, kin-based networks are transformed to consist of non-family members (Straßburger 2001: 6).

Studies shedding light on the phenomenon of marriage migration focus on types of marriage migration emerging from specific social and economic conditions in the countries of origin and the migration motivation that these conditions produce. There are two main analytical perspectives in this research: One focuses on the structural constraints which compel women to set off to Germany and under which these women have to live once they are married (Niesner, Anonuevo, Aparocoi, and Sonsiengchai-Fenzl 1997, Kelek 2005). Another addresses the agency of migrant women and examines how they overcome the structural constraints they are confronted with. This approach does not see marriage migration as a hurdle of integration (Straßburger 2003).

A study conducted by Elvira Niesner, Estrella Anonuevo, Marta Aparocoi and Petchara Sonsiengchai-Fenzl (1997) on women’s migration from Thailand and Philippines is an example of the first perspective. Their main argument is that the discrimination with which women are confronted in the countries of origin during immigration makes them vulnerable and deprives them of self-determination. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork on female marriage migrants and migrant women in domestic work and prostitution, the authors point to blurred boundaries between trafficking and the autonomous migration of women. What makes the boundaries unclear is that these women not only rely on profit-oriented matching agencies but also informal networks of family and friends. Systematic discrimination against women in Thailand and the Philippines compels women to migrate and simultaneously holds them responsible for financially supporting their families, while men are free from such liability. The formal or informal mediation of brides from these countries to German men bears the character of trafficking in women for sexual and labor exploitation (Niesner, Anonuevo, Aparocoi, and Sonsiengchai-Fenzl 1997). Increased acknowledgement of commercial marriage migration has led governments, both in Thailand and the Philippines, to set up measures to protect women. The Thai government banned matching agencies in order to reduce the exploitation of women. However, policy is trapped in a dilemma, as the government is dependent on remittances sent by these migrants. Thus, the Thai government is rather reluctant to effectively combat marriage

\[\text{2 In the beginning of the 1990s the German government also tightened entrance requirement for Thai and Filipino nationals to prevent the migration of ‘catalogue brides’ and prostitutes by introducing a visa.}\]
migration. Similarly, the government has no choice but to accept mass tourism, which effectively caters to prostitution, since mass tourism is one of the main sources of state revenue.

The social conditions under which these women live affect their integration process. The barriers of integration are closely linked to relationships with their husbands and families; conflicts arise through difficulties in intercultural communications and ambivalent relationships towards their female compatriots. Many of these women enter Germany with a tourist visa, which is only valid for three months. Niesner and her collaborators point out that due to this time limit they tend to hasten finding a husband-to-be, not allowing the relationship to mature. Consequently, these relationships often lack stability. Furthermore, according to Niesner et al, these women have little social contact outside their families and acquaintances/friends from the same country, and thus tend to be isolated. Relationships among compatriots are, however, ambivalent. They screen one another to find out who is best adhering to moral standards, which results in high degrees of tension and social control among them. Consequently, they often try to maintain a healthy distance from their own female ethnic community, although it is one of the few sources of social contact they have.

Necla Kelek (Kelek 2005) takes a similar slant in investigating arranged marriages among second generation immigrant men from Turkey. Kelek inspects aspects of the economic transaction that accompany such arrangements. The key figure here, holding decision-making power, is the bridegroom’s mother. She utilizes the young bride’s labor. Pointing out an obvious lack of self-determination among the young women and a high degree of exploitation by the husband’s family, Kelek’s analysis reveals a power relationship established by gender and age. It also reveals the proximity of this marriage practice to trafficking in women. Moreover her analysis raises skepticism concerning the chances for these young women to realize social integration. According to Kelek, they enter segregated ethnic social structures characterized as a “parallel society” (Kelek 2005: 258). They rarely have contact with German society, and socialize exclusively with other young women in the same situation. The conditions in the “parallel societies” often lead to religious fundamentalism among these women, because for them religion is the only moral support they can adhere to within the social isolation and oppression exercised by the husband’s family.

Based on her qualitative research on marriage migration by Thai women to Germany, Pataya Ruengkaew (Ruengkaew 2003) considers international marriage migrations to be the last stage of internal rural-urban migrations, and maintains that such moves are based on perceived opportunities concerning education and work and, as such, marriage migration is a project of these female migrants. Thai women use both marriage agencies and informal networks to enter Germany. However, the motives of migration are multilayered: Ruengkaew believes that marriage migration is a strategy to circumvent immigration constraints and realize labor migration. Immigration policy transforms labor migrants to marriage migrants. Here the boundaries between marriage and labor migration are blurred. In contrast to the afore-mentioned studies, the integration prospects for marriage migrants are not evaluated negatively. The relationship between the spouses is characterized as one of mutual interdependence in terms of emotional and other needs. In this sense, a balance of power is reached.

Gaby Straßburger (2003) develops a similar perspective in her study on arranged marriages between second-generation Turkish immigrants. Although transnational, these are intra-ethnic marriages with spouses from the country of origin. Drawing on biographical interviews, Straßburger comes to the conclusion that the young men and women are not passive victims of their parents. Not only are they actively involved in the decision making process, but they can also influence this open-ended process. Although they rarely appear as obvious actors, they do utilize subtle forms of communication, trying to balance individual and family orientations. However subtle their actions may be, it is here that we can still discern constrained agency in these young women (and men). Integration of the immigrating spouse into the new social context is not determined to fail, as the first perspective suggests.

While most studies refer to marriage migration from non-‘Western’ societies and highlight its embeddedness in family survival strategies or attempts at wealth maximization, Stephan Beetz and Tsypylma Darieva (1997) bring to the fore a rather individualized and self-planned form of marriage migration detected in ‘modern’ post-socialist Russian society. They analyzed biographical interviews
with Russian women married to Germans, and could reconstruct marriage migration as a chance for a new beginning and a safe exit from an extremely unstable society. In this sense, there are similarities between marriage migration from Russia and marriage migration from ‘traditional’ societies. Despite a high educational level among Russian migrant women, structural conditions in the transitory Russian society entail, similar to ‘traditional’ societies, an extremely unstable future for many women. Marriage migration from Russia is considered to be strongly related to marriage based on romantic love, on the one hand, and the wish to emigrate to another country, on the other, one where social security and upward mobility seem attainable. Beetz and Darieva argue that marriage migration among Russian women is inextricably linked to the image of German men as responsible breadwinners. As in the case of other female marriage migrants, a high degree of dependence on the husband becomes a barrier to integration. Immigration status is tied to marriage, and many are dependent on the incomes their husbands provide. Therefore, legal constraints, i.e. the fact that immigration can only proceed as a family member, change the meaning of the marriage ritual for these women, and may lead to increase in potential conflict. Moreover, despite their generally high educational levels, Russian women can rarely obtain a job correspondent to their qualifications in Germany and have to remain in labor market segments absorbing less qualified labor. One strategy used by migrant women to cope with this situation is “ambivalent integration” which is expressed, among others, through intensive mobility in the country of origin.

What all these studies have uncovered is that legal framework is at the core of the vulnerable position facing immigrant women, regarding both marriage and their immigration status, and creates a significant dependency on their German husbands. The authors we reviewed here see this as a serious impediment for the integration process. More importantly, some of the authors studying marriage migration apply the concept of trafficking in women to marriage migration, as they interpret this phenomenon as a form of sexual exploitation. In fact, some studies on female marriage migration rely on a narrow definition of trafficking as sexual exploitation and are critical of broadening the definition of trafficking to include various kinds of labor exploitation. In their view, the more inclusive concept of trafficking would lose its analytical strength. In addition, it would stigmatize all irregular migrants as victims (Niesner, Anonuevo, Aparoconi, and Sonsiengchai-Fenzl 1997).

2.1.3 Migrant domestic and care workers

In a European comparative study on domestic work, Bridget Anderson (1998) examined flows of female migrant domestic workers from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and concluded that migrant domestic work is a rather rare phenomenon in Germany. However, empirical observations, especially those on migrants from CEE, reveal the widespread practice of paid domestic work (Cyrus 2000, Hess & Lenz 2001, Irek 1998, Morokvaïse 1993, 1994). In Germany research on contemporary migrant domestic work has just recently begun while the topic has long stimulated interests among Asian, British, and North American researchers.\(^3\) It was only in 2001 that the first conference on migrant domestic work was organized in Germany (for details see Gather, Geissler & Rerrich 2002). To a large extent, this has to do with the combination of two developments. First of all, although women’s labor force participation has considerably risen in the past three decades, time use surveys show that unequal divisions of labor in the household have been largely maintained (Künzler, Walter, Reichard, & Pfister 2001).

Secondly, the German state has long failed to recognize an increasing demand for the outsourcing of reproductive labor, in particular in families with frail elderly members and/or young children.\(^4\) The underlying assumption has been that wives and mothers largely continue to bear care responsibilities (Lewis & Ostner 1994). In contrast to other European countries, there was no policy on migrant domestic workers in Germany until 2002 (for details see a policy section 2.3)

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\(^3\) Apart from the focus on migrants doing domestic work, there is evidence that retired German women take up cleaning jobs (Gather & Meißner 2002). Moreover, there are efforts to set up a placement agency for professionalized German and immigrant women in domestic employment (Lutz 2007, Weinkopf 2002).

Thus, a dominant characteristic of the phenomenon of migrant domestic work in Germany is that it has developed in the absence of policy. This resulted in the creation of a *de-facto* domestic work sector in the labor market, often operating underground, culminating in a large discrepancy between registered employment and the real scale. According to official statistics, approximately 39,800 households employed a cleaner or a caregiver with full social security rights in 2000 (Schupp 2002, p. 50). However Jürgen Schupp (2002, p. 65), an economist, estimates that more than three million households employed an irregular domestic worker in that same year.

Transnationality and illegality are the two major themes being explored in this emerging field of research. The phenomenon of migrant domestic work has been intensified by the freedom of movement that Eastern Europeans, especially Poles, have enjoyed since the fall of the Berlin Wall. As pioneer studies have shown, these migrants make trips to Germany with tourist visas, while in reality engaging in domestic work in households for up to three months (Irek 1998, Morokvasic 1993, 1994). Thanks to legal leeway, aided by the geographic proximity to Germany and cheap transportation costs, Polish women have established rotation systems with female friends and relatives, taking turns in the same job (Irek 1998, Morokvasic 1993, 1994). Their strategy is to pursue short term labor migration in order to sustain their lives in their home countries, all the while maintaining a regular immigration status in Germany: This is a particular form of transnational existence cultivated by Eastern and Central European women (Morokvasic 2003, 2004).

In contrast to the ‘back and forth’ movements among the Central and Eastern Europeans, other scholars (Lutz 2007, Rerrich 2002, Shinozaki 2002, 2004) highlight a tendency of long-lasting transnational subsistence among non-European migrant domestic workers. Helma Lutz conducted extensive qualitative research on migrant domestics of different ethnic origins in Berlin, Hamburg and Münster and could observe both trends. The majorities of non-European domestics enter Germany with a tourist visa and become irregular migrants after their visa expires. Most decide to stay longer than planned in order to earn more money, put their children through college, purchase consumer goods, or support extended families. Despite distance and long-term separation, many migrant domestics from non-European countries do cultivate transnational ties with families and friends left behind, living dual lives in Germany and their countries of origin. They make use of recent advances in communication technology by sending remittances, making frequent phone calls, texting messages and chatting on the Internet (Lutz 2007, Shinozaki 2003, 2004).

The emergence of transnational families and migrant care work is taking place on a global scale. While leaving their own children behind with nannies and mothers-in-law in the Philippines, Filipina migrant domestic workers care for the children of their German employers: “global care chains” a term coined by Arlie Hochschild (2001), depict three-tiers of care taking within the process of globalization. The chains typically start with individuals in the wealthy North and end with the least privileged in the poorer South. Thus, extending the concept of the racial division of reproductive labor (Glenn 1992) to an international terrain in the globalization process, Rhacel Parreñas (2001) calls global care chains “international division of reproductive labor” (p. 62). The issues of care chains and drains in the German-CEE context are to be addressed in a coming investigation.

What characterizes the German context of transnational parenting by non-European migrants is its tendency of endurance. Based on her research on Filipina and Filipino migrant domestics, Shinozaki shows that, due to the their irregular immigration status, they cannot cross borders freely. They are trapped in transnational mobility. She also shows in this context that many migrant parents practice transnational parenthood, which is deeply gendered (Shinozaki 2002, 2004).

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5 Sigrid Metz-Göckel has carried out a research project on commuter migration for domestic work between Germany and CEE. See [http://www.geschlechterdynamik.uni-dortmund.de/proj_4.htm](http://www.geschlechterdynamik.uni-dortmund.de/proj_4.htm)

6 Lutz has carried out the first large scale, third-party funded research project on migrant domestic work in Germany (2001-2005). See [http://www.uni-muenster.de/FGEI/](http://www.uni-muenster.de/FGEI/)

7 Lutz began with her new project on care chains, “Landscapes of Care Drain. Care Provision and Care Chains from the Ukraine to Poland, from Poland to Germany.” See [http://www.helmalutz.de/Forschung/forschung.html](http://www.helmalutz.de/Forschung/forschung.html)
The move to illegality means not only foregoing an employment contract and its associated rights for social security. It also makes it virtually impossible to exercise one’s rights as a worker. The body of available scholarship in Germany has concentrated on the existential and working conditions of migrant domestic workers at the micro (individual) level (Lutz 2002, 2005, 2007, Rerrich 2002, Shinozaki 2003, 2005). For example, Shinozaki’s (2004) research on Filipina and Filipino domestics draws from their biographical narratives and reveals the negotiating strategies they employ in securing working and living conditions. Many have established a certain degree of autonomy in negotiating terms of employment.

Moreover, scholars have engaged in a critical, intersectional analysis. In the 1970s, when domestic work was problematized as unpaid work, this was presented as the shared experience of all women. While this politicization of domestic work had an important aim, that of making the invisible work done by women visible, it led to a neglect of the different experiences within the group of all women, those based on ‘race’ ethnicity and citizenship (Friesen 1995, Lutz 2002, Rerrich 2000). Attention is now paid to the asymmetrical relationship between female employers and female employees based on these social divisions. In addition the authors address a difficult dichotomy, public vis-à-vis private, which tends to render domestic work invisible.

Despite obvious risks and the potential exploitation involved, many migrant women do seek employment in the domestic work sector. Lutz (2004) speaks of a potential “opportunity space” for irregular migrant domestics, both in the sense of capital accumulation and self-determination, as in the case of women fleeing unhappy marriages. Young lesbians from Eastern Europe often seek work as domestics. They set off for Germany to escape the social control over their sexual orientation experienced at home (Lutz 2004). While some studies tend to explain coping strategies with illegality as rational behavioral logic (Irek 1998), others rather see diversity in such strategies. Lutz (2004) underscores the aspect of self-determination found in irregular migrant domestics. Drawing on biographical interviews with migrant domestic workers, Lutz reveals richly textured individual coping mechanisms embedded in the diverse life experiences of these women.

One way to avoid illegality is to work as an au pair. Sabine Hess (2005) describes how young women from Slovakia strategize the au pair program, which was originally conceived of as an opportunity for cultural exchange, to realize migration projects. In this sense, au pairs are hidden labor migrants. This is a creative reaction on the part of these women to non-promising futures in Eastern Europe and rigid immigration policy in Western Europe (Hess 2005). Another way to get away with illegality, identified by Lutz (2007), is to enter Germany as a student. She depicts the case of a female migrant from Eastern Europe who worked as a cleaner for several years, continuously registering as a student at the university until she reached the maximum enrolment duration (Lutz 2007). Moreover, irregular migrant domestic workers might be able to ‘regularize’ their status through marriage or by finding a sponsor in diplomatic institutions and global scale companies (expatriates) (Lutz 2007, Rerrich 2004, Shinozaki 2003). Immigration status can change from one time period to another. The fluidity of immigration status deserves attention.

Another group of domestic workers, which have attracted the attention of the press, consists of domestic workers hired by diplomats. A diplomat’s domestic workers are allowed to stay in Germany as long as the diplomat lives and works in Germany. The domestic worker has to live in the diplomat’s house, and the diplomatic immunity enjoyed by the employer means that one cannot take legal action against him/her, even if the domestic worker’s human rights are being violated (Prasad 2003).

**2.1.4 Female migrants in prostitution**

While female migrant domestic workers are often referred to in studies on irregular migration, migrant women in prostitution remain entirely invisible in some studies, not often mentioned as a separate category of irregular migrants (Sinn, Kreienbrink, and von Loeffelholz 2006). Nevertheless, according
to the trade union Ver.di (Mitrovic 2005) the number of irregular migrant prostitutes in Germany is quite high, as the majority of some 200,000 migrant prostitutes fall in this category.

Estimates on the number of prostitutes working in Germany range from 50,000, to 400,000: the higher number being estimated by Hydra, a self-organization of prostitutes. Half of the prostitutes are thought to be migrant women, and most of them irregular (Leopold, Steffan, and Paul 1997). The German government (at the time a coalition of Social Democrats and the Green Party) used the higher estimate when proposing a new Prostitution Law in 2001 (BT-Drucksache 14/5958:1). The EU-network TAMPEP (European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers) has also adopted the higher estimate and confirms a steady increase in the proportion of migrant women among prostitutes, growing from 52 % in 1999 to 60% in 2005 (Munk 2006).

Prostitution is widespread, yet little academic research is done on it. A few studies show that prostitution is a very heterogeneous sector in terms of work conditions, work organization, and the legal status of the women involved. Documentation on the legal and social situation of prostitutes, which is based on key informant interviews (Leopold, Steffan, and Paul 1997), offers a detailed overview of prostitution in ten German cities in the old (western) and new (eastern) federal states. The study, conducted for the Federal Ministry for Families, Elderly, Women and Youth, is still of great interest ten years after its publication. According to this study prostitution is most widespread in the old federal states. The low level of prostitution in the new federal states is attributed to repressive measures engaged by the former Democratic Republic of Germany. Moreover, current attacks by right wing groups on prostitutes as well as intense police regulation have reduced street prostitution greatly. In the mid-1990s, when this research was conducted, prostitution in the new federal states, occurring in some cities in mobile-home trailers, was “under construction” (p. 263). In some cities in the new federal states, prostitutes and pimps had relocated from the west and were actively involved in this “construction.” Many of the prostitutes in these regions were migrant women from CEE countries. According to the above-mentioned study, in subsequent years the number of prostitutes in the new federal states may have risen. The share of migrant women in prostitution in the old federal states was very high: in Berlin accounting for 50%, mostly Thai women married to migrant or German men, while 75% of the prostitutes in Frankfurt’s brothels come from Latin America. Most of the migrant women have no work permit, and some of them only a tourist visa. Migrant prostitutes are dependent on Germans and migrant pimps. The earnings of migrant prostitutes differ quite significantly depending on their workplace (apartment, brothel, street, massage clubs prostitution etc.) and the economic prosperity of the region. Compared to native German prostitutes, migrant women frequently offer their services for a very low price. Many of the prostitutes are indebted to the brothel owners and others as their earnings are not constant. The study also refers to issues of communal policy towards irregular migrant prostitutes, for example, in Frankfurt am Main local authorities are more tolerant than in Munich.

The survey conducted by TAMPEP offers a more detailed account of migrant women in prostitution. It provides information about the increasing proportion of migrant women in prostitution in Germany, their ethnic composition and their regional distribution. The biggest share among the migrant prostitutes (50%) consists of women from CEE countries. Antje Mansbrügge (1997) identified three main legal frameworks that enable women to enter Germany – as a tourist, a performance artist (i.e. dancer), or a family member. Mansbrügge (1997) argues that the women from Thailand, Latin America and Eastern Europe come over with the overt intention of working in prostitution. Thai women have been dominant in prostitution since the middle of the 1980s. Polish women fluctuate widely, entering Germany for the limited period of three months and then leaving. The TAMPEP survey reveals that the self-image of migrant prostitutes differ broadly among the different ethnic groups. For instance, Latin American women, heavily influenced by the Catholic Church, cannot develop a positive image of themselves as prostitutes. Presenting the results of the TAMPEP survey, Veronika Munk (Munk 2006a; 2006b) claims that the majority of migrant women in the German sex industry are autonomous migrants and their migration was not forced. However, they are dependent on the ‘help’ of others including smugglers, traffickers etc. to enter Germany due to the restrictive immigration policy.
The regional concentration of certain ethnic groups suggests that there are ethnic networks that ‘help’ compatriots find work. Irregular migrant women work primarily in established houses and less so on the street, since they would be deported if discovered by the police. Munk’s work entails a detailed cartography of prostitution by female migrants in Hamburg, the city with Germany’s most extensive prostitution scene. She outlines different forms of prostitution in brothels, apartments, clubs, massage salons, the streets, and points to changes in advertisement from newspapers to the much cheaper Internet. It becomes obvious that prostitution is widespread throughout the city and is not just limited to its red light district. Most interesting is the description of the high degree of mobility among migrant prostitutes in the city and beyond, which is explained through structural aspects of the market for sexual services and the demand for exotic ‘new faces’, as well as strategies to avoid police raids. Veronika Munk describes the committed efforts of social workers in supporting prostitutes. They offer information about health protection and counseling on legal status. One of the biggest problems the author identifies is the difficulty in establishing trustworthy relationships with social workers when prostitutes are frequently moved from one place to another.

During the 1990s debates on migrant prostitution evolved around the assumption that migrant women in prostitution were victims of trafficking and had been forced into this line of work. On the other side, advocates of the decriminalization of prostitution pointed out the need to recognize sexual services as a normal work. In her study on trafficked women from Eastern European countries, Alexandra Geisler (2005) conducted interviews with eight women from these countries who became victims of trafficking in prostitution and eventually found protection with associations which counsel the victims of trafficking. The aim of this study was to overcome the dilemma resulting from one-sided identifications of these women as either an offender or a victim, and Geisler emphasizes the limits of both discourses on trafficked women. Seeing migrant prostitutes merely as persons in migration legitimizes treating them as offenders of the Immigration Law. Treating them solely as victims of criminal agents further victimizes them, leaving little space to consider a move as a means of realizing their life projects. Therefore, on the basis of these interviews, Geisler is analyzing the complexity in migrant prostitution. Nevertheless, she argues that female migrant prostitutes should be treated as victims by the state and not as offenders of the immigration legislation. Furthermore, they should be offered protection rather than extradition to their countries of origin, especially in view of the fact that the women would prefer to stay in Germany or migrate to another country over returning to their homelands due to a lack of perspectives. The central motivation for migration seems to be the responsibility accorded women for the economic survival of their families and extremely severe social and economic conditions. However, women decide to migrate only after traffickers make contact with them via neighbors, relatives or acquaintances. The traffickers promise lucrative work in Germany, in most cases in sectors other than prostitution.

Juanita Hennig (1997) challenges the conventional assumption that migrant prostitutes are trafficked women and thus forced into prostitution. She aims to recover the agency of female migrant prostitutes. Based on interviews with Columbian prostitutes in Frankfurt am Main, Hennig reconstructs their autonomous migration to work as prostitutes in Germany. Exploring their motivation and social class origins, she found that being rather well situated and wanting to improve class status back home through earnings from prostitution, a large number of the interviewees came on their own with the intention of earning money, and were indeed successful in achieving their economic targets. The women work for a few months, return home for a while, and then come back to Germany again. Although they voluntarily travel to engage in prostitution, they do not always anticipate the working and living conditions they are ultimately confronted with and are generally unsatisfied with them. Furthermore, Hennig analyzed their attitudes towards female sexuality in opposition with dominant moral values. Columbian migrant women do struggle with inner conflicts since the values they have been socialized with define prostitution as immoral.

Concerning studies on policy addressing migrant women in prostitution, Emilia Mitrovic discussed the impact of the Prostitution Law, in force since 2002, on migrant prostitutes. The law aims to decriminalize prostitution and recognize its vocational character. Practicing formalized work, prostitutes now have, in theory, access to the social insurance scheme and can become a members of trade unions. Nevertheless, she stresses that this law has not substantially improved the situation of
migrant prostitutes. As most of them are irregular migrants, they are practically barred from legal entitlements as workers, including social security (Mitrovic 2006; 2004).

2.3 Studies on legal framework and policy

In their recent analysis of German policies affecting the integration of female migrants, which was conducted in conjunction with the FeMiPol project, Kontos, Haferburg and Sacaliuc (2006) found that these policies tend to marginalize and exclude female migrants from the labor market and society. In another study, Kontos and Sacaliuc (2006) point out that in the implementation of social policy, market logic has become increasingly important. They highlight the negative impacts of this development on the integration of female migrants. While these studies look at a wide range of German policies, this section primarily focuses on the legal framework.

- Dependent residence rights of marriage migrants

Marriage migrants have the right to reside in Germany as long as their marital relationship remains in tact. Thus their residence rights are inextricably tied to the maintenance of their marriage. Prior to 2000 they had to prove a dependent residence status of four years before they could claim their own residential rights, independent of a marital relationship. In 2000 this period was reduced to two years. This dependency could place migrating spouses in a highly vulnerable position, for example, in cases of serious maltreatment by the husband. Almost all authors address problems with this legal ‘construction’ and its impact on the self-determination of migrant women (Kelek 2005; Niesner, Anonuevo, Aparooci, and Sonsiengchai-Fenzl 1997; Ruenkaew 2003).

- Legal framework for labor market integration

The situation for female migrants has been strongly affected by new legislation regulating immigration and the labor market, the Immigration Law in force since 2005 and the so-called Hartz Laws that came into effect in 2002 and 2004. Simply put, the Hartz laws have the ultimate aim of getting the (especially long-term) unemployed back in the labor market, driving them to become self-reliant. These three sets of legislation develop a cumulative impact on the situation of unemployed documented migrants, ultimately inducing marginalization. One of the preconditions for maintaining residence rights is gainful employment within the framework of the national social security system. The Hartz Laws press the unemployed, both Germans and non-Germans, into so-called “one euro jobs”, which are not covered by the social security plan. For migrants, however, this means that although they are taking up employment, it is not type of employment that will justify their right to stay. Consequently, they are faced with a possible loss of their residence permit (Frings 2005).

- Migrant domestic and care workers recruitment policy

There was no policy in Germany to regulate migrant domestic work before January 2002. The public debate in 2001 was fired up through protests initiated by a prominent journalist, Frank Lehmann, who was found to have hired a female Slovakian caregiver for his father-in-law during a police raid8. Utilizing his social capital as a journalist, he started a campaign to legalize ‘affordable, legal domestic and care workers’ from CEE and was able to get the attention of the labor minister (Shinozaki 2005). After an intense political debate, new legislation opened a regular channel for labor migration in the domestic sector in February 2002. Belatedly acknowledging the demand for outsourced elderly care, this legislation aimed to quickly settle this demand by utilizing the upcoming expansion of EU membership to include five CEE states 9. In Germany and Austria, both having national borders with East European states, pressure had been increasing to allow the free movement of workers from CEE.

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9 These are Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary.
As a result of this change in regulation, those households with people in need of care could now recruit domestic ‘helpers’ (*Haushaltshilfe*) from CEE states under the care insurance provision.

Noteworthy is an observed shift in language: When Lehmann conducted his “out of illegalization” campaign, these Eastern European women were often referred as “care workers” (*Pflegekräfte*). However, during the legislation drafting process, the term “care workers” was replaced with “domestic helpers”. Here one can discern a compromising element in the legislation: labor unions were concerned about increasing unemployment rates among registered professional caregivers in Germany, although they were too expensive for most German families to consider full-time employment. There was nobody else to fall back on but these migrant women. The German government could no longer ignore the discrete yet well-known practice of hiring irregular workers from Eastern Europe. Thus, instead of foreign “care workers”, the German government opted for the term ‘domestic helpers’, as a signal to the unions that these migrant women are not professional ‘workers’ but merely ‘helpers’ in the household (Shinozaki 2004). In reality, however, it is often almost impossible to draw a distinction between care and domestic work, let alone to monitor whether these Eastern European women are actually engaging in care work or not.

As a result of the recent change in recruitment policy, households with people in need of care have been able to legally employ ‘domestic helpers’ from Eastern Europe as of February 2002 for a maximum period of three years. Yet, this has not brought about much success: Only 1,102 households made use of this legal measure in 2002 (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration, 2004, p. 137). In fact, it is widely believed that the number of official recruitment cases is only the tip of the iceberg and it does not reflect the true extent of the practice of hiring domestic and care workers (Lutz 2007, Rerrich 2002, Shinozaki 2004). In the meantime this regulation has been incorporated into the *Zuwanderungsgesetz* (Lutz 2007).

In contrast to this change in regulation concerning recruitment, there was an almost counter-move to criminalize undeclared domestic work. This emerged from the effort to generally combat illicit employment and the bill was debated at the turn of the year 2004. However, the bill met with fierce protest and consequently did not pass the parliament (Lutz 2007).

- **Legal framework for protecting victims of human trafficking**

Human trafficking is often debated with regard to migrant prostitution and central to the debate is the extent to which migrant prostitutes should be considered victims and what legal measures would best protect migrant prostitutes. Ulrike Mentz (2001) analyzed The German Law for Aliens, which had been in force through 2004, in relation to its impact on trafficking in women. She found that a restrictive immigration policy in conjunction with the repressive treatment of irregular migrants engaged in illicit employment has promoted trafficking in women. This is particularly evident among migrant prostitutes (Mentz 2001). The legal structure makes it difficult to uncover the true criminals and provide support for the victims. Victims of trafficking often turn to mafia organizations to elude repressive state control and escape exploitation and violence. Mentz (2006) argues that The German Law for Aliens suffers a one-sided perspective, wherein migrant prostitutes are granted few rights and conceived of as the passive victims of trafficking, having no prior intention of coming to Germany. To combat trafficking in women, she makes a plea for an action scheme that captures the multiple factors underlying the phenomenon of migrant prostitution (see 2.2.4 in this report). Strengthening the rights of female migrants would prevent them from becoming victims of trafficking; Mentz calls this an empowerment strategy (Mentz 2006). The German trade union for the service sector (Ver.di) shares the same perspective on trafficking with migrant prostitutes (Mitrovic 2006; Mitrovic 2004; Schwethelm 2006).

The impact of anti-trafficking legislation on migrant women has also been a subject of studies. In particular, the insecure residence status of the victims of trafficking is criticized for being counter-productive (Niesner and Jones-Pauly 2001).
Policies for participation

Until recently, German trade unions have organized regular migrant workers. Concerning the irregular employment of irregular migrant men and women, trade unions pursue a double strategy. On the one hand, they support strict controls in the sectors of construction and agriculture to combat irregular employment. On the other hand, at least in construction, there are activities to create a frame for organizing irregular workers. What Schmidt and Schwenken highlight from the European experience is that it is important to establish alliances among trade unions, irregular migrant workers’ self-organizations and organizations of workers in sectors with a high percentage of irregular migrants (Schmidt and Schwenken 2006). However, few self-organizations in Germany are able to meet this challenge. Workers in the sector of domestic services have low degrees of participation in trade unions. There is a German chapter of the European Network RESPECT (“Rights, Equality, Solidarity, Power, Europe, Co-operation, Today”), which represents the interests of irregular migrant domestic workers. The German chapter consists of migrant women’s organizations, NGOs and trade unions. Although strong RESPECT chapters have been successful in legalizing irregular workers in other European countries, their political influence in Germany has been rather weak. Only in the sector of prostitution has self-organization become viable. Though the organization is small, it is very active. Since prostitution has been decriminalized in Germany, the trade union Ver.di has initiated activities for organizing prostitutes, and the many migrant women among them, however without major success so far (Mitrovic 2006; Mitrovic 2004).

3 Discussion

We identified a range of gaps in knowledge concerning the integration of new female migrants into the German labor market and general society. First, the literature focuses on those labor market sectors in which new female migrants have become most visible. There are no studies on the situation of new female migrants in the restaurant or agricultural sectors, although the media and studies on irregular migration report that female migrants do often find work in these sectors. Second, many of the studies reviewed in this report are largely descriptive, concentrating on subcategories of female migrants such as marriage migrants, migrant women in prostitution, and on the vulnerability of irregular migrant women. Some of the studies describe interventions initiated by the authorities, counseling centers and communal institutions, which fill the void left by a lack of consequent integration policy. While these studies add experiential knowledge about new migrant women, they tend to remain case studies and recapitulate the diverse life experiences of the migrants.

An exception is the study of migrant domestic workers, which goes beyond reporting migrant women’s work and living conditions. It is remarkable considering the invisible and often clandestine character of the work. Feminist migration researchers in this field have launched theoretical debates about transnationalism/transnationality and globalization, incorporating the theoretical insights of gender studies. In the field of migrant domestic and care work, the recent years have witnessed an emergence of empirical case studies which tend to take a qualitative approach by examining the biographies of migrant domestic workers. As demonstrated in research conducted by Lutz (2007), Hess (2005) and Shinozaki (2002, 2004), migrant domestics do conduct negotiations with their employers over their working and living conditions. This clearly exemplifies their agency to achieve gains on the individual level. What is missing in the German context are links between the detailed, richly textured research found at the micro level and similar efforts at the meso-network, macro-state, and European levels. For example, why is there no attempt at major political mobilization among irregular migrant domestic and care workers in Germany in order to achieve collective gains? Moreover, at the time of state welfare retrenchment, it is important to establish a connection between the emergence of migrant care/domestic work and welfare state scholarship from the perspectives of

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10 The most impressive success was witnessed in the UK (see Anderson 2001, Schwenken 2005).
gender, ethnicity and citizenship. In this context, it may be worthwhile to analytically differentiate care and domestic work to examine the meaning of social citizenship.

In researching gender, care and migration, German researchers tend to focus only on the German state, or the receiving end. Lutz’s on-going project to trace the chains of care will shed light on the connections among the individuals and states involved, bringing the neglected sending side into the picture.

With a few exceptions, studies on female migrants in prostitution remain under-theorized and descriptive. Prostitution is a particularly difficult field to study because of its clandestine and invisible character. Moral exclusion makes investigation even harder. Thus, as we have reviewed, many studies focus on collecting data to fill in information gaps. The central argument of many authors has been that only few migrant women in prostitution are victims of trafficking and enter this field out of their own free will. However, the question is how ‘free’ is this choice? Social constraints compel them to choose prostitution to earn a living and support their families. Many authors reviewed in this report are skeptical of broadening the concept of trafficking in women. Yet, other authors opt for its broader definition, enabling them to capture potentially exploitative aspects in migration streams other than prostitution, such as female marriage migration.

We still know little about migrant prostitution. What we know even less about is the role of played by pimps and other actors such as brothel and business owners who place migrant women in prostitution, as well as the role of clients. Furthermore, how is prostitution linked to dominant female ethnic communities? How do migrant prostitutes plan their lives and how did they enter and exit prostitution?

The fact that most studies have so far focused on specific types of migration or ethnic groups has contributed to gains in knowledge about these female migrants. However, this has simultaneously led to losses in linkages among them. Thus, future research with a more holistic and inclusive approach would enhance our understanding about their integration into the labor market and society at large, and would also provide a solid basis for policy recommendations.

Conventional labor market analysis stresses the impermeability of different labor market segments. However, there is ample evidence to suggest that migrant women do cross rigid labor market segment borders. Therefore, it would be highly relevant to the issue of integration to investigate the following questions: How and into which labor market segments/sectors do migrant women find entry? How do they move from one segment/sector to another? While analyzing migrant women’s occupational mobility, it would be worthwhile to reveal the ways in which they achieve social and economic mobility at the micro subject level. This perspective at the subject level would supply an analytical and political tool for better integration with a human face.

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