

**SECURING CARE AND WELFARE OF
DEPENDANTS TRANSNATIONALLY:
PERUVIANS AND SPANIARDS IN SPAIN**

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to illustrate the growing interdependence between household strategies in Europe and those stemming from developing countries where international migration has become a main resource. In an attempt to reveal the forces underlying the match between the realities and expectations of an increasingly connected world population, I will compare the way that different families and individuals secure care and welfare for themselves and for their dependants.

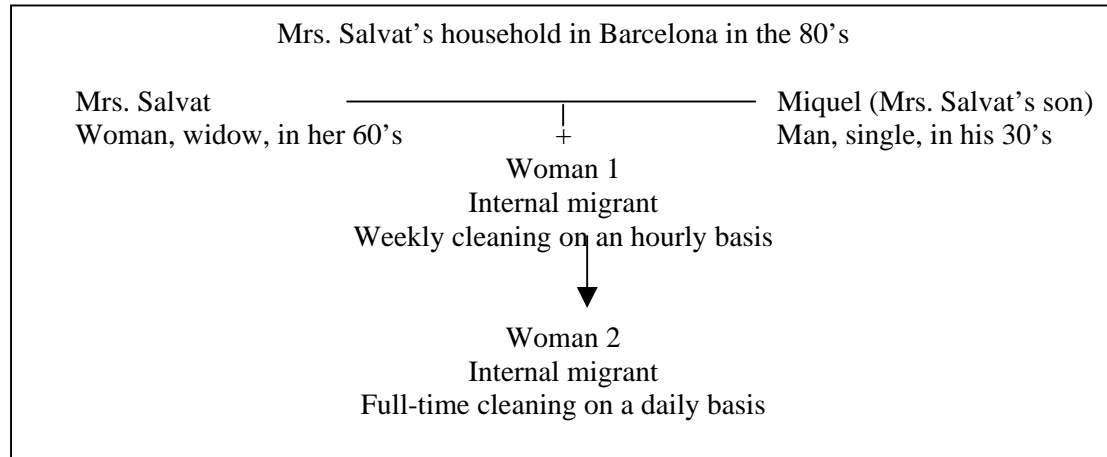
Drawing from a case study on Peruvians in Spain I will demonstrate, immigration is only a partial, and in the best of cases, non-global remedy for the need to care for dependants and to secure old-age pensions. Most Peruvians soon naturalize after settling in the country and eventually reunify their families who, in turn, hope to obtain the same social benefits for themselves. At the same time, the gap between dependants from migrant and non-migrant families are clearly widening both here and in their country of origin. Given the current dynamics, the process of externalizing care and welfare will result in people being replaced at whim, provided that other social arrangements, including a revision of gender roles, are not sought transnationally to resolve these issues.

At number 18, Frances Macia Street in Barcelona, Mrs. Salvat and her 45-year son Miquelⁱ live in a roomy 5th-floor flat with several bedrooms, a large kitchen, two toilets and a sunny balcony. The furniture, however, is rather old. One has the feeling that time stopped inside these walls some two or three decades ago, and apart from a few fashionable electronic gadgets - a cordless telephone and a TV - very little has changed. Besides the 72-year-old woman and her son, two other people are often in the apartment. Mrs. Salvat has suffered from Alzheimer's for more than twenty years and has gradually lost the ability to care for herself. At the time Mrs. Salvat began to show the first symptoms, she made her son promise her – he had never married and would not in the future – that he would remain by her side and not send her to a nursing home or hospital.

In the beginning she only needed some help with the housekeeping so they hired a Spanish woman (originally from Andalusia) to clean and tidy up for a few hours a week. Some years later, it was necessary to have a full-time person come in to help with the cooking and cleaning. But Miquel was becoming increasingly concerned about his mother when he was out with friends in the evenings or at weekends. He was afraid she might have a domestic accident or leave the flat and not be able to find her way back home again. So he decided to speak seriously with her about the convenience of hiring someone who could sleep in the house everyday. At first she

rejected the idea because they had never had a live-in domestic servant. But after a couple of incidents, she had no choice but to accept. They searched carefully for a maid.

Chart 1



In the early nineties Barcelona was a bustling city busily preparing for the Olympic Games. Since the early century, thousands of migrants, mainly from poor rural origins, had moved to the city from other regions of the country. Yet these migrants had already settled and their living standards were approaching those of the native Catalan population (Solé 1988). Consequently, it was hard to find a Spanish woman willing to stay as a live-in domestic servant in Mrs. Salvat's apartment. The foreign population from less economically advanced countries, on the contrary, had been growing steadily during the eighties and was reaching its peak at the beginning of the new decadeⁱⁱ.

Table 1

Year	Population of Barcelona born outside Catalonia (in thousands)			
	<u>Place of birth</u>			
	Andalusia	Castille	Aragon	Abroad
1996	126,5	94,4	54,6	58,3
2000	114,7	87,5	49,1	108,7

Statistical Unit, City Council of Barcelona

Some of Miquel's friends suggested that he talk to the nuns of a neighbouring convent as they could "supply you with foreign women who do not have such high expectations as the Andalusians". By high expectations, people meant the amount of money they asked for and their desire to have a formal contract. Though the value assigned to caregiving work in the society is low, native women employed as

domestics have increasingly demanded higher salaries and better working conditions, making it impossible for some families to get by without State subsidies. In the absence of a female relative to care for dependants, be they young children, the aged, the handicapped or the sick, hiring immigrant women has become the only resort for families in need of a caregiver. Given that many of these workers have entered the country as undocumented migrants, there has usually been no need to formalize a contract, thereby saving the family social security costs.

This was not Miquel's case, however. As a lawyer he knew it was risky to hire an undocumented person. He preferred to hire a documented one or, failing that, to arrange for the maid's papers through the quota systemⁱⁱⁱ. After a few days, the nuns sent a couple of candidates. Miquel selected the one he thought would be kindest to his mother. "Caring for older people requires much tenderness and respect," he said. The Peruvian woman he was addressing fit that role very well and besides, she had no other obligations in Barcelona since her family was in her country of origin, as she explained.

"Mr. Miquel, could you please formalize my contract as soon as possible? I want to bring my children with me," she asked him one day. Mrs. Salvat's son feared that once the children were in Barcelona the maid would quit her job, though she promised that that would not happen as she had a sister who could look after them. After a year, both children were reunified with their mother and the Peruvian maid kept her job. It wasn't long, however, until she quit and passed her job on to a fellow countrywoman.

Live-in maids have an extraordinary turnover rate. For many of these women, these jobs are simply a stepping stone towards more "normal" occupations while they regularize their legal situation in the new country of residence. In countries and periods in which the channels for becoming a documented migrant are very limited, more women find themselves trapped in their occupational prospects and migratory projects, especially if trafficked (Hughes 2000). In Spain, although some trafficking has also been reported (Bonelli and Ulloa 2003), thousands of undocumented maids and other types of immigrant workers have been able to regularize their legal situation through the different measures established during the 90's. These measures are basically two: the amnesties of 1991, 1996 and 2000, and the quota system implemented in 1994.

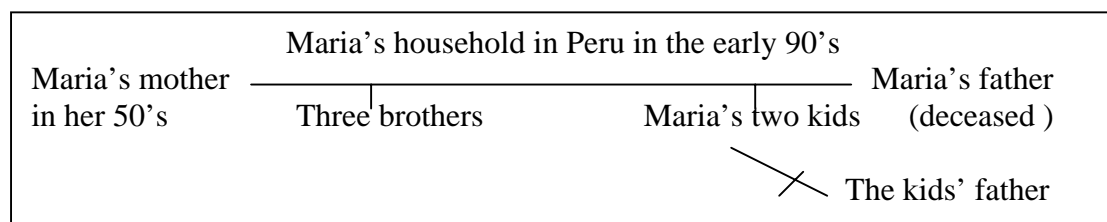
Table 2

Immigration policies and measures implemented in Spain	
1986 First Non-Nationals Law	1991 First Amnesty (regularization process)
1994 Implementation quota system	1996 Second Amnesty
2000 Second Non-Nationals Law	2000 Third Amnesty
2004 Amendments to Non-Nationals Law	

Becoming a documented migrant is not only important for women seeking better job opportunities within the domestic service sector or outwardly, but is also an essential requirement to obtain the right to reunify dependant relatives and prevent them from taking unnecessary risks by crossing borders illegally. Unfortunately, the latter has often been the case. Because of the fact that many women are undocumented upon arrival, other European borders are open to Peruvians and other Latin Americans, and regularization processes and family reunion petitions are slow and demanding^{iv}, many immigrant workers have resorted to bringing their loved ones at any cost.

Maria, the Peruvian maid working in Mrs. Salvat and Mr. Miquel's house had continued to live with her family of origin in Peru even after the birth of her two kids. The children's father had never cared very much about them. He was a long-term, unemployed alcoholic who used to beat her. The couple had only lived together a short time when Maria's family convinced her to move back with them due to her poor state of mind and health. This happened twice. After that, she and her family decided it would be best for her to migrate to Spain where a sister was already working and sending money back home on a periodical basis. It was hard for Maria to leave the kids, but she knew they would be well attended to by their grandparents. After a few months, however, she received some news from home telling her that the children's father had requested their custody. Maria felt obliged to speed up the process of bringing them with her to Spain.

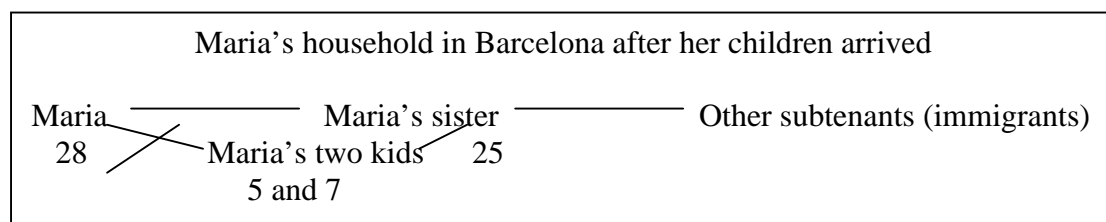
Chart 2



Dependants left-behind by migrant men and women are often exposed to abuse, mistreatment or blackmail (Instraw-IOM 2000). This is especially true among couples that have separated in disagreement or under circumstances of violence and pressure. There are also reports in our research of minors, the aged, sick or disabled that have been mistreated by relatives or employed caretakers. Clearly, involuntary and dishonest caretakers do not like having to perform caregiving duties but are only interested in the money sent back by migrants. In the absence of a middle-aged woman in the household, dependants become increasingly vulnerable as the men who are left behind do not usually take on these duties, as our many interviews have shown. Therefore, if it is the woman who migrates, a reunification process is more likely to take place soon after migrating, especially when the conditions back home are unsafe for family members.

Maria’s sister had arrived in Spain a few years before, at a time when there was still no visa requirement to enter the country. She, too, had worked as a live-in domestic servant for the first two years, but after obtaining her work and residence permit she decided she had better look for a part-time cleaning job while continuing her higher education at the local university. When Maria’s children arrived, it immediately became obvious that their aunt could not cope with a paid-job, a university career and childrearing. Soon afterwards, she spoke to Maria and explained to her that it would be necessary for Maria to leave her job as a live-in domestic servant as soon as possible. “But, you know, I promised Mr. Miquel that I wouldn’t quit if he helped me with my papers”. Clearly, Miquel’s need to have someone to care for his mother on a long-term basis ran head on into Maria’s need to have someone to look after her children. In the end, Mr. Miquel accepted her decision to leave and hired another undocumented Latin-American migrant woman that had arrived in Barcelona just a few months earlier and was anxious to find a suitable live-in job.

Chart 3



The domestic service market has undergone extraordinary changes in composition especially over the last ten years, since many foreign nationals, mostly

women, have considered migrating to Spain to work as maids, at least temporarily. Barcelona, in particular, was one of the main destinations of the first large group of foreign maids in Europe, and probably in most parts of the world – Filipino women (Ribas, 1999). At that time, there were few other foreign women or men because of the low numbers of immigrants in general. Employers appreciated the Filipinos because of their language skills – they could speak English with the children – and their docility. However, this situation changed dramatically in the late 80’s and early 90’s when Dominicans and, above all, Peruvians arrived to Barcelona in increasingly large numbers. There were also smaller numbers of maids of Moroccan or other African or Latin-American descent, although the Dominicans and Peruvians continued to hold the majority until the late nineties (according to official records). Unlike the Filipinos, the Dominicans and Peruvians could speak Spanish and therefore communicate well with the families. Peruvians, in particular, had additional highly-valued skills in the health professions and showed kindness and respect for the elderly^v. These two factors have contributed enormously to the fact that they have gained the place as the most desirable maids for eldercare. Exploiting this image, they have practically monopolised this segment of the labour market.

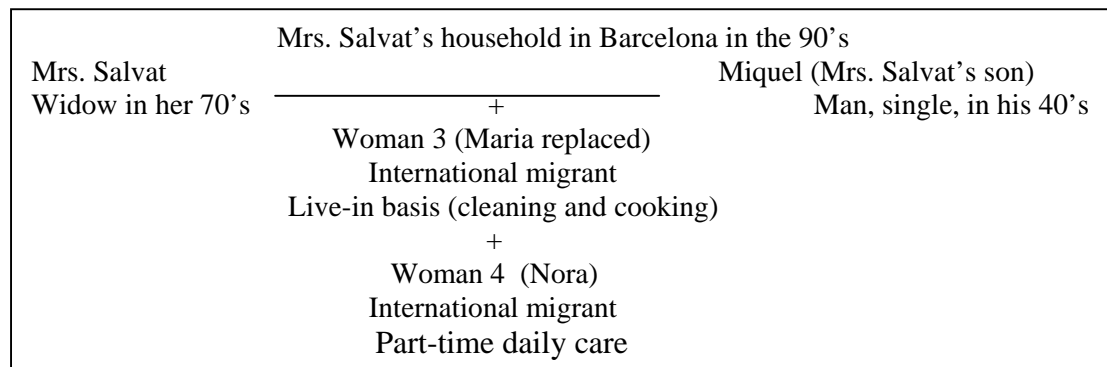
Lately, new nationalities are joining the immigration flow to Spain, namely Eastern Europeans such as Poles, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, and others (DGEI, 2003). Consequently, there is a larger variety of foreigners in the international maid market; a sector that is growing rapidly as the population ages and native women become engaged in legal, paid employment. Around the end of the century, increasing political and economic instability in countries such as Ecuador and Colombia has meant that ever larger numbers of people move abroad, especially to Spain or Italy where they have formed the largest Latin-American communities throughout Europe, thus supplying the domestic services market with numerous maids.

Table 3

Composition of the maid market in Spain in 2002 by nationality			
Spaniards: 92,797			
Ecuadorians: 24,735	Colombians: 12,864	Peruvians: 6,952	
Dominicans: 5,080	Bolivians: 1,115		
Rumanians: 4,389	Ukrainians: 2,518	Poles: 1,684	Bulgarians: 1,497
Moroccans: 7,263	Filipinos: 5,102	Statistical Yearbook, Home Affairs	

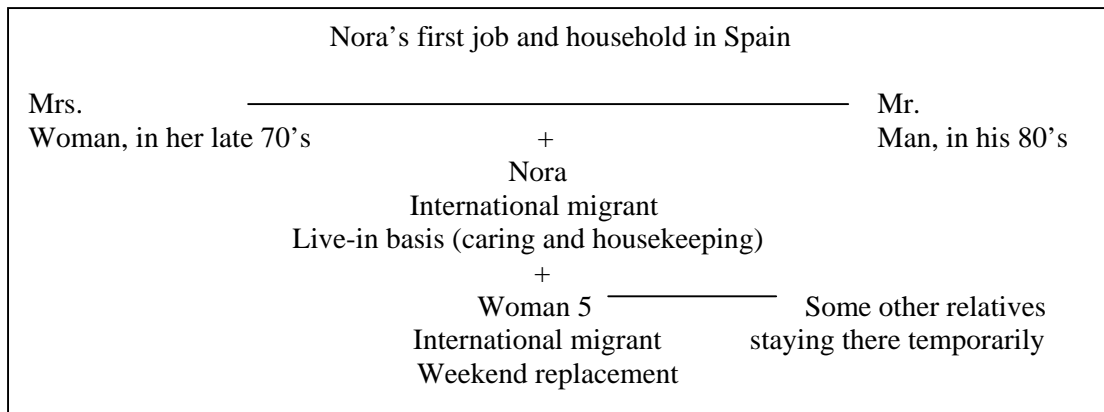
A new live-in domestic worker had been working for Miquel for a year when his mother's illness took a turn for the worse. She no longer recognised the people around her and was unable to walk or eat on her own. The live-in maid could not cope with tending to her needs night and day. So Miquel decided to hire another person with sufficient experience in eldercare for a few hours a day. Again with the help of the nuns, a woman in her thirties who had previously worked as a live-in caretaker for a person with Alzheimer's, came to the house. She was just the kind of person he liked for the job: mature, responsible, experienced, but also kind. Nora was hired on as a part-time domestic worker solely to care for Mrs. Salvat; the other person would concentrate on cleaning and working the night shifts.

Chart 4



When Nora arrived to Spain in the early 90's she was a single woman. Unable to find a suitable, well-paid job at home, she decided to try abroad, following in the footsteps of other acquaintances. She found work as an undocumented live-in maid in different households until she could sort out her papers and find a nice elderly couple to care for. This last job lasted two years, during which time she managed to save enough money to send back home for herself and for the rest of her family. With the money Nora sent back home, her family invested in several businesses, providing them with some extra income. The elderly couple, however, became so ill that finally one of them died and the other was placed in a nursing home. At that point Nora lost her job and decided to return to Peru to start a new life for herself.

Chart 5

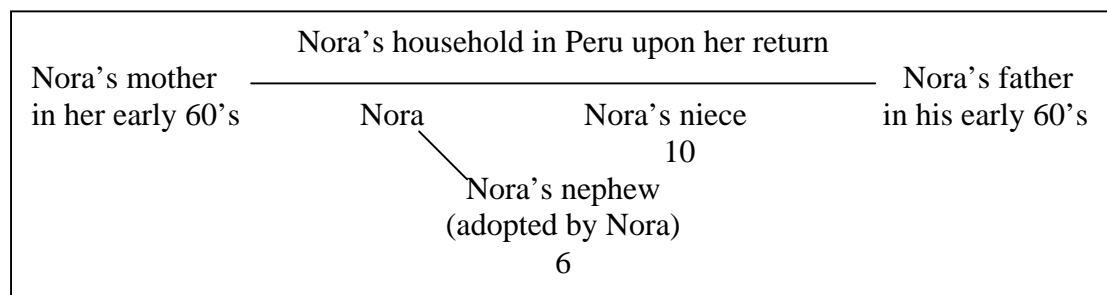


Care-providing maids frequently suffer from isolation, stress and job insecurity, a situation which is, to say the least, difficult for them to bear (Escrivá 1999). Because their work is so demanding and requires around-the-clock care of ailing elders who spend much of their time at home alone, live-in caretakers often feel isolated. Furthermore, elder caretakers are frequently required to care for both physically and mentally ill people who suffer from Alzheimer, senile dementia, deafness, and paralysis, among many other ailments. Non-trained elder care-providers therefore find themselves in a tough working environment where they, too, are prone to high physical and psychological stress and consequently to illness (as reports have proved). In addition, job duration greatly depends on how long the elder lives. Since many families hire caretakers only in the last stages of an illness, job duration often falls far short of migrants' expectations.

At other times, jobs last longer when elders are in a relatively good state of health but suffer from loneliness or have minor health problems that are easily managed by their caretakers. On many occasions, the relationships between these caring (accompanying) women and their elderly become so intense and satisfactory that the elderly reward the maids with money, gifts, or other kinds of compensation. In extreme cases, some have named their maids as sole or partial heirs with or without the consent of other relatives. Other kinds of arrangements can also be made so the maid does not feel obliged to quit after reunifying her children or other close relatives. In interviews with live-in domestic workers I have learnt about arrangements in which the maid's relatives were also living in the house with the elder with his/her full consent or that of the person in charge. These very peculiar household compositions are at least a temporary solution for inter-generational care among blood and non-blood related people with shared commitments.

Back in Peru, Nora has settled down once again with her parents, a nephew and niece, all of whom live under the same roof. Her niece is the (supposed) daughter of Nora's dead brother whose mother could not support her and sent her to live with Nora's family. She is ten years old and lends a helping hand to the whole family doing domestic chores. Her nephew is the illegitimate son of another of Nora's brothers whose mother did not want to have and could not take care of. They took him in when he was still a baby. The boy is now six years old but is not well and suffers from a variety of ailments, including heart disease. Nora decided to adopt him and has taken charge of his healthcare and hospital treatments.

Chart 6



A year later, Nora's plans to remain in Peru have changed dramatically. Her money is still well invested, now in property, and she has become engaged to a man who would like to move to another country in order to work and do some postgraduate studies. Since prospects for further employment are not that good in Peru, and Nora always wanted to form a family, she suggests going back to Spain where she still holds a valid residence and work permit and bringing her fiancé over later. So Nora returns to Spain and takes a part-time job as an elder caretaker. She is now Mr. Miquel's second employee (see chart 4). She has taken the job because she wants to continue her university studies. In summertime she will visit her boyfriend in Peru, at which time they will set the date for their wedding. After the wedding, Nora will return to Barcelona to work while her husband remains in Peru. So far, very little has changed in Nora's life. All her relatives are in Peru and they are doing relatively well.

It is not an exceptional circumstance for people to come and go throughout their lifetime. Many migrants choose to return to their places of origin for varying periods of time. Although it depends very much on how strong family ties are back home, the majority returns for regular visits. Getting back in contact with the people

at home has a twofold aim: to keep informed of any developments in the family and country and to prove to others that emigration is a worthwhile undertaking. Not infrequently returning or visiting migrants are asked for information to help others in the family or the neighbourhood to migrate. Migrants can be helpful in providing addresses of job placement agencies, institutions or individuals who may be interested in hiring someone. In this way, arrangements can be made transnationally, and the new migrant arrives with a job in hand.

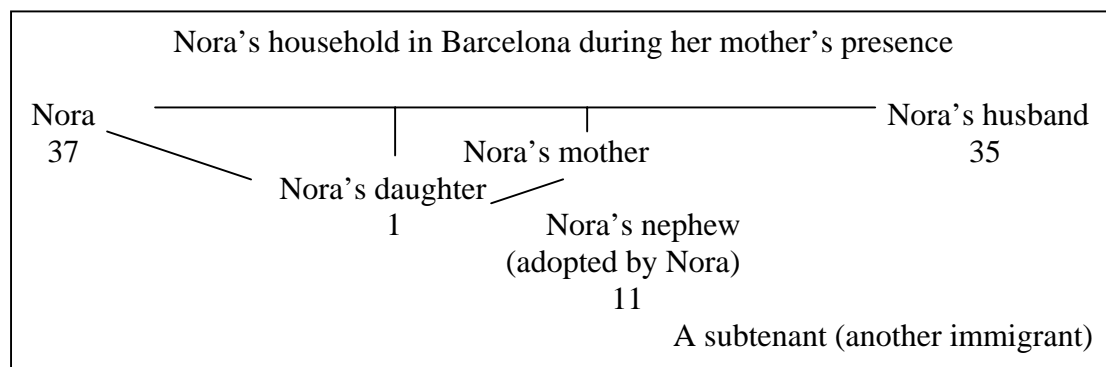
The next summer Nora decides to visit her family in Peru again. Her new husband is waiting for her and announces his intention of entering the country at any cost. But by that time, Nora has obtained Spanish nationality and thinks it would be easy to obtain a tourist visa for him. In Spain it should not be difficult to ask for reunification with him. To her surprise, once in Spain, and while waiting for her husband's visa to come through, she learns she is pregnant. She is not that young anymore and her pregnancy is risky, so she will need somebody to help her during the coming months.

As we have already argued, family reunification is especially difficult for maids, though opportunities for work in other regimes have opened up possibilities for reunification in the medium term. In fact, successive regularisation processes have led many to take jobs as live-out domestics or in other services. Likewise, family formation has been limited by the chances for a single domestic female worker to meet other people in the work setting. However, single, divorced or widowed Peruvian women in Spain regard marriage to a Spaniard as a good chance to move out of the ethnic trap (from fieldwork interviews). This can be explained by the fact that many Latin-Americans consider mixing with a "whiter" person a form of social mobility and a means to attaining higher status. Moreover, marriage to a native man or woman help migrants to gain access to a new sphere of social networks in which information and job and family welfare resources are available. On the other hand, a migrant woman who reunifies or brings her partner to Spain after migrating, acquires more power in the partnership by her own means since she has been in the country longer and his permit is contingent upon hers.

After many years of living independently in Peru and in Spain, Nora never would have expected her life to take such a dramatic turn after she got pregnant and her daughter was born. "Now, I will have to stop studying at the university and look for some part-time care for my baby," she complained. Her husband had arrived from

Peru some months before the childbirth and had been working only on an irregular basis. Originally, they thought they could both take part-time jobs and share in the childcare. Yet, this meant that they would have less money, and it would not be enough to run the house. Nora also doubted whether her husband would be able to deal with caring for their child on his own so she decided to bring her mother over to assist her. Nora's mother came and spent a year with the couple and the baby. During that time Nora was able to keep up her studies while working in the mornings and breastfeeding her little daughter. Her adopted son (originally a nephew) also accompanied his grandmother to Spain. He attended a public school in the neighbourhood and gave the family a helping hand when necessary. He was expected to return to Peru with his grandmother when the school term ended.

Chart 7

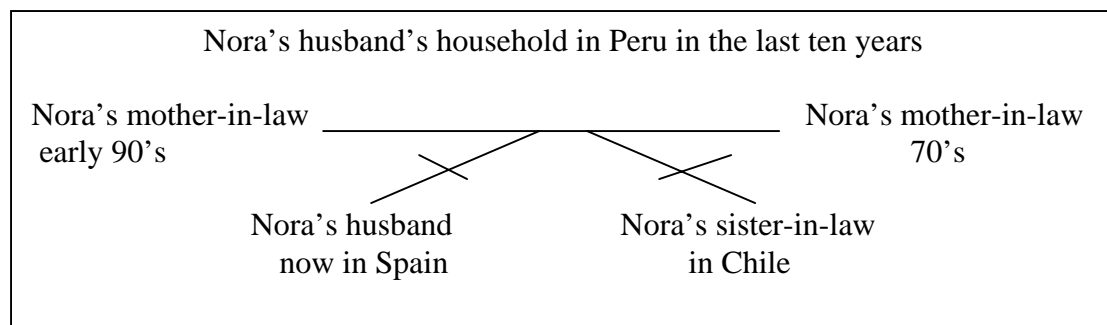


As we have seen in chart 3 and now in chart 7, immigrant households are usually composed of kin and non-blood related people. By subletting a room or several rooms, migrants try to save on expensive rents. In some cases, if they manage to get a long-term rental or buy an apartment, they (sub)rent it as a whole or in rooms for a profit. Property ownership is not an unknown source of income for many Peruvians who arrive to Spain, since they often rent their own homes, cars or whatever else can turn a profit while they migrate. Besides non-kin members, households frequently host relatives or acquaintances for a period of time. This is the case of newly arrived relatives who lodge with the family before finding new accommodations, those who have given up their previous living arrangements for any given reason and are also looking for another place to stay (chart 5); and temporary visitors who will eventually return to their place of origin, as we have seen in the case of Nora's mother and nephew (adopted son). Consequently, immigrant household

composition is quite different from that of average native households as it undergoes rapid changes in short periods of time.

Everybody in Nora’s family has caretaking duties and must contribute to the welfare of other members within his/her means. As we explained in the beginning, Nora is caring for Mrs. Salvat. Nora and her husband also look after their baby. Nora’s mother, with some assistance from Nora’s nephew, cares for the baby, too, when the couple is out working. In return, Nora had sent her mother and father money in previous years and is helping them to rebuild their house. Back in Peru, Nora’s mother runs a big house where a lot of housework has to be done daily. She is assisted by Nora’s (supposed) niece who is in charge of the household chores while Nora’s mother is in Spain. Nora’s husband has some problems of his own as he and his sister must deal with taking care of their parents. His parents are at a very advanced age and need somebody to look after them. Nora’s husband lived with his parents while his sister was working as a maid in Chile for several years, but when he married Nora and decided to join her in Spain, his sister had to return to Peru to live with them. In return, he has to send money to support all three. But what his sister really expects from him is that he helps her to migrate to Spain and eventually reunify their parents, too. However, because the old couple is in such poor health, Nora’s husband thinks that a long overseas trip would be too risky. On the other hand, leaving them alone in Peru would mean having to provide for their care, with all the additional problems this involves as highlighted above (the risk of hiring an unreliable, dishonest person).

Chart 8



Nora’s husband is also contributing to the care of native elderly in Spain. During the last stage of Nora’s pregnancy, he accompanied her everyday to Mrs. Salvat’s house and helped her to lift and move the woman in order to bathe her and make the bed. More often men than women are employed for these heavy tasks,

especially in older people's homes. For a few hours a week he also assisted other elders until he got a more stable job as a night watchman in a garage and later a part-time day job in a museum.

The list of duties and responsibilities, caregiving and receiving, and different stages of interdependence is endless. There are many cases of linked care and welfare arrangements within and between families for the well-being of dependants, especially small children and the ailing aged. Among them: babies and children sent back home to be cared for by relatives while their mothers are working abroad, older people who circulate between different migrant households (a well-known phenomenon in Spain called "swallow grandparents") or even between different countries; younger brothers and sisters who are reunited to continue their studies and give a hand with childcare, among others. All of these cases clearly illustrate that a specific group of foreign immigrants in Spain, the Peruvians, are involved in a wide array of situations. Similar arrangements can also be seen among other immigrant groups, especially Latin Americans, who enjoy preferential treatment under the Non-Nationals Law and Immigration policies which allow them easier entry to the country and reunification processes than other foreigners or naturalized Spaniards.

Table 4

<p>Aspects of preferential treatment towards Latin Americans in Spain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- No entry visa required during the nineties, and still valid for some nationalities- Easier to obtain work and residence permits, as well as successive renewals, than for a non-Latin American- Access to dual nationality after only a two-year residence, or one year after marrying a Spaniard <p style="text-align: right;">Extracted from different national regulations</p>

DISCUSSION

Methods: a multi-sited longitudinal approach

More than ten years have passed since the first Peruvian maids entered Spain. Since then, the live-in eldercare sector has been gradually occupied by women from around the world. However, a thorough understanding of such a process – mainly women migrating abroad and being employed as domestic caretakers - can only be achieved through a longitudinal and multi-sited approach. From a longitudinal perspective we learn that this inflow of maids forms part of a tradition that dates back in the history of many cities in the South and the North, like Madrid or Barcelona in Spain, or Lima

in Peru, where the upper classes have employed^{vi} domestic servants for centuries (Sarasua 2001, Radcliffe 1990).

But the global and historical perspective of these processes should be encompassed within microlevel analyses of families that have to adapt to different structures and needs, depending on the time and the place. A longitudinal life-cycle approach on migrant families reveals the continuities and disruptions that take place after migration. Urban middle-class Peruvian household members, who have employed cheap domestic help for its utility and as a sign of status in Peru, are themselves now employed as domestic workers upon arrival to their new countries of residence – for both economic benefit and as a way to maintain their status back home (Escrivá, 1999).

In addition to a longitudinal approach, the multi-sited approach (Marcus, 1995) constitutes a powerful tool for studying people and the livelihoods they construct between spaces. The researcher who moves here and there and is aware of the different contexts and their interconnections, does not need to resign him/herself to hearing just one side of people's stories about their lives and those who are far away, but is able to be in many places at once and extract directly from what is seen and heard. In the present study, this approach has allowed us to shed some light on the way the caretaking strategies at both poles of the migration chain are interrelated. Likewise, new immigrant caretakers in Europe have had to transfer the same caretaking duties towards their dependent relatives to someone else in their places of origin (paid or unpaid) and must continue to do so even after reunification, if they want to keep their jobs.

Theory: the transnational perspective on migration

The title of this paper, “Securing Care and Welfare Transnationally”, clearly illustrates the theoretical perspective towards which our research has been oriented. Transnationalism has become a somewhat fashionable concept which seems to encompass most of what migration is about today. Researchers such as Ludger Pries (verbal communication during the second summer school on Transnationalism, Bochum 2003) have criticised the use of this catch-all term, while many others have remarked upon the need for more systematic, clear and comparable empirical data (Ninna Glick-Schiller, Steve Vertovec, Alejandro Portes).

The term is used here in an attempt to capture the way an increasing number of people, both migrants and non-migrants, are constructing their lives in response to personal as well as social circumstances. Transnational livelihoods (term used by Sorensen & Olwig 2002), that is to say, durable forms of transnational living, emerge around physically separated, but virtually interconnected spaces through social, cultural, economic and political practices that link the different countries to which migrants and non-migrants have turned. These practices have led to a rise in de facto and imagined transnational fields – social spaces of identity and action that cross borders and leave them blurred^{vii}. As Levitt (2002) argues, transnational livelihoods are more than actual behaviours or practices; “they also include the way social actors construct their identities and imagine themselves and the social groups they belong to when they live within transnational fields and when they can use resources and discursive elements from multiple settings”.

The transnational perspective consequently offers a unique framework for considering people’s actions and the formation of their identity across political borders through the construction of special forms of living enabled by international migration. These experiences, however, are very much determined, facilitated or constrained by their geography, that is, by local, national and international factors such as laws and regulations, economic opportunities and segmentations, political and social climates and so forth, as Guarnizo & Smith (1998) remind us. In the literature on transnationalism, this argument reproduces previous discussions about the reach of globalisation and the enduring importance of the “local” versus the “global”; an interaction which is summed up in the concept of “globalisation” (Robertson, 1992).

Theorists of globalisation and migration come together in discussions about the extent to which contemporary migrations are as much a determinant as a consequence of the growing process of economic and cultural globalisation. For Massey (1999:40), the basis of this relationship can be found in the “world systems theory”: “because political power is unequally distributed across nations, the expansion of global capitalism acts to perpetuate inequalities and reinforce a stratified economic order.” Therefore, as migration is a direct result of economic globalisation, and the forces of globalisation are continually advancing, increasingly more people, from all layers of society, will join this transnational migration. Like the concentric circles of a ripple, migration and especially that which is in permanent and close

contact with its place of origin, will in turn lead to more migration, thereby expanding upon and deepening globalised forms of production and behaviour back home.

But globalisation, like transnational migration, impacts people from different places and backgrounds in different ways. Not everyone has the chance nor the capacity to benefit equally from it. Migrants may be considered in this regard either as privileged actors or as victims of the structural forces enveloping them, depending on their life experiences and how they ultimately evaluate their own lives^{viii}.

The North American literature on transnationalism has developed in discussion with two other main areas of research on migration: the integration of migrants in the receiving society (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996), and the impact of migration in the process of development in the countries of origin (Landolt 2003, Ibarra 2003). As Vertovec (2003) points out, these applied fields of research open the way for the study of societal transformations rather than merely describing practices and connections. Albeit unproductively, discussions have often taken an absolutist stance, especially in the past (Gordon 1964, Pickus 1998), as if adaptation to a new society could not run parallel to an orientation towards or the maintenance of ties with other places where people have lived before, as the transnationalisation perspective suggests.

The difficulties of understanding such a combination of trends are the product of a deep-rooted individualistic and unilineal concept of what these processes involve. Individualistic, in the sense that the concept denies the salience of social networks in migrants' lives (Boyd 1989, Tilly 1990). Unilineal, because in its purest assimilationist sense, integration into North American society is conceived of as a gradual path towards a highly standardized and collective image of what North American society is or should be. Thus, society is essentialized and the possibilities of transformations denied, a question which has recently been the object of strong criticism (Alba and Nee 1999).

In support of the transnational perspective on migration, it can be argued that it is a much better tool for approaching the adaptive practices used by migrants to resolve their matters here and there and to culturally and psychologically adjust to different living environments with the support of home-based social networks. Most commonly, migrating does not mean that those who have left their places of origin in order to prosper have forgotten those left behind nor, out of respect for them, have remained untouched by the forces of assimilation in their new surroundings, as case

studies show. On the contrary, it should be expected that people will adapt to their new circumstances by using the elements they are already familiar with, interpreting what is newly learned and redefining all of it.

Research on family reproduction in migration studies

It is indeed in the area of family reproduction where the highest cores of transnational engagement are recorded (as also Vertovec points out, 2003). However, as Levitt and Glick Schiller (2003) remind us, “much work on globalization and transnationalism focuses on production, but reproduction also takes place across borders and is an important, if understudied, aspect of the migration experience”. Increasing work has been done mainly by female researchers that deal with the transnational family (Glick Schiller 1999, Pessar and Mahler 2003, Foner 1999, Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, Menjivar 2000, and others, in the US; Sorensen 2004, Escriva 2004, Benzotti 2002 and a few others, in Europe).

Before going into the issues and perspectives approached by these researchers, we should start by clarifying some key concepts. What do we understand (or is usually understood) by the family, the migrant family, and family reproduction? Firstly, there is a wealth of literature from historical and socio-anthropological research (see Segalen 2000, Roussel 1992, Anderson 1995) on the **notion of family**. These comparative and longitudinal studies have debated long-established assumptions on the universal evolution of families in terms of their size, composition and roles. They have shown that the limits of what could be considered a family are difficult to establish objectively, since the concept of “family” is full of subjectivity and open to diverse interpretations. Moreover, the dynamics of families over time and place have proven to be extraordinarily variable.

Consequently, many authors avoid using the highly polysemic and metaphorical term of “family” in their empirical research. They prefer instead to use the term “household” or “domestic group” as analytical units, and “kinship” to address the relations among people with blood and marriage ties. By using these different analytical concepts, researchers are able to focus on the material and non-material elements of daily life in common and link them to the relationships built on other people who may not share the home but are considered part of one’s group, whether they live close by or far away.

The main key to identifying “family” is the existence of dependency relations among its members (Fineman 2001). These dependencies may be social and economic or physical and/or emotional, but are mainly found in the household or domestic group in which members cohabit, performing different activities according to their age, sex or other conditions. However, families and family dependencies are not restricted to cohabitation. Processes such as marriage or migration may divide an original household into two or more different units which are joined by new members such as newborns, spouses and in-laws, or non-blood related people. Though members live apart in new households, even far away, dependencies may continue in the form of sending money and other resources, writing letters or making phone calls to give advice or emotional support and participate in decision-making, as much empirical research on migrant families shows (Levitt 1998). This is what sustains the continuing process of reproduction through time and space.

In a comprehensive manner, **family reproduction** can be understood as “the activities, attitudes, responsibilities and relationships required for the maintenance of daily life across generations” (Laslett and Brenner 1992). The maintenance of daily life includes feeding, housing, schooling, and caretaking when a household member is sick, frail, handicapped or unable to care for him/herself. It also entails physical and emotional interactions that are commonly defined as “unpayable,” namely giving love, support or emotional stability. Nor are the activities and interactions confined to the duties of adult members towards children, but also towards other adults, the sick and the aged. This is especially true in most societies in the world where it is the family, and not the state or any other private entity, which constitutes the first and almost sole institution that participates in social reproduction.

The focus of research on family reproduction in migration studies usually centres on **migrant families** per se, whether fully or partially migrated/reunified, left behind or spread over different locations (most authors cited above). Conceived of as an analytical category, their composition and dynamics differ from that of other non-migrant families, but overlook the multiple interactions occurring between people from different or mixed origins. From that perspective, what interests the researcher is the ability or inability/incapacity of members to keep or improve their living conditions and prospects wherever they are or expect to be in the future.

When defining migrant families, however, one has to account for different concepts depending on the denomination actor/perspective. For the countries of

origin, migrant families are those in which at least one member has moved to live in a place that is different from his/her town or country of origin (see most sending country programmes). The domestic units these people have left behind are supposed to benefit economically from the remittances sent by those who have left; one of the greatest incentives to migration for sending states as well. Yet, in return, non-migrated people may suffer emotionally from the absence of those who have supported them. Not having them around implies that caretaking duties and domestic chores must be redistributed among those who remain. The physical and emotional support lost through migration is expected to be recovered when family members reunify in the new place of residence, as our own empirical data suggests.

It is only after reunification when receiving societies start to speak properly of migrant families instead of migrant individuals, though entire families rarely migrate. Due to legal constraints in the new country of residence^{ix}, or the fact that some people just do not desire or are unable to migrate (as in the case of Nora's father and Nora's husband's parents), there is always someone who remains in the place of origin and who may be in need of attention, most frequently older, ailing relatives. But reunification processes pose new challenges to family reproduction for those migrants who now have to share domestic and paid work in a less familiar environment, like Maria, for example. When first-generation migrants reunify their children, their elderly, or they give birth to newborns, they may not have yet built a strong social network of assistance. Moreover, their knowledge or capacity to benefit from private and social services may be scarce, particularly in the case of non-mixed couples. In these cases, migrants must rely on other individuals of their ethnic community abroad or back home to quit their jobs or share the employer's domestic unit^x.

This last element is linked to a relatively new attempt in gender and family migration research – including my own research - to capture the interconnections between family reproduction arrangements in the households of kin left behind, in reunified and newly formed households by (all or some) immigrants, and in the employers' households where migrants work (what Hochschild, Salazar Parreñas, and others have only partially done). In this way, family reproduction in migration studies incorporates another topic of research: the role of migrants as caretakers and facilitators of family life and the reproduction of native and other migrant populations in their new places of residence. It can be concluded, therefore, that migration contributes (for better or worse) to the reproduction of migrant families by providing

them with better resources and to processes of family reproduction of those living in better-off societies, as seen in the story about Mrs. Salvat.

Much has been written about how historically affluent families have had people at their disposal to clean, cook or care in the household (Sarasua 2003 in the Spanish case). These systems of servitude have traditionally been built, like many still existing today, on social inequalities based on class, gender, age, and/or race; the most representative example of which is slavery. In an amazing study, Glenn (1992) traces the experiences of Afro-American people in the States from slavery to their current occupations in the domestic service sector. Her essay proves that although such by-force systems have now been dismantled in more advanced societies, mechanisms are still in place in the current conditions of domestic work and its labourers which reproduce these same features. In Spain, there are two clear, well-defined legal or official ways in which discrimination is institutionalised: one is the domestic workers' social security regime and the other, the quota system implemented for hiring a set number of immigrant workers per year.

The domestic workers' social security regime, which stems from a reform in the sector in the early 80s, stipulates labour conditions below the norm. Thus, for example, domestic workers are not entitled to ask for unemployment benefits when terminating a job contract, are expected to work longer hours and have fewer rights (regarding health benefits, holidays or seniority) than the majority of workers (Ministerio de Trabajo s.e.). The quota system likewise perpetuates the situation of this second-level sector by assigning domestic jobs, especially on a live-in basis (considered by many immigrants and natives to be outrageous) to foreign (ethnic) women^{xi}. Like previous social norms regarding the employment of native women coming from deprived rural areas, today's system also reinforces ethnic and class differences between employees and employers.

Longitudinal and comparative approaches have demonstrated that the processes of chain substitution in domestic work are widely extended and that practices adapt everywhere to the different intervening actors. The work provided mainly and originally by the women of a family is transferred to internal migrants if the family prospers, and later on to international migrant workers when the internal labour force becomes scarce or too demanding. Nowadays, in Spain and in many other economically advanced societies, increasing female participation in the workforce (after many decades of being confined to the household) and weakened

family support networks, together with insufficient state provisions and the unequal contribution by males to household chores, has intensified and demonstrated the difficulties of matching care needs and caretaking offers (Colectivo Ioe 2001). International migration is simply a new resource available to native families in these better-off societies, albeit subject to high turnover rates and incompatibilities due to mismatched job prospects and job availability in the domestic labour market in Spain (Escriva 1999). This “mismatching” is the product of a higher than expected educational level among international migrants and family reunification projects, making live-in job placements impossible to fill in the medium to long term.

Mrs. Salvat’s case, and many others, highlight the importance of placing more attention on **the elderly** in family reproduction research in transnational migration studies. Indeed, most work has commonly focused on the arrangements made to secure the care and well-being of children (the above-mentioned work of Hochschild, Salazar Parreñas or Hondagneu-Sotelo). In addressing the transnational family, the tendency has been to focus on the adults who migrate and the children who stay behind, those who eventually reunify after some time or those who undertake their own independent migration at a later date. The elderly, if the subject of any research, have been specifically viewed in their role as caretakers of the children who remain behind, whereas their own circumstances have gone unnoticed or been secondary for many researchers once the children reunify with their parents or grow up. More studies are needed that reflect, as in Nora’s mother’s case, the role of the elderly as transnational care providers in societies like Spain where reunification and circulation is possible, their care needs and their dependence on their children and other public services for their welfare when reunified or staying behind.

On the other hand, further research should be done on the growing incorporation of immigrants, mainly women like Maria, Nora and many others, into the promising elder care job sector in private or public spheres such as nursing homes. Most studies on caring services have specifically concentrated on the nanny sector, overlooking the fact that the elderly are a growing proportion of those seeking domestic help and health and social care. In addition to the use of the concept of “transnational mothers” coined by the American social scientists mentioned above (Hondagneu-Sotelo, Hochschild), a new term like “transnational daughters” could be coined to refer to the thousands of women from disadvantaged countries who move to better-off societies to seek full or part-time work as elder caretakers.

Due to an increasingly aged world population, not only in the most advanced economies but also in the less, it is foreseen that the problems associated with maintaining family reproduction, especially the well-being of elders, will intensify and worsen (UN 2003). This expected “burden” placed on younger generations may contribute to the search for a distinct “equilibrium”, where families, individuals and states alike will have to adjust to increasing numbers of lonely elders with or without a shelter. As a consequence of the growing difficulties involved in supporting an ageing population, particularly in the South, it is foreseeable that the aged will become increasingly more active in migration in coming decades, as independent or reunified dependants, in order to become (or continue their role as) a paid or unpaid labour force in private households and family businesses in the North.

Transnational family arrangements: on dependencies and solidarities

Family reproduction in human life is key to understanding why people move and why they behave as they do when moving; that is, by sending remittances or investing in certain services such as education, health and caretaking back home, or in the new place of residence in the event of becoming reunified with their loved ones, all of which form part of the migration strategy. Family reproduction is also one of the major reasons for employing immigrants in the receiving societies, as native families in more advanced economies must increasingly rely on foreign help to sustain their own families, especially dependants.

The two aspects of family reproduction in migration studies described above (reproduction within migrant families and migrants as a key element in the reproduction of native families) involve, to some extent, the activation of transnational arrangements. From the perspective of the migrant family itself, this is especially clear, since the ones who stay behind commonly require or expect the assistance of those absent, as we know from the narratives of our informants. Our fieldwork on Peruvian domestic workers and their employer families reveals that, when employers want to keep their employees in the long term, native families who have come to need immigrant workers increasingly participate in their employees’ family arrangements as well, by helping them to reunify their loved ones, hosting them or getting them a job. These arrangements may even include an agreement between employers and employees whereby jobs are subsequently transferred to relatives who come from the country of origin as a way for families to save time,

effort and the risks involved in searching for a new domestic worker. Edita, a live-in Peruvian domestic worker who cares for an aged couple, suggested to her employers that a cousin coming directly from Peru take over her job if the family would give her a nominal contract. The employer family accepted and the immigration process got underway. Edita had worked for the family for some years and had gained their trust and affection, but was now required to live independently in order to reunify her husband and son.

A **dependency chain** can be traced between migrant families and families who employ caretakers. However, it could be argued that the degree of dependence and vulnerability of each party at each end of the spectrum may be far from equal. Clearly, employers have the upper hand when firing unwanted employees or imposing their rules. Yet employees quit their jobs unexpectedly if they feel exploited or unfairly treated. In spite of everything, when trust has grown between both parties, usually some kind of negotiation takes place. It is important to bear in mind that live-in domestic workers share very close quarters with the people they work for, and households are often small, so large doses of familiarity and trust are needed if employers and employees are to live together in harmony.

In the case of eldercare, dependence on the immigrant labour force (help) stems from the inexistence, economic incapacity or undesirability of using other private social services such as nursing homes. Since many elderly in Southern Europe prefer to remain at home and be attended to there, in-house services are currently on the rise (Parella 2003). Economically speaking, an immigrant domestic worker (especially if undocumented) is a cheaper solution to long hours of care for families who usually have to contribute an additional amount of money to the older person's pension in order to pay for these services. The same could be said of childcare as the scarcity of subsidized nursery schools and the high prices of private day-care centres forces parents, especially those with several children, to look for substitute, low-paid services.

The dependency between migrant and native households is a reflection of internal dependencies in both types of families. A gender and generational structure sustains the rights and duties every family member has in his/her life course. Under the principle of generational solidarity, relatives are expected to take care of those who are unable to earn their keep for reasons of age or physical inability. Yet different situations have shown this assumption to often be unfounded: people with no

surviving relatives close by or who are unable or unwilling to play the solidarity role have fallen under the protection of the state or charity organizations for a long time. Reinforcement of the family ideology by the State or the Church has cyclically pursued the return of dependency and solidarity structures back to the household domain (Carson and Kerr 2002)).

Although these ideological machineries are active in reproducing the united family, the economic forces and individualistic ways of living that they promote oppose this reproduction in many cases. In order to achieve the best economic advantages through migration, at some stage migrants must decide whether to keep working towards the overall well-being of their families or focus on their own betterment. This dilemma constantly emerges in migrant's discourses on their future plans. As Lina, another Peruvian migrant in Spain explains:

“I am tired of saving money for my restaurant (the one she expects to open one day). Suddenly something happens, my mother gets ill, my brother needs money to repair the house in Lima, or whatever, and I have to start saving from the beginning...I told them, now I want to look after my future, they cannot say I only think about myself, I have done a lot for them.”

People's attachment to their families does, indeed, vary greatly and the extent of these chains of rights and duties toward relatives is very much subjected to the individual's construction of a family identity, as discussed, and to the formation of a new family unit which may absolve migrants from further obligations towards their family of origin. As in the previous case, the fact that Lina is a 35-year-old single woman with no children explains why she has been so devoted to her family of origin. In the beginning, Nora, our case study presented earlier, also contributed a great deal to her family in Peru until she got married and had a daughter in Spain. Since then she has not been able to send as much money, but has instead received some support from her family back home, for example, the valuable childcare help her mother gave her.

Nevertheless, we should not let ourselves be deceived by the myth of the united family, especially with regard to migrants. Though there is usually some degree of **solidarity** in place when activating a migration process, not all individuals play a significant role within their families. In some cases, people betray the expectations others have placed on them due to individualistic feelings, sibling rivalry or simply incapacity. Economic hardship and legal vulnerability, as described by Menjivar (2000) in the US case, also prevents migrants from establishing strong

solidarity and family ties at both poles of the migration chain. Consequently, although we may expect a high level of solidarity among migrant populations because migration is commonly said to be a “family strategy”, in fact, migrants often feel powerless to live up to the expectations that their moving raises.

The contrary could also be said about native families who employ migrant caretakers. Employing foreign domestic help is not necessarily a symptom of the lack of family solidarity because mothers and fathers or sons and daughters (stressing the female expected care role) do not fulfil their natural obligations with respect to their ascendants or descendants. On the contrary, for many it is a matter of survival and a way to improve the living standards of the family unit as a whole. In our fieldwork, both employers’ parents and children have shown great concern for their dependants and visited them frequently, sometimes even living together, as in the case of Miquel, Mrs. Salvat’s son. It is hard to believe that a family who is paying for domestic help would be willing to abandon their dependant to his/her own fate.

Strong bonds can also be established between the migrant and the cared person. The phenomenon of “transnational love chains” has been nicely described in the case of migrant women working as nannies in the US (Hochschild, 2000). Similar experiences of attachment to the cared people have been recorded in our fieldwork on eldercare in Spain. Susana, a 44 year-old caretaker, confessed to me that she would never leave her 84 year-old grandma because they were both so attached and accustomed to each other that if Susana were to leave, she would miss her terribly and would probably find herself in no better hands later. Roxana, another Peruvian caretaker, told me she cried and could not sleep for several weeks after the death of her first grandma. Some years later, when Roxana had a daughter, she named her after the old woman she had cared for so much.

Indeed, it is precisely because immigrant women (especially some Latin Americans) are considered to be kinder and more respectful with the elderly than native women, that families look for these very specific foreign services, as argued in the first case studies and in Tamagno’s work (2001) on Peruvians in Italy. Yet, should we talk about a greater degree of intergenerational solidarity between immigrants and natives or should we only talk about strategies to cope with the labour market and the family’s own needs? Newly-formed, mixed families provide an interesting point of comparison to verify whether intergenerational solidarity is stronger in these types of families and promoted by the person from immigrant origin or not.

“Global maids markets” and “global care chains” in the Latin American-Spanish experience

Much research highlights the growth and globalisation of the maid market (Lutz 2002, Chang 2000, Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). The Latin American experience in Spain forms part of this trend, as it is a relatively new^{xii} and promising phenomenon. However, although the maid market is no doubt reaching global dimensions, there is still a tendency for people from certain areas to migrate to others and to perform certain activities. This is the case especially in Spain, where it can still be argued that the maid market is structured around and recruiting people (especially women) from very specific geographical areas, and most importantly, from similar cultural origins. Likewise, Peruvian women migrating to work as maids move to certain countries in particular, many of which are culturally closer to them than the rest of the world, for example, neighbouring countries in Latin American and Southern Europe, whereas North America and Central and Northern Europe are reserved for only the boldest or those married to foreign men.

Hiring preferences are subject to changes over time, depending on the available labour force and on new incorporations into the maid market. Some Spanish families who had employed Filipino women in the 80s, later turned to Latin Americans in the 90s and are now discovering the Eastern Europeans, who they consider particularly hardworking. As has already been discussed, in places where different nationalities come together, some kind of specialization takes place: Filipinos as nannies, Latin Americans, especially Andeans, as elder caretakers, while others are preferred as cleaners or cooks. As shown in comparative studies (Catarino and Oso 2000), these preferences and stratifications rarely vary from country to country or they continue on an international scale, as has been reported in the case of Filipino women (Benzotti 2002).

The Latin American-Spanish experience can also be encompassed within the literature on “global care chains”. The concept of “global care chains” refers to the multiple care arrangements that are simultaneously or successively established in different world locations in order to secure the well-being of both the employees’ and the employers’ dependants. For Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2003), these transnational chains are unequal because there is an unbalanced importing of care and

love from poor to rich countries. This phenomenon has resulted in what is known as the “care drain”; or in Moors’ (2003) words, a “fragmentation of motherhood” and a “lack of intimacy and an increase in emotional insecurity” among migrant families divided between countries. Yet, though this may be partially true, Sorensen (2004) adds that “care drains” already existed among internally migrated families, in which women move to cities to work as maids or factory workers. In addition, international migration does not lead only to separation, but can also promote women’s empowerment and improvement, which may contribute to the family’s welfare in turn.

The current literature on care chains specifically focuses on childcare substitution (Salazar Parreñas, Gamburd, Hondagneu-Sotelo, among others), whereas in Spain and similarly in neighbouring European countries, the role of domestic servants in childcare is smaller even than that played by immigrants joining the eldercare market in private households (Escrivá 2000). In some cases, such as the one described below, these intergenerational care chains become incredibly complex:

Carla works in Spain as an elder caretaker while her underage children remain in a coastal city in Peru. Officially, Carla’s mother is in charge of them while Carla’s husband is out working in a gold mine in the Peruvian highlands, but in fact, most of the hard work at home is done by a live-in girl the family has brought in from a neighbouring rural area in order to care for the children and the great-grandmother who lives with them. Carla has three brothers and one sister, some of who have children. Two of her brothers have lived in Argentina for almost ten years and since then Carla’s mother has visited them at least once a year. While she is abroad, she tries to help out with childrearing. Carla would like to bring her children, and eventually the father, with her to Spain, but for that to be compatible with her current job she thinks she will also need to bring her childless sister in order to help her with the kids. If her plans do not work out, that is, if her sister is not willing to stay at home and care for the children, Carla will wait a bit to acquire Spanish nationality. She will then be able to bring the rural girl who is caring for her children over from Peru who will work for them in Spain at almost no cost.

The previous example provides clear proof of the common statement that caring is still a very female thing subjected to racial and class structures (Anderson 2000, Reynolds 2001) in most, if not all, times and places. As in the case of Dominican migrants who employ Haitian domestic workers back home or Spaniards

who work as nannies in the United Kingdom while their mothers in Spain have an Ecuadorian domestic worker, the ethnic substitution of reproductive work, in which caregiving is essential, takes place today at a hence unknown level of complexity, globality and intensity. Moreover, the above examples show that a position in the care chain is highly changing and relative according to one's place in the economic structure. While Carla is the subordinate person in her employer's family, her family is in turn subordinating someone else in their place of origin. Yet Carla, in turn, expects to gain a stronger position in the future when, after legalisation, she, too, will be able to have a servant.

Policy implications

Traditionally, caregiving activities have been a female sphere in which women from better positions have been able to transfer their duties to other women. These substitutive options available to elites in the past, are increasingly being opened to "First-World" women. Just as families from better-off countries recruit foreign caretakers, these immigrant women substitute their caregiving activities with other women of the family if available, or with women from lower economic groups in their own country or abroad. Likewise, migrant women who have succeeded in reunifying their dependants (children, the elderly) require caring services in order to remain active in the paid labour market. These services may be formed by a combination of public facilities, family and community help or employment arrangements which allow productive and reproductive life to be shared.

These three dimensions of transnational care chains should be considered in research and public policies. The domestic arrangements which enable women's emancipation at the global level and provide for the well-being of dependants are unquestionably impacting on household configurations (composition, size, dynamics, functions) and leading us to reconsider inter-ethnic, inter-gender and inter-generational relations within domestic units. Additionally, the role of public policies and other non-domestic actors on enabling or disabling, facilitating or constraining these caring strategies appear to be important factors. A feedback mechanism acts in which families are influenced by the state and other economic and cultural agents, while these external agents are influenced by developments in families and households too, though they often go unnoticed.

Transnational forms of living and support are not only important for the migrant population, but also for those who do not migrate, but benefit from these resources in the places of origin or transit and in the new places of settlement. This is the case of many Spanish households, like that of Mrs. Salvat who recruits foreign help and will have to continue doing so in the future, given the demographic projections (Puga 2003). But it is also the case for increasing numbers of newly formed, mixed families which comprise foreign and native populations, reunified domestic groups, and relatives left behind or spread over different countries.

Given the facts, policies should also be of a transnational nature. Binational and multinational agreements, such as those only partially reached in bilateral treaties on social security signed between Spain and other countries, should be promoted. Policies should reflect the interdependences of care arrangements in a single location with other care arrangements on a geographical continuum. It should be understood and internalised that intervening locally while ignoring the impact of actions on a more global scale, will only be dangerous for world stability.

Balancing national social policies for native and immigrant populations with policies and actions for developmental cooperation with migrants' countries of origin requires a new political and social agenda; a complete revolution in contemporary practices. For example, whereas in welfare-countries major public expenditures are geared towards schooling, health and pension systems, policy-makers and experts alike regret the "unproductive" use of migrants' remittances in terms of health, schooling, feeding, caring and other social reproduction activities. Taking into account that remittances are essential for the elderly whose pensions, if any, are too low to provide for their needs and the needs of additional family members who form the left-behind domestic units, the relevance of this "unproductivity" becomes evident.

Likewise, treating immigration as the "best" solution for caring deficits in more economically advanced societies condemns the foreign population, particularly women, to jobs which native women have been freed from; transfers the caring deficits to other parts of the globe by accepting only young adults for migration; reproduces the situation among the subpopulation of migrant families that stay behind or reunify and must, themselves, look for substitute caring services and leaves the fundamental question unanswered concerning the future of an ageing world population and the way inter and intra-generational caring relations will evolve. In the

meanwhile, in spite of Garrido's statement (1993) that the elderly in today's society are better off than newborns because they have already had the chance to live and receive pensions that allow them to be independent or free of undesired family obligations, this sector of the population suffers from the highest rates of poverty and exclusion and is extremely vulnerable.

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This paper is based on ethnographical fieldwork conducted in Spain from 1995 onwards, firstly under a PhD programme and later under a postdoctoral fellowship from the Spanish Ministry of Education.

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Footnotes

ⁱ The following cases are extracted from fieldwork material gathered over a period of more than ten years. It includes information from in-depth interviews, informal conversations and observations taken from many visits to migrant households and households where migrants work. Moreover, the researcher has taken part in activities and organizations with the aim of acquiring a deeper understanding of people's lives in a variety of environments. All the names used are fictitious in order to protect their identity.

ⁱⁱ In 2002, over 30,000 immigrants arrived in Barcelona, a historical number that had been only reached and somewhat exceeded before in the early 60s.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Spanish Government implemented the quota system in 1994, establishing a fixed number of work permits for foreign workers from certain countries to supply large numbers of migrant labourers to Spain to work in very specific activities, such as domestic work, agriculture or construction. This system is very similar to the Italian experience and has been in force since then.

^{iv} The requirements for a reunification petition have become harder over time, but essentially require a certain period of residence in the new country as a documented migrant, a large enough salary to cover the family's living expenses and appropriate housing for all the reunified members of the family.

^v Tamagno (2002) also argues in favour of the politics of "kindness and politeness" among Peruvians in Italy.

^{vi} "Employed" is a moderate word used in a historical perspective, since slavery and different kinds of patronage have prevailed in domestic work relations.

^{vii} We recommend Glick-Schiller (1999) for a wonderful account of transnational migration or "transmigration" in the US from a historical perspective. Many compound words have been coined around the term "transnational": *transnational social spaces*, *transnational fields*, *transnational social formations*, each with its own defenders on the basis of their original field of study (geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists., etc.) In my opinion, however, the differences between them are negligible.

^{viii} Anderson (2003) exemplifies this with the case of undocumented migrant domestic workers who live in hiding, confined under their employer's roof. They are less able to move back home from time to time or shuttle between places, have less access to communication services and the exchange of information and goods with relatives, and less opportunity for meeting other people from their country than, for example, ethnic entrepreneurs. Thus, the author adds, the intensity and form of engaging in transnational space is very much related to power, which is in turn determined by matters of gender, race, and the intersection of all of the above with class. The state, moreover, plays a role in these contradictions, and most particularly in accessing the social space of citizenship.

^{ix} A restrictive conception of the family unit, as in the case of Spain, allows reunification of a spouse, underage descendants and dependent ascendants.

^x Relying on the employer's household to solve the caretaking needs of the migrant's family is possible in those arrangements where the employee is allowed to bring or stay with his/her dependants in the workplace during or even after work hours, as found during our fieldwork with domestic workers.

^{xi} For further information on the Spanish quota system see the following governmental web site: www.extranjeros.mir.es/

^{xii} A new mass phenomenon in Spain, but not in Latin America where families have traditionally employed domestic servants as a sign of status.