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Title: *Public and Private responses to ageism: 'proximity services' and domestic care work of migrant women, the case of Spain*

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Abstract

The way in which social care is organized in a society is the result of a combination of many factors that range from the institutional set (the provision of welfare services), to the social and economic environment (social perceptions and attitudes towards care work) and individual characteristics (educational background, household composition and the like). These factors lead to a particular allocation of social care needs between the market, the state, the family and other informal sectors, which is strongly rooted in the historical development of countries though with commonalities for the welfare regimes in which welfare states cluster.

This paper will assess the relationship between levels of social policy development in the area of social care and the existence of migrant domestic care work to look after the elderly. In Europe, a growing number of female migrants are working in expanding fields of the service sector. Migrant women are increasingly taking over the care of households and of dependant people, especially children and the elderly. Many factors contribute to this development, increasing percentages of women in paid employment; rapidly ageing population in Europe and the insufficiency of state care provisions for the elderly are among the strongest reasons behind this development; Given the high cost or inexistence of other solutions, employing live-in or per-hour foreign domestic workers as caretakers has become a resource for caring and accompanying the elderly who increasingly live alone in their own homes.

At first sight, one could guess that those countries with greater public provision for social care and lower levels of wage inequality are less likely to import high numbers of immigrant domestic workers.

The paper will look at Spain as a case study. This country has seen a rapid growth of migrant domestic work in the care sector while at the same time the central government has recently passed a law with the objective of articulating a system of protection for those individuals in need of care. The study will assess how the informal work of migrant carers has been articulated within this new policy development and how will a future system of social protection for individuals in need of care integrate the existing arrangement of domestic care work.