



Migrants from a European country?

The influence of European citizenship on the situation of Polish domestic workers in Madrid

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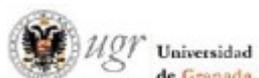
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Universiteit Utrecht, Gender Studies Department
Erasmus Mundus Master Degree in Women's and Gender Studies GEMMA
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Abstract

In the context of the contemporary shifts of the external borders and internal boundaries of the European Union, this thesis explores the specific issues related to the re-definition of the long-established migrant status of Central and Eastern Europeans as new mobile European citizens. The central research question relates to the effects of the acquisition of European citizen status on the position of Polish female domestic workers in Spain, which implies an analysis of their social location as defined in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship in the context of such a change. This thesis analyzes the complicated relation of Central and Eastern Europe to the rest of Europe, the political, economic, and discursive divisions of the continent, as well as its history of East-West migrations with reference to the complexities of Eastern European whiteness in the context of multiethnic societies. These issues are further articulated with the “global hierarchies of womanhood” in terms of race/ethnicity, class, and nationality in the framework of the traditional employment of Eastern European women as domestic workers in countries of Western Europe. In order to fully account for these issues, intersectional perspective is adopted, as a way to analyze such complex and shifting positionalities. The theoretical and political background for the central research question is further completed with empirical material, provided by a set of interviews conducted with Polish domestic workers in Madrid. The analysis of the interviews explores issues related to migration motivation, labor market situation, perceptions of self and others in ethnic terms, and the transcendence of the status of European citizen in this context. The main conclusion which might be drawn from this study is that the positionality of the new European citizens remains complex. In the specific case of Polish domestic workers, in the context of a strongly racialized migrant community, their whiteness, perceived cultural proximity and (still ambiguous) belonging to Europe position them closer to the local society and constitute a basis for preference on the labor market. Nevertheless, in economic and social terms, their predominant employment in the migrant niche of domestic workers locates them closer to other non-EU migrant women present in Spain.

Resumen

En el actual contexto de cambios en las fronteras externas y en los límites de la ciudadanía de la Unión Europea, el presente trabajo de investigación intenta explorar cuestiones relacionadas con la re-definición del estatus inmigrante de los ciudadanos de Europa Central y del Este, como nuevos ciudadanos de la Unión. Mi investigación se centra en los efectos de la adquisición del estatus comunitario sobre la situación de las trabajadoras domésticas polacas en España a través de un análisis de su posición social definida por las categorías de género, clase, etnia, nacionalidad y ciudadanía en el contexto de este cambio reciente. Este estudio explora las complicadas relaciones entre la Europa Central y del Este con el resto del continente y sus divisiones políticas, económicas y discursivas, así como la historia de las migraciones del Este hacia el Oeste y las implicaciones de la blancura en el contexto de las sociedades multiculturales contemporáneas. Estas cuestiones se articulan con las jerarquías globales de feminidad en términos de raza, etnia, clase, nacionalidad y ciudadanía en el marco de las migraciones tradicionales de mujeres del Este de Europa como trabajadoras domésticas en países de Europa Occidental. Todos estos elementos permiten examinar los efectos de su reciente adquisición del estatus de ciudadanas de la UE y examinar las condiciones de su movilidad como trabajadoras europeas. La perspectiva interseccional se aplica en este estudio con el fin de acceder a las complejas y cambiantes posiciones sociales. El marco teórico y político de la cuestión central de esta investigación se completa con material empírico, proporcionado por medio de entrevistas con trabajadoras domésticas de origen polaco en Madrid. La parte dedicada al análisis de las entrevistas explora cuestiones relacionadas con la motivación para la migración, situación en el mercado laboral, percepciones de sí misma y de los demás en términos étnicos, y la transcendencia del estatus comunitario en este contexto. La conclusión principal de este estudio es que la situación actual de las trabajadoras domésticas de origen polaco resulta compleja: por una parte, en el contexto de una comunidad inmigrante racializada, su blancura, proximidad cultural y su pertenencia a Europa las posicionan más cerca de la sociedad española e implican una situación de preferencia en el mercado laboral. Por otra parte, su tradicional empleo en el sector de trabajo doméstico, hace su situación más próxima a la de las mujeres inmigrantes no-europeas, en términos económicos y sociales.

Introduction

There is no comparison [with the situation before 2004] it was as if Europe finished with the German border and then, there was a great chasm and only then, the Eastern countries... I am telling you, they treated us as if we were from a different planet.

Zofia, in Madrid since 1995

The 2004 enlargement of the European Union implied an important geographical and discursive shift of its borders further east, accompanied by the removal of boundaries to its membership for millions of citizens of the new member states. Out of the ten new members of the EU, eight are countries which until 1989 formed part of the socialist “Eastern bloc,” separated from the West in political and economic terms. Therefore, the enlargement is regarded as especially significant as it is thought to overcome the former division of the continent. Such transformation entails complex and multifaceted processes of re-definition of belonging in the space of Europe which are principally reflected in the ambiguous positionality of the new European citizens. On the one hand, the new member states carry with them the post-socialist burden of underdevelopment in economic terms together with the historically established discourse on Eastern Europe as backward (Böröcz 2001, Kuus 2004), as “the Other” necessary for the establishment of the European identity (Stråth 2002). On the other hand, they have been included as partners in the European Union project, and the nationals of these states acquired the status of European citizens, implying their belonging to the imagined community (Anderson 2003 [1983]) of Europeans and holding important rights in terms of intra-European mobility.

In the context of these contemporary shifts of the external borders and internal boundaries of the European Union, this thesis explores the specific issues related to the re-definition of the long-established migrant status of Central and Eastern Europeans as

mobile citizens of the EU. The main point of enquiry concerns the influence of the status of European citizens on the situation of Polish women employed as domestic workers in Spain in terms of their social location defined through the hierarchies of gender, ethnicity, class, nationality, and citizenship. As a result of the expanding boundaries of European citizenship, they became mobile European workers, a change which must be necessarily articulated with the global hierarchies which trigger migration processes. In spite of the great scholarly interest in migration in the Spanish context, there are no previous studies concerned with the specific situation of Polish women; neither have I come across any recent studies assessing the effects of the 2004 enlargement on the situation of Polish migrants in Spain, from this perspective, the present study is both necessary and exploratory.

As Castles and Miller (2009) argue, one of the most important characteristics of migration in the globalized world is its feminization, a process which, according to Helma Lutz (2008), is to a great extent due to the growing demand for labor force in domestic work. However, the majority of studies concerned with the situation of foreign domestic workers in Europe focus on the presence of women who are racially and ethnically different, migrants from other regions, continents, and of culturally diverse origins (for instance, Gregorio Gil 1998, Escrivá 2000, Parreñas 2000, Marchetti 2005). Therefore, the presence of foreign domestic workers in the countries of European Union is analyzed in terms of their “difference,” within the framework of global hierarchies of gender, class, race/ethnicity, and citizenship. In this context, the intervention made through this thesis is innovative inasmuch as it explores the paradox of European citizens who remain in the traditional position of migrants in economic and social terms. Its focus is on the situation of migrant domestic workers in a European country; however, the specificities of the social location of the women in question as white, Catholic, (Eastern) European, and EU citizens pose problems for their categorization as “migrant women” in traditional terms of difference. Therefore, there is a need for new analytical tools and frameworks in order to account for the ambiguous positionality of Polish women employed in the racialized sector of European domestic work, especially since this issue has not received much attention in the scholarship after 2004, as noted above. At the European level there is a need to account for the complicated relation of Central and Eastern Europe to the rest of Europe, the political, economic, and discursive

divisions of the continent, as well as a history of East-West migrations. These issues must be articulated with the global hierarchies of womanhood (Parreñas 2000) in terms of race/ethnicity, class, and nationality and the traditional employment of Eastern European women as domestic workers in countries of Western Europe (Morokvasic 1991, Coyle 2007). This already complex framework must further include the perspective on the effects of the recent acquisition of the status of EU citizens and mobile European workers, as well the complexities of Eastern European whiteness. In order to fully account for these issues it is necessary to adopt an intersectional perspective as a way to analyze such complex and shifting positionalities without assuming stable positions of privilege or disadvantage.

The intersectional approach is of central importance here, as it allows for a better understanding of the ways in which social categories of gender, ethnicity, class, nationality, and citizenship interact to create complex hierarchies of power in contemporary societies. The concept of intersectionality has been subject to much debate in the last two decades, and while it was first introduced by the U.S. scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to analyze the complexities of the disadvantage of Black women in the United States, studies of interlocking oppressions have been developed by European feminists already throughout the 1980s (for example, Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, 1983). In the last decade, intersectionality has become a hot topic in women's and gender studies, and there has been much debate on its different conceptualizations (for example, Brah and Phoenix 2004, Yuval-Davis 2006, Haschemi Yekani et al. 2009¹), as well as on its methodological aspects (McCall 2005). To account for the complexities of these debates would be beyond the scope of this introduction, however, it must be made clear that for the sake of this study the conceptualization put forward by Nira Yuval-Davis (2006) will be adopted. Yuval-Davis argues against an additive approach to intersectionality based on identity politics, and conceptualizes it as a way to "avoid attributing fixed identity groupings to the dynamic process of positionality and location on the one hand and the contested and shifting political construction of categorical boundaries on the other" (2006, 200). Therefore, this scholar clearly opposes the kind of politics and research agendas based on essentialized and fixed identities and argues for accounting for the ways in which the

¹ See also the debate in the special issue of the *European Journal of Women's Studies* (2006) with contributions by Nira Yuval-Davis and Ann Phoenix.

interlinking grids of differential positioning in terms of class, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, ability, stage in the life cycle and other social divisions, tend to create, in specific historical situations, hierarchies of differential access to a variety of resources – economic, political and cultural (2006, 199).

In the specific context of this study, such an approach is considered of central importance in order to account for the ambiguous positionality of new European citizens within the shifting borders of the European Union, and to analyze the complex position, between privilege and disadvantage, of white migrant European women employed in the racialized sector of domestic work.

In this sense, the main objective of this thesis is to explore the question: in what ways does the acquisition of the status of European citizens influence the position of Polish domestic workers in Spain? And, further, how is their social location defined in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality in the context of such a change? The theoretical and political background for this question, sketched above and further developed in the first two chapters of the thesis, will be complemented by empirical material, provided by a set of interviews conducted with Polish domestic workers in Madrid. The interviews were focused on the interviewees' perceptions of the change of status from migrant to mobile European citizens; the main focus was, therefore, on issues related to migration motivation, labor market situation, perceptions of self and others in ethnic terms, and the transcendence of the status of European citizen in this context. The underlying questions of my study are:

1. How are the motivations for economic migration related to broader sociopolitical contexts, especially the post-socialist transitions and the EU enlargement?
2. What are the reasons for the predominant employment of Polish women in the sector of domestic work in Madrid?
3. How important is Polish ethnicity in the context of the multiracial and multicultural community of migrants in Spain?
4. How the change of status from migrant to European citizen is accommodated in these circumstances, and what are the perceived effects of this change?

These four themes constitute the framework for the analysis of the materials obtained through the interviews which provide initial insight into the general situation of mobile

European citizens after 2004, and into the particular experience of Polish domestic workers in Spain.

Having outlined the general political context of this study, its main objective, as well as some analytical issues at stake, I want to make clear that I consider my own location as a Polish woman living in Spain as the starting point for this inquiry and I recognize the fact that my motivation and interest for this particular issue is connected to personal experience of migration and Europeanness. However, I also admit that my “academic migration” between three different European countries (Poland, Spain, and the Netherlands) constitutes a different social location than that of the participants of this study. While some experiences and struggles might be shared by all of us, many remain quite different. As I try negotiate my own location and relation to the fact that I recently became a European citizen as well as I try to adapt to new cultural, linguistic, and economic circumstances as a mobile European citizen –experiences which might be shared with the participants of my study–, there are issues which make my location radically different, for instance, my academic preoccupations. Here the most significant point is the constant process of negotiating the Southern, Northern, and Central European academic traditions while communicating within the space of the English language. This study is the direct reflection of these processes as it has been carried out in Spain, with the empirical part conducted in Polish, and it has been written in English for a Dutch university. As I cross political, cultural, and linguistic borders on a regular basis, I can find one common identifier for my shifting locations: that of a European citizen. Therefore, different versions of Europeanness (Southern, Northern, Central European) become the common denominator for my positions. Bearing in mind my own complex position, I opt for producing a situated knowledge (Haraway 1991) as an embedded and embodied subject, critically approaching the possibilities of constructing grounded and located statements from my partial perspective. Nevertheless, I am reminded that as a researcher, I possess the power of choice and decision in certain practical, methodological, as well as theoretical issues. Therefore, I consider it critical to remain self-reflexive about the research process and make explicit my own location, my particular motivations, and the choices I make along the way.

In this context, one of the most significant decisions made in this study is the structure of my enquiry, which I want to make clear from the beginning. The thesis is

structured into four chapters, each enclosing a different aspect of the research project, elements which will altogether provide a basis for addressing the central research question. In the first chapter I will provide a theoretical background for my analysis of the effects of the expanding boundaries of citizenship in the EU. I will outline the connections and tensions between European citizenship, the shifting borders of Europe, and the location of Polish domestic workers in terms of ethnicity and gender. Here the ambiguous positionality of Central and Eastern Europeans in the discourse of Europe will become manifest, combined with the specific issues of intra-European mobility of women to for the racialized sector of domestic work. Categories such as citizenship, nationality, Europeanness/Easterness, whiteness, and gender will be discussed in order to account for the dynamic positionality of Polish women within the complex web of social hierarchies of the expanded European Union.

In the second chapter I will present the context of Polish migratory movements in the last two decades. I will provide an overview of the post-socialist transitions and the process of EU accession as the economic and political transformations of reference. Within this framework, I will account for the specificities of Polish emigration to Spain, focusing on the labor market situation and ethnic perceptions of Poles within the migrant community of this country, with special reference to the position of women.

In the third chapter the empirical part of the project will be introduced. Firstly, the methodological issues related to the choice and application of qualitative methods for this research project will be discussed. Subsequently, short migration histories for each of the participants of the project will be presented in order to account for their differences and commonalities, as the basis for the comparative approach in the analysis of the interviews.

In the last, fourth, chapter of the thesis I will incorporate the discussion and analysis of the empirical material obtained through the interviews with Polish domestic workers in Madrid. I will analyze their narratives in terms of the central research question and the four subquestions, which will allow for a thorough analysis of the effects of the acquisition of the European citizenship on the situation of Polish domestic workers in terms of their gender, ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship status.

Chapter 1

Migrants from a European country: theoretical perspectives on citizenship, whiteness, and migration within European Union

They treat you as an apprentice because we are from Poland, we are from Eastern Europe, we are not from America [meaning the U.S.], we are not from England, and we are not from Germany or France. We are treated as if we still need to learn.

Agnieszka, in Madrid since 2003

Article 17:

Citizenship of the Union is hereby established. Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union. Citizenship of the Union shall complement and not replace national citizenship.

Treaty Establishing the European Community
(consolidated version)

Introduction

The analysis of the effects of the change in status from migrants to European citizens on the social location of mobile Central and Eastern Europeans in general, and on the specific situation of Polish migrant domestic workers, requires examining the ways in which the borders of Europe are constantly being renegotiated through political as well as cultural discourses intertwined with structures of ethnicity, class, and gender. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to explore and map out some of the theoretical

issues linked to the ambiguous positionality of Central and Eastern European migrants/mobile citizens within the contemporary processes of re-definition of the European Union as an imagined community (Anderson 2003) with special reference to issues of ethnicity and gender.

In order to construct a framework for the analysis of the situation of white, European, migrant domestic workers, several significant and cross-cutting modes of belonging need to be discussed, such as the historically shaped discursive borders of Europe, as well as citizenship and ethnicity in their European dimension. In this context, the creation of European citizenship constitutes the focus point for my theoretical framework and it will be analyzed principally through the practices of inclusion/exclusion which accompany it (Ferreira and Tavares 1998, 2). In order to unpack this concept, I will discuss the notion of Europe and citizenship as theoretical notions which provide the basis for the conceptualization of the citizenship of the European Union. Subsequently, I will analyze the ambiguous location of Central and Eastern Europe within the shifting borders of the space of Europe in order to make visible some of the problems which their belonging entails. Finally issues related to the categories of ethnicity and gender will be raised with special reference to the notion of Europeanness as Christianity and whiteness, as well as the issues of gendered/racialized work in a global framework. As a final point, I will draw connections between all of the above-mentioned elements in order to sketch the theoretical framework of my study as an intersectional analysis of the situation of Polish domestic workers in Spain in terms of their Europeanness, citizenship, whiteness, class, and gender.

The citizenship of Europe

As noted above, the key issue for my research is the process of construction of European citizenship and the processes of inclusion and exclusion which accompany it. In order to deconstruct this central notion and make it analytically operative I will discuss the problematic meanings of Europe and connect them to some of the traditional and more recent perspectives on the contested notion of citizenship, in order to finally discuss the theoretical and political issues raised by the creation of the category of “citizenship of the Union.”

The notion of Europe and European Union

To analyze the effects of the expanding external and internal borders of the European Union, it is necessary to clarify the basic frame of reference: the meaning and scope of the notion of Europe. To say that it is a contested concept might be commonplace, but indeed it seems that the only thing one might acknowledge without hesitation is its vagueness. Numerous scholars argue that such ambiguity is inherent to the concept of Europe, as it is not and has never been, a precisely delimited space or notion (Pittaway 2003, Balibar 2004, Jenkins 2008), and “European identity is an abstraction and a fiction without essential proportions” (Stråth 2002, 388). In this sense, Gabriele Griffin and Rosi Braidotti note that,

Europe as an idea, an ideal, and a geopolitical reality has had varying contours throughout history. At the turn of the twenty-first century, its meaning remains in flux as changing political realities require a continual and critical interrogation of the term, mediated by the context (2002a, 8-9).

These authors further argue for the importance of historical memory for the conceptualization of Europe, a necessary accountability for the history of the Holocaust, ethnic cleansing, and colonialism both within Europe and beyond. Therefore, Europe must be understood as an idea in a the process of becoming and definition, its contours depending on the context one is considering and always having in mind the historical memory of the continent marked by shifting borders and violence. From this perspective, the European Union should be regarded as just yet another “contour” drawn on the changing map of European meanings. From a historical point of view, the social and political construction of the EU is a rather recent process; however, it seems that in the political and popular discourse it has already become the synonym of the whole of Europe. Such discursive shifts seem to remain in line with the Cold War legacy when the “Western Bloc,” became unequivocal with the whole of Europe, while the “Eastern/Communist Bloc,” has been marked as radically different from it (Gupta 2005, 96). The famous Hungarian scholar Jozsef Böröcz notes the inadequacy of such synecdoche of “pouring the EU into the vessel of ‘Europe,’” as in reality, the EU still excludes large populations of Europeans (2001, 9).

However, and in spite of these problems of definition, the cultural and political centrality of the notion of Europe persists and most recently it has been reinforced

through the construction of the European Union as an imagined supranational community of Europeans. Here I use Benedict Anderson's (2006 [1983]) term to denote the development of the EU as a socially and politically oriented formation, rather than a strictly market-based one. Although Anderson coined the term "imagined community" to explain the historical construction of nation-states, I would argue that the contemporary processes of construction of the European Union as a political and social entity give basis for the study of the Union as an imagined community of Europeans. From this perspective, the question of sovereignty of the EU seems to be the most pressing, and is subject to much debate, especially in relation to the concept of citizenship of the Union. Although accounting for these debates would be a task beyond the scope of this chapter, let me just point out that there is much discussion on whether the EU might be analyzed as a form of statehood (Böröcz 2005) and what is the role of "the people" as a source of democratic legitimacy for the political project of the European Union (Shaw 1998, 295, Shore 2000, Balibar 2004). Here, the creation of European citizenship can be considered as a response to such a "crisis of legitimacy" (Shaw 1998, Shore 2000) and it implies the creation of a transnational community of citizens who will provide the democratic basis for further development of the Union. It is of great political and discursive significance that the nationals of the post-socialist new EU member states have been included in this community, as it might constitute the first step in the overcoming of the historical divisions of the continent. Nevertheless, it is necessary to further explore some of the specificities of the citizenship of the Union in order to account for inequalities which still prevail in the expanded Union in spite of the official political discourse of equality and non-discrimination.

The concept of citizenship

In order to account for the specificities of EU citizenship it is indispensable to clarify in the first place the traditional meanings of citizenship as a theoretical concept. This is not an easy task, since the meaning of citizenship, as that of the majority of the core concepts of social theory, remains subject to much contestation. Although the roots of this notion are to be found in the ancient Greek *polis*, in the modern era, the concept became "intimately linked to the story of the emergence of the nation state as a dominant form of political organization" (Shaw 1998, 295). Therefore, traditionally, citizenship has

been intrinsically connected to the concept of nationality, and denoted a status of belonging to the national state.

A classical reference in terms of the definition of citizenship, is the work of the British theorist, T.H. Marshall, who characterizes it as “a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community (1998 [1950], 14) and as consisting of three elements: the civil (rights necessary for individual freedom), the political (the right to participate in the political sphere) and the social (relation to welfare state). Such conceptualization of citizenship has been subject to a strong feminist critique as it does not take into account the fact that women’s relation to the state is differential than that of men. It is thought to be inadequate due to the fact that social rights are tied to male patterns of employment, and the reproductive role of women makes it difficult for them to participate on equal terms with men in the labor market, as well as in the sphere of politics (Pateman 1988). In response to this kind of critique, Ruth Lister (1997), in her feminist reworking of this concept, offers a synthesis between the liberal tradition of individual rights and obligations and the civic republican understanding of citizenship as participation. She proposes to understand citizenship in a more active and inclusive manner, as “both a status, carrying a set of rights including social and reproductive rights, and a practice, involving political participation” (1997, 196). Therefore, Lister proposes a participatory model and highlights the double-sided character of this concept as both a status and a practice with the aim of strengthening the inclusive side of it, while, at the same time, challenging the exclusionary sides both within and at the borders of nation-states (1997, 196).

In spite of such efforts to re-conceptualize citizenship as inclusive, the dynamics of exclusion remain central to its workings. As Etienne Balibar argues:

It is always the practical confrontation with the different modalities of exclusion [...] that constitutes the founding moment of citizenship [...] every institution of citizenship involves the institutionalization of exclusions, following different historical modalities (2004, 76).

However, it is crucial to make clear that these modes of institutionalization of exclusion although change in time and depend on specific national (or, in the case of the EU, transnational) context, remain always gendered and racialized. In this sense Nira Yuval-Davis and Pnina Werbner argue that,

the specific location of people in society – their group membership and categorical definition by gender, nationality, religion, ethnicity, ‘race’, ability, age or life cycle stage – mediates the construction of their citizenship as ‘different’ and thus determinates their access to entitlements and their capacity to exercise independent agency (1999, 5).

It becomes clear, therefore, that in order to analyze the social reality of citizenship as status and a practice, as entitlements and capacity to exercise agency, it is necessary to apply an intersectional perspective which allows for an appreciation of the differential access to and experience of citizenship depending on one’s social location in terms of gender, ethnicity, class, nationality, and legal status. Furthermore, as the feminist critique of the concept of citizenship makes clear, these issues are of critical importance for women, and especially those women employed in the sphere of domestic work, traditionally not considered as a source of entitlement for citizenship rights in the public sphere.

European citizenship

Having revised some theoretical issues related to the traditional meanings of citizenship, I now turn to the definition of the core elements of the EU citizenship. The founding moment for the establishment of the citizenship of the Union was the 1st November 1993, when the Treaty on European Union (the Maastricht Treaty) came into force. In its second part, article 17 of the amended Treaty, establishes the basis for the citizenship of the Union through its direct link with the nationality of the EU member states. Therefore, it is important to note that EU citizenship remains additive to the “original” national citizenship.² The articles which follow outline the four constitutive elements of the citizenship of the Union: firstly, it is the right to move and reside freely within the territory of other member states; secondly, it is the right to vote and run in municipal and European Parliament elections in the member state where the EU citizen resides; thirdly, it is the protection in a non-EU country by the diplomatic or consular representatives of other member states if one’s own state is not represented; fourthly, it is the right of petition to the European Parliament and the European Ombudsman. The

² The complementary character of the citizenship of the Union has been clarified by the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam. Such a formulation of the citizenship of the Union raises important issues as far as the national models of access to citizenship in the EU member states are concerned, which remain a matter of national sovereignty. The lack of convergence on the UE level implies important differences and inequalities in terms of the possibilities of becoming a national, and thus a citizen of the Union, in the different states of the EU (Kofman et al. 2000, Böröcz 2007).

above-mentioned provisions of the Treaty concerning the citizenship of the Union are further complemented by the normative authority of the Court of Justice in its capacity as a constitutional court (Shaw 1998, 297, Nanz 2009, 414).

As mentioned before, the aim of the creation of the European citizenship is to “strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the EU” and “make the processes of European integration more relevant to the individual citizens by increasing their participation” (European Commission report quoted in Shore 2000, 67). However, many scholars are rather critical about the possibility of achieving this aim (Shaw 1998, Shore 2000, Bauböck 2007). The main problem seems to be that the status of the citizen of the Union does not imply holding rights in relation to the institutions of the EU, rather, its value becomes manifest when nationals of member states become mobile and acquire rights in other member states (Bauböck 2007). From this perspective, there is another important effect of the creation of a citizenship of the Union: the creation of a space where what traditionally was conceived labor migration, is now considered workers mobility,³ as the long-established material and legal obstacles to transnational intra-European movement are removed for EU citizens. As Patrizia Nanz argues, the creation of the category of European citizenship changed the nature of intra-European migration and the increased transnational mobility of Europeans has resulted in the materialization of a “transnationalized space where growing numbers of individuals are going through experiences in their everyday lives that undermine their sense of national belonging” (2009, 411). In this sense, one of the most important effects of the creation of the citizenship of the Union is the establishment of a space of free movement across national borders, which is thought to re-define the sense of belonging at the European level. However, it is of critical importance to recognize the fact that the just as in the case of the traditionally conceived model of citizenship, the benefits of the European citizenship for the intra-European mobile workers are based on the male breadwinner model (Ferreira and Tavares 1998, 5, Kofman et al. 2000, 88, Nanz 2009, 414) and leave

³ The right to move and reside freely in other Member states, the first basic right of citizens of the Union is supplemented by the free movement of workers within the space of the European Union. This right has been established in the Treaties, specifically the article 39 of the consolidated treaty establishing the European Community (modified in this article by the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty). It states that “Freedom of movement for workers shall be secured within the Community” and further that “Such freedom of movement shall entail the abolition of any discrimination based on nationality between workers of the Member states as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment.” Therefore, what used to be considered economic migration is now regarded as workers mobility (Pajares 2007, 51) to which EU citizens are legally entitled in the whole of the Union, where any legal discrimination is explicitly forbidden.

the care work outside of its conceptualization, a fact which has important consequences for the situation of mobile European domestic workers, which will be analyzed in the last chapter of this thesis.

Post-national citizenship?

A final issue which must be discussed in relation to the EU citizenship is its potential for transforming traditional citizenship, as directly connected to the nation-state that controls its content and defines its limits. Some authors propose that as an effect of the increased labor migration movements, especially in the form of the guestworker system of the 1970s in Western Europe, new modes of membership are emerging. As Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal (1993, 3) remarks, “the model of national citizenship, anchored in territorialized notions of cultural belonging [...] is losing ground to a more universal model of membership, anchored in deterritorialized notions of persons’ rights.” From this perspective, European citizenship can be analyzed as redefining the traditional meanings of citizenship, as a possible next step in the development of this notion (Shore 2000, 73), or even a post-national citizenship (Shaw 1998, Braidotti and Griffin 2002, Nanz 2009). However, and contrary to the hopes of scholars who argue for a development of new forms of universal and deterritorialized membership, it remains a nation-based form of belonging, not only due to the fact that EU citizenship remains contingent upon the national citizenship, but also because the historical and cultural ties to the community of Europeans remain at its core.

This latter element is strongly related to the exclusion of the non-EU nationals in the framework of EU citizenship. Such exclusion is double: from the nation-state, as well as from the supranational European community, which is often termed in the popular and legal discourse as the status of extra-communitarian (or *extracomunitario* in Spanish⁴), implying a radical exclusion from the imagined community of Europeans. This issue is problematized by the famous French political philosopher, Etienne Balibar, in his book *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship* (2004) when he notes that,

⁴ Although the term might be considered as exclusionary, *extracomunitario* is widely used in the public and political discourse in Spain, as a useful term way to indicate the status of non-EU foreigners; its uses range from the legal discourse and scholarly work to mass media and sports.

the fact that, with respect to individuals, “citizenship” is defined as the simple addition to the national citizenships of the member countries of the union, transforms the status of the foreigner. In each particular country the foreigner is only the national of another sovereign state (...) but at the level of the newly instituted union, he or she becomes the object of internal exclusion (2004, 171).

That is why this author argues for a necessary progressive re-conceptualization of the notion of European citizenship as more open to immigrants, the “citizenship in Europe, that is, the shared construction of citizenship by the diverse inhabitants of Europe” (2004, 177). However, from the point of view of the nationals of the new member states of the EU, the exclusionary side of this concept is precisely what has shifted with the redefinition of the borders of the enlarged Union, as they have been included as legitimate citizens of the European community on a political level. This change constitutes the starting point for this thesis, nevertheless, such shift has not been unproblematic and the social perceptions of this inclusion remain to be analyzed, especially in terms of the ambiguous positionality of the new European citizens within the borders of Europe.

Central and Eastern Europeans and the changing borders of Europe

According to Etienne Balibar, “Europe is a border line” (2004, 219); this scholar argues that no absolute border lines exist between its historical and cultural territory of Europe and the spaces which surround it. The shifting nature of borders is thought to be one of principal features of Europe (Favell and Hansen 2002, Balibar 2004, Pittaway 2005) as borders remain central to the social imaginary of this space: both in the contemporary discussions of who is welcomed and who should be kept at the frontiers of the EU, and in the historical experience of the Iron Curtain dividing Europe into the capitalist “free world,” and the socialist space of controlled movement. The cultural memory of the latter division is still present in Europe, as Central and Eastern Europe is very often perceived in terms of its status of “Second World.” From this perspective, the historic instability of political borders and cultural boundaries accounts for the ambiguous positionality of Central and Eastern Europeans, between Europe and the East, between otherness and proximity which influences in important ways the positionality of Eastern

European migrant women, who as European citizens remain in the migrant niche of domestic work.

European perspectives on borders

In order to discuss the implications of the shifting external borders and internal boundaries of the EU it is considered necessary to make clear the importance of the specific notion of border in the European context. As Avtar Brah notes, “borders are arbitrary dividing lines that are simultaneously social, cultural, and psychic; territories to be patrolled against those whom they construct as outsiders, aliens, the Others” (2003, 625). Such a conceptualization transcends in important ways the limited notion of border as the physical space delimiting the territoriality of two states and opens up the possibilities of analyzing their significance as politically and historically constructed concepts which shape public and individual imaginaries. In a similar manner, Nira Yuval Davis and Marcel Stoetzler note that borders constitute a way of imagining the boundaries between collectivities and serve to divide people between those who belong and those who do not (2002, 331). Such perspectives constitute a starting point for the understanding of the peculiarities of European processes of construction of borders and boundaries as intertwined with culture, ethnicity, and politics. However, most of the scholarship on the topic of borders is based on the case of the U.S. – Mexican border, and there is a necessity of reframing the theory of borders in the specific European context. As Sandra Ponzanesi rightly argues,

The notion of borders within Europe is profoundly different from that in the United States, [...] Within Europe the proximity between what used to be defined as the First and the Second Worlds has created –with the collapse of the Soviet Union– a hazy ‘transit zone’ (Eastern Europe going Western)[...]. The Eastern frontier has become the site of a recycled workforce for the expansion of the Western economy, but also a receptacle of lost histories and identities that claim their centrality in the shaping of European identity (2002, 214).

Therefore, there is a necessity of analyzing the processes of definition and re-definition of borders in its European historical specificity, as well as in the context of their contemporary re-negotiations. The historical burden of the Cold War must be taken into account, especially when considering the position of Central and Eastern Europe as a post-socialist borderland, undergoing important economic, social, and political

transformations based on the model of Western liberal democracies and free market economy.

The construction of the European Union and its most recent enlargements become yet another element of these processes. On the one hand, the construction of the external borders of the Union –the infamous and widely criticized “Fortress Europe”– must be critically scrutinized. In this context it is important to note, that some of the new member states of the EU constitute now the new Eastern border of the EU, and frontiers which were before relatively easy to cross (such as the Polish-Ukrainian border) became sealed as a strategic part of the external border of “Fortress Europe” (Kindler 2008). In spite of this, some scholars also argue that the notion of “Fortress Europe” should be rejected altogether, as in reality Europe has welcomed great numbers of market-driven migrants in the last decades and its borders are increasingly porous (Favell and Hansen 2002). On the other hand, the internal borders of the EU, as boundaries in the access to membership established through the European citizenship, have been also proved not immutable. The recent inclusion of new member states from the Central and Eastern European periphery resulted in the extension of the European citizenship to many former migrants. In the context of such dynamic processes of inclusion and exclusion, the perceptions of the shifting character of the borders of the European Union are a significant point of research on European identity and citizenship (Meinhof 2003). In such context of the shifting borders of Europe and the dynamics of inclusion of some and the exclusion of many, the inherent ambiguity of the position of Central and Eastern Europe becomes manifest and it must be further analyzed in relation to the historical divisions of the continent.

Central and Eastern Europe as the post-socialist Other

The ambiguous position of Central and Eastern European region within Europe is termed by some authors as a specific version of postcoloniality. For example, David Moore (2001) points to the social and economic parallels in historical and political developments of the post-socialist space with that of postcolonial countries, such as economic problems, ethnic tensions, and disillusion with the political process. Nevertheless, Moore remarks that many peoples of the post-socialist Second World think of themselves as Europeans (thus, “Western”), and would, therefore, reject the

notion that their situation is similar to that of the colonized people of the Third World (2001, 111). The interesting conclusion which is made by Moore is that, as many theorists of colonization suggest, one of the results of extended subjugation is either the desire for authentic, own, historical sources, or for mimicry, understood as craving for the dominant cultural form. In the case of the post-socialist countries this compensatory process is manifested in the fact that “Central and Eastern Europeans type this desire as a return to Western-ness that once was theirs” (2001, 118). This desire is exemplified in the insistence on geographical exactitude in naming the region Central and Eastern Europe, without abbreviating it to Eastern Europe. Such a simple assertion, which might be perceived as being “geographically correct,” has further, discursive, implications as it constitutes an allegation of belonging to the space of Europe. Historically, the vindication of the concept of “Central Europe” was fundamental for the intellectual elites of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia during the last decades of the socialist rule. It constituted a challenge towards the bipolar logic of the Cold War that delegated these states to the periphery, as well as an attempt to actually move their positions to the core and differentiate themselves from those further East (Pittaway 2005, 118).

It becomes clear that Central and Eastern Europe as a post-socialist space poses problems for the definitions of the borders of Europe. However, it is necessary to note that it is by no means a homogenous space either, and the differences between countries of the region are deeply rooted in the historical past. However, in general terms and in spite of the local differences, there are two basic aspects to the ambiguous location of the region. On the one hand, the legacy of the socialist past and memory of its status as the “Second World,” separate from the Western sphere (Regulska 1998, 40). On the other hand, it is the desire to be considered Western and European. This desire has been acknowledged as legitimate for some of the post-socialist states through the “eastern” enlargement of the EU. Nevertheless, some authors argue that the divide between the fully European Europe and the not-yet-fully European “Eastern Europe” constitutes a central premise of the recent EU enlargements (Böröcz 2001, Kuus 2004). This is due to the fact that, according to these scholars, Easternness continues to connote a sense of backwardness and inferiority, even if this is the *East of Europe*. In this sense Bo Stråth argues that:

(...) as Enlightenment philosophers established 'Western Europe' as the seat of civilization, so too they invented an 'Eastern Europe' as its complementary other half. Eastern Europe exhibited a condition of backwardness on a relative scale of development; however, the philosophers did not bestow on Eastern Europe the radical otherness ascribed to non-European 'barbarians' (2002, 393).

According to this author it is precisely this unclear position of Eastern Europe, between civilization and barbarism, which relegates it to such an ambiguous space within the discourse on Europe. Central and Eastern Europe remains simultaneously included and excluded from Europe, and, as argued above, questions concerning the delimitation of borders within its space are not simple issues of geographical determination, rather, they form part of the idea of Europe as a concept (Pittaway 2005, 115) and continue to influence the position of the new European citizens.

Issues of Ethnicity: Europeanness as Whiteness

The ambiguous position of Central and Eastern Europeans, due to their historically constructed position as "Eastern," and thus ambiguously "Other," reinforced by the socialist past, is further complicated by the intersections of discourses on culture and ethnicity as central part of Europeanness. As Armbruster et al. argue, "the unresolved question of where the boundaries of Europe actually lie is of course not simply geographical or political. It is revealed in the dilemmas surrounding Europeanness" (2003, 887). In this sense, the issues of whiteness and Christianity constitute central points of cultural and ethnic reference in Europe, and, therefore, must be taken into account when analyzing the complex processes of inclusion and exclusion of the new EU citizens.

Europeanness as ethnicity

Ethnicity constitutes an important element to be considered when analyzing the processes of the construction of a European identity and citizenship due to the politics of belonging which this notion entails. In short, the concept of ethnicity refers to the boundaries which define a group (Barth 1950, 15). In this sense, Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) considers the ethnic politics as the politics of constructing boundaries between collectivities: "ethnicity relates to the politics of collectivity boundaries, and by using identity narratives, dividing the world into 'us' and 'them'" (1997, 44). Therefore, there

is a close relation between ethnicity and the notion of border, as both concepts serve to establish boundaries of belonging. In order to further unpack this notion we might think of a few, simultaneously operating aspects of ethnicity. As Jenkins proposes,

Ethnicity is a matter of differentiation, [...] ethnicity is a matter of shared meanings, [...] and ethnic identification is collective and individual, externalized in social interaction and the categorization of others, and internalized in personal self-identification (2008, 168).

Therefore, ethnicity is a twofold process of differentiation but also of construction of shared meanings, and one which occurs both on the level of society, as well as at the individual level.

In order to find a way to articulate ways in which European identity and, thus European citizenship, entail specific notions of ethnicity, David Theo Goldberg (2006) argues that contemporary notions of Europeanness imply inevitably whiteness and Christianity. This fact which poses important problems of belonging for the numerous non-White and non-Christian communities present on the European soil:

The taboo of racial characterization, and at least the official avoidance of racial expression or categorization, reinforce the long historical presumption of Europe as the home of, and so to, whiteness and Christianity. It follows that any person of colour or non-Christian in Europe presumptively is not of Europe, not European, doesn't (properly or fully) ever belong (Goldberg 2006, 352).

This characterization of Europeanness as a very concrete historically shaped form of belonging based on whiteness and Christianity is the focus point of many critics of the concept of European citizenship, who point to the fact that unless such assumptions are deconstructed, there will be no real community as the basis for the European Union project (Balibar 2004). However, in the case of Central and Eastern Europeans, if Europeanness is understood in such ethnic terms, they have always belonged to Europe and their acquiring of European citizenship is significant only in legal terms. Nevertheless, the relation between Eastern whiteness and Europeanness is not straightforward either, and requires further analytical work concerning the notion of whiteness in European context in order to fully account for its complexities.

Whiteness and Europeanness

The academic interest in the category of whiteness has grown importantly in the last couple of decades. In the 1990s a wide array of scholarly work on this topic emerges and

scholars such as Richard Dyer (*White*, 1997) argue for the problematization of whiteness in order to dismantle its social invisibility. Ruth Frankenberg in her famous book *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (1993) analyzes white women's relation to whiteness. In this study Frankenberg is one of the first scholars to argue for the analysis of the processes of "the social construction of whiteness." She argues that

whiteness refers to a set of social locations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced and, moreover, are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination. Naming "whiteness" displaces it from the unmarked, unnamed status that is itself an effect of its dominance (1993, 6).

Furthermore, whiteness is considered a relational category since it is co-constructed with other categories of social difference such as class and gender:

This coconstruction is, however, fundamentally asymmetrical, for the term "whiteness" signals the production and reproduction of dominance, rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality, and privilege rather than disadvantage (Frankenberg 1993, 236).

Frankenberg's study is an example of the U.S. based perspectives of whiteness in the 1990s, focused on making it visible as a racial category and providing analytical tools for its study. However, more and more European scholars point to the necessity of developing a specific framework of study for the European context.

In a recent article France Twine and Charles Gallagher (2008, 4) argue for a new perspective on whiteness, a perspective they term "the third wave" in the scholarly study of this concept, which would reject any assumption of whiteness as "only an unconditional, universal and equally experienced location of privilege and power" and become focused on "the situational, relational and historic contingencies that are reshaping and repositioning white identities within the context of shifting racial boundaries." The study of whiteness as linked to European citizenship, offers exactly this kind of opportunity to investigate ways in which white identities might be formulated in multicultural European societies, when whiteness intersects with the social and economic status of migrant and "not-fully-European." Such a project inscribes itself in the wider task of providing "a necessary corrective to the literature on race dominated by analyses of and analytical frames based upon the North American and British analyses of racial hierarchies and meanings" (Twine and Gallagher 2008, 16). There is a necessity for studies of whiteness which will account for the European

specificity of white identities; such an argument is also made by Griffin and Braidotti who in their article “Whiteness and European Situatedness” (2002) revisit the whiteness debate in terms of European cultural and historical context. The authors focus on the specific effects of the ideology and practices of eugenics and anti-Semitism, which, according to them, must be considered vital points of analysis in the European debates on race (2002, 226). The analysis of whiteness in the European context must, therefore, entail accountability for the European historical memory; an approach to white identity as a complex process shaped by colonization, Holocaust, and ethnic cleansing, undergoing important changes in the contemporary Europe. A very good example of such a situated analysis is that of the study by Philomena Essed and Sandra Trienekens, who argue that,

(...) white skin colour is one of the criteria of inclusion in the community of “real” European nationals. But in the lived perception and in the most commonly used model of explanation for racial inequality in Europe, however, one does not primarily refer to skin colour, but to deeper connotations of citizenship, national identity, western superiority and civilization (Essed and Trienekens, quoted in Twine and Gallagher 2008, 16).

Therefore, to study whiteness is to study not only the implications of skin color in itself, rather what is of interest is the wider context of other features which surround it, the influence of nationality, religion, class, gender, language in the construction of social hierarchies. In the case of Central and Eastern Europeans their whiteness implies Europeanness, but also their specific ethnic characteristics define them as “Eastern,” and, thus, not fully European. These complexities will be further explored in reference to the empirical material of the case study in the last chapter of this thesis.

Gender and migration

So far, I have discussed European citizenship in its relation to the idea of Europe and the ambiguous positionality of Central and Eastern Europeans within the shifting borders of Europe, as well as the intersection of Europeanness with ethnicity, especially whiteness and Catholicism. However, I would like to add another crucial aspect to my analysis: that is the category of gender. As Nira Yuval Davis argues, gender is “a mode of discourse which relates the groups of subjects whose social roles are defined by their sexual/biological difference as opposed to their economic positions or their

membership in ethnic and racial collectivities” (1997, 9). Nevertheless, the economic positions (class) and the modes of membership (ethnicity, nationality, citizenship) are closely tied to issues of gender and must be necessarily analyzed from an intersectional perspective as dynamic processes of shifting social locations.

There are numerous studies devoted to the relevance of gender in migration processes; however, in this case I want to focus on a very specific case: the situation of European, white, Catholic migrant domestic workers and an intersectional approach allows for making visible the ambiguities of social hierarchies of privilege and disadvantage in which they are positioned. Here the intersection of gender with ethnicity, nationality, and class becomes of critical importance for their experience of migration in terms of the specific ambiguous positionality of the “Other” European women (Regulska 1998).

Migrants on the labor market: ethnicity and gender

Much attention has been paid to the unfavorable situation of migrant workers in the European Union countries, as their position on the European labor market is determined by nationality, ethnicity, and gender (for example, Lutz 1997, 2008, Anthias and Lazaridis 2000, Andall 2003, Freedman 2003). As Morokvasic argued already two decades ago, “the reliance on a migrant labour system can be seen as one of many capitalist strategies in search of an even cheaper labour force” (1991, 75). Therefore, most migrant workers find employment in the less regulated secondary labor market characterized by jobs which are less stable, less skilled, less protected, and less paid (Solé 1995). In Spain non-EU migrants get predominantly employed in five sectors which constitute the labor market niches for immigrants: domestic work, agriculture, unqualified jobs in the hotel and catering sector, construction, and the retail sector (Solé and Parella 2003, 124). This segmentation according to the nationality of workers is further structured by clear gender patterns in employment: there is a high concentration of migrant women in the sector of domestic work, whereas migrant men find work predominantly in construction and agriculture (Ribas-Mateos 2000, 182). Such a gendered character of the migrant labor market and the predominant employment of migrant women in the domestic work is not a particular feature of the

Spanish context; rather, it is a common situation in all migrant-receiving European states (Anderson 2000).

The predominant employment of migrant women as domestic workers implies further issues related to combination of gendered work with postcolonial racial hierarchies constructed and co-constructed from/within the space of Europe. In this sense Kofman et al. remark that migrant women

can be treated differently, treatment which is conditioned by embodied racism, which casts them as 'exotic' or 'subservient' and which for many Europeans may be a way of restoring what they see as 'proper' relations between genders and 'races' (2000, 124).

Therefore, the analysis of the employment of migrant women in Europe must necessarily be analyzed from an intersectional postcolonial perspective in order to account for the interlocking gender and ethnic/racial relations within the space of Europe. In this context, the position of Polish women employed in domestic work is peculiar, since, on the one hand, in economic terms they remain within the racialized space of migrant community, while, on the other hand, due to their ethnic and cultural proximity and legal status they are included in the community of European citizens as (almost) equal. This situation is further complicated by the specificities of their employment in the sector of domestic work which has traditionally made it harder for women to claim entitlement to citizenship rights, as discussed previously.

Domestic work, migrant women, and citizenship

As Helma Lutz (2008, 1) notes, there are important characteristics of domestic work, which distinguish it from other sectors of migrant transnational employment: the intimate character of the social sphere where the work is performed, the social construction of this kind of work as female; the emotional relationship between employer and employee; its personalized character and mutual dependency; and the logic of care work, different from other employment sectors. Such special characteristics of the sector of domestic work influence significantly the citizenship status of migrant women. As argued previously, domestic work, traditionally carried out by women in the "private" sphere of the household, constituted an important handicap for them as far as the participation in the public sphere of politics and economy on equal terms with men is concerned. In this context, migrant women through their role of domestic workers can

be seen as “directly facilitating some members of the marginalized community of women to exercise their citizenship rights. Thanks to the hidden labour of migrant domestic workers, some middleclass women gain access to the public sphere” (Anderson 2000, 189). Therefore, the global hierarchies of citizenship remain at the core of contemporary transnational commodification of domestic work and must be accounted for in the analysis of the influence of the European citizenship on the situation of Polish domestic workers.

Finally, it is important to note that the analysis of the employment of migrant women as domestic workers combines the analysis of gendered and racialized work inequalities with the study of the dynamics of capitalist globalization. In this sense, Rahcel Parreñas notes that “globalization has transformed the structure of reproductive labour into an ‘international transfer of caretaking’ in which class-privileged women in receiving countries purchase the labour of immigrant women” (Parreñas 2001, quoted in Moras 2008). Parreñas also points out that such a hierarchy of “womanhood,” is structured by race, class, and nationality, and it is based on “a distinct form of transnational division of labor that links women in an interdependent relationship” (2000, 577). However, the majority of the studies which focus on such relationships of international dependence are concerned with the employment of non-European women in EU countries, for instance, Filipinas in Italy (Parreñas 2000, Marchetti 2005), Latin Americans in Spain (Gregorio Gil 1998, Escrivá 2000), or even Ukrainians in Poland (Kindler 2008). In this context, the central question of my study is how the employment of “Other” European women can be accommodated with the common racialization of domestic work.

It is important to note that, Eastern European women in general and Poles in particular have a long story of emigration to Western Europe as domestic workers (Morokvasic 1991, Coyle 2007). This was thought to be one of the effects of the post-socialist transitions, as “a dramatically different employment system has nudged many women to migrate for domestic work” (Kofman et al. 2000, 122). However, nowadays, twenty years after the end of the socialist era, Polish women, already European citizens, continue to move abroad to earn money as domestic workers for other European women. This situation constitutes the starting point for my enquiry, in which I want to

account for the complex and shifting position of these women: between migrants and European citizens.

Conclusions: articulating a framework for analysis

The aim of this chapter was to sketch a framework for the analysis of the situation of the new European Citizens employed in traditional migrant women niche of the labor market: the domestic work. As Morokvasic argues, “the position of migrant women in industrialized developed societies is determined by the articulation of different power relationships, the most important being gender, class relationships and migrant’s women relation to the nation state as immigrants, foreigners, or members of ethnic minorities” (1991, 71). In the context of this thesis such assertion is further complicated by the new form of belonging on the transnational level, as European citizen. In this sense, I aimed at framing my theoretical analysis of the position of Polish domestic workers in relation to the European citizenship in terms of their ethnicity, class, gender, nationality, and citizenship status. Through the discussion of the construction of European citizenship and the issues of the shifting borders of Europe it became clear that these dynamic processes of belonging entail important ambiguities in terms of the positionality of Central and Eastern Europeans. Their inclusion as new European citizens not necessarily implies the real overcoming of the complex divisions of the continent as the post-socialist past and the historically established position of “the Other” still constitute a source of disadvantage. Such location becomes more complex when combined with notions of ethnicity in the context of intra-European migration/mobility. In the case of Polish domestic workers their whiteness and Christianity position them as rightly European, and, therefore, differentiate their situation in important ways from the rest of the community of racialized migrants. However, the specificities of Eastern European whiteness need to be accounted for in order to avoid straightforward assumptions of privilege. Finally, the category of gender completes this framework, as the gendered employment in the sector of domestic work influences in important ways the ability of women to claim entitlement to citizenship rights. This has been noted in studies of the situation of migrant non-European women, and in the context of this study it acquires a new significance, as the benefits of the

European citizenship for mobile European workers must be also investigated from the perspective of gender.

Citizenship, notions of Europeanness and Easternness, as well as class, ethnicity, and gender are all categories which operate in the construction of complex web of social hierarchies in which Polish domestic workers are located. An intersectional approach is necessary here in order to account for their dynamic positionality defined by the contested and shifting construction of categorical boundaries (Yuval-Davis 2006, 200) within the space of Europe. Although this kind of approach has been primarily used to account for the complexities of the disadvantage of racialized non-European migrant women, I argue that in the context of this study it also entails important methodological advantages as it provides the framework for drawing together all of the aforementioned elements and investigating ways in which complex social hierarchies operate, without assuming stable positions of privilege or disadvantage. Such approach provides the basis for the exploration of the complexities of Easternness and whiteness in the context of Europe, and destabilizing the notion of Europeanness as straightforward source of privilege. As this study proves, Europeanness remains complex and the expansion of the limits of European citizenship constitutes a dynamic element in this context, especially visible on the example of the new European citizens. In the following chapter I will supplement this theoretical perspective on the position of the new European citizens with the concrete history of migration between the “heart of Europe,” (as the British historian, Norman Davies, famously refers to Poland), and its Southern borderland, Spain.

Chapter 2

From migrants to European Citizens:

An overview of Polish migration to Spain

Obviously, [I left] to earn money, there was no work in Poland, so I came here. And Spain-, because I had a female friend who has been here before and she came [to my town] and said there is a lot of work for women here.

[...]

Poles have always been valued here, for children, cleaning; they have been always praised by them [Spanish employers]. They say Polish! That's good, they are good people, they work hard, and they are clean.

Ewa, in Madrid since 1997

Introduction

Having discussed some of the issues connected to the ambiguous positionality of Central and Eastern Europeans within the space of the newly enlarged European Union, I will now turn to the analysis of the specific situation of Polish migrants in Spain, the Mediterranean borderland of the EU. The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of Polish migration to Spain in the general context of post-War Polish population movements. Based on qualitative studies and statistical data available, its focus is on Polish migration during the last two decades, in the aftermath of the post-socialist transition and as the outcome of the accession to the European Union. The particular situation of Polish migrant workers in Spain will be described in terms of numbers, labor conditions, social integration, and cultural perceptions with special attention paid to the gendered character of their employment and the implications of their perceptions as Eastern and European. Finally the necessity of researching the repercussions of EU

enlargement and the acquisition of European Citizenship in the context of migration will be discussed.

From post-socialist transitions to the EU enlargement

The history of Polish migration must necessarily be analyzed in the framework of the economic and political changes occurring in Europe in the last two decades. From the beginning of the Round Table talks in early 1989 and the successive fall of the Berlin Wall, through the subsequent transitions to liberal democracy and capitalism, until the 2004 enlargement of the EU, Poland constituted the site of important redefinition of boundaries and borders at the heart of the notion of Europe. Roughly speaking, two major processes comprise the most important frame of reference here: the disintegration of the so-called “Eastern Bloc” and the European integration. It is important to point out that although these are two distinct processes, they cannot be considered as separate, as they triggered a whole matrix of complex and intersecting political, economic, and social effects. In the context of this study, it should be noted that, on the one hand, both of them have had an important effect on the motivations and possibilities of emigration for Polish citizens, and, on the other hand, both caused anxiety in the West concerning the possible mass migrations from Central and Eastern Europe (Arango 2003, Castles and Miller 2009).

Socialist state, transition, and migration

During the forty years of the existence of the two blocs in Europe, their separation was referred to in Churchill’s term of the “Iron Curtain.” Such a conceptualization implied a total separation; however, the reality was quite different. As some authors argue, a process of “continuous hemorrhage” occurred in the Eastern bloc, as almost four million people moved across the Berlin Wall over the period of its existence (Chesnais 1992, 41). It is estimated that about ten million people left the Eastern bloc as migrants before 1989 –among them almost two million Poles (Ferrero Turrión 2005, 16)– in part due to the Western states’ policies of offering asylum to dissidents from Eastern European countries (Castles and Miller 2009, 191). Nevertheless, even if the separation was not total, the system of blocs did make people’s movement much more difficult. Therefore, when the Round Table talks in Poland commenced and the Berlin Wall fell, important

new movement opportunities for the citizens of the states of Central and Eastern Europe were created. Following 1989, a process of the opening of borders occurred; however, it should not be understood literally, as borders remained in place; rather, the change consisted in the fact that it became easier to obtain an authorization to cross them.

In economic terms, a series of deep restructuration measures, in the case of Poland commonly referred to as the shock-therapy (Rae 2007, 54), was applied in the region in order to move from the centrally managed socialist economy to the capitalist free markets. These changes have had dire consequences for Polish citizens, such as a great increase in unemployment levels (Rae 2007, 73), as well as a dramatic decrease in the quality of life and lack of social measures of protection (Arnal Sarasa 1998, 122), as they were accompanied by the dismantling of the socialist welfare state (Regulska 1998, 48). In this context it is important to note that although some authors argue that women were most badly hit by the adverse effects of transition, more recent studies show that both men and women were affected by the new post-socialist realities and that new forms of empowerment, as well as new forms of exploitation emerged in these processes (True 1999, 76).

As noted above, such a difficult economic and social situation in Central and Eastern Europe caused much concern in the West in the face of the possible emigration from this region. In the specific case of Poland, the effects of high expectations related to the democratic transition combined with the dramatic increase in unemployment and prices indeed made of migration an attractive alternative to the situation in the country of origin (Ferrero Turrión 2005, Rae 2007). However, and although it was feared that the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the opening of its borders would trigger mass migrations from Central and Eastern Europe to the West, these fears were not realized: movements of population were much less intensive than it was initially estimated and they have further decreased in the second half of the 1990s (Arango 2003).

EU enlargement and intra-European mobility

After the disintegration of the Eastern Bloc in the early nineties, the process of the so-called “eastern” enlargement of the European Union followed when states formerly included in the Eastern bloc have been invited to negotiate their prospective membership in the EU. However, the enlargement is not to be viewed as a separate

process, rather, it should be considered an extension of post-socialist transitions as it triggered further important economic transformations in the region (Böröcz and Sarkar 2005, 166).

The 2004 enlargement implied an important redefinition of the borders of Europe: while in the earlier decades the “Iron Curtain” constituted the frame of reference, now it became the shifting exterior border of the EU. In terms of international migration, the inclusion of new member states implies that great number of Central and Eastern European citizens can now move within the borderless area of the EU and their movement is termed as mobility, and no longer as migration. As discussed in the previous chapter, Poles and other nationals of the new EU Member states, just as Italians, the French, or the British are legally considered mobile EU citizens entitled to reside and search for work under conditions of non-discrimination in any EU Member state. However, the reality is that in spite of these legal measures, nationals of the new Member states very often remain in the social situation of “migrants” in terms of labor market possibilities and public imaginaries.⁵ In this context we can speak of a paradox of “migrants from European Union countries” (Pajares 2007), who, in legal terms, exercise their right to free movement of labor around the EU, but on the social and economic level remain within the community of non-EU migrants.

The 2004 enlargement and the granting of the right to move freely as workers to the nationals of the new EU member states, has once more caused much preoccupation with the possible mass labor migrations from the region of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as it has drawn much attention to the issue of policing of the new eastern borders of the EU (Arango 2003). These preoccupations were accompanied by the apprehension related to the possibility of substituting native workers of the EU-15 with cheaper Central and Eastern European ones (a good example of such a discourse is the “Polish Plumber” myth⁶). These fears resulted in the adoption of transitional periods for

⁵ For example, see Pajares (2007), on the situation of Romanians in Spain; or Drinkwater, et al. (2009) on the situation of Poles in the UK.

⁶ The figure of the „Polish plumber” surfaced in the political debate surrounding the French campaign on the European Constitution. The Polish Plumber embodied fears concerning possible mass migrations of workers from the new Eastern European Member states who would take the jobs of the nationals of the EU-15 states. The response of the Polish Tourist Board was to issue posters with the figure of an attractive blond man styled as a sexy plumber which read “I stay in Poland. You are welcome,” matched by a poster picturing an attractive nurse which read “Poland: I am waiting for you.” These posters were very positively received by the Polish society; although, the campaign was clearly based on gender stereotypes on jobs traditionally perceived as female/male.

the EU-8⁷ workers' mobility by twelve out of fifteen EU Member states in 2004.⁸ The only countries which applied the free workers movement principle from the start were the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, and Sweden (Castles and Miller 2009, 115). Spain followed their example quite soon and removed its restrictions on the 1st May 2006, two years after the accession of new member states became effective.

Although it is still rather early to evaluate long term effects of the enlargement in terms of population movement, the case of the United Kingdom might be a good example for the analysis of the effects of granting free labor mobility rights to the new citizens of the EU. The British government set up a Workers' Registration Scheme (WRS) in order to monitor the effects of the opening of the labor market to the citizens of the new member states (Ryan et al. 2009, 62) and in the two years after the enlargement about 550.00 nationals of the EU-8 states had been registered by the WRS; about 65% of them were Poles (Drinkwater et al. 2009). These numbers caused great attention from the British press which in many cases adopted a sensationalist tone over the possible numbers of workers arriving from the new member states, accompanied by a dire critique of the UK Government accused of a "lack of control" of the situation (Cekalova 2008). However, it is important to note that great numbers of these "new" migrants actually resided in the UK before 2004 as irregular workers, and took the opportunity created by this political change to legalize their situation (Castles and Miller 2009, 115). Therefore, the real influx of new workers has been probably much less pronounced.

The presence of thousands of Polish workers in the UK has attracted much attention not only from the press, but also, from scholars.⁹ In economic terms, research on the situation of Poles in the UK proves that just as the rest of the EU-8 migrants, they find employment predominantly in the lowest paying jobs of the UK labor market

⁷ The eight Central and Eastern European new member states of the EU: Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

⁸ The twelve EU countries which opted for limiting labor mobility from new Member states could maintain this limitation as long as until 2011. However, already in 2006, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Iceland, and Finland announced the end of these restrictions for Poland, followed by Italy and Luxembourg in 2007 (Kępińska 2007). Although this tendency seems to indicate that the initial fears of great numbers of migrants from the new member states were not realized, in the subsequent enlargement, the same restrictive measures have been applied for Romanian and Bulgarian workers, also in the UK, one of the few EU states which did not apply these restrictions in 2004 (Castles and Miller 2009, 116).

⁹ The scholarly interest in the presence of Polish migrants in United Kingdom is reflected in numerous studies and articles published on this topic in the recent years, see, for instance, the research done by Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Multiculturalism (CRONEM) at the University of Surrey or the recently published volume *Polish Migration to the UK in the 'New' European Union. After 2004*, edited by Kathy Burrell (Ashgate, 2009).

(Drinkwater et al 2009, 181), while on the level of social perception they are regarded as hard-working due to their “Catholic work ethic,” and their cultural proximity is rather highly valued (Garapich 2008, 749). Such an ambiguous position of Poles in the British society draws attention to the new hierarchies which are being created within the space of the European Union, where some migrant communities are socially perceived as less distant in cultural terms, while they remain unequal in economic terms.

Poland as a country of emigration

Poland is a country that due to its historical past of political unrest and changing borders has a long history of population mobility and labor emigration (White and Ryan 2008, Drinkwater et al. 2009), and, thus, migration might be considered as a “structural phenomenon” for its society and economy (Ramirez Goicoechea 2003, 64). In the beginning of the 1990s the number of Polish citizens residing abroad summed about ten million people living mostly in the United States, Germany, Great Britain, and France (Ferrero Turrión 2005, 24). In the context of the EU enlargement, Poland as the country with the biggest population, with high levels of unemployment, much lower salaries, and with such a history of migration to the West was the most feared in terms of possible mass movements of workers (Drinkwater et al. 2009, 162). Recent studies have demonstrated that in 2006 both emigration from, as well as immigration to Poland, reached the highest levels since the end of the 1950’s (Kępińska 2007, 10), and it is estimated that between the 1st May 2004 and 2007 more than one million Poles emigrated (Rae 2007, Castles and Miller 2009). Nevertheless, most recently there are signs of the slowing down of this dynamic, and although emigration from Poland is still increasing, this increase seems to be smaller in 2007 than in the preceding years, right after the enlargement (Kępińska 2007, 38). In this context, it is important to note that Poland has been also receiving growing numbers of migrants, as a country of transit, but also increasingly as a country of destination, especially after the accession to the European Union (Ramirez Goicoechea 2003, 64). Migrants settling in Poland take up jobs in sectors which have been left with labor shortages due to the massive emigration of Poles in the last years and come mostly from Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia (Castles and Miller 2009, 116). This process is interesting from the point of view of the global labor market hierarchies, where nationals of one country leave their jobs and become

migrant workers in places where they are offered higher salaries, and they are replaced in their country of origin by migrants from the neighboring, less developed countries following a pattern of migration from the East to the West.

A recent study of the effects of the EU accession on population movement from Poland demonstrates that whereas before 2004 most popular Polish migrants' destinations were the United States, Germany, Italy, and Great Britain, after 2004 emigration to Germany and United States diminished importantly. At the same time the study proves that emigration to the United Kingdom is now the most numerous and new important destinations emerged such as Ireland and Sweden (Okólski 2008). It is crucial to note that the last three countries are exactly those which have allowed for free labor mobility from the EU-8 countries immediately after the enlargement. Furthermore, one of the most important characteristics of these new post-2004 migration patterns is that migrants are younger and better educated (Okólski 2008, 73). Kaczmarczyk further argues that

most recent Polish migrants are under 35, relatively well-educated, single and with language skills, and migrate to Ireland and the UK, while the longer-term migrants are less well-educated, have poor language skills and go to Germany, Italy and Spain (Kaczmarczyk quoted in White and Ryan 2008, 1471).

Such a remark requires special attention in the context of this study which looks at migrants which move to the country included in the second "type." On the basis of the case study included in this thesis, such a strong opinion might be questioned as the characteristics of the respondents are much more heterogeneous; however, due to the small sample size it is not possible to categorically refute such a statement. Rather, I would agree with White and Ryan who note that such a typology of Polish contemporary migrations should not be regarded as something stable; rather, it establishes two "extremes on a continuum" (2008, 1471). As the migration stories included in this study prove, the matrix of international labor migration is much more complex and resists its framing in dualistic terms.

Spain as a country of immigration

Having briefly reviewed the general political and social context of the most recent Polish migrations, I now turn to the analysis of the presence of Poles in Spain, necessarily linked to the general political, social, and economic changes mentioned above, as well as

the particularities of the location of a Southern European “new immigration” country. The general impression is that the situation of Polish citizens has not received much attention in the scholarship on migration in Spain. Most popular analysis focus on the presence of Latin American, North African, and Subsaharian migrants, and if nationals of Central and Eastern European countries are taken into account, they are often treated as a quite homogenous group. However, a deeper bibliographical search proved that there are scholars interested in this community precisely due to the invisibility of these migrants in the horizon of migration scholarship in Spain (Arnal Sarasa 1999) and due to the general lack of studies on Central and Eastern European migration in this region (Ferrero Turrión 2006).

Spain is one of the “new immigration countries” a term which makes reference to its more recent transformation into a migrant-receiving country.¹⁰ This change occurred in the last two decades of the twentieth century: 1985, the year of implementation of the first immigration law in Spain is considered by some researchers to be the turning point in the process of conversion from a country of emigration into a migrant receiving one. It is from this year on when stable flows of non-European migrants appeared, and migration became the concern of the public opinion and the policy-makers (Arango 2000, 254). During the last decade, the migrant community in Spain has been dominated by Moroccans, followed by various nationalities of Latin America (Ecuador, Columbia, Peru, and Argentina). Therefore, in the Spanish context, migrants from Northern Africa and Latin America constitute the point of reference when talking about migration, especially in terms of their racial and cultural “difference.” Nationals of the EU countries on the other hand, although also quite numerous, are mostly not taken into account in debates on migration and very often were treated as “residential tourists” (Arango 2000, 257).

Poles have been the pioneers of Central and Eastern European migration to Spain and in the 1990s they constituted the most numerous group of migrants from this region in Spain (Pajares 2007, 74), outnumbering migrants from Romania, Bulgaria, and Ukraine. However, this dynamic has changed in the last few years (Ramirez Goicoechea 2003, Turrión 2006) when the importance of migration from Romania has grown

¹⁰ According to the Ministry’s of Labor and Social Services (MTAS) annual statistical data on foreigners (*Anuario de Extranjería*), in December 1995, there were 499,773 foreign citizens legally residing in Spain (MTAS 1996), while in December 2008 their number rose to 4.473.499 (MTAS 2008).

spectacularly.¹¹ According to the latest official statistical data, in 2008 Romanians became the most important migrant community in Spain (MTAS 2008). Such a dynamic growth of the numbers of Romanian citizens in Spain has become the focus of attention for many scholars who analyze the peculiar situation of this community of “EU migrants,” who are already European citizens and have the right to free mobility around the Union, but until very recently (1st January 2009) did not hold the right to move as workers, due to the temporary restrictions imposed on free labor movement from this country by the Spanish government.¹² In this context the issue of Europeanness becomes essential, since Romanians, as well as Poles and the rest of the EU-8 nationals, have recently acquired a new legal status of EU citizens. This change is reflected in the official statistics in which they are no longer considered “Eastern European” migrants, but nationals from other EU member states, residing under the special EU regime, referred to as *comunitario*.¹³

Polish migration to Spain

As mentioned before, Spain has never formed part of the top priority destinations for Polish migrants, although it does appear among the top 13 world destination countries for Polish migrant workers before the EU accession. Also, it seems that the change of 2004 has not affected importantly the percentage of Polish migration received by this country which is about the 3% of the overall number of Polish citizens residing internationally (Okólski 2008). The history of Polish migration to Spain is a recent one as the first important inflow of Polish citizens occurred when a group of families pertaining to the Polish aristocracy moved to Spain after the Second World War (Arnal Sarasa 1998, 191). This elite migration was not significant in numbers but influenced the general, positive, representation of “Polish migrant” in the Spanish society (Gonzalez Yanci and Aguilera Arilla 1996, 89). It is important to note the difference between the “old” and “new” Polish immigration in this country: most authors distinguish between

¹¹ In 1995 there were only 1.208 Romanian residents in Spain, while in 2006 this number has increased to 211.325, and reached 718.844 in 2008.

¹² For an in-depth analysis of the situation of Romanian migrants in Spain see Pajares 2007.

¹³ As I have already mentioned in the previous chapter, this term is omnipresent in the political and popular discourses and denotes the belonging to the political community of Europeans. Those who do not belong, are referred to as *extracomunitarios*, a status which implies not only a different legal status, but also a lack of belonging and a special kind of social perception including notions of difference in terms of culture, ethnicity, and social status.

those Poles who settled in Spain in the post-War decades and the more recent migrants who started arriving in the early 1990s (Gonzalez Yanci and Aguilera Arilla 1996, Arnal Sarasa 1999, Stanek 2003). The former, “old,” Polish immigration in Spain was constituted by political refugees and dissidents and was characterized by their high levels of education, established professional position, and strong integration in the Spanish society either through marriage or by means of holding the Spanish nationality (Stanek 2003). The “new” immigration, on the other hand, is a more typically economic one, with lower education and professional levels.

Polish economic migration to Spain

As far as the history of the “new” economic Polish migration to Spain is concerned, for instance Arnal Sarasa (1998) proposes to distinguish two main periods: the first one in the eighties, until 1989, characterized by a strategy of entrance as refugee and asylum seekers, and a second one in the early nineties, when Polish migration to Spain became a strictly economic one and the way of entrance as asylum and refugee seekers has been closed due to the disintegration of the Eastern bloc. In a more recent study, Ramirez Goicoechea proposes to add a third period, after 1995 (2003, 67), when family reunification processes are initiated, family and friends migration networks become established, and a second generation of Poles is to be found in the Spanish primary schools. From the perspective of this particular study I would argue for adding a fourth distinctive period, after 2004, which could be methodologically useful to talk about the significant increase in the number of Polish residents in Spain during the last four years. Therefore, Polish migration to Spain should be analyzed in the framework of a changing status: from asylum seekers from the Eastern bloc, through economic migrants during the years of economic transition, to the inclusion as European citizens in the last years.

In terms of numbers, before the transition to democracy in Poland, in 1987, there were only about four hundred Polish citizens registered as legal residents in Spain (Stanek 2003), while in 1996 this number increased to 3.172 (MTAS 1996), and according to the latest statistical data available, in 2008 Polish residents summed 86.995 residents (MTAS 2008). This increase has been quite important; however, it must be considered in the wider picture of the general numbers of immigrants in Spain which have also risen considerably in the last decade, when, as argued before, Spain became a

country of immigration. Moreover, the numbers of Polish citizens in Spain must necessarily be analyzed in the context of the important political changes occurring in the country of origin.

A closer analysis of the development of the number of Polish citizens, residents in Spain, proves that while the immigration of the 1990s was quite a stable process by which the community grew annually in a few thousands, there has been a major change of tendency around 2004 and 2006. These two dates are very significant, since the former is the date when Poland entered the EU, and the latter marks the opening of the Spanish labor market to Polish workers. During the two years before and after the enlargement the Polish community in Spain increased in almost 20.000 people, while after the opening of the Spanish labor market it rose in almost 40.000 (MTAS 2008). These numbers clearly indicate that the political processes have had a pronounced effect on the numbers of Polish workers residing in Spain. However, it must be also taken into account that, probably as in the case of the United Kingdom, not all of the newly registered workers have recently arrived in the country; on the contrary, it can be presupposed that many migrants who were already residing in Spain took the opportunity to regularize their residence or legalize their employment situation in the last years.

In terms of the geographical distribution of Polish resident in Spain, the most important destination point for Polish migrants is Madrid (almost 30% of total), and the northern and central part of Spain, especially big cities like Barcelona and Valencia (MTAS 2008). Such a situation is the result of the work opportunities to be found in these regions, as well as the established migrant networks. As far as the share of women and men in this community is concerned, although according to official statistics men prevail among Polish nationals in Spain (MTAS 2008) it must be also taken into account that the number of irregular women workers might be substantially higher than the official statistics reflect, due to their predominant employment in the highly irregular sector of domestic work (Arnal Sarasa 1999, 34).

Labor market position

The general idea about Poles that stems from the scholarship available up to date is that they are mostly employed in jobs which are below the level of their education and

professional qualifications (Arnal Sarasa 1999, Ferrero Turrión 2006, Stanek 2008) and are to be found in the irregular sectors of the labor market (Stanek 2003). Such a position is not surprising bearing in mind the fact that in Spain —and, as argued previously, also in other countries of the European Union— the labor market is very visibly segmented according to ethnicity, class, and gender. In this context an important duality in the employment conditions of foreign workers must be noted, where nationals proceeding from the developing non-Western countries are employed in the lowest strata of the labor market, while nationals of developed, richer countries occupy high professional levels (Colectivo IOE, 2001). Such a dual structure of the labor market is strongly related to the distinction between the situation of the nationals of the EU Member states, USA, and Japan, and those migrants coming from Northern Africa and Latin America. According to the available research sources, the employment of Polish nationals seems to follow the patterns of the latter, non-Western migrants from developing countries in spite of their status of EU citizens, due to their predominant employment in the highly irregular sectors of construction, agriculture, domestic work, and services (Stanek 2008). This position might change as an effect of the EU enlargement: the impact of the recent acquisition of the status of European citizens remains to be analyzed in terms of work opportunities. As some scholars argue, the EU enlargement might make it easier for Poles to access better jobs on the Spanish labor market (Ferrero Turrión 2006); however, this possible change in the labor market situation has not yet been researched properly and it is one of the main objectives of the present study to provide some initial insight into this issue.

Employment of Polish women

The employment situation of Polish workers in Spain resembles the situation of the low-profile economic migrant workers also in its gendered character. According to all the studies consulted, Polish men are predominantly employed in the sector of construction, while women find employment in the domestic work sector (Arnal Sarasa 1999, Ramirez Goicoechea 2003, Stanek 2003, 2008). Furthermore, a recent study on the labor perspectives of Polish migrants demonstrates that for 88% of Polish women who settle in Spain, the domestic work is at least the first employment (Stanek 2008, 346). Polish women are predominantly employed as cleaners and nannies, and the type of

employment –live-in (*interna*), live-out (*externa*), or per hours– depends mostly on how long they have been in Spain. The predominant employment path among women is to start working as *interna*, and then move on to the other two types of employment (Arnal Sarasa 1999, 20), a situation which resembles the general employment patterns discerned among migrant women in Europe (Anderson 2002, 107).

The predominant employment of Polish women in the sector of domestic work has important effects on the overall characteristics of the Polish community in Spain: on the one hand, the predominant residence in Madrid is connected strongly to the employment possibilities in this city, where the demand for domestic workers is quite high (Arnal Sarasa 1999, 44); on the other hand, it is more difficult for women to formalize their stay in the country due to the high level of irregularity in this sector (Arnal Sarasa 1999, 34, Stanek 2008, 345). This last issue is not as important anymore for the sake of obtaining an authorization for residence, since Poles, as EU citizens, can reside freely in Spain without any work contract; however, it still holds much significance in terms of the right to unemployment benefits and other social subsidies.

Another sector of Polish women's employment, which will not constitute the focus point of this study but is considered of great scholarly interest, is the agriculture. Since 2002 there is a migration agreement in place between Poland and Spain which regulates, among other issues, the process of recruitment of seasonal workers for the Spanish agriculture.¹⁴ As the outcome of this agreement, an officially stipulated number of Polish workers (mostly women) come every year to work in the southern agricultural regions, where they have partially substituted the traditionally employed Moroccan men (Ramirez Goicoechea 2003, 75). It is very significant how the presence of Polish women in these Southern regions has attracted much attention from the society and the press. A recent ethnographic study of this specific sector of the Spanish agriculture, demonstrates that Central and Eastern European women employed as seasonal workers are perceived in the local communities mostly in terms of their looks: fair skin and blonde hair, a total opposite of the typical Southern Spanish woman (Reigada Olaizola

¹⁴ This Agreement for the Regulation of the Migration Flows has been signed between Spain and Poland in 2002, with the main objective of controlling the flows of migrant workers between the two countries, enhancing their employment rights, and in order to prevent clandestine migrations and labor exploitation of irregular migrants. I would argue that it might have been a strategy, on the one hand, to control better and anticipate the influx of workers from the biggest new EU member state, and, on the other hand, try to foster the recruitment of workforce which is more easily accepted in the Spanish society due to their cultural and ethnic characteristics, as discussed below.

2007). Such a perception of “Eastern whiteness” in terms of difference is a source of hypersexualization of these women, and there is much public discussion concerned with the transnational relationships and marriage taking place in these communities. These discussions are also reflected in the media; for instance, press articles dealing with this topic depict Polish women in terms of their whiteness and their intimate relations with Spanish men (see for instance, special feature in *Mujer Hoy*, April 2008). It is interesting to note that while much greater numbers of Polish women are employed as domestic workers they remain rather invisible, while their presence in the agriculture of Southern Spain has attracted much attention from the public opinion and the press, a situation which offers interesting topic for further research.

In general terms, Polish women are located in the sectors of the labor market which are typically dominated by migrant women; however, such a situation is not something new, since, as Angela Coyle points out in her study of Polish women’s migration, since the 1990s Polish women have participated in large numbers in labor migration “travelling to work in the informal economies of Europe as cleaners, nannies, childminders and carers” (Coyle 2007, 48). Therefore, the employment of Polish women in the sector of domestic work has formed part of the European map of labor migrations for more than two decades. However, for all these years, their situation was rather unfavorable, because “without work permits or rights of residency, their status has been undocumented, and without employment rights or recognition of their qualifications, their work has been precarious and unskilled” (Coyle 2007, 48). The enlargement of the EU and the acquisition of the status of European citizens will improve this situation in important ways, granting them the right to work legally, and make use of employment rights. Nevertheless, the potential and real effects of this change must become the subject of further research in order to evaluate their importance. It remains to be seen whether this legal change will have influence on the sectors of employment: whether Polish women will remain in the migrant labor niches, or access the primary labor market reserved until now for nationals and other EU citizens. The last chapter of this thesis offers some initial insight into these issues.

Social perceptions of Poles in Spain

The idea that stems from the scholarship available on Central and Eastern European migration in general, and that focusing on the Polish community in Spain in particular, is that nationals of the CEE countries integrate very easily in the Spanish society due to their cultural proximity and a lack of historical issues between Spain and the region (Ferrero Turrión 2006, 26). Their Europeanness is considered an important feature in the framework of immigration dominated by Moroccan, Latin American, and Subsaharian migrants, strongly othered in the Spanish society (Ramirez Goicoechea 2003, 64). In various studies the ideas that Poles are “the ones which integrate the best,” those which are not “visible” in the society, or whose presence in Spain is not perceived as a “problem” by the public opinion are reiterated (Gonzalez Yanci and Aguilera Arilla 1996, Ramirez Goicoechea 2003, Ferrero Turrión 2006). This general favorable opinion is also reflected in the fact that Spanish citizens regard Poles as hard-working and valuing highly the family ties (Ramirez Goicoechea 2003, 78,), as well as discreet and law-abiding (Gonzalez Yanci and Aguilera Arilla 1996). The fact that the discourse on the presence of Polish migrants as unproblematic is located in the context of a strongly racialized migrant community clearly indicates the link to issues of race and ethnicity. Although these issues remain unspoken and are referred to through a discourse on “cultural proximity,” I would argue that Poles have an advantaged position due to their perception as white and European.

An additional point of cultural reference is the representation of Poland as a deeply Catholic country, an image reinforced by the figure of the late pope John Paul II. Such a perspective is also reflected in most studies of the Polish community which point to the strong connections between the Catholic religion and Polish national identity, supposedly maintained in the process of migration (Arnal Sarasa 1998, Ramirez Goicoechea 2003). In this context, Arnal Sarasa (1998, 278) argues that the perception of Polish migrants in Spain as white, Catholic, and Western is also used as a mechanism of adaptation by this community in the context of a negative discourse on migration of racially different others. I consider this issue to be central for the analysis of the location of Polish migrant workers in the Spanish society, as well as in the general horizon of intra-European contemporary population movements.

Conclusions: Poles, migrants from EU country?

Migration is a very dynamically changing subject of study, and it is difficult for the scholarship to follow the global, regional, and local changes in the conditions, directions and compositions of its flows. This difficulty is very visible in the context of this study where almost all previous research consulted has been conducted before Poland entered the European Union,¹⁵ and, therefore, the social and economic impact of this important political change in the context of migration needs further studies. In this chapter I have sketched a general picture of the political and economic processes necessary to understand the dynamics of Polish emigration in the last two decades and contextualize the specific case of immigration in a Southern European country like Spain. It seems that the two principal characteristics of the situation of Polish citizens in Spain are, on the one hand, the location within the community of economic migrants in terms of labor opportunities, class perceptions, as well as a gendered employment; and, on the other hand, a social perception mediated by whiteness, Europeanness, and Catholic origins regarded as elements of cultural proximity and facilitating social acceptance and integration. Moreover, this already quite positive picture has been most recently enhanced by the acquisition of the status of *comunitario*, denoting the belonging to the imagined community of Europeans. Such double positionality is best reflected in the situation of Polish women who, in spite of being European citizens remain predominantly employed as domestic workers, a sector globally dominated by racialized migrant women from non-European countries. The impact of the recent EU enlargement and the tensions between Europeanness and migrant economic status is the central issue analyzed in the interviews with Polish domestic workers in the last chapter of this thesis.

¹⁵ The most recent study available, a doctoral thesis from 2008 is based on materials gathered through interviews carried out until 2006 and, therefore, cannot assess the full impact of the EU enlargement and the granting of the access to the Spanish labor market for Poles, which occurred in May 2006.

Chapter 3

Interviewing Polish domestic workers in Madrid

Introduction

Having discussed the theoretical issues related to the ambiguous location of Central and Eastern Europeans within the borders of Europe and the discourse on European citizenship, further complemented by the description of the specific situation of Polish migrant workers in Spain, I now turn to the empirical part of this study. The main objective of this chapter is, firstly, to discuss some methodological issues related to the research method implemented and, secondly, to introduce the participants of the case study.

This study has been conceived as an empirically grounded interdisciplinary project which aims at developing knowledge on the situation of Polish domestic workers in Spain in the framework of their recently acquired status of European citizens as intertwined with social hierarchies of gender, class, nationality, and ethnicity. Therefore, the central research question is how does the acquisition of the status of European citizens influence the position of Polish domestic workers in Spain? And further, how is their social location defined in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality in the context of such a change? In order to provide the empirical basis for such an inquiry, qualitative methods have been applied, specifically semi-structured interviews, a method which allows for more sensitivity towards the individual experience and subjectivity of the participants (Reinharz 1992, Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). The interviews were conducted in order to articulate the connections between theoretical categories such as gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship, and the experience of a specific group of white, Catholic, Central European women living in a multicultural society of Southern Europe. It is considered that the ways in which these different social categories co-construct the location of the new European citizens should necessarily be scrutinized from an intersectional perspective. As argued previously, intersectionality is conceived here as a way to detangle the dynamics of complex social locations and shifting boundaries (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

I start this chapter with the discussion of qualitative methods, in particular, the semi-structured interview, as the means for providing empirical material for analysis of the central research question. Subsequently, I describe the process of approaching and interviewing the participants of this project with special attention paid to the dynamics of insider/outsider research, economic/academic migrant positions, and the notions of commonality and difference in the participant-researcher relationship. In the final section of the chapter I present the migration stories of the eight participants of this case study.

Qualitative methods: interviewing women

According to Criado (2001), in order to advance in the study of migrations it is necessary to employ a global analysis combining different aspects of the process: the structural factors (economic, demographic, political); personal circumstances, motives, and interpretations (by means of biographical study); and the relation of both elements to the specific historical conditions (the temporal aspect). Such a multilayered analysis is the objective of this project, as it combines the analysis of economic, political, and discursive processes of boundaries construction, with the study of the subjective experience of a specific group of women. Within such a methodological framework, the qualitative method has been applied in this case study to account for the subjective element of the global analysis.

The choice of qualitative methods

The choice of qualitative over quantitative methods for the purpose of this research has been motivated by the assumption that quantitative methods such as surveys and statistics, although allow for wider generalizations about the social reality in question, “offer limited access to account of experiences, nuances of meaning, the nature of social relationships, and their shifts and contradictions” (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002, 155). In a similar way, Kofman et al. (2000, 195) argue that it is the in-depth qualitative inquiry which can “illuminate the motivations and strategies that are hidden within statistics.” Due to such advantages, the privileging of qualitative methods of research, especially of the interview technique, has become the cornerstone of feminist and

gender research methodologies. As Shulamith Reinharz notes, “the use of semi-structured interviews has become the *principal means* by which feminist have sought to achieve the active involvement of their respondents in the construction of data about their lives” (1992, 18). The assumption about the possible role of the participant in the construction of the data, in narrating their own story, gives the research process a more power-balanced structure, where the participants are treated as “meaning makers” and not “passive conduits for retrieving information” (Warren 2002, 83). Furthermore, in the framework of qualitative research, the researcher cannot maintain the illusion of a complete detachment from the “objects of study.” As Dwyer and Buckle argue, in qualitative research,

we are firmly in all aspects of the research process and essential to it. The stories of the participants are immediate and real to us; individual voices are not lost in a pool of numbers. We carry these individuals with us as we work with the transcripts (2009, 61).

Being immersed in such a way in the process makes it possible to better appreciate the complexities of the issue in question; in this case, the experience of migration shaped by the social divisions of gender, race/ethnicity, class, nationality, and citizenship.

The advantages of semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview implies the use of questionnaire/guidelines for the interview, but, in comparison with the traditional interview, the leading role of the researcher is far more limited and the importance of participants’ role in the shaping of the outcomes of the research becomes crucial. Therefore, the semi-structured interview offers “access to people’s ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words, rather than in the words of the researcher” (Reinharz 1992, 19). It is so, due to the basic assumption that the participant should be offered a space for the construction of their own narrative and not remain locked in the researcher’s terms and ideas about the subject. Semi-structured interviews are self-reflexive, open conversations, offering the participants the possibility of narrating their own experience, even though their partial structure provides a general framework for the interaction. As Marvasi notes, “by not limiting respondents to a fixed set of answers, in-depth interviewing has the potential to reveal multiple, and sometimes conflicting attitudes about a given topic”(2004, 21). This is thought to be one of the most important advantages of this method, as it allows the

researcher to access the complex reality of the issue in question, but also implies that the meanings and attitudes conveyed by the participants in the interview might be inconsistent and even contradictory.

Finally, even when the objective is to create a space for the creation of meanings by the participants, it must not be forgotten that it remains shaped at least by the general issue of interest for the researcher. Therefore, as Frankenberg argues, an interview “is not, in any simple sense, the telling of a life so much as it is an incomplete story angled toward [researcher’s] questions and each woman’s ever-changing sense of self and how the world works” (1993, 41). The final outcome of the interview is always shaped by the researcher’s participation, even if the aim is to avoid such an effect on the interviewee.

Interviewing Polish Women in Madrid

During the course of my fieldwork, I interviewed eight Polish women who at that time lived in Madrid and were employed as domestic workers. In spite of such commonality, their particular situations differ importantly in terms of family situation, education levels, and geographical origins and, therefore, represent the heterogeneity and complexity of migrant motivations and life situations. I used purposive sampling (Ryan et al. 2009) to select the participants of the study, and the main criterion of selection was the temporal aspect. I aimed at interviewing both established migrants, as well as those who arrived more recently in order to provide an empirical basis for a comparative perspective on the experiences of the pre- and post-2004 migrants. The entrance of Poland into the European Union in May 2004, and the consequent acquisition of the status of European citizen and the right to reside and work in Spain on equal terms with the nationals of this country constituted the main frame of reference. The outcome of the interviews was that three of the respondents have been in Spain for more than a decade (represented the economic migration of the 1990s), four arrived at different points after 2004 (already as European citizens), and one arrived just before this date. Such a diversity of experience allowed for a comparative approach and the analysis of the different attitudes towards the notion of European citizenship.

Making contacts

I decided to set my geographical focus on Madrid, the location of the biggest Polish community in Spain. I used two types of methods to contact my respondents, both of them using internet as the basis of my search. At first, I looked for the word *polaca* (in Spanish, a Polish woman) in the texts of job advertisements placed in online advertisement web pages between January and April 2009. I learned that there were numerous Polish women in Madrid who looked for work emphasizing their nationality. Of all the job advertisements found, most were for domestic work and all had their telephone numbers included, therefore I could make direct contact with the potential participants. The other means of contacting was the biggest Polish internet based social network *Nasza Klasa* (Our Class), which has millions of Polish users. There I performed a search of women self-listed as residing in Madrid and I sent messages introducing myself and the project. It was a particularly useful tool, in that I could directly have a look at the “profile” of each contact, easily obtain initial information on the geographical and educational background of potential contacts. However, I did not “choose” the receptors of my message, I have sent tens of messages to all the Polish women I could find listing themselves as living in Madrid. Responses to both methods were rather positive, however, and in spite of the initial positive attitude and many contacts made, many potential respondents said no to my request for an interview. Most of them worked very hard and simply did not have the time to spare for the interview, others were distrustful and did not want to meet a stranger, and some potential participants thought they did not have any “interesting” opinions and I could not convince them otherwise. In total, I talked to two women contacted via internet based social networks, three contacted by phone, and one met on the metro while returning from one of the interviews (I also interviewed her friend).

Conducting the interviews

I scheduled the interviews on weekends, when my potential participants had more free time. We met in cafes or bars which the respondents would indicate as close to their home, so that the interview would not require of them to lose more time than necessary. As Mullings (1999) argues, the importance of the politics of self-representation in the context of the interview cannot be underestimated and I considered my own

presentation as a crucial moment of the interview. I described the motivation for my own migration to Spain, as well as the situation of my family members and friends who experienced economic migration in the last years. Although I also explained why I was developing this project, and what the objectives of the interview were, the former information was of most interest to my respondents, as they realized we possibly shared some similar life experience. After my presentation and the introduction of the objectives of the project, I always asked for their permission for taping the interview and offered a consent form. Finally, before starting the interview I asked each participant to fill out with me a form with some general personal details such as age, education, family situation, geographical origin in Poland, and year of arrival and place of residence in Spain, as well as a general indication on what kind of jobs she has been performing after arriving in Spain. In every case I would ask them to provide me with a nickname if they preferred to remain anonymous, but none thought this was necessary.

The questionnaire¹⁶ was divided into three parts (migration story and labor situation, issues related to European citizenship, experience of multiethnic society) and it contained main, general, questions and follow up, more specific issues to be raised in each part. From the start, the interview had a biographical tone, as I initiated each conversation asking the participants to describe the circumstances of their arrival in Spain. In most cases that would trigger a quite lengthy story, which opened up a whole set of issues of great interest to me such as motivation for migration and the election of Spain as a destination, the importance and character of migrant networks, as well as the legal and labor market situation. In most cases, the issues related to the acquisition of European citizen status would come up as a result of description of the labor and legal situation and I encouraged the discussion of these. The last part, the experience of living in a multi-ethnic society was brought up as a natural continuation. For most part I tried to follow the way of narrating of my respondent, and if some issues would not be raised as expected, I would ask about them directly in the final part of the interview.

Some authors report that “a willingness, even and eagerness to talk about oneself in interviews” is quite common in social research interview situations (Warren 2002, 90). However, in many cases it was more than just that, as it became an intimate and personal conversation, a situation which could be possibly described as “the intimate

¹⁶ The questionnaire translated to English can be found as attachment to this thesis.

stranger bond” (Reinharz and Chase 2002, 229). Since I was another Pole in Spain, I was able to understand many deeper cultural and social meanings of their experience; however, coming from another city, with no contact at all with other members of their communities, I was also enough of a stranger to them so that I could listen to personal stories. Such a position was rather beneficial for the interview, although it also brought forward further methodological issues.

The dynamics of the interview

One of the central premises of my research project was the fact that I aimed at studying the situation of women of the same nationality and living in the same foreign country as myself. In this context, Ganga and Scott note that

being a cultural insider has many advantages when researching migration, particularly in terms of negotiating access to migrants, in understanding the spoken and unspoken “language” of the interview, and in terms of recognition of idiosyncratic cultural references (2006).

Indeed such a foundational premise for my research, implied important insider advantages such as the possibility of communicating in our native language, a general knowledge about both cultural contexts (that of the country of origin and that of reception), and a shared experience of living in a foreign country as a Polish woman.

Especially the issue of language and the shared cultural meanings became salient as all the interviews have been conducted in Polish. This allowed for a very good level of communication and avoided traps of translating meanings and ideas. Furthermore, the respondents felt very at ease speaking in Polish, and assumed shared meanings and knowledge, for example, about the social and economic realities of Poland. However, it must also be noted that the context of migration alters the spoken language, and new terms used to describe the changing social context are incorporated. This was a challenge for me at first, since the Polish community in Madrid has its own jargon used to describe some of the elements of the new social reality, especially concerning work issues, such as *być na internie* (work as a live-in domestic worker), *pracować na externie*, (work as a live-out domestic worker), *godzinki/robić w domach* (work in different households and being paid per hours). Therefore, the linguistic commonality must not be taken for granted as not being familiar with these terms, coined in the context of migration, made it difficult for me at first to capture their meanings.

In spite of this sharing of a similar linguistic, cultural, national, and religious background, important differences in our social locations became explicit in the process. As Ganga and Scott (2006) argue, conducting a qualitative study within one's own cultural community implies a level of shared cultural and social meanings which paradoxically makes the differences in social locations more salient. The authors term such positionality as "diversity in proximity,"

We must not assume that insider status leads to greater proximity in the social interview [...]. On the contrary, we argue that whilst insider status is generally beneficial to the research process, it also brings to the fore a range of social fissures that structure interaction between researcher and participant (2006).

Many authors argue in a similar way against the neat distinction between insider/outsider positions (Mullings 1999, Dwyer and Buckle 2009). In the context of this study, it became clear to me that although at first my Polishness was the basis for instant relation, my position as an academic migrant, was in many aspects very dissimilar to that of "economic migrants," the participants of this study. The process of getting to know our differences underneath the apparent commonality of being Polish women who migrated to Spain was a nuanced one, however, it was very clear to both parts. Nevertheless, such differences can also be negotiated in the context of the interview, and researchers must seek "positional spaces" defined as

areas where the situated knowledges of both parties in the interview encounter, engender a level of trust and co-operation. These positional spaces, however, are often transitory and cannot be reduced to the familiar boundaries of insider/outsider privilege based on visible attributes such as race/gender, ethnicity or class (Mullings 1999, 340).

Therefore, it becomes clear that the insider-outsider status rather than a fixed location remains shifting and can be negotiated in the context of the interview. Furthermore, the intersecting ways in which social categories such as gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, education come together should be taken into account not only at the level of data analysis, but also as deeply embedded in the very process of data gathering and, in this particular case, in the dynamics of the interview.

Stories of migration/mobility across Europe

In this, last, part of the chapter I will sketch the migration histories of the participants of my study. The aim of these accounts is to situate the autobiographical narratives of my respondents in terms of their particular social location and migration experience and strategy, as well as to make explicit the differences and commonalities between them. These elements influence in important ways their narratives on mobility, belonging, and Europe, which will be the focal point of my analysis in the following chapter.

Zofia: “You feel you have rights”

Zofia is an energetic woman in her early forties. She has been in Spain for more than fourteen years and she seems perfectly in place switching fluently between Spanish and Polish. In 1995 she was working as a teacher in a local school in her home city in Poland and her salary was so low that she could not be financially independent from her mother. Therefore, when she came across an advertisement offering domestic work for women in Madrid, she decided to give it a chance and left Poland. After two weeks of waiting she was “sold,” as she tells me, to a Spanish woman, where she started working immediately from Monday till Saturday. Already in Madrid, she met the future father of her children, a Nigerian. When it turned out that the relationship with her employer was getting worse due to the fact that she was being treated badly, given no food, and constantly shouted upon in a language she could not yet understand, Zofia decided to run away. As she comments on her first work experience in Madrid, “it was only three months, but it felt as three years, it was utterly exhausting.” Coming back to Poland was not an option, because “that was not the point [of leaving],” so she went to live with her new partner instead. Their relationship was very difficult, as she suffered psychological and physical violence from him. She had to run away once more, with two small children; she was placed in a safe home for women with children, but after the maximum period of stay she had to look for her own place. A few months ago she moved in with Pilar, an older Spanish woman. She rents a room from her, for her and her children and works as a cleaner combining various jobs in order to make a living for her family. Recently, her situation became more difficult when her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer; now Zofia is also contributing to her treatment, sending money back to Poland on a monthly basis. Zofia emphasizes that she would like to

change her job, she hates cleaning and she wants to make use of her education and professional skills while being able to provide better quality of life for her children. From her perspective of living as *extracomunitaria* in Spain for almost a decade, she considers the acquirement of European citizenship is very beneficial on many levels, especially as a source of self-confidence and a “feeling that you have rights.” Apart from the legal facilities, she is looking forward to voting in Spain for the European parliament, which she considers a source of self-satisfaction.

Ewa: “It became easier for us to stay”

Ewa is a fortyish woman, who has been in Spain for the last twelve years. In Poland she has left her two children, now almost finishing high school, and a husband from whom she became divorced as a result of her emigration. Ewa left Poland due to unemployment: she finished high school and was working in an office, but after finishing her maternity leave with her second child she could not find any employment. Her female neighbor, who has been working in Spain, told her that there were many possibilities for women to work in Madrid. This is how she found a job as a live-in nanny for a Spanish family, where she worked for five months. Then she returned to Poland for a while, but, pressured by her family, decided to go back as she realized that in this way she was able to earn much more money than in Poland at that time. The second time she became employed as a live-out nanny by another Spanish family where she worked for two years, and subsequently as a cleaner in the homes of various members of the same family, during the next six years. In the meantime she divorced her husband, and met a Polish construction worker, with whom she maintains a stable relation. Even though her economic situation is quite good as her partner has a steady job in spite of the economic crisis, she tells me “there is not so much work for women these days,” and she is able to make only half of what she used to. Ewa explains to me that it would not be a problem if she were “alone,” but since she must send money for her children every month she keeps on searching for new employment opportunities. In spite of these difficulties, which are due, according to Ewa to the economic crisis, she does not want to look for employment outside domestic work, as she considers that it is far more convenient than other jobs accessible to her (shops, bars, restaurants). She regards the acquirement of the status of European citizen as an important change, especially in comparison to the

much more difficult situation of other migrants. She considers that now many things became as easy as if you were back in Poland and this fact makes it easier to make the decision to stay.

Sylwia: “Now it is really easy to get the papers”

Sylwia is in her mid-thirties and has been in Spain for the past eleven years. She has a basic level of education, and she remained unemployed in the little Polish town where she lived. Looking for new employment opportunities, she first came to Northern Spain to substitute her aunt, who wanted to have a month of vacation from her work with an Italian circus travelling around the country. Sylwia then stayed as a cook and cleaner for the group. After some time, tired with the exhausting rhythm of travelling, she “ran away” with her new Polish partner. Relying on Polish migrant networks, they settled in Madrid where he started working in the construction industry while she has been working in a number of jobs such as cleaner, nanny, waitress, and cashier. After being unemployed for the last three months, currently she has come back to working as a domestic worker, combining a live-out full time employment with other jobs, per hours. This was a conscious choice, since, as she explains, other types of work are too demanding in terms of time, or offers no stability as temporal contracts are not renewed in the service sector. She lives with her Polish partner and three daughters in a rented apartment shared with another Polish migrant, construction worker. She also has become divorced during the course of her migration; however, in contrast to Ewa, she decided to immediately reunite with her daughters and brought them to Madrid ten years ago. Although she underlines the fact that they will always remain Polish, she has no plans to go back as she is very critical of the economic situation in her home country and thinks living in Madrid is much easier than anywhere else in Poland. Sylwia thinks the most important benefit of acquiring European citizenship is the fact that “it became much easier to get the papers” although the value of this change is partly undermined by the fact that the waiting period for the permits became quite long in the last years (average three months).

Agnieszka: “Little has changed”

Agnieszka, thirty-seven, in Madrid since 2003, lives with her partner, a Polish construction worker and their two-year old daughter. After graduating from University, Agnieszka used to work in Poland in a major national company as assistant to the CEO, earning good money, until she decided to marry her Syrian fiancée and moved to Syria. It turned out that, she was unable to accept the limitations put upon her by her husband’s family; she ended the marriage after three years and came back to Poland. Unfortunately, she was unable to reincorporate in her old job, and neither could she find a new one, as her arrival coincided with the unemployment crisis of the early 2000s. In the unemployment office in her home city, she was told that since there is no work in Poland she might consider going to Spain to work in agriculture in the framework of the intergovernmental program of workers supply. This is how she was sent to pick strawberries in Huelva for the duration of three months, and came back to Poland having earned “good money,” but still without employment possibilities in her home city. When she found an offer from a Polish intermediary for domestic workers in Spain she decided to leave once more. She paid 500 Euro and was placed in a wealthy Spanish family as a live-in nanny. At first, and in spite of not having any contract or other legal protection and earning only a little more than 500 Euro, she was quite satisfied with her job. However, soon the employers started to take advantage of her and Agnieszka had to work so hard that she fell ill from exhaustion. When she recovered, she decided to leave her work, and, with the help of another Polish migrant she met in the previous months, she “escaped” to Madrid. There she started working as live-out and per hour cleaner, combining various jobs just as the other respondents. This is when she met her current partner and they moved in together. Agnieszka is ambivalent about her situation, on the one hand she recognizes she has certain financial stability and made a choice to work as domestic cleaner over office jobs which were offered to her, as it is more convenient; on the other hand, she says she will never “let her daughter end up like [her],” as she regrets not making the use of her professional qualifications. She considers that the EU citizenship brought “little change” to her situation but she admits that it was post-2004 when she and her partner legalized their stay in Spain.

Karolina: “The EU accession had negative effects on Poland”

Karolina is in her late twenties and she is a university graduate in chemistry. She is from the same region of Poland as Agnieszka (Silesia), where, during the socialist era, government-controlled industry was the biggest source of employment, and in the course of privatization most of the important companies were destroyed. She came to Spain accompanied by her boyfriend, also a university graduate at the same technical university. They were both unemployed after they graduated and decided to try to make a living in another country. They chose Spain over the typical destinations such as UK or Ireland due to the “good climate and quite exotic location.” They arrived in 2005, without any knowledge of the language but soon they found employment thanks to their Polish acquaintances: Karolina as a cleaner in private houses and her boyfriend as a construction worker. Karolina notes that it was easier for her to start working and also now, in spite of the crisis, she has much more facility in finding work as a woman. She remarks that at first, she could not imagine that she would be able to live abroad, but actually she likes living in Madrid due to the good climate. Also, since both of them are working, they can afford to go on vacation to the seaside, while in Poland that would not be possible. However, as she notes, “having children, is a different issue, I wouldn’t like to have them here, far away from my family and my country.” Even though Karolina recognizes the benefits of European citizenship in the matter of free movement and legal facilities, she says that the effects of the EU accession are mostly negative as the prices in Poland have increased greatly, and this is an important obstacle for them to come back: “with the same cost of life here and there, here we earn much more money.” She values her current quality of life, and has decided to stay in Madrid for a while.

Ewelina: “Perhaps it is good that we entered the EU”

Ewelina is only twenty-three, but she has been in Madrid for three years now. When she graduated from high school, specialized in administration and economics, her parents could not afford to finance her further studies at the university. This is when one of her family’s friends contacted her parents about a job in Madrid with a Polish family that needed a nanny for their child. Ewelina’s family strongly encouraged her to take the job and “earn some money for further education.” She left for Spain, and worked for this family for more than a year as a live-in nanny. She did not speak any Spanish; neither

had she any friends in Madrid, so she started meeting other Poles who lived in the same city through internet chat rooms. This is how she met her current partner, a slightly older than her Polish construction worker who has been in Madrid for over ten years, son of an immigrant family. Ewelina left her live-in job to move in with him and she took up another nanny job, this time for a Polish-Spanish family. Later on she moved on to working as a live-out cleaner for a Spanish family, who finally, after almost three years, offered her an official contract. As Ewelina remarks she is quite satisfied with her current job as she has gained the right to health insurance and unemployment benefits, but she is “not going to work as a cleaner all her life.” She would like to make use of her professional qualifications, however, her knowledge of Spanish is still not sufficient to work in an office as she spent the first years of her stay in Madrid working for Polish families and seeing Polish friends. Her current employer is helping her with the language and she also attended an intensive Spanish course offered to migrants by the local authorities. Ewelina is one of three siblings, all of whom are abroad: her brother is a construction worker in France, while her sister is working in a factory in the UK. However, she underlines the fact that she is different, she would like to stay abroad, while her siblings want to earn as much as possible and then come back and settle in their little town in Poland. Since Ewelina has arrived in Spain already as a European citizen, she takes the actual state of things for granted, and does not have a lot of information about the situation prior to 2004. She tells me she has not really thought about how her situation would turn out if she would have arrived earlier, although finds it positive that Poland entered the EU.

Martyna: “I don’t really think about it”

Martyna is only 20 years old. She arrived in Madrid about a year ago, after finishing high school in Poland, in order to reunite with her emigrated parents. Her mother, Alicja, left for Madrid ten years ago, as a result of high unemployment in her home region. Through an intermediary she found a job as a live-in domestic worker in Madrid. After some time, Alicja moved on to live-out and per hours modes of working as a cleaner and her husband came to join her. Thanks to the contacts she had with other Polish migrants, he started working in the construction sector. Together they worked very hard to save money and send it to the children they left in Poland: Martyna and her brothers who

stayed behind with their grandparents. Martyna stayed in Poland until she finished high school and finally last year she joined her family. She is working as a nanny for a small child in a Spanish family. She wants to go to university and study economics, as soon as she will be able to study in the language. Her parents have quite a good economic situation, as after 2004, her father opened a construction company and employs his own workers, Polish and Ukrainian. Martyna is satisfied with her life in Madrid, as she remarks, she earns her own money for clothes and going out with a group of Polish friends she has already made here. She seems quite happy that her family has finally reunited but it is obvious she misses her friends in Poland. She is not really concerned with political issues, as she points out, she does not really think about European citizenship.

Kasia: “What matters to me is to save money and go back to Poland”

Kasia is Martyna’s friend. She is also twenty years old and arrived in Madrid less than a year ago. She is from a small village in the Eastern part of Poland where she graduated from high school last year. She came to Madrid to stay with her boyfriend, whom she met during the summer in her village in Poland. He is slightly older than her, and has been living in Madrid for five years now, working in the construction business. He, in turn, came to Madrid to visit his sister and stayed. Kasia and her boyfriend plan to get married soon and, as she explains, they don’t know how much longer they will stay, but only long enough to save money for the construction of a house in Poland and establishing a business back home. Kasia gets up at seven in the morning every day, and goes to work as an *externa* for a Spanish family. In the afternoons she works cleaning various other houses. Every day she comes home at night exhausted after the long day of work. As she remarks, most of her Polish female friends work as hard as she does, as cleaners or nannies, in order to save money for future projects in Poland. Kasia is not really concerned with the issues of European citizenship and does not hold any opinions about this topic, what matters to her is saving enough money to go home and have a good start in life.

Conclusions

In this chapter I provided a methodological introduction to the empirical part of this project, based on eight semi-structured interviews with Polish domestic workers in Madrid. The interviews constitute a direct source of knowledge about the reality and experience of the economic migration of Polish women in Spain. The subsequent analysis of the materials gathered through the interviews is based on the intersectional approach which rests on the assumption that different aspects of the social location of the participants co-construct their subjectivity and their social location. As Warren argues, “the objective of qualitative interviewing is to discern meaningful patterns within thick description” (Warren 2002, 87), and as such the material obtained through the interviews offers a rich universe of the meanings of Europeanness in the context of a multicultural society and a labor market structured along the lines of gender, ethnicity, and nationality.

Chapter 4

Case Study: Polish domestic workers in Madrid. Between migrants and European citizens

Before, it was a disaster, if you had no papers, you would go to jail. And I survived being in jail for that! [...] It was a problem back then, we were not in the EU, and you had to have a preliminary contract, saying that somebody was going to hire you.

Sylwia, in Madrid since 1998

I can tell you that girls who are employed as domestic workers, are not concerned whether Poland is or is not in the EU, but they think about their job, whether it is convenient and whether they are paid enough; [...] they just want to earn as much as possible and go back.

Ewelina, in Madrid since 2005

Introduction

In this, last, chapter I will discuss the interviews I have conducted with Polish women employed as domestic workers in Madrid. As evidenced in their migration histories sketched in the previous chapter, there are important differences between the participants of the study in terms of age, family situation, level of education, as well as duration of stay in Spain, a diversity which reflects the heterogeneity of the Polish migrant community in Spain. Although the small sample size of this case study does not enable me to make generalizations about the whole of the Polish community in Madrid, it does provide initial insight into the situation of Polish women employed as domestic workers in Spain and may serve as groundwork for more comprehensive research on the implications of the EU enlargement of 2004 for the new European mobile citizens.

The narratives of the participants of the study will be analyzed in relation to the central research question concerning the effects of the acquisition of the status of

European citizens on the position of Polish domestic workers in Spain. Such analysis will be necessarily articulated with their social location defined in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality in the context of such a change. Following the four subquestions laid out in the introductory part of the thesis, I will discuss the issue of motivation for migration/mobility; the most important characteristics of the employment of Polish women as domestic workers; their perceptions of whiteness in a multicultural society; in order to finally discuss the perceptions of change from migrant to European citizen and how this status influences the former three issues.

Economic migration and the (un)changing sociopolitical context

As far as the motivations for migration are concerned, although my respondents decided to emigrate at different points between 1995 and 2008, all of them related to the difficult labor market situation as the principal reason for leaving the country. The lack of access to opportunities and high levels of female unemployment, constitute the principal motivation for Polish women's emigration, a situation evidenced also in other studies of this type (Coyle 2007, Ryan et al. 2009). Here I will discuss the structural processes which intersect with specific family and individual strategies as the principal factors which induce emigration of Polish women.

Structural reasons for Polish women's migration in the 1990s

As noted in chapter 2, the drastic economic reforms of the 1990s transition from socialism to a free market economy have had a profound influence across the Polish society; however, their impact was differential on the various social sectors. For instance, Zofia, employed in the public sector as a teacher, was not happy with her low salary. As she remarks,

There were many reasons [to leave]. The economic one, for sure, because I was working in a school and the situation was so bad that my students earned more money than me [...]. Also, I was almost thirty, and my boyfriend-, it didn't work out. And I was a little depressed [...]. And I had to run away. So, when my mum found an advertisement in the newspaper which said "work for women in Madrid," I decided to take a chance and called them (Zofia_1).

This account evidences the harsh situation in the 1990s, when the country was undergoing intensive post-socialist restructuring, and the public sectors such as education were one of the most affected. Although Zofia, a university graduate, was working as a teacher, she could not afford to become financially independent and her motivation to emigrate became stronger due to personal difficulties experienced. Therefore, the combination of the socioeconomic context and the personal circumstances made her leave the country.

The other two respondents, who emigrated in the 1990s, Ewa and Sylwia, were in an even more difficult position: both were already married and mothers and could not find any employment in their small towns. As Ewa remarks:

Obviously, [I left] to earn money, there was no work in Poland, so I came here. And Spain-, because I had a friend who has been here before and she came [to my town] and said there is a lot of work for women here, and that for me there would also be work, so I left. [...] I was on my maternity leave, and then I had no job anymore (Ewa_1).

Ewa's account also relates to the difficulties of the post-socialist period aggravated by gender-related obstacles on the labor market. Sylwia, on the other hand, could not find any job in the small town where she lived because the only source of employment was a wood processing plant where only men were employed, so she left "because one had to leave." It becomes obvious that in both cases the discourse on the general difficult economic situation of the 1990s intertwines with more gender-specific issues: losing work as a result of maternity leave and being unemployed as the only source of employment was reserved for men. Therefore, the effects of deep economic restructuring propelled female emigration from Poland in important ways, as they intertwined with the specific difficulties of women in the labor market. In the cases of Ewa and Sylwia, their emigration constituted a family strategy which extended their households transnationally through space and time (Ryan et al. 2009, 64), while for Zofia, it constituted an individual project of emancipation. These accounts clearly respond to what Saskia Sassen terms as "counter geographies of globalization," the

emigration of women as a result of the post-socialist transitions, constituting a resistance to hardships of the transition period (Saskia Sassen 2003, quoted in Lutz 2008).

Governmental fostering of female emigration

In a situation where due to low salaries, unemployment, and gender-specific problems in the labor market migration was turning into an increasingly attractive option for many Polish women throughout the 1990s, the Polish government also promoted their emigration in significant ways. As described in chapter 2, in 2002 an intergovernmental agreement was signed with Spain for the supply of workers for the Spanish agriculture, and it was implicitly meant for the provision of women workers, preferred by the employers. Agnieszka was one of the women who took part in this government-controlled program of Eastern European labor supply to Southern Spain:

It was a tragedy, no work; even friends who graduated with me from the university were unemployed [...]. My neighbor said he was going to the regional Office of Employment because he heard about some possibility of working abroad [...]. I left my CV there and they told me to go to pick strawberries, that there is work, because "Unfortunately there is no work in Poland, so you must go there." (Agnieszka_2).

This is how Agnieszka, a University graduate who worked in a big national company prior to her marriage and leaving Poland, found out that there was no work for her when she came back and she was sent off to work in Spanish agriculture. This option was offered to many women across the most economically depressed regions of Poland, and, as she recalls, when they would go to the local town in the region she worked in, "there were thousands of Polish women, in the shops, in the bars," a fact documenting the impact this agreement had on the temporal emigration of Polish women to Spain. Although it was much below her level of professional qualifications, Agnieszka was lucky, as she says, because her employer was polite, did not exploit her, and paid good money. However, upon her return, she still could not find a job, clear evidence of the lack of effective governmental measures to change the adverse economic situation. As she explains, once more she became disillusioned with the situation in Poland, and started looking for other offers of employment abroad. She found an advertisement of a Polish woman, who, for a fee of 500 Euro, helped her find work as a live-in nanny in Madrid.

The account of Agnieszka, as well as the situation of Zofia and Karolina, all university graduates who found employment as domestic workers, constitute good examples of the de-skilling of Polish women through migration, an issue quite common among migrant women employed as domestic workers (see for instance, Anderson 2000, 29; Kofman et al. 2000, 130).

Women's migration after 2004: unchanging economic context

The situation of the four participants who had left Poland after 2004, is slightly different, as they moved already as European citizens, as well as, due to the fact that they are younger and have no family obligations. However, there are also significant similarities to the situation of pre-2004 migrants: their main motivation for migration remains the lack of opportunities in the country of origin (Karolina, Ewelina, and Martyna) and plans to save money (Kasia). For example, Ewelina explains her motivation to emigrate in the following way:

In Poland I wanted to go to the University, I got in, but I had no money to pay for it because my parents have five children and they cannot afford to pay for one, and not the others, right? [...] So I came here thinking that I would go back to Poland after six months to study [at the University] but I like it so much here that I don't want to go back to Poland anymore (Ewelina_1).

The general difficult economic situation in the country, and her specific socio-geographic location impeded Ewelina's plans to continue her education and access better employment opportunities outside her small village. Martyna, on the other hand, also mentions the little work possibilities for her in the region where she lived during the last years, finishing high school and living with her grandparents. But her main motivation to leave was to reunite with her parents. So in different ways, Ewelina's and Martyna's family situation made them move to Madrid and become employed as domestic workers to earn money while their plans to study have been postponed to the near future.

Kasia's and Karolina's emigration presents a different kind of approach to the migratory project, termed by Okólski (2001) as "incomplete migration." The main characteristics of this type of migration of Poles, is that they are attracted by the higher pay abroad but plan to spend their earnings in their home country. In spite of the fact that initially such a strategy is thought to be short-term, in many cases it evolves into a more long-term emigration. Karolina, for example, left Poland due to unemployment, to

save up some money and go back, but she started to enjoy living in Madrid and now she plans to stay for a while. While Kasia, still presents the type of migration described by Okólski, as she only thinks about saving money and spending it in Poland.

In all the aforementioned cases, the processes of economic transformation had direct impact on the motivations to emigrate. Those women who emigrated in the 1990s talk about a “tragic situation,” and “a necessity to leave” and sketch an image of a country immersed in deep economic crisis. On the other hand, women who emigrated in 2000s still refer to economic difficulties, a perception which counters the discourse on Poland being one of the fastest developing countries in Central and Eastern Europe during and after the EU accession. Although two decades have passed already since the transition started, and the EU membership of Poland was supposed to improve the economic situation in the country, the lack of good employment opportunities remains the main motivation for women, who look for alternative opportunities of employment abroad. Such a situation reinforces the status of Poland as belonging to the “Second World,” the developing post-socialist sphere, which impedes the full Europeanness of its citizens remaining in the positions of “economic migrants.”

Labor market situation

Having revised the motivations of the respondents to leave Poland, and how these intertwine with the broader political and economic context, I will now turn to the analysis of the labor market circumstances which they face upon their arrival in Spain. As noted in chapter 2, all the available research on the Polish community in Madrid points to the principal employment of Polish women as domestic workers and of Polish men in the sector of construction (Arnal Sarasa 1999, Ramirez Goicoechea 2003, Stanek 2003, 2008). To my surprise, such a homogenous picture of a gendered employment situation has been also confirmed in the case study. All the respondents were employed in the domestic work sector, and their Polish partners were holding jobs in the construction business at the time of the interview. When asked about other Polish friends or relatives, all of them pointed out that it is a common situation, and that they know almost nobody who would be employed elsewhere, older and more recently established migrants alike. As Agnieszka comments,

A lot of Poles [men] have their own construction companies... Nothing else, zero... Everybody cleans, all of the women I heard about, I know. The wife of Jurek's [her partner] boss, who owns a company which is really prospering, she is a cleaner as well (Agnieszka_5).

Although, obviously this situation is not entirely homogenous, and there are Poles employed in different sectors of the labor market, some in higher positions, they remain in a minority and the figures of Polish construction worker and Polish domestic worker, constitute the preeminent representation of Poles in Spain, both in the eyes of the Spanish society, as well as for the migrants themselves. Therefore, it is of great interest for this study to examine in more details which factors contribute to this situation and what are the special characteristics of the employment of Polish women in the sector of domestic work.

Female migrant networks

While discussing my respondents' motivation to leave Poland, it became very interesting for me to hear that all of them were offered their first job in Spain either by women acquaintances or through transnational intermediaries. Sylwia, Ewelina, and Ewa came to work in Spain thanks to women who were friends of their families, while Agnieszka and Zofia found their first jobs through established networks working to bring Polish women for the domestic work in Madrid. Karolina and Kasia found their jobs through other Polish women working in Madrid, while in the case of Martyna, she found her job as a nanny thanks to her mother's contacts with former employers. It becomes clear, therefore, that the emigration of Polish women is embedded in strong female migrant networks established since the 1990s, which conduct them to this specific sector of work.

However, these migrant networks have evolved with time. Those women who arrived in the 1990s refer to the established intermediaries who placed advertisements in Polish press offering "work for women" for a fee of a couple of hundred Euros (or its equivalent in pesetas, before Euro was introduced). These intermediaries comprised of a representative in Poland and extensive contacts in Madrid for the placement of new workers. Zofia, who came to Spain in this manner, recalls "an apartment full of Polish women waiting for their jobs as live-in domestic workers," who were then "sold" to Spanish employers. Such an account seems to bear similarities to the slave trade

(Anderson 2001, 133), and provides evidence for the fact that these networks had strong operational infrastructure and the numbers of women who arrived as irregular can be considerable.¹⁷ However, as Ewa points out, the practice of “paying for job” is disappearing: “In the beginning I had to pay for work, for getting me here [...].Then you would earn and repay. But now it is not so anymore, if you hear about something [about a job] you just [pass the information on].” However, while the prominence of transnational intermediaries seems to have decreased in the last years, the importance of the established Polish migrant networks cannot be underestimated. All of my respondents who arrived after 2004 confirm this observation. In the case of Ewelina, she was offered a job in Poland as a nanny for a Polish family who lived in Madrid; Karolina and Kasia found their jobs through Polish female acquaintances; and Martyna was placed by her mother in the home of her former employer.

To sum up, it can be argued that while in the 1990s established intermediaries existed which conducted Polish women into the sector in Madrid, currently their employment in the sector is reinforced by the existing female migrant networks. However, in this context it is important to look more in-depth at the narratives of my respondents to analyze the reasons for their continuous employment in this sector –traditionally dominated by racialized migrant women–, even in spite of the fact that as European citizens they might find employment in any of the sectors of the labor market supposedly on equal terms with the national workers.

Motivation to work in the domestic sector

As discussed above, in the initial phase of migration the importance of migrant networks is prevalent in terms of job placement. However, once the migrants settle, learn the basics of the language, and make their own contacts, it becomes easier to change their sector of employment. Moreover, in the recent years Polish women became European citizens who can, in theory, compete with nationals in any sector of employment on equal terms. When asked why they were working as domestic workers, my interviewees answered that in most cases their employment was a result of a

¹⁷ This account can be related to the fact that in the mid-nineties, in 1996 and 1997, two trafficking organizations bringing women from Poland to work as domestic workers in Spain have been dismantled. It is estimated that they could have introduced almost 2.500 Polish women into that sector (Arnal Sarasa 1999, 34).

conscious choice. For instance, Agnieszka told me she was offered jobs in an office which would be much more in accordance with her professional skills and education. However, she rejected those offers because as she explained to me:

I now earn 650 Euro working four hours a day. And there [working in an office] I would have to work for the whole day for 600 Euro, and [...] now, I come from work, take a shower, put on nice clothes and go to the park with my daughter (Agnieszka_5).

Therefore, she chose a more comfortable situation where she can spend time with her daughter and earn the same money, over making use of her professional skills. Also, employment in bars and shops is deemed less desirable in terms of the relation of the money earned to the effort made. As Ewa explained to me, “My friend used to work in a shop but she says it makes no sense, working Saturday and Sunday for so little money, she says, ‘I prefer to be working [as a domestic worker] per hours and I have a lot more money.’” These perceptions are also reflected in the situation of Sylwia, who, after being employed as a waitress and supermarket cashier has gone back to working as a cleaner. As she notes, when she was working as a waitress, “it was hard, I resigned from that job because I had no time to see my kids, no time to cook, no time to clean the house, no time for anything, no time for myself.” The account of Zofia is a more contradictory one as in the beginning she tells me that she would like to find a different job, preferably more in accordance with her higher education, while later on in the interview she notes that the employment as a domestic worker, “is kind of convenient, and brings money. [...] So I am not surprised [that women work in this sector].” Similarly, Karolina says she “never expected to become a cleaner” and treats her employment as the best possible option giving similar reasons for her choice as Agnieszka, Ewa, Sylwia, and Zofia. Therefore, even though my respondents could possibly access other types of jobs, more or less skilled, there are important advantages for them in the employment as domestic workers.

The younger women, on the other hand, see it as a transitional employment, while they learn the language in order to access more skilled jobs, or the university. As Ewelina makes clear for me, “I am happy with my job for now, but I will not be a cleaner for my whole life, right? First of all I need to learn Spanish, and then, I am thinking of working in a shop.” Also Martyna is working as a nanny, but explains to me that it is temporary, only until she learns enough Spanish to continue her education. In contrast,

Kasia treats her employment as a source of income and the means for achieving her goal of saving money. All of them see their current employment as temporary and circumstantial and chosen mainly due to their poor knowledge of Spanish which impedes their access to other types of jobs. This is not a unique situation, because, as Escrivá and Skinner argue, women of many nationalities “consider domestic work in Spain merely as a stepping stone towards a better job” (2008, 115) or other kinds of future projects.

Modes of employment in the sector of domestic work

Not only is working in the domestic sector considered more advantageous than other jobs in certain aspects, but also the different modes of employment as domestic workers are deemed more or less desirable. As mentioned before, there are three types of employment to be distinguished: *interna* (live-in worker), *externa* (live-out worker), and working per hours in different households. Four of my respondents worked as *interna* upon their arrival in Spain: Ewelina, Agnieszka, Ewa, and Zofia. Those who experienced this kind of job say it is exhausting due to the fact that it means being available practically all the time to your employer and having very little rest.¹⁸ However, it continues to constitute an advantageous mode of entry for migrant women (Anderson 2002, 107) who are provided with accommodation and at least some guidance in the initial phase of their migration, while they get to know the new surroundings and learn the basics of the language.

The other type of employment, as *externa*, allows for much more independence, and can be combined with other jobs and activities, however, also entails important disadvantages. As Ewa comments, “you work in one house and if someone sacks you, you have nothing. Working per hours is better [...]. And of course this is how you earn most, but it is also hard to find.” Therefore, the best option, but also the hardest to find, is working in various jobs per hours, as Ewa points out. It allows for flexibility not only in terms of fixing the exact hours when the worker is available to the employer, but also in terms of job continuity, since losing one employment does not mean remaining without source of income. It seems to be considered the best strategy, especially in times

¹⁸ For an in-depth discussion of these characteristics of live-in domestic work, see Anderson 2000.

of economic crisis which, as evidenced below, influences in important ways the situation of my respondents.

The influence of the economic crisis

When discussing the jobs available on the labor market, most interviewees made reference to the economic crisis. The general picture is that even though it became easier to find a job as a European citizen after 2004, the adverse economic circumstances in Spain complicated the situation on the labor market and it is also noted heavily as far as the employment of domestic workers is concerned. As Ewa comments on this double sided process,

It became harder, due to the economic crisis, there is no work. In the beginning after Poland entered the UE it was easier to find a job, anyone could hire you, and they would give you papers, and everything, because you were from the EU (Ewa_5).

Also Sylwia explains the situation in a similar way: according to her, the labor market situation improved after the EU accession, however only for a short time, until the citizens of Romania started arriving in great numbers, due to the subsequent 2007 EU enlargement. According to Sylwia, their lower expectations in terms of salary undermined the situation of Polish women in the sector of domestic work. Finally, even those women, who arrived in the last years and have less experience, comment on the issue of the economic crisis. As Martyna remarks, “most of my friends complain about the [economic] crisis, people are being sacked, there is no work.” However, the crisis influences the different sectors of the labor market in a differential way and it seems that the employment of women as domestic workers might be favorable in this context:

It's easier for women. Because when all the construction is halted no man will find work [...]. And here [in the sector of domestic work] there is work. [...] So it is easier for us [women] it is really easier for us because when there will be always somebody who needs our help (Sylwia_4).

The gravity of the economic crisis was the theme which came up in all accounts, but also a positive outlook on the future could be noted, because recently it seems the situation is getting better.

The reality of the economic crisis also triggers thoughts of coming back to Poland. However, my respondents perceive the situation in Poland as still more difficult than in Madrid, even in spite of the EU membership. Most of my respondents, except for

Martyna, Karolina, and Kasia who have been in Madrid for a shorter time, express their plans to stay in Spain at least until retirement and are critical about the possible betterment in Poland after the EU accession. As Sylwia comments on Poles coming back to Poland during the last year due to the economic crisis in Spain:

I know some who have left, they said, 'We prefer Poland, we will have everything there, a big salary.' And soon they came back here and started asking for work. [...] Nobody made it there, there is no welfare in Poland, even here everybody knows that things are not better in Poland, it was just a smokescreen to make people come back, because in the end there were shortages [of labor] (Sylwia_5).

Sylwia's account constitutes a graphic example of the broader discourse on unfulfilled expectations following the enlargement. While most of my respondents consider the progress is still too small in order to come back, some note the principally negative effects of the EU accession:

When I go to Poland now, I think, how people are supposed to survive there? Since Poland entered the EU everything has become so expensive [...]. And in my family, my friends- they tell me that there is no increase in the salaries. [...] Sometimes I think life is easier in Spain, even if I am working as a cleaner (Karolina_6).

It becomes clear that nowadays the effects of liberal capitalist policies in Poland undermine the welfare of its citizens, and it is no longer the effects of post-socialism, but the post-enlargement economic dynamic which makes the perception of everyday life in Poland rather negative and, in result, the perspective of coming back less probable in spite of difficulties experienced in the context of migration.

Regular vs. irregular workers

One of the most important problems related to the employment in the sector of domestic work is its highly irregular character. This issue is strongly connected to the private character of this type of work and the difficult legal situation of most migrant women who are employed in this sector. The predominantly irregular character of the employment of Poles in Spain (Stanek 2003) can possibly change with the easy access to legal employment as European citizens. However, when comparing the narratives of those women who became employed legally prior to and post 2004, there are still many similarities. Here Zofia describes the difficulties of getting employed legally before 2004:

Your boss for which you were working had to give you a preliminary work contract, and I asked my boss for that [...] I begged her for years, but she kept on exploiting me, I was working Saturdays, Sundays, whenever she wanted, without a contract, happy to have a job. And for her it was simply inconvenient [to employ legally] because she knew that as soon as you had a residence permit you would have more possibilities of movement and you could leave (Zofia_6).

Therefore, before 2004, the employer had the total control over the worker, a situation allowing for abuse of power and obliging many women to remain in an irregular and unprotected situation for years. As Bridget Anderson documents in her famous book *Doing the Dirty Work? The Global Politics of Domestic Labour* (2000), the situation of abuse of power on part of the employers is unfortunately rather common among migrant domestic workers in Europe. It may seem that with the acquirement of the status of European citizen this kind of abuse would stop, however, this is not always the case as employers still refuse to pay the insurance of their workers, which leaves them unprotected in terms of possible unemployment and medical insurance. Agnieszka, who got her first contract once Poland had already entered the EU, describes her experience:

When Poland entered the EU I was already pregnant, and I came to my boss, for whom I worked as *externa*, begging them on my knees for the contract. [...] And they agreed. On the same day I went to the office, took the documents, I brought the papers, they filled it out, and I started paying [the insurance], I didn't expect them [to do it]. And everything went great (Agnieszka_4).

Therefore, we can see an improvement in the way Agnieszka could regularize her labor situation in a matter of days, with the collaboration of her employer, which is due to the fact that as a European citizen she did not need any type of special work permit. However, still, she emphasizes the fact that it is she who pays the insurance, as she "didn't expect her employers to do that," a situation in which the fact that your employer pays the social insurance is no longer perceived as a right, but a favor, which can be refused. This fact clearly proves the lack of successful enforcement of labor rights in the domestic sector. Ewelina and Kasia, the younger women I interviewed, were the only two who at the time of the interviews were legally employed. As Ewelina explains to me:

Until now, until October last year, nobody ever offered me a contract. It is now [after 3 years in Madrid] when I got employed with a contract, it is for a certain period of time, and every three months she renews it. [...] I am happy with this job. They pay me okay, and I am insured. Last month I had my hand broken and I was like that for four weeks, and they paid me for that. If I had no papers, I would not receive a cent for the whole month. So it is a big advantage (Ewelina_3).

For that reason, the advantages of being employed legally are quite important, however, it seems that especially in times of economic crisis very few workers can expect their employers to employ them officially. According to the legislation in Spain, a domestic worker can also become self-employed, which implies of course covering her own social insurance cost. However, in times of crisis and shortage of employment many women decide to remain working illegally, even though previously they used to work as self-employed domestic workers; Ewa makes it clear when she notes that, "I don't have a contract anymore. For me it is not profitable now, [...] now it makes no sense." Clearly, the effect of acquiring the status of European citizen, although removed many legal obstacles, coincided with the effects of the economic crisis, which further undermined the labor rights of domestic workers.

One of the most important conclusions drawn during the course of interviews is that in most cases, being employed as a domestic worker is the result of a very conscious decision. Women who work as live-out workers or work per hours underlined the fact that in spite of its disadvantages in terms of a less regular character, this kind of work allows for more flexibility, free time, and relatively higher income than other jobs in the service sector. The enlargement of the EU and the acquisition of the status of European citizens improved the situation of Polish domestic workers on the Spanish labor market in important ways, granting them the right to work legally quite easily. However, in spite of these legal facilities, most of them remain irregular as domestic workers, since employers refuse to sign official contracts and cover their social insurance. This situation has been already noted in the first chapter of the thesis where I referred to scholars, who argue that the benefits of the European citizenship for the intra-European mobile workers are based on the male breadwinner model (Ferreira and Tavares 1998, 5, Kofman et al. 2000, 88, Nanz 2009, 414) and leave the care work outside of its conceptualization. This particular case seems to confirm such an argument.

Ethnic perceptions in a multicultural society

The ethnic characteristics of the new European citizens are a significant element which influences their position. As argued in chapter 2, prior to 2004, while they were still considered non-EU migrants, whiteness and Christianity positioned them closer to the host societies of Western European countries. Such cultural and ethnic similarities allowed Polish (and other Central and Eastern European) migrants to remain less visible, and, thus, more socially acceptable as migrants in the context of a much racialized discourse on the “dangers” of migration present in the EU countries. However, and as I argued in the previous chapters, while Central and Eastern Europeans’ whiteness implies Europeanness and belonging, it becomes more ambiguous when combined with the specific white ethnic characteristics which imply their perception as “Eastern.” These issues become critical for the definition of the location of the new European citizens in terms of racial hierarchies present in the labor market, since, as Bridget Anderson argues, “employers tend to express preferences for specific nationalities of domestic workers, and these preferences often reflect racial hierarchies that rank women by precise shades of skin colour” (2002, 108). As Kofman et al. (2000, 122) note, the principal characteristic of such hierarchy is that Black women earn less than ‘White’ groups. Therefore, and bearing in mind such arguments on the ethnic/racial hierarchies present on the labor market, Polish women’s’ whiteness constitutes an important point of analysis for the understanding of their position as migrant domestic workers.

Whiteness in a multicultural society

All of my respondents expressed in some way their feeling of being positively perceived by the Spanish society, for the most part such positive attitude concerned their employment possibilities. Agnieszka, for instance, speaks about it in very general terms noting that “we have a very good opinion; I know Spanish families who only want to have Polish women in their house.” Ewa goes into more details of such perceptions:

Poles have always been valued here, for children, cleaning; they have been always praised by them [Spanish employers]. They say Polish! That's good, they are good people, they work hard, and they are clean (Ewa_5).

Also Martyna, who has been in Spain for a rather short period of time expresses a similar, positive, perception: "Spaniards have respect for Poles, I think so. The family I work for, my employers, they have been to Poland, and they liked the country." However, some of my respondents also operated a very clear racist discourse:

Spanish women prefer Polish women. Because, Ecuadorian women have an opinion of lazy people, dirty, all those Peruvians, they are dirty, Romanians are thieves, Ukrainians and Russians are mafia, all the time in the papers. [...] So you know we should be glad that we are Poles. Always there has been an opinion that [we] are hard-working and diligent (Sylwia_3).

Clearly, the positive self-perception of Polish women is inscribed in a broader framework of racial hierarchies of the multicultural Spanish migrant community. Sylwia was the only one to voice this in such stark racist terms; nevertheless, it can be argued that in general, Polish women use their location as white and European to their benefit, signaling their belonging to the (white) "norm." Here I refer to the concept of whiteness as formulated by Frankenberg (1993) who defines it as a racial category which remains unnamed in popular discourses, and, thus, produces spaces of power and domination over those defined as "non-white." In my fieldwork the term whiteness has not been used by the respondents, and no explicit reference has been made to the racial location of Poles. Whiteness remains unspoken, unnamed, even though all the respondents relate to it in one way or another. For instance, Ewelina notes:

Poles are characterized by blonde hair [...], that we have fair eyes, fair skin, etc. And I am more aware of that now, about the culture we have, what distinguishes us. [...] When I was living in my village I didn't think about that (Ewelina_8).

Therefore, issues of skin color and race are directly related by Ewelina to the notion of cultural difference which becomes evident in the context of the multiethnic Spanish society. Sylwia, on the other hand, notes that, "You know for them a Pole, is this conception of blonde with blue eyes, but we are not all like that." She points to the fact that this homogenous image of Poles is false, and exists only as a social construction, while the reality is much more complex. Finally, contrary to the other accounts, the younger women, Kasia and Martyna, do not express notions of difference; rather, they

think that Poles remain invisible since, as Martyna argues, “we don’t stand out at all, and we are no different than Spaniards, in terms of skin color, culture.” Nevertheless, such “invisibility” clearly refers to a very concrete notion of ethnicity, that is, the European whiteness. In this sense, my respondents only see the other migrants in racial terms, and conceive of their “blond hair and fair skin” as something natural and unproblematic, whiteness is a position which remains unnamed and, thus, invisible.

It is also important to note the differential perceptions of other Eastern Europeans. As Ewelina notes, “I think [my nationality] matters, at least in the sector [of domestic work] in which I work now, we are ahead of Russians, Ukrainians, and Romanians –whom everybody hates–, you know?” Ewelina, as well as Sylwia above, inscribe Poles in a hierarchy of Eastern Europeans, in which their position is very advantageous. However, and in spite of this perception of Poles “standing out” among other Central and Eastern Europeans, my respondents tell me that there is a common confusion between Poles and Romanians. As Zofia notes, “people very often associate me with Romania and not Poland, at first I was outraged. [...] But Romanians, like the rest of us, there are all sorts of people, there are those who cheat and those who work hard.” However, for Sylwia and Ewelina such associations are not positive at all, as they hold rather strong negative opinions about this particular nationality. From this perspective it is not only the ethnicity and skin color which matter, but also the nationality and regional differences: those more “faraway East” are perceived as occupying a lower position in the social hierarchy. It is important to note that, this is a rather common social perception in Poland, since Polish Europeanness has been most often defined in terms of difference from its Eastern (“non-European”) neighbors, especially Russia (Pittaway 2005).

In the context of such perceptions of Easternness as the basis for an inferior status, in spite of the positive attitudes towards Poles as domestic workers, my respondents also note that coming from Central Europe has its costs:

They treat you as apprentice because we are from Poland, we are from Eastern Europe, we are not from America [meaning the U.S.], we are not from England, and we are not from Germany or France. We are treated as if we still need to learn (Agnieszka_5).

Clearly, Agnieszka makes reference to the issue of the borders drawn between the East and the West, and the fact that Poles still remain those not fully-European, as coming

from the Eastern borderland of the EU marks them as backwards (Kuus 2004). Such a combination of, on the one hand, positive attitudes and recognition, and, on the other hand, perceptions of difference implies a rather ambiguous position of Poles, somewhere in-between those fully European and Western, and those who do not belong in the space of Europe. In social and economic terms, Poles seem to perceive themselves as belonging to the latter group of economically disadvantaged migrants, who treat their mobility as a strictly economic undertaking. "I think our situation is closer to those who come from Ecuador, Peru; they all come here to earn money, like us. But it is much more difficult for them with the papers, and everything." Therefore, the cross-cutting differences and commonalities between European and non-European, Western and Eastern, belonging and non-belonging, result in a complicated web of hierarchies, where the position of Poles remains shifting and unstable.

Other sources of commonality/difference: language and religion

The perception of Poles in Spain is further complicated by notions of commonality and otherness based on other social traits such as language and religion. On the one hand, the representation of Poland as a deeply Catholic country might constitute an additional point of cultural reference in the Spanish society. Such hypothesis is reflected in most studies of the Polish community in Spain, which point to the strong connections between the Catholic religion and Polish national identity, supposedly maintained in the context of migrant community (Arnal Sarasa 1998, Ramirez Goicoechea 2003). Nevertheless, this case study has questioned such direct associations, as most women defined themselves either as not Catholic; or Catholic, but not concerned with religion at all. Moreover, my respondents note that the three Polish churches in Madrid, regarded as an important symbol of attachment to Catholic origins, in reality constitute a meeting place for the Polish community, and the Polish mass is considered a social event, and does not necessarily have a profound religious meaning. Out of all the participants, only Kasia considered the Catholic religion to be very important element of her culture of origin, and a source of difference in the context of migration:

I am a Catholic and I am not ashamed of it. I don't care what they think about me. My boss asked me whether I go to church, and I said, yes. And she made a strange face. But I don't care what she thinks. They are different than us, they don't value such things (Kasia_6).

Therefore, Kasia seems to be the only one in this case study confirming the stereotypical perception of Poles as very religious and deeply attached to Catholic values; surprisingly, from her perspective, Catholicism constitutes a source of difference, rather than commonality in the Spanish society.

On the other hand, the cultural trait of Poles which distinguishes them in important ways is the language. The Polish language is completely different from Spanish, and constitutes a potential difficulty and handicap for these migrants in the context of strong Latin American migration. However, it turns out that this obstacle is sorted out by Polish migrants and they learn the basic language quite rapidly. Also, it seems that for the Spanish employers who prefer to employ Poles, this does not pose a problem at all, because all the women I talked to started working with Spanish employers without having even the basic notion of the language. Nevertheless, there always remains the issue of accent, as accents in Spain indicate the socio-geographic origins of its inhabitants. It is no different in the case of Poles, who are considered to have a specific "Eastern European" accent. As Agnieszka notes, "my accent—it is typically Eastern European, and they laugh at it." However, it is not the case for all the women I talked to, Zofia for instance explained to me:

People tell me I know the language quite well; there is no accent, [...]. And we, we always have this distinctive accent, and that is why in a conversation they think I am from the East, but not from Poland, rather from Romania, because their language is similar to Spanish (Zofia_7).

Therefore, the accent or its lack can be a source of further ethnic differentiation, which when combined with the specific ethnic characteristics and Catholic associations make up the figure of a Pole in Spain.

Having outlined some of the perceptions of the ethnic characteristics of Polish women, it is interesting to note that in many work advertisements Poles do state their nationality, and it is reasonable to think that it is so because of their belief that it might help them find employment. Such a hypothesis has been confirmed by my fieldwork, when the participants expressed their conviction that their nationality was an advantage for them, as many Spanish employers prefer Polish domestic workers over Latin

American and Moroccan women. Such a situation makes explicit the construction of clear hierarchies based on race, ethnicity, and nationality. Although in the accounts of Polish domestic workers I have interviewed the issue of whiteness remains for most part unspoken, and, thus, invisible, it becomes clear that when combined with their perceived cultural proximity it constitutes a basis for preference on the labor market over other, racially different, non-European women.

The migrant – European citizen dynamic

Having sketched the situation of Polish women employed as domestic workers in Madrid in terms of their motivations for migration, labor market situation, and position in the multicultural society of Spain, I now turn to the last issue, however central to all the previously discussed issues: the change of status from migrant to European citizen. This change can be best perceived and most thoroughly narrated from the point of view of women who arrived in the decade prior to 2004; however, it is also of great interest to note what attitudes can be found in the accounts of the more recent migrants, who have not experienced the change directly.

The difficult situation prior 2004: “Without papers, you meant nothing”

Prior to the 1st May 2004, Polish citizens constituted just another group of *extracomunitarios* living and working within the Spanish society, and just as the rest of migrants who do not legally and politically belong to Europe, they experienced problems when trying to settle and work in any European country. Such a position had significant consequences for many aspects of their everyday life. As Agnieszka describes this feeling, “without papers, without anything, it was tragic, you know? Everybody treated you as if you weren’t there, because you meant nothing.” Such a feeling of being disposable to the host society was reinforced by the danger of police controls and arrests. As Ewa notes,

Before it was much harder, it was much more difficult when you didn't have the papers —I had, but many didn't, they could not get the work permit—we were afraid! My friend from work, she was caught twice when she was coming back from work; in civilian clothes, they came up to her, asked for documents... (Ewa_3).

The main characteristic of such an unstable situation was the constant fear of being “caught” on the one hand, and a feeling of impotence when not succeeding at legalizing the situation in spite of important efforts, on the other. Sylwia describes the situation prior to 2004 in the following way:

Before, it was a disaster, if you had no papers, you would go to jail. And I experienced being in jail for that! [...] It was a problem back then, we were not in the EU, and you had to have a preliminary contract, saying that somebody is going to hire you (Sylwia_5).

The accounts of all three interviewees who arrived before Poland entered the EU: Ewa, Sylwia, and Zofia, contain elements of terror and despair; however, the one which might be considered as the most graphic is that of Zofia:

Before Poland entered the EU we had huge problems with the papers. I had my first residence permit when Lisa was born, my older daughter, because she was born here. Before, when I had no documents yet, I went on a trip to Barcelona and I was caught, I got arrested, the police arrested me. [...] I got 2 days in arrest, a police order to leave the country, and a five-year prohibition to enter Spain (Zofia_6).

Zofia, just like Sylwia, experienced police arrest for not having “papers” and she had to wait until her daughter was born to forget about the fear of being in jail for simply not holding the right passport. However, her narrative is even more striking when she goes into details of her situation as an irregular, pregnant woman:

When I was pregnant with my older daughter I didn't go to a doctor not even once, [...] I didn't visit a doctor because I was afraid that he would call the police, and I was imagining myself handcuffed, my mother waiting for me at Okęcie [Warsaw's airport], and me handcuffed with this enormous belly (Zofia_6).

Her fear of being “caught” was so overwhelming that even in advanced pregnancy she did not dare go to a doctor. Now she laughs about it, and thinks it was silly of her to think a doctor would turn her in for not having “papers;” however, her account illustrates the pervasiveness of fear in every aspect of life of the irregular migrants. As she remarks,

This is how it is when you don't have a *tarjeta* [residence permit], you are very afraid, and even more when you have a police order to leave the country and a

prohibition to re-enter the EU. I remember asking the policeman in Barcelona, "Where do you think I come from, Mars? I am European, I come from Europe!" I remember I was shouting that as I walked handcuffed. Such a humiliation... (Zofia_6).

Zofia tried to vindicate her rights on the grounds of her feeling as belonging to Europe, which, however, was not yet validated by the political process of expanding borders of the rightly European states. Nowadays, Poles are already on the other side of the imaginary line, the Eastern frontier of Europe and they do not have to vindicate their belonging in such a dramatic way anymore; it has been bestowed on them by means of a political decision.

Advantages of European citizenship: "We are here as if we were in Poland"

Having outlined the situation of Polish migrants in Spain before 2004, I now turn to the perceptions of the change of status to European citizens. In this point the opinions of my respondents are more diverse. For instance, Sylwia, as well as Karolina, consider that EU citizenship matters only in terms of legal facilities with the "papers," and does not affect their position and, especially, labor market possibilities in Spain. In a similar way Martyna notes, "maybe it is good we entered the EU. Because you can go now to the unemployment office and submit your papers as unemployed, and through them look for work." While, for instance, Ewa, although underlines the practical facilities, also refers to the disappearance of the pervasive fear described above, as well as a general change in the attitude towards Poles, now considered Europeans:

Now that we are in the EU it is easier with the job, and with everything. Because [...] now it is much easier to arrange things, bank documents, etc. They look at you quite differently, a Pole, so they know now: no problems (Ewa_3).

Therefore, being European citizen implies a relaxed attitude, as opposed to the tense situation of a third country migrant who might be "caught" without papers. Ewa also makes an important reference to the issues of citizenship in traditional terms:

Before, after eight [in reality ten] years of residence you could apply for Spanish citizenship. But now, what for? When we are in the EU there is no need, now we are like one big state. Before everybody wanted to become a citizen! (Ewa_3).

Therefore with the acquisition of the new transnationally recognized status of European citizen, the traditionally desired position of local citizen loses its importance. Although in economic terms Poles might still consider themselves closer to the third country

migrants, in legal terms, the difference in positions between new European citizens and non-EU citizens is very sharp. My interviewees regard remaining Polish citizens and residing in Spain as a perfectly acceptable position within the “transnationalized space” of the EU (Nanz 2009, 411). Mobile EU citizens no longer feel totally foreign in other member states of the EU as they hold rights which imply a status of quasi-national. As Ewa notes, “Poles are in an advantageous situation now, we are here as if in Poland, and the same if somebody comes to Poland and is from the EU, it’s the same, no problems, to buy a house, a car, everything’s the same.” Such a perception has further consequences for the future plans of the women who emigrated. As Ewa points out, after Poland entered the EU it did not become more attractive for migrants who might consider coming back; on the contrary, it made it easier to take the decision to stay, because in legal terms there are no longer any differences. Such an effect of the acquisition of EU citizenship has been already observed in the context of UK where Ryan et al. (2009, 61) note that the ability to claim EU citizenship rights has a twofold effect of inducing mobility, and promoting more prolonged stays, and greater permanence of migrants.

Although the prevalent understanding of European citizenship remains in terms of legal improvement, in the narratives analyzed there are also elements which relate to broader discourses of belonging (national and transnational) and borders in Europe. Zofia, for instance, makes reference to the legal facilities implied by the status of European citizen and connects it to the construction of the borders of Europe:

Now you go, register, get your NIE [foreigner identification number] and goodbye. They go to social security, get their number and can already work. There is no comparison [with the situation before 2004] it was as if with the German border Europe finished and there was a great chasm, and, then, the Eastern countries... I am telling you, they treated us as if we were from a different planet (Zofia_6).

Zofia’s account reflects the traditional discourse on Eastern Europe as “the Other,” and the fact that with the inclusion of Poles among the European citizens a shift occurred, not only in legal, but also possibly in discursive terms. Zofia also expresses her perception of European citizenship in terms of a positive feeling, when she notes that “Now you feel self-confident, you feel you have your rights, and before, you had no rights.”

Finally, the status of European citizen, in spite of the difficulties to analyze it in traditional terms of citizenship, has another very important aspect to it, as it implies not

only a certain status and rights, but also the possibility of participation. This element is considered by my respondents as key to “feeling European” when, for instance, Ewa remarks that “we can vote now, we matter now, the fact that we are here in Spain matters, we have documents, we have rights, and everything.” And in the same spirit Zofia notes,

Now you can vote in the European elections. I usually don't vote, I am not interested in politics; it's all the same to me. But the sole fact that I could go, take out my *tarjeta* from the purse, show it to them, and say I want to vote. [...] So I went to vote, ha! It is good I can vote also! (Zofia_7)

Such an understanding of European citizenship reflects the approach of Lister (1997) who proposes to think of citizenship as more inclusive in its facet of rights, as well as participation. The fact that the new EU citizens-mobile workers can vote in the European elections becomes symbolic for them, it connotes the idea that they matter somehow, and can make a change with their participation.

In the context of my study, those who had less to say about European citizenship were women who have never known a different state of things. Some respondents, who have not lived directly through such traumatic experiences as Ewa, Sylwia, or Zofia, consider that in reality the change is not really that significant. As Agnieszka remarks, “it seems to me that not much has changed, [...] Jurek [her partner] has been working as irregular for more than a year, and nothing happened.” Even though Agnieszka arrived one year prior to 2004, she has a completely different perspective than the women who arrived in the 1990s. She considers the acquirement of European citizenship to be rather insignificant and the discourse on the threats towards irregular workers as pure propaganda. However, a lack of concern with the issues of European politics is not uncommon:

I can tell you that girls who are employed as domestic workers, are not concerned whether Poland is or is not in the EU, but they think about their job, whether it is convenient and whether they are paid enough; [...] they just want to earn as much as possible and go back (Ewelina_12).

The perception of Ewelina, seems to reflect the situation of Kasia, who says she holds no opinion on the importance of European citizenship, and notes that “what I am really concerned with is to save as much money as possible, and go back to Poland, get married and have a good start, build a house, start a business.”

Clearly, those who have experienced the change most dramatically are the women who have lived for many years as *extracomunitarias*, also they appreciate more the transcendence of this recent change in status. But even from their perspective, the acquisition of the status of European citizen can be valued in different ways: as a mere legal improvement, or as belonging on the wider transnational level. Here I have contrasted the dramatic accounts of pre-2004 migrants characterized by feelings of fear and impotence, with the views of the post-2004 mobile workers. The perceptions of this dynamic change bring about many issues related to the construction of discursive and material borders and the processes of belonging, which evidence the ambiguous position of Polish women who are employed as domestic workers in Spain in terms of their Europeanness as mediated by gender, class, and ethnicity.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have analyzed the narratives of eight Polish domestic workers in order to assess the implications of the change of their status from migrants to European citizens, as well as analyze their situation in terms of ethnicity, class, gender, nationality, and citizenship. I have applied an intersectional approach as all these categories of social stratification are assumed to co-construct each other and dynamically create shifting social locations of disadvantage and privilege. On the one hand, in the context of a very strongly racialized migrant community in Spain, Polish women's whiteness, perceived cultural proximity and (Eastern) Europeanness position them closer to the local society and constitute a basis for a preference on the labor market. On the other hand, their predominant employment in the migrant niche of domestic work maintains their position as migrant workers, reinforced by the fact of coming from the economically underdeveloped post-socialist sphere.

Firstly, I aimed at describing the ways in which the motivations for economic migration are closely related to broader sociopolitical contexts, especially the post-socialist transitions and the EU enlargement. As it has been argued in the second chapter, Eastern European women in general, and Poles in particular have a long history of emigration to Western Europe as domestic workers (Morokvasic 1991, Coyle 2007). Although initially, this was thought to be one of the effects of the post-socialist transitions (Kofman et al. 2000, 122), nowadays, two decades later, Polish women

continue to move as European citizens, to earn money as domestic workers for other European women. However, they should not be regarded as victims of this situation; rather, they are clearly exercising their own agency as their labor mobility forms part of family strategies and individual projects. Secondly, I discussed various aspects of the predominant employment of Polish women in the sector of domestic work in Madrid and the importance of Polish ethnicity in the context of the multiracial and multicultural community of migrants in Spain. Here, the issues of whiteness became manifest, as the Polish ethnic and cultural background as well as, albeit to a lesser extent, the status of European citizen, seem to constitute a significant advantage on the racialized migrant labor market. However, the special characteristics of employment as domestic workers constitute a drawback, as the advantages of European citizenship for mobile European workers seem to benefit principally the traditionally male forms of work (Ferreira and Tavares 1998, Kofman et al. 2000, Nanz 2009). Finally, the analysis of the migrant-European citizen dynamic in relation to the important change of 2004, when Poles acquired the status of European citizens proves that the transcendence of the change is more deeply valued by women who have experienced the difficulties and exclusions as *extracomunitarias*, while younger and more recent migrants seem to care less about this issue. European citizenship seems to be valued for the most part as a legal, bureaucratic facility (the principle of non-discrimination, the right to work and reside in other member states) and a possibility of political participation (the right to vote in municipal and European elections), rather than a significant change on the political and discursive level.

Conclusions

Throughout this thesis I have discussed various aspects of the ambiguous positionality of the new mobile European citizens within the expanding borders of the European Union. The main objective was to scrutinize the complexities of the social location of Polish domestic workers as situated between the specificities of the shifting European borders and the global migrations of women to the sector of domestic work. In this context, the central research question of this study was: in what ways does the acquisition of European citizen status influence the situation of Polish domestic workers in Madrid? This question has been further articulated with European and global hierarchies of gender, ethnicity, class, nationality, and citizenship. However, such an analysis entailed certain analytical difficulties, since –as it has been argued already in the introduction– most of the studies which deal with the topic of migrant women employed as domestic workers in Europe analyze the situation of non-European, non-white women and their focus is on the processes of racialization of the sectors of their employment, as well as their exclusion from citizenship in Europe. On the other hand, throughout this study, it became clear that the model of mobile European worker, based on the male breadwinner model, excludes domestic work from its conceptualization (Ferreira and Tavares 1998, Kofman et al. 2000, Nanz 2009). Therefore, from both perspectives, the presence of Polish domestic workers in another member state of the EU remains obscured. For that reason it is necessary to develop new analytical tools in order to account for the complicated web of social hierarchies in which these white, European, migrant domestic workers are located. For this purpose, an intersectional approach has been applied in order to analyze the dynamic processes of positionality and location on the one hand, and the contested and shifting construction of boundaries, on the other (Yuval Davis 2006, 200). From this perspective, Europeanness has been approached as complex and dynamically constituted by different social categories which intersect as sources of disadvantage and privilege.

The empirical basis for the analysis of the central research question was provided through a set of in-depth interviews developed with Polish domestic workers in Madrid. The focus of the interviews was on the migration stories of the participants and their subjective perception of the change of status from migrants to European citizens. Their

narratives were analyzed in relation to the four main themes linked to the central research question: motivation for migration in relation to post-socialist realities and the processes of EU enlargement; reasons for the predominant employment of Polish women as domestic workers; perceptions of self and others in ethnic terms in a multicultural society; and the transcendence of European citizenship status in this context.

On the basis of the empirical material, it has been observed that although some decades ago, the emigration of Polish women as domestic workers in other Western European countries was thought to be one of the effects of the post-socialist transitions (Kofman et al. 2000, 122), currently Polish women, already European citizens, still choose to earn money as domestic workers for other European women as part of family strategies and individual projects, and their employment in this specific sector of work is reinforced by the existing female migrant networks. One of the most important findings is the fact that their employment as domestic workers is considered a conscious choice made on the basis of individual circumstances. Secondly, it has been detected that the employment of Polish women in the sector of domestic work in Madrid, in spite of their status of *comunitarias*, implies the similar problems as in the case of other, non-EU migrant women, in terms of their de-skilling and predominant irregularity of their employment. European citizenship implies important legal and bureaucratic facilities, nevertheless, it has not influenced the employment conditions of the women in question. Furthermore, the special characteristics of employment as domestic workers constitute a drawback, as the advantages of European citizenship for mobile European workers seem to benefit principally the traditionally male forms of work (Ferreira and Tavares 1998, Kofman et al. 2000, Nanz 2009). Thirdly, Polish ethnicity in the context of the multiethnic community of migrants in Spain seems to constitute a source of advantage in terms of employment possibilities and positive social perceptions. Here, the influence of whiteness has been analyzed, however, it has not been named directly by the participants who only see the other migrants in racial terms, and conceive of their “blond hair and fair skin” as something natural and unproblematic. Finally, the analysis of the migrant-European citizen dynamic in relation to the important change of 2004, when Poles acquired the status of citizens of the Union proved that this change is more deeply valued by women who have experienced the difficulties and exclusions as

extracomunitarias, while younger and more recent migrants are less concerned with this issue. European citizenship is principally valued as a legal, bureaucratic facility (the principle of non-discrimination, the right to work and reside in other member states) and a possibility of political participation (the right to vote in municipal and European elections), rather than a significant change in political and discursive terms.

The shifting borders of Europe and the ambiguous positionality of Central and Eastern Europe within these discourses constituted the starting point for my enquiry. I argued that Europe has never been a precisely delimited space or notion, and the historical memory of the political and economic division of the Cold War period, as well as the discursive construction of Eastern Europe as backwards, account for such ambiguity. However, these historical divisions have further effects from the perspective of the “global hierarchies of womanhood,” (Parreñas 2000) due to the fact that Polish women have been part of the European domestic work sector for more than two decades (Morokvasic 1991, Coyle 2007), as it constituted a strategy of resistance to the negative effects of the transition to capitalism and democracy. These “counter geographies of globalization”(Sassen 2003) have been most recently made more complex with the expansion of the boundaries of European citizenship, and the shift which occurred when some Central and Eastern Europeans former migrants became mobile European citizens. Although the EU accession and the acquisition of the status of EU citizens, changed in important ways the situation of Polish women, they continue to emigrate as domestic workers for other European women, as evidenced in the situation of the younger women who participated in this case study. Therefore, the largely publicized positive economic effects of the EU accession are not yet recognizable, as the majority of interviewees in this study choose to remain abroad and continue working as domestic workers, rather than come back to Poland. Furthermore, such decision has been made easier after 2004 due to the legal facilities which the status of European citizen entails.

In my analysis, the effects of the EU citizenship have been articulated not only with issues of labor mobility and economic privilege, but also with the category of European ethnicity. Here the focus was on the issue of whiteness and Catholic origins as a source of privilege: both in terms of positive perceptions in the Spanish society –the perceived cultural proximity which is the basis for preference in terms of employment–;

as well as in terms of the self-perceptions of the participants of this study. Polish women's discourse on ethnicity inscribes itself in the broader racial hierarchies present in the societies of Europe, where white identities remain the unspoken norm and a source of advantage. It is also of scholarly interest to note that, in relation to other Central and Eastern Europeans, the participants of the study perceive their position rather favorably within a hierarchy where the main source of differentiation is nationality: those more far away east are considered to be located lower on such a hierarchical scale.

The main conclusion which might be drawn from this study, is that the positionality of the new European citizens remains quite complex. In the specific case of Polish domestic workers, in the context of a strongly racialized migrant community, their whiteness, perceived cultural proximity and (still ambiguous) belonging to Europe position them closer to the local society and constitute a basis for preference on the labor market. On the other hand, in economic and social terms, their predominant employment in the migrant niche of domestic workers locates them closer to other non-EU migrant women present in Spain. Therefore, the research developed in this thesis indicates the ways in which the shifting and unstable borders and boundaries of contemporary Europe influence the lives of its citizens. The construction of European citizenship intersects with other social processes and hierarchies which together define the dynamic positionalities of new and old European citizens.

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Appendix

Questionnaire used for the interviews

(Main questions and possible follow-up questions; the original questionnaire was prepared in Polish)

Could you describe your arrival in Spain?

Follow up questions:

- When did you first come to Spain?
- What was the main motivation for leaving Poland?
- What was your main motivation/reason for choosing Spain as your destination? And this particular region/city?
- Did you make use of personal networks (friends, family) or intermediaries?

Could you describe your employment situation?

Follow up questions:

- Could you describe your previous jobs?
- Do you have an official work contract?
- Are you satisfied with your job?
- Do you think of changing your job? (if yes: why? when? For what kind of job?)

Can you describe the situation of Polish women in terms of employment possibilities in Spain?

- Did the situation meet your expectations?
- Do you think being a woman influences your employment possibilities?
- Do you think being Polish influences your employment possibilities?
- Did you notice any change in your work possibilities after the opening of the labor market to Poles in 2006?
- Did you notice any change in your work possibilities due to the economic crisis?

How did the change of status from migrant worker to European Citizen influence your situation?

Follow up questions:

- What was your legal situation upon arrival?
- Did you experience difficulties in obtaining work permit, residence permit, etc?

- How does being European Citizen influence your situation? Could you give concrete examples?
- Do you think your situation would be different before 2004?

What does becoming a European Citizen mean to you personally?

- Could you think of concrete examples of how the change of status from migrant worker to European Citizen is manifested?
- Do you feel European?

How do you think Poles are perceived in the Spanish society? Can you give examples of opinions?

Follow up questions:

- Examples of general opinions concerning Poles you came across (positive or negative)?
- Are Poles visible in the Spanish media?
- Have you come across any specific opinions concerning Polish workers?
- Have you come across any specific opinions concerning Polish women? And Central/Eastern European women in general? (give examples)

How would you describe the situation Polish workers in comparison with other nationalities of migrants?

- Can you describe the attitude towards foreigners in the Spanish society?
- Is there a difference in attitude towards the nationals of different countries, or different national groups?
- How are the Central and Eastern European nationals perceived in general? What are the differences between national groups?

What are the differences, if any, in the situation of Polish women and men in Spain?

Follow up questions:

- Work possibilities?
- Reception in society?
- Differences in attitudes?

Do you have personal contact with other nationalities?

- Do you feel more identified with the situation of other non-European nationals in Spain, other European nationals or the Spanish citizens (in terms of cultural proximity, social interaction, position on the labor market)
- In Spain, do you mainly maintain contact with other Poles, other nationalities, or Spanish citizens?

Could you describe your situation in terms of commonalities/differences with other members of the Spanish society?

Follow up questions:

- Are you more aware of the characteristic which mark you of Central European origin?
- Are you Catholic? If yes, do you think it makes it easier to integrate in the Spanish society?
- What is your level of the Spanish language? Did you learn it prior to your arrival? Do you get comments on your accent from Spaniards?

Do you plan to stay in Spain?

Follow up questions:

- If yes, why? If not, why? When do you plan to leave? Do you plan to change the country of residence for another foreign country or go back to Poland?
- Does the entrance of Poland in the EU influence this decision?