

GRITIM-UPF Research in Progress Session

Tuesday, May 20th, 2014

12.30-14.00

Room 40.039

1. How Institutional Contexts Matter. Experiences of Precariousness and Capability among Migrant Domestic Workers in Stockholm and Barcelona

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Abstract

The private markets for care/domestic services have expanded across Europe over the past decade, simultaneous to the emergence of a bottom layer of (female) migrant workers. This paper argues that the work conditions in this sector represent greater similarities between two very different countries, and that this in turn reflects the gradual acceptance of a precarization of the labor market that is particularly striking in an advanced welfare state as Sweden. Simultaneous to this development, however, it also becomes clear that institutional contexts matter. The work and life conditions of individual migrants are still largely shaped by contextual features as national migration policies, the granting or denial of social rights to undocumented migrants, and the social mobility on the labor market. This paper is based upon 60 in-depth interviews with female migrant domestic workers and 9 stakeholders in Stockholm and Barcelona. The experiences of migrant workers in Stockholm and Barcelona reflect how different institutional contexts shape their strategies and opportunities to fulfill their migration project and improve their life situation, parallel to their position on labor markets where exploitative conditions are frequent.

2. Strategic combats in the policy field of inner-European mobility from Spain

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Abstract

This contribution offers insights into the constraints of the inner-European mobility of skilled labour and opportunities created by adaptation strategies of migrants, political, economic and educational institutions drawn from the example of (highly-) skilled Spaniards migrating to Germany and the United Kingdom. Recently, the European Union aims to increase its competitiveness inter alia by improving mobility and lifelong learning since the formalisation of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, which is now followed by the programme EU2020 (Ette et al. 2013). Nevertheless, due to different institutional frameworks in the member states and diverging labour markets, there are informal barriers and discriminating regulations. In order to benefit from the common labour market, not only policies on migration and mobility have to be adapted, but also labour market regulations as well as educational systems on national level. Applying the approach of Fligstein and MacAdam (2011), power struggles in the strategic action field (SAF) of labour migration policy in and between the emigration country Spain and the immigration countries Germany and the United Kingdom are analysed. Literature review, qualitative interviews, participating observations, and secondary analysis of quantitative data, reveal new insights into individual and institutional adjustments, which drive the policy of mobility in Spain.

While German companies are recruiting (highly-) skilled Spaniards to reduce its demographic crisis, Spaniards are looking for jobs in Germany to escape the economic crisis in Spain. In both countries national and regional migration policies have to be adapted, job profiles have to be reconsidered as well as programmes and practices of education and training in universities and companies. Adaptation strategies are developed in the interactions between politicians, public services, companies, consultancies, labour unions and different kind of educational institutions. The case study points out barriers in the Common European labour market and exemplifies possibilities to overcome them.