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The socio-economic role of domestic service
as a factor of European identity

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Conclusion

**Domestic service
and European identity**

by Raffaella SARTI

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Domestic service and European identity

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The main purpose of the “Servant Project” has been to create an arena where specialists from different disciplines – historians, demographers, sociologists, anthropologists, jurists, etc. – could meet and exchange information on domestic service both in past and present times, in order to pinpoint the long term history of this activity that is today at the crossroad of important themes for the European Union such as migration, citizenship, gender inequalities, informal work, unemployment, the relationship between the family and the state, etc. A major hypothesis to be tested was that domestic service played and still plays an important role in the formation of the European identity. Moreover, we were convinced that focussing on domestic service and its history would allow us to understand some crucial features of the ongoing processes and provide policy makers with vital information for enacting policies aimed at greater social justice and welfare.

In this Conclusion, I will try to summarize and discuss the main results relating to European identity as well as private and public services, welfare and employment that have emerged from the work we have done within the “Servant Project”, placing them in the wider framework of current research on domestic service.

¹ I have reduced to the minimum bibliographical references, mainly referring, where possible, to the papers presented at the seminars organized within the Servant Project. For further references see, besides the final bibliography of this rapport, the website www.uniurb.it/Servantproject/

I will focus on the role of domestic service in the formation of European customs, values and features, both past and present; moreover, I will supply the reader with some quantitative data on the long term evolution of domestic service and its role in contemporary Europe, concentrating in particular on the relationships between public services and private modes of housework and care as well as informal labour and unemployment.

Domestic service is a quite difficult research theme, both for scholars focusing on past times and for researchers analysing the present. This is mainly due to the ambiguity of the concept of the domestic servant or domestic worker. This ambiguity has, in turn, a lot to do with the wide range of reasons that might have convinced, and still may convince, someone to hire, or become, a domestic servant or a domestic worker (cf. *Scientific description* Chapters II.1. and III.1.).

Defining European identity is even more difficult and I will not try to do this here. However, I do not consider European identity as a static set of elements but rather as a cultural construction that changes over time. Conflicts among different actors (individuals, groups, nations, etc.) are particularly relevant to explain and understand the reasons for and “direction” of this change. From this perspective, it is crucial to discover the *specific* role and contribution of different actors. In the next pages, I will focus on the domestic workers’ role and (direct or indirect) contribution to the formation of European-ness as well as values and features recognized as European, both in past and present times. I will mainly focus on culture, values, power and social change, but I will not completely ignore other themes, first of all the social and economic role of domestic workers and their importance in relation to demographic trends.

1. Domestic service and circulation of cultures

1.1. Introduction

Some reasons for hiring a domestic worker are common to past and present societies, such as the need for work, help or care and the desire (or the social “necessity”) of displaying status and wealth, while others – if we limit our analysis to Western societies – are peculiar to past centuries, such as the wish, or the social obligation, to become the master and patron of people from inferior social groups (McCracken 1983), and the willingness or the interest in welcoming a poor relative, a destitute child, an orphan, a widow, etc. (for instance Prochaska 1981; Da Molin 1990, 2002; Miscali 2005; Hantzaroula 2005b).

People entered, and enter, into domestic service not only to find a job, but also for many other different reasons. Some people were simply obliged to enter service, as servants or even as slaves². Unfortunately, even today there are “modern slaves” who are forced to serve. Yet there are several differences between past and present slavery. Obviously, a major difference is that in past times masters had legal rights over their slaves, while today legal slavery has been abolished all over the world. Moreover, generally, modern domestic servants don’t turn themselves into so-called modern slaves because they are forced to *start* service, as it was the case in the past, but because they are not free to *quit* service³.

In past centuries European children might (and their non-Western counterparts still may) be sent out into service by their families to reduce the number of mouths to feed (Wall 2005; Hantzaroula 2005b; Anderson 2005, etc.). Sending out someone as a servant could also be a way to take away from the family an undesirable person, a stepchild perhaps. At the same time, finding a workplace as a servant could be a good solution for orphans (Mayew 1991), to the extent that orphanages, foundling hospitals and parish or urban authorities providing for the poor placed children in service⁴. Other persons without a family, such as widows, might consider working as a servant a suitable way to find a house and a living. In this sense domestic service could be a kind of “refuge” for people without a (supporting) family (Arru 1990; Da Molin 1990, 2002, etc.).

Among these people we may also list (some kind of) migrants. Actually, this reason may still be valid today because for migrants, particularly for international migrants without a visa, an employment as a live-in domestic worker may guarantee not only a wage but also a roof and a workplace in a space (i.e. the private household) where there is little or no control by the police and other authorities, with all the advantages and the risks of exploitation that this implies (Lutz 2003, 2004; Lutz & Schwalgin 2005 and *Scientific description* Chapters III.3. and V.3.6.). In some cases

2 In Europe there were persons legally enslaved until the 19th century. On slavery in Europe see Bono 1999; Martín Casares 2000, 2005; Fiume 2001; Stella 2000; Sarti 2001b, 2005b; Peabody 1996; Steadman 2002a and *Scientific description* Chapter II.1.4. Within the Servant Project also papers of enslaved or pawned labour in Extra-European countries were presented, see Moosvi 2005 and Nagata 2005.

3 “The Parliamentary Assembly is dismayed that slavery continues to exist in Europe in the twenty-first century. Although, officially, slavery was abolished over 150 years ago, thousands of people are still held as slaves in Europe, treated as objects, humiliated and abused. Modern slaves, like their counterparts of old, are forced to work (through mental or physical threat) with no or little financial reward. They are physically constrained or have other limits placed on their freedom of movement and are treated in a degrading and inhumane manner” (European Council 2004). Anderson 1993; Torrès 1996; Bales 1999; Arlacchi 1999; Zarembka 2003; Gaburro 2004; www.antislavery.org; www.esclavagemoderne.org; see also *Scientific description* Chapter V.3.6.

4 Prochaska 1981; Lombardi & Reggiani 1990; Krausman Ben-Amos 1991, 1994; Sharpe 1991; Steinfeld 1991; Rahikainen 2002; Hantzaroula 2005b, etc.

domestic service may even represent (almost) the only channel to legally enter a country or to legalize one's position⁵.

A consequence of the variety of people who went into service – and the differing reasons for hiring a servant and entering service – was that remuneration for service could vary greatly: members of the top ranks of the servant hierarchy often earned high wages and were highly respectable people, while others domestics only got board and lodging (Sarasúa 1994, 2005). In regard to this we cannot forget that even today domestic labour may be performed (almost) without a salary in return for room and board. In many European countries there is an increasing number of “au-pairs” who work in exchange for accommodation, food and pocket money (Blackett 2000, 2005; Lutz & Schwalgin 2005; Widding Isaksen 2005). Au pairs are “not constructed as a worker, and legally can work only a certain number of hours per week”. They are “not covered by regular social security”. Au pairs are “not classed as workers, and legally can work only a certain number of hours per week”. They are “not covered by regular social security”. Therefore, they are often “hidden” and exploited domestic servants who primarily do housework and babysitting, while they should enter a foreign country above all to visit it and study its language (Anderson 2000, p. 24)⁶.

1.2. Serving and learning

Actually, learning a foreign language could be an important reason for entering domestic service even in the past. In Switzerland, for instance, as shown by Anne-Lise Head-König in the paper she presented at the Oslo seminar (2002), the so-called “volontariat-system”, which was still very common in the first decades of the 20th century, was rooted in a tradition of educational

5 This has been the case of Italy in the early 1990s, see Andall 2003; Alemani 2004; Sarti 2004. On Britain see Cox 1999. During the Second World War, for instance, many Jewish women who migrated to Britain to escape the Nazi's prosecution found a job as refugee domestic workers (domestic service visas were the primary avenue of entry (Kushner 1988, 1989).

6 Significantly enough, recently the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council adopted a recommendation on *Domestic slavery: servitude, au pairs and “mail-order brides”* (1663/2004) recommending that the Committee of Ministers: “a. issue guidelines in the form of a Committee of Ministers’ recommendation to member states, which would ensure that the distinctive status of au pairs (neither students nor workers) is recognised and safeguarded, their working conditions and social cover are fixed and that the au pair industry is appropriately regulated at national and international level; b. recommend government regulation of the au pair placement industry, through the creation of a system of accreditation, by virtue of which agencies that commit themselves to certain minimum standards – such as charging reasonable fees, ensuring au pairs enter into a legally binding contract with their employers which clearly states rights, responsibilities and duties and providing emergency help in cases of difficulty – would see visa applications put forward on their behalf validated automatically. Accredited agencies should also be committed to doing background checks on both the prospective au pair and the prospective host family to ensure that they do not have criminal convictions, for example for sexual or child abuse; c. ensure regular monitoring by appropriate authorities of the agencies accredited under the “accreditation” system referred to in sub-paragraph b above”.

exchanges between the Swiss-German speaking and the French-speaking parts of the country. This tradition developed from the 17th century and implied a stay in the other part of the country mainly to learn the language. Similar exchanges were also common between groups speaking different languages within the Hapsburg Empire⁷. In other words, servant mobility contributed to create Europeans who spoke more than one European language. Foreign languages were, however, only one of the many things that a youngster could learn through service.

Indeed, before the spreading of the school system, domestic service represented a major channel for the transmission of knowledge and expertise from one generation to the other. In this sense it really represented an important factor of European identity. In fact, from a formal point of view servants and apprenticeship were different. Servants were paid for their work, while apprentices generally were not. Instead, in several contexts apprentices or their parents paid the master (or more rarely the mistress) for his/her teaching. This was the case in medieval Paris and in seventeenth century England, while sources on several late medieval and early modern Italian cities do not mention any payment for the teaching (Sarti 2005a, with further references). Moreover, in seventeenth century England “apprenticeship contracts were signed for a long period of seven or eight years, compared with the annual contracts in farm service” (Krausman Ben-Amos 1988, p. 45). Yet, both servants and apprentices generally lived in the master’s house, were subject to his authority and had to obey and serve him. Besides, as mentioned, some servants only worked for board and lodging, while apprentices might perform menial duties in the master’s house. As a consequence, in practice it could be very difficult, or even impossible, to clearly distinguish between apprentices and servants, and in any case the terms used to define them servants were often the same and both domestic service and apprenticeship were considered as a type of service⁸. Apprenticeship was not limited to manual crafts, but also involved mercantile and/or prestigious trades. In other words, also young people who aimed to become merchants, shopkeepers, etc. often lived with the persons in charge to teach them the necessary skills for their future employment, even being sometimes sent out to tutors to learn particular skills (as arithmetic, geometry, foreign languages, etc. Krausman-Ben Amos 1988, p. 47).

7 I am grateful for this information to Ludmila Fialová and Tamás Faragó. See also Claus Gatterer, *Schöne Welt, böse Leut. Kindheit in Südtirol*, Europa Verlag, Wien, 1982 (Ital. transl. *Bel paese, brutta gente. Romanzo autobiografico dentro le tensioni di una regione europea di confine*, Praxis, Bolzano, 1989), for servant exchanges between the German speaking and the Italian speaking parts of the Empire.

8 Hajnal 1983; Laslett 1983, 1988; Krausman Ben-Amos 1988, 1991, 1994; Steinfeld 1991; Marcello 1993; Fauve-Chamoux & Fialová (eds.) 1997; Meldrum 2000, pp. 25-33, etc.

However, the educational function of service was not limited to formal apprenticeship and teaching. From a moral and legal point of view, for instance, each master and mistress had to correct their servants and apprentices if and when they did not behave properly. Moreover, both Catholics and Protestants agreed that the head of the household should instruct the servants in religious matters (Müller-Staats 1987; Sarti 1991). Finally, even in recent times, domestic service was thought of as a fitting occupation for unmarried girls to learn housewifery (for instance Walter 2005)⁹.

Nor was the educational function of domestic service restricted to the lower or middle classes: a young noble could serve as a pageboy in an aristocratic family of a higher rank in order to learn good manners, to get patronage from the master, to be introduced to a network of important relationships (Gutton 1981; McCracken 1983; Sarti 1991, etc.). Consequently, many young people stopped working as servants when they finished their education, training or apprenticeship. This was the case not only in Europe (Cooper 2005b), but also in other parts of the world, such as in Japan (Nagata 2005): the educational function of domestic service was not peculiar to Europe. Nevertheless, the master/servant relationship was crucial for teaching and learning many of those skills and much of the knowledge that were peculiar to the European culture. As a consequence, European identity owes a lot to domestic service, and while studying how this culture circulated and, whilst circulating, was transformed, we cannot forget the role played by all those millions of anonymous masters who – more or less patiently – taught their skills and secrets to an army of curious or bored apprentices and servants, though we cannot forget that life-cycle service did not played overall the same role (cf. *Scientific description* Chapter II.1.3.)

With the development of the school as the main channel for the transmission of knowledge and skills from one generation to the other, domestic service lost most of its educational function (Ariès 1960, 1980), and increasingly became an alternative to education, i.e. the more theoretical education then more and more necessary for adult life, though still being considered useful to learn housewifery. Significantly enough, some of the authors who, about a century ago, analyzed the reasons of the so-called “servant question”, i.e. the difficulty of finding (good) servants, often also mentioned the development of compulsory education as a factor that reduced the offer of domestics (Reggiani 1992; Sarti 2001c, 2005d etc.).

9 Interestingly enough, in Bristol “by the 1600 and onwards (...) domestic service (...) replaced what was earlier described as ‘housewifery’, and it became the major training occupation for women” (Krausman Ben-Amos 1991, p. 233).

Today domestic workers may find it very difficult, because of lack of time, to attend school to accomplish or develop their education, what could improve their chances of finding better jobs. This difficulty may be particularly great for migrant domestic workers trying to improve their knowledge of the host country's language. Significantly enough, for domestic workers attending training courses on domestic chores may also be problematic (Andall 2000, pp. 174-186)¹⁰. Therefore, for many domestic workers their job represents a hindrance to education. Differences between past and present are now so wide that today highly educated middle class people from the Philippines, Eastern Europe, etc. are employed as domestic workers in Europe, the USA, etc., i.e. in a sector where their skills are often simply wasted (Parreñas 2001, 2005; Magat 2005; Shinozaki 2003; Andall & Sarti 2004, etc.)¹¹. This represents not only a loss of skills for the sending countries, but also a bad business for Europe as is unable to make the most of the skills and education of the migrants. Moreover, in this way Europe reveals a particularly exploitative and imperialistic attitude towards migrants that is in sharp contrasts to “the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity” on which the European Union is based (*European Constitution*, Part II, Preamble).

1.3. Age, gender, class and nationality

In formal apprenticeship it was implicit that a successful apprentice would become a master himself. Indeed, apprentices were often of the same social class as their masters. This was also frequently the case with domestic or agricultural life-cycle servants who left service while marrying, as previously mentioned (Cooper 2005b). Domestic servants of the same social class as their masters were thus less common in those areas where life-cycle service was practically unknown, such as Southern Italy (Da Molin 1990), Central and Southern Spain (Reher 1998; García Gonzales 1998) as well as Galicia (Dubert 1992, pp. 73-83). However, the development of the school as the main channel for the transmission of knowledge and skills contributed to make servants who came from (almost) the same social background as their masters increasingly uncommon. Indeed, over time middle and upper class servants almost disappeared, as well as lower class families employing a servant (Ariès 1980; Barbagli 1984; Cooper 2005b; Wall 2005, etc.). In

10 I am grateful Jacqueline Andall for stimulating comments on this point as well as on some other parts of this Conclusion.

11 In the past, upper servants were often highly educated, but they used their skills in their employment. Kamecka e Kuklo, for instance, mentioned in the paper they presented in Florence (2002) that Polish male servants often had books and pens for writing.

other words, domestic service typically became a job for lower class people, often migrants from rural areas, in middle and upper class (mainly urban) households (Davidoff & Hall 1987, p. 389; Sarti 1997b, 2004; Dubert 1999, 2001, pp. 273-319, etc.).

This proletarianization went hand in hand with feminization and ruralization of domestic staff. This complex transformation was due to many different reasons – one was the aforementioned development of the school – that affected (not necessarily at the same time) different kinds of domestic workers. Some of these factors led to the reduction or even the disappearance of some male members of the domestic staff. The externalization of several administrative and managerial functions once carried out in middle and upper class households and the development of bureaucracy, led, for instance, to the reduction or the disappearance of some kinds of upper servants such as bookkeepers, secretaries, etc. whose role was substituted by professionals, civil servants, bureaucrats, etc. Other male servants such as lackeys or sedan carriers disappeared because of the crises in the aristocratic way of life, and the introduction of taxes on servant keeping (see below) that mainly affected *male* servant keeping, while the development of new means of transportation made coachmen, stable grooms, etc. increasingly superfluous. On the other hand the increasing stigmatization of the servant condition (see below) reduced the number of people willing to be employed as servants, particularly among men. Moreover, with the industrialization and the development, in several rural areas, of a more capitalistic agriculture, many households lost part of their traditional economic functions, and this also reduced the need for “productive” servants, many of whom were males. At the same time, the new emphasis on the house as the “kingdom” of women, on domesticity and child rearing increased the demand for female servants, to which also contributed the growth of the middle classes that shared this view of the house and the family. Demographic growth, particularly of rural population, in several contexts implied the “expulsion” of surplus people, among which there was, in several contexts, a high proportion or even a majority of women. These women migrated towards the cities where they easily found jobs as live-in domestic workers, at a time when urban girls were increasingly unwilling to do this kind of job¹².

In most European countries the long-term “proletarianization” of domestic workers was finally reached in the 19th or at the beginning of the 20th centuries. Even though in past centuries long-distance and trans-national domestic workers were not unknown (for instance Sogner 2003, Moring 2005 for the early modern age), over centuries they became increasingly common as local and

12 It is impossible to give bibliographical references on these points, because I am summarizing (in a necessarily simplified way) the findings from several hundreds articles and books.

natives people were no longer willing to work in a backward sector such as domestic service, where working conditions did not improve at the same pace as in other sectors, or did not improve at all¹³. In other words, the supply of domestic workers in the European cities was made up by people coming from increasingly distant and less favoured areas. Yet this supply was generally considered inadequate, in both quality and quantity, particularly from the late 19th century, as we shall see.

Increasing inequalities on a global scale have recently implied a reversal of this long term pattern. Indeed, while the enlargement of the recruitment areas has continued and they commonly have, today, a trans-national and trans-continental dimension, a (partial) reversal of the aforementioned pattern of class and gender of domestic workers has occurred in recent times. Indeed, today domestic workers are not all proletarians: among them we also find highly educated and middle class people. Though a small minority, men are not uncommon (see below). In present times, the shocking income differences on a global scale make a job as domestic worker in Europe “attractive” (clearly because of lack of better chances) even to middle class people from poor/impoverished countries, despite the fact that working conditions in domestic service generally remain harsh¹⁴.

In contrast to the past, today foreign people willing to work as domestic workers in Europe are so abundant and salaries may be so low that even lower-class European people are likely to employ some kind of domestic help. As a consequence, we may find domestic workers who are much better educated than their employers, and who – in their home countries – were in a comparatively better social position than these latter. There are also migrant domestic workers who, in their home country, employ(ed) domestic workers (for instance Friese 1995; Russell Hochschild 2000a; Parreñas 2001; Alemani 2004, 2005a; Sarti 2004, etc.). These educated and middle class domestic workers experience a decline in their social status and an increase in their financial status in comparison with their position in their home country (“contradictory class mobility”, Parreñas 2000, pp. 150-198; Shinozaki 2003). Many of them accept being downwardly mobile abroad in order to keep or improve their living standards (or those of their family) in the home country.

Their existence represents a clear break with the well established pattern according to which domestic workers employed in Europe were, with few exceptions, such as the highly qualified

13 On trans-national migrants in the first half of the 20th century see for instance Perco 1984; Henkes 1998, 1995¹; Gubin 2001; Goetzinger 2001; Piette 2001; Head-König 2001, 2002; Morelli 2001.

14 Gottschall 2000; Parreñas 2001, 2005; Magat 2005; Shinozaki 2003, etc. see also *Scientific description* Chapter III.3.

British butlers and nannies (Cox 1999), lower class people (I have mentioned in previous pages the development of this pattern). However, in a broader perspective, they don't represent a completely new phenomenon (we have seen that in early modern times there were middle and even upper class domestics as well, and that they were likely to employ domestic staff). This clashes with our expectations and our representations of the "typical domestic workers", possibly making their lives in Europe even more difficult.

To conclude on this point with an oversimplification, we can say that in early modern times domestic service was a matter (widely) of age. In the 19th-20th century it evolved into a matter of (age), class and gender and, in the last few decades, into one of (class, gender and) nationality.

1.4. Domestic workers as cultural mediators

Before the school completely replaced the domestic service's "educational" function, that function might go too far, so to say, and produce results undesired by the ruling elites, as is demonstrated by the fact that moralists often denounced servants for aping their masters, thus confusing social ranks¹⁵. Yet in part a certain degree of "aping" was implicit in all those forms of domestic service in which the master also was the servant's teacher, i.e. in practice in each form of domestic service as long as all masters were supposed to give moral, religious, and practical advice and instructions to their servants as if they were their children.

Scholars were quick to recognize the consequences of this asymmetric relationship between masters and servants. As early as 1899 Thorstein Veblen considered "the class of domestic servants" "as one channel, and an important one, through which this transfusion of aristocratic views of life, and consequently more or less archaic traits of character goes on": in his view servants "have their notions of what is good and beautiful shaped by contact with the master class and carry the preconceptions so acquired back among their low-born equals"¹⁶. Half a century later Joseph J. Hecht (who quoted Veblen, among other authors) spoke of the 18th century English "servant class as a cultural nexus" that "linked the *élite* and the lower levels". Yet in contrast to

15 For instance Jean Cordier, *La Famille Saincte*, Bechet, Paris, 1666 (1644¹, Ital. transl., 1674-1686, 3 vols., vol. II, p. 86 and the anonymous text *La Madre Cristiana Instruita*, nella Reg. e camerale Stamp. di Chiaramonte, e Provenzano, Mess.[ina], 1732, p. 40. On the literature that, among others, exhorted domestics to be happy with their social position see Müller-Staats 1987; Sarti 1991; Casalini 1997, in part. pp. 127-142.

16 Veblen 1899, chapter 9, "The Conservation of Archaic Traits" (also available online, see <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/VEBLEN/chap09.html>).

Veblen he did not regard the servant class as an agent of social conservation but rather as “an important agent in the process of cultural change” (Hecht 1980, 1956¹, pp. 220-228). More recently Daniel Roche has shown, thanks to a thorough analysis of probate inventories, that 18th century servants possessed more books, elegant clothes and refined furniture than other members of the *peuple de Paris*, and has suggested that they were cultural mediators (*intermédiaires culturels*) between the upper and lower social strata (Roche 1978, 1981). In her influential essay on servant and wife in Victorian and Edwardian England, Leonore Davidoff wrote that some women “found their horizons widened by their experience of service” and possibly passed some of the new ideas they had learned “to their children along with ambitions for social advancement”: “it is even possible that there may be one of the sources of working-class conservatism”. Yet at the same time she also suggested that domestic servants could be agents of innovation: “servants as ‘culture carriers’ is an intriguing idea. It is particularly important in the areas of private life, e.g. the adoption of ideal family size” (Davidoff 1974, p. 421, 428). A few years later Theresa McBride (1978, p. 55) wrote that “many servants at least found their personal horizons widened by the exposure to the very different style of life of the middle class”. Several former domestic workers interviewed some years ago by a group of Italian oral historians confirmed that they had learned more refined manners and new ideas from the masters and their environment. Furthermore, they maintained that domestic workers brought novelties from the cities to their villages, thus stimulating other girls to leave in order to enter domestic service (Leoni *et alii* 1980-1981; Sarti 2004, pp. 39-40). Similarly, as reported by Margaret Lynch-Brennan (2005), “modern scholars of Irish immigration agree that domestic service provided an acculturating experience for Irish domestics” employed in the USA. And this acculturation, by the way, “facilitated the rise of the Irish into the American middle class”.

As previously mentioned, consumption patterns of 18th century Parisian servants were more fashionable than those of other members of the *peuple de Paris*, while according to the Italian women we referred to above, domestic workers were much more elegant than the girls who had not moved from their villages. Today, according to Margaret Magat (2005), “Filipino domestics in Italy bring their consumption habits to a new level”. They dress with haute couture clothes, send home regular *balikbayan* (literally “coming home”) boxes filled with every kind of commodities and when they return to the Philippines, take presents and organize parties, showing off their new wealth. This stimulates further migration, because other Filipinos, besides wishing to help their families, aspire “to keep up with the new levels of consumption”. Migrants employed in other sectors may behave similarly. Yet both in past and present times domestic workers were/are

particularly well-placed to observe and possibly learn the everyday-life customs and class habits of their employers and/or of the country where they work(ed). As we shall see, this does not mean, however, that they were/are necessarily interested in “aping” their masters, nor that they passively adopt(ed) the employers’ values, habitudes and fashions.

In short domestic service for centuries has represented a major channel not only for the transmission of knowledge and expertise from one generation to the other, but also for the circulation of cultures between social classes and, because of servant migration, between different geographical areas. This latter feature still seems true today. Thus, the development of European culture owes a lot to domestic service. Whether domestic service also generally represented a channel for upward social mobility is instead more controversial, as we shall see. In any case those interested in the conservation of the traditional social hierarchies had to strike a difficult balance between the need to make servants familiar with the customs, habits and manners of their masters in order to serve them well and the fear of an “excessive” acculturation of domestic staff that would lead to the closing of the social gap between master and servant, as it was the case in the film *The servant* by Joseph Losey analyzed by Andreas Marklund (2001), Karen Diehl (2002) and Esther Fischer (2005). Several ways were found out to reach the goal of keeping domestic servants “in their place”, involving dress (liveries, apron), food¹⁷, spatial segregation, language (use of family name, imposition of a new name, asymmetric use of pronouns and allocutive forms, jokes, etc.)¹⁸, as well as explicit moral teaching through sermons, manuals and novels (Müller-Staats 1987; Sarti 1991, 1994, 2001a, 2001c, 2004; Casalini 1997; Notari 1998, etc.).

17 In Italy, bread and wine “da famiglia” (i.e. for the family) indicated low quality bread and wine for domestic servants (Sarti 2002, p. 170; for the meaning of “famiglia” as servants see pp. 31-33 and this *Conclusion*, below). In early 19th century France, the bread “de domestique” was a kind of brown bread (while masters ate white bread), see Martin-Huan 1995, p. 25.

18 Guiral & Thuillier 1978; Schulte, 1978; Wierling 1987; Martin-Huan 1997; Meldrum 2000; Sarti 2002; Hantzaroula 2005a-b; Steedman 2002b; Lynch-Brennan 2005 etc.

1.5. The domestic worker's cultural power

Obviously the role of domestic servants in cultural circulation cannot be analyzed only by looking at the transmission of ideas, manners, etc. from the top to the bottom of the social ladder, from the city to the countryside or from the “centres” to the “peripheries” of the world, but has also to be considered in the opposite direction, i.e. in relation to the transmission from the servants to the masters. This theme, though not completely neglected, has until now received less attention¹⁹. Yet it is crucial, especially today, when a high percentage of domestic workers is made up of international migrants who inevitably bring something of their culture into the country and into the households where they work. This seems particularly important in general and in the culture of care, if we bear in mind that children and aged people in Western countries are presently often cared for by migrant domestic workers. Indeed, Western countries are today importing “love” and care, while “global care chains” are developing (Hochschild 2000a-b; Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2003; Parreñas 2001, 2005; Magat 2005; Widding Isaksen 2005, etc.).

Past writers, indeed, were highly conscious of the influence that domestics could have, particularly on children, and often saw this influence as a threat to the social prominence of the elites and as a source of contamination (Davidoff & Hall 1987, p. 394; Delpiano & Sarti forthcoming)²⁰. For centuries heads of families were urged to choose carefully their servants and to supervise them (and it would be interesting, for early modern times, to see whether these worries were more common in the Mediterranean area, where servants of the same social strata as the masters were – it seems – less common than in Northern and Central Europe). Yet in this case, too, striking a good balance could be difficult as long as the upper classes left their children alone with wet-nurses, nannies, governesses, tutors, and so on for hour on end (for instance Gathorne-Hardy 1972; McBride 1978; Delpiano & Sarti forthcoming, etc.).

Significantly the Catholic Church (particularly since the 1930s), elaborated a strategy to take advantage of the presence of maids in families, trying to convert them into “missionaries” of the gospel in its fight against the spreading of laicization: “Women servants can bring Christ and his

19 Engelsing 1978, 1973¹; Fairchilds 1984, pp. 111-119; Grendi 1986; Corrà 1984; Hardach-Pinke 1993; Stoler 1997, 2002; Petzen 2001, 2002; Magat 2005; Delpiano & Sarti forthcoming, etc.

20 I am focusing here on cultural contamination, yet people were also afraid because of the transmission of diseases, such as tuberculosis and syphilis, particularly, it seems, in the 19th century (McBride 1976, p. 26) , though also in earlier times doctors were concerned that servants could infect the master's children (Pech forthcoming).

spirit into environments from which Christ has been expelled”, wrote an Italian bishop in 1935, expressing an idea that was spreading among the Catholics (Sarti 2004). However this approach had ancient roots. In early modern times, and even in the 19th century, for instance, there were Catholic women in service with Jewish families, even though in theory they shouldn’t have been (according to the 1555 encyclical *Cum nimis absurdum*, which represented an important negative turning point in the “ghettoization” of Jews, Jews were not allowed to have Christian employees). Sometimes these women (often encouraged by priests) exploited their privileged position to christen Jewish children by simply throwing some water on their bodies and saying the words “I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”. When this was the case, the Catholic authorities generally took the baptized child away from his/her family in order to bring him/her up in a Catholic environment, as in the famous case of Edgardo Mortara, who was kidnapped by the Pope in 1858 at the age of six and never went back to his family (Kertzer 1997; see also Galasso 2002; Caffiero 2004).

Among certain Catholics the idea that domestic workers could and should spread the Catholic religion was destined to survive for a long time. In 1959, a century after the kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara, Father Erminio Crippa, a conservative activist within Italian Catholic domestic worker associations, wrote in his book *La tua morale professionale (Your professional morality)*, addressed to domestic workers, that they should let their faith be known, if they worked in a non Catholic household, and should baptize newborn babies in danger of dying (Crippa 1959, p. 88). He repeated exactly the same words in the second edition of the book, published in 1968, where he stressed even more clearly that “Christian domestic workers” had the “mission of ambassadors of the Church” and had the duty to “spread the faith” in the environment where they worked (Crippa 1968, pp. 35-45).

Even today some priests, according to Magat (2005), “see Filipinos in Italy as ‘evangelizers’ for Jesus. This is because Filipinas have access to the private sphere of Italian families and they wield influence over the child, and consequently over their employers. Several women have said that when they take the children to church, sometimes the parents follow”. Magat and Parreñas maintain that some Filipina women really consider themselves as the “new apostles of Christ”. We need more information on the actual role played by migrant domestic workers in the spreading of Catholic faith and religious values. It is an interesting issue, particularly now that discussion on the so-called “Christian roots of Europe” is so lively, since the Catholic religion was introduced into the Philippines by Spanish colonizers, and it is now possibly being re-exported to Europe – though with

a different power – by people from former colonized countries. However, while in the past the Catholic Church considered the masters on the one hand and the colonizers on the other as the “evangelizers” (of the servants, natives), in more recent times domestics and Extra-European people were/are seen as potential missionaries into the families of their de-Christianized employers (Magat 2005; Sarti 1994, 2001a)²¹. Significantly enough, Catholic groups are very active in recruiting foreign domestic workers to be employed in Europe from Catholic areas as the Philippines or South-America (Andall 2000, 2003, pp. 52-53 and 2004; Andall & Sarti 2004; Lutz & Erel 2002; Scrinzi 2004a-b).

Traditionally Catholics have been particularly concerned with domestic workers in several European and non-European countries (Italy, Spain, France, Belgium, the Philippines, South-American countries, etc., see Sarti, 1994, 2001a-c, 2004; Andall 2000, 2004; Muñoz Ruiz 2005; Martin-Huan 1997; Vanderpelen 2001; Gill 1994, etc.). Significantly enough, also the *European Parliament resolution on regulating domestic help in the informal sector (2000/2021(INI))* was adopted after the report by the Catholic Euro MP Miet Smet (Smet 2000). The Catholic doctrine has thus a certain influence on this sector. Yet Catholics do not have a common shared view on domestic service. Today many refuse the conservative approach that considers it as a means of “sanctification” through obedience, service and sacrifice particularly suited for (lower class and/or migrant) women, because it is performed within a family²². This has probably contributed to making it difficult to consider domestic service as a real job, though Catholics also have promoted, quite contradictorily, the professionalization of domestic workers. However, the Catholic influence should not be overemphasized. Today there is a wide concern about this sector in many different ideological areas, and many migrant domestic workers are not at all Catholic.

Besides religion, and even more than religion, language is another legacy of colonialism. Pei-Chia Lan (2003, p. 138) maintained, referring not to the Spanish, but to the Americans who colonized the Philippines for half a century, that “the cultural and linguistic heritage of their colonizers ironically becomes the most valuable human resource for Filipino/a workers to escape their stagnant economy and poverty in the post-independence era”²³. Indeed, due to the American colonial rule, English is still today the dominant language in official documents and curriculum

21 Yet still in 1979 the aforementioned Father Crippa, possibly expressing a shared view, saw foreign domestics workers employed in Italy as people to be evangelized rather than as evangelizers (Crippa 1979, p. 48).

22 The Papal Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) maintained that women had been destined by the nature to housework, and in later times several other papal documents stressed this point.

23 I am grateful to Pei-Chia Lan for her bibliographical suggestions on this point.

materials. This often gives today Filipino/a domestic workers an advantage in the labour market: “in East Asia, an English-speaking *amah* or domestic servant is an asset to help with the education of the children, which clearly favours the Filipina as the servant of choice” (Skeldon 1997). There is some evidence that English fluency is also appreciated by some European families (Andall 2000, p. 169; Chell-Robinson 2000; Magat 2005). In other words, “thanks” to the fact that they have been colonized by the Americans and consequently know English, Filipina/o domestic workers are particularly appreciated and, through their work, may contribute to English linguistic imperialism, a double-face phenomenon, that on the one hand is creating a worldwide common language, thus making communication easier, but, on the other, is impoverishing the English itself and marginalizing people who does not speak it. In this way, as in a circular dance, quite paradoxically, Filipina/os, who had been colonized by the Americans (who had been in turn colonized by the British) may contribute to the spreading of English in Europe.

Fluency in English though, can put Filipina domestic workers in a quite ambiguous position. In Taiwan, for instance, “as English has become a vital tool for the Taiwanese middle class to pursue upward mobility in the global economy”, hiring a well-educated English-speaking Filipina maid has the side benefit that she can teach the employer’s children English (and validate the employer’s status). “However, the mix-up of “maid” and “tutor” contains an intrinsic contradiction. Highly educated workers may even manoeuvre their linguistic capacity to challenge the supremacy of those Taiwanese employers who have no college degree or cannot speak fluent English” and this has possibly led, in more recent years, to a certain preference – especially by employers who feel particularly insecure with their English – for Indonesian domestic workers who speak little English and are considered more docile (Lan 2003, p. 139, 152, 156). Fluency in English does not always represents an advantage in the labour market and an economic asset (Lorente & Tupas 2002).

The position of 19th and early 20th century European governesses who were in the service of native families in the colonies or in other non-European countries was similar, or perhaps even more complex. They did not only frequently suffer from a status incongruence due to the fact that they often were members of impoverished middle class families forced into service to find a means of subsistence, as it was often the case with governesses in their home countries (Peterson 1973). They also found themselves in the complex position of being subject members of the households while representing the dominant Western imperialistic nations whose culture they were supposed to teach to the master’s children (Petzen 2001, 2002). In other words, they were agents of the diffusion of Western European languages, values and attitudes in the colonized countries or in countries

under Western European influence. Anna Leonowens, for six years governess at the Court of the King of Siam, is probably the best known of these “civilizing” women, though her books on her Siamese experience are highly controversial²⁴. Significantly enough, however, with the development of nationalistic movements and a nationalistic public opinion and of in some cases (as in the Ottoman Empire) European governesses became the target of criticism (Petzen 2001, 2002)²⁵.

On the other hand, in the colonies native domestic servants were seen as a threatening danger for the European identity of the colonizers’ they served, particularly that of the colonizers’ children who grew up in the colonies. In the Dutch Indies, for instance, “Javanese nursemaids could affect the very formation of a child’s racial and national character (...) such contact could undermine their acquisition of what it took to operate in a proper European milieu and therefore their eligibility to be considered European at all” (Stoler 1997, p. 78; see also Stoler 2002).

Domestic service, therefore, was at the very core of European colonialism and imperialism. European governesses were heavily involved in the “export” of European values and attitudes to extra-Europeans countries and in the alleged civilizing mission of the Europeans. At the same time the colonizers were required to defend themselves from the contaminating influence of their native domestic servants that was likely to sneakily undermine their identity as true civilized Europeans. At the same time servants (and slaves) were brought to Europe from the colonies, often also as status symbols (Hecht 1954; Peabody 1996; Steedman 2002a; Sarti 2005b etc.).

Within Europe, at least from the 17th century onwards, there were governesses who found a job abroad and were in charge of teaching their own language to the children they were in charge of. In an age when French was becoming the common international language, the first governesses employed abroad were probably the French, who thus contributed to creating a common European culture. Yet, significantly enough, even within Europe nationalistic criticism addressed the role of governesses: as early as 1698 the Pietist German author August Hermann Francke accused the French governesses of encouraging vanity of the young, teaching them to *plaire au monde* and transmitting to them only a superficial culture. Criticism against them grew as long as German nationalism developed and complaints multiplied that children educated by French governesses

24 Anna Leonowens published two books based on her experience at the court, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (1870) and *The Romance of the Harem* (1872). Her books inspired the novel *Anna and the King of Siam* by Margaret Landon (1944), on which are based the musical and the film *The King and I*.

25 On domestic service in Turkey at present times see Özyegin 2001, 2003, 2005, with further references.

were not able to write or even speak German correctly, that they lost their “original” German character and so on (Hardach-Pinke 1993, pp. 106-115).

In summary, members of the domestic staff could play a crucial role in the formation of the identity of the children they care(d) for as far as concerns their sense of belonging to not only to a certain class, as we shall see, but also to a certain nation, culture and religion was concerned. On the one hand domestic workers contribute(d) to the circulation of cultures but, on the other, they might/may be seen (though often in a quite contradictory way) as contaminating agents. They were/are thus likely to provoke defensive reactions from employers and to become the target of criticism.

1.6. Agency

Fears of the bad influence that governesses could have reveal that in the past domestic workers were not seen as passive individuals. Recent research into the past and the present correctly emphasizes the agency of domestics (Arrizabalaga 2003; Ewan 2005; Moring 2005, Vikström 2005a-b; Magat 2005; Parreñas 2005, etc.): “migrant domestic workers should not be seen as mere victims or marionettes driven by the circumstances of globalisation but rather as self-consciously acting subjects”, maintain for instance Lutz and Schwalgin (2005). Indeed they cannot be seen as people simply “aping” their masters, as static bearers of an “original” national or “ethnic” culture or as passive instruments operated by such powerful groups as the clergy and the imperialist elites either. In this sense, they played and play an important role in the circulation of culture by way of appropriating and actively manipulating it (for ex. Scrinzi 2004b). Take for instance the case of Filipina women who work in Italy analyzed by Magat (2005). They are not simply aping the Italian attitude towards material culture and fashion: their consumerism, according to several observers, is generally stronger than that of the Italians. Indeed migrant Filipina/o domestic workers who live in Italy were often middle class people in the Philippines. So they use material goods to boost their self-esteem in a context where it is threatened and to transcend their present lower status (i.e. that of domestics). At the same time they distinguish themselves from other migrants, actively constructing a positive Filipino ethnic and national identity in the host country. Moreover, as members of trans-national families they try to compensate for absence by sending or taking home abundant material goods that also are a symbol of their success as migrants (see also Parreñas 2003, 2005). However,

using consumerism as a “tool” to improve one’s self esteem and one’s status is obviously not peculiar to middle class Filipina/o domestic workers.

In summary, even though some Italian products may materially arrive in the Philippines thanks to migrant domestic workers, it would be misleading to maintain that Filipina/o domestic workers simply “ape” the Italian way of life or that of their employer. First, in the age of globalization many items and products are world-wide known (and possibly desired) because of advertisements, mass-media, etc. In other words, Filipina women who work in Italy may have desired Armani or Versace clothes even before arriving in Italy and/or independently from the clothes worn by their employers. Second, while *adopting* attitudes, values, and fashions from someone else, individuals generally *adapt* them to their own particular position (Sarti 2002, pp. 107-109 with further references). Finally, the current relationship between employer and domestic worker as well as the old one between master and servant appear as an arena of conflict and exchange between two individuals with a different power but a similar interest in negotiating and manipulating the situation (Arru 1995, 1997; Burgess 2001; Diehl 2001, 2002; Marklund 2001, etc.).

Obviously, emphasizing the servants’ agency does not mean overlooking the fact that in the past servants could be heavily exploited and humiliated (for instance Rahikainen 2002; Hantzaroula 2001, 2002, 2005a-b) or that today there are domestic workers who are mistreated and even experience a form of modern slavery²⁶.

2. Borders and conflicts

2.1. Conflicts in the “open” house: class and status

Households are still often represented as (quite) closed environments and as a folded up private sphere, particularly middle class households from the late 18th century onwards, even though scholars have increasingly criticized the public/private dichotomy, stressing that in everyday life it is impossible to distinguish neatly between the two (Sarti 2002, pp. 214-240, with further references). The history of domestic servants plays a central role in this debate, because – according to many historians – the privatization of families (parents and children) primarily occurred against

26 Anderson 1993; Torrès 1996; Bales 1999; Arlacchi 1999; Zarembka 2003; Pasleau & Schopp 2005b; www.antislavery.org; www.esclavagemoderne.org, etc.

servants through growing spatial segregation and other mechanisms (for instance Stone & Fawtier Stone 1986; Sarti 2002 with further references). I am in agreement with this view.

Nevertheless middle and upper class families – who wished to have servants – were/are forced to “open” themselves up and to give access to domestic workers who may/might be very different from them. In fact over time these were possibly *increasingly* different because of the reduction and then (in the 19th-20th century) the complete disappearance of the servants coming from a similar social class as the masters’, and the increasing percentage of migrants from relatively far away places among domestics²⁷. While speaking of an “open” house in relation to the households that employ(ed) domestic staff, I do not want to represent them as an open space without walls, but rather as a house with an open door through which “foreign” people enter(ed), a fact that had and has further consequences.

Indeed, in this case the apparent unity of the households was/is thus cut by a borderline: frontiers were/are not only outside, but also inside the family. Domestic service represented and still represents a frontline where people of different origin, social class, religion, race, got/get in touch. were/are brought together Yet this contact could and can be perceived as highly threatening. “If the servant has the primary task of caring for children up to adolescence, the ideal typical middle-class American character structure would be less likely to develop”, wrote David Chaplin in 1978 (p. 102).

Servants had/have therefore a very complicated function. They were/are useful because of their work. At the same time, employing domestic staff for centuries was often a requirement to be considered a member of the middle and upper classes. In early modern times this could be a formal requirement: in 18th century Bologna, Italy, for instance, people who aspired to become members of the city nobility had to employ servants who wore their liveries (Sarti 1999). Interestingly enough, during the French Revolution liveries were abolished together with hereditary nobility, aristocratic titles and coats of arms (19th June 1790) (Maza 1983, p. 311; Sarti 2002, p. 212). In other words, they were strictly associated with nobility, and were considered a component of a hierarchical society that had to be suppressed in order to establish a new society based on equality among

27 For instance McBride 1976; Walser 1986; Piette 2000; Dubert 2001; Wrag 2003; Vikström 2005a-b; Casalini, Salinari 2002; Salinari 2004, Sarti 2004, 2005c, etc.

individuals, i.e. in order to establish a principle that still represents one of the fundamentals of the European Union²⁸.

From this point of view, it is also interesting that in early modern Spain sumptuary measures were taken to limit the number of servants, “since the king feared competition from aristocrats, and the number of servants was a sign of opulence and power” (yet masters made their servants pass for relatives or *protégés*, and the Spanish aristocracy continued to have large staffs, Martín Casares 2005). In England a tax was introduced in 1777 on male domestics, considered as luxury items. A tax on servant employment was also introduced during the French Revolution and then “exported” by the French to several European countries that, in some cases, taxed masters for servant keeping during the whole of the 19th and many decades of the 20th century (e.g. Italy, where the tax was abolished as late as 1960²⁹) (Hecht 1980, pp. 33-34; Horn 1975, pp. 8-10; Sarti 1997; Schwarz 1999, etc.).

In summary, for centuries the fact of employing servants was often an important component of the middle and upper class identity. In early modern Europe and still in the 19th century, when large numbers of servants carried out productive tasks and servants could be found in poor families too, what made the difference was not simply the fact of keeping domestic staff: not all kinds of servants were inevitably “paraphernalia of gentility” (Higgs 1979, 1982). From this point of view their gender, “quality” and number were extremely important (Sarti 1999). Romano (1991, p. 676 and 1996, pp. 27-239), for instance, argues that in Venice new ideas about the purposes of servant keeping developed in the 16th century. While in earlier times a mercantile kind of servant keeping prevailed and masters mainly employed female servants to ensure efficiency in their households, from the 16th century onward they increasingly hired male domestics for display and as “the necessary accoutrements of a noble life-style” (Romano 1991, p. 676). This also increased antagonism and conflict between masters and servants. Significantly enough, the aforementioned taxes on servant keeping generally taxed masters only (or more heavily) for keeping *men* servants.

28 European Constitution, Preamble: “Drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law...”; Part II, Preamble: “Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice”.

29 Law 16 September 1960, n° 1014, art. 15; the law became effective from the 1st January 1961.

O the contrary, in more recent times the simple fact of employing a servant became sufficient to distinguish social groups: in 19th century cities employing at least a maid of all work in several contexts became a signs of belonging to the middle class to the point that certain families made sacrifices in order to hire one and thus feel they belonged to a respectable social group (for instance Casalini 1997). “I must not do our housework, or carry my baby out, or I should lose cast” insisted the wife of an assistant surgeon in 1859 Britain, at a time, however, when servants were still present also in quite poor families (quoted in McBride 1978, p. 44). According to Claudia Alemani (2004), still in the 1950s there was an important difference between those Italian families who could afford a live-in domestic worker and those who only could afford a charwoman. On the contrary, in several European contexts hiring a domestic worker is today increasingly presented as a necessity rather than a luxury. We will discuss this point further on. However, if we assume that it is correct, we have to conclude that the current situation, from certain points of view, is more similar to early modern times than to a more recent past (Sarti 2004), when servant keeping allowed the existence of “idle” and “leisured” wives, mothers and daughters who were a crucial hallmark of belonging to the middle and upper-classes (for instance Walter 2005 about the English case).

Employing servants could be used by the middle and upper classes to construct their social identity only as long as servants stayed in their (inferior) place; so they should be kept at the “right” distance from their employers, even though they lived in close contact with them. As previously mentioned, there could be different strategies to reach this goal might be diverse. Possibly, as suggested by Tocqueville, they became harsher as long as the idea spread that all human beings are equal, because this led the elimination of the reassuring idea that social hierarchies were due to intrinsic differences among individuals³⁰. Spatial segregation was one of these strategies, while others had to do with dress, food, language, etc. Still another consisted in denying the very human nature of the domestic workers. For centuries moralists addressing masters warned them not to consider and treat their servants as horses or dogs, or even worse, for instance as worms, or as

30 “But what shall I say of those sad and troubled times at which equality is established in the midst of the tumult of revolution, when democracy, after having been introduced into the state of society, still struggles with difficulty against the prejudices and manners of the country? The laws, and partially public opinion, already declare that no natural or permanent inferiority exists between the servant and the master. But this new belief has not yet reached the innermost convictions of the latter, or rather his heart rejects it; in the secret persuasion of his mind the master thinks that he belongs to a peculiar and superior race; he dares not say so, but he shudders at allowing himself to be dragged to the same level. His authority over his servants becomes timid and at the same time harsh; he has already ceased to entertain for them the feelings of patronizing kindness which long uncontested power always produces, and he is surprised that, being changed himself his servant changes also”, Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835), III, 5 (http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HY-PER/DETOC/ch3_05.htm).

members of a different species, often complaining that this was frequently the case³¹. To be treated with respect was the more frequent request of the members of the Russian Professional Union of Female and Male Servants that in 1905 also organized a big servant strike (Spagnolo 2005a)³². “However benevolent or paternal some employers were, the servant was not considered by them to be a human being with rights and abilities, according to the conclusions of a study by the Women’s Industrial Council of Great Britain in 1916. As Christina Butler reported for the Council, ‘a common complaint is not to be treated as a human being’” (McBride 1976, p. 32). Forty years later the representatives of the “The Association of Domestic Personnel” at the first Panhellenic Conference of Women held in May 1946 denounced: “There are houses in which they treat us as human beings, but these are exceptional” (Hantzaroula 2005a) and unfortunately this kind of problem is still on the agenda (for instance Anderson 2003). As we shall see, another mechanism, partially similar to that of treating servants as cattle, is the racialization.

2.2. Conflicts in the “open” house: nationality and race

Tot servi tot hostes (literally “as many enemies as servants”), an ancient Latin motto said. *Servi* in ancient Rome were often “real” enemies captured and enslaved, indeed, exactly as were the Muslim slaves in early modern Europe (cf. Sarti 2005b and *Scientific description*, chapter II.1.4.). Yet servants who had not been enslaved might also often be perceived as enemies. An 18th century Italian legal text, for instance, considered the human condition very unhappy because some people were born poor, and had to work very hard, while others were born wealthy and were thus in serious danger of death because of the servant’s lack of loyalty³³.

31 For some Italian and French examples see J. Cordier, *La Famille Sainte*, Paris, Bechet, 1666 (1644¹, It. transl. *La Famiglia Santa*, 3 vols., Macerata, Pannelli, 1674; Roma, Lazzari Varese, 1677 and 1686), vol. 1, pp. 361, 376 (animals; servants treated worse than dogs); F. de Salignac de la Mothe-Fenelon, *Traité de l’éducation des filles*, Paris, 1687 (It. transl., In Venezia, Stamperia Palese, 1788), pp. 106-108 (horses, animals of a different species); F. Fontana, *Il Padrone Istruito Overo Istruzione A Chiunque tiene Persone al suo Servizio, Per conoscere le obbligazioni, che hanno verso la propria Servitù*, In Milano, et in Bologna, Pisarri, 1710, pp. 30-31, 39-40 (animals); Idelfonso da Bressanvido, *Istruzioni morali sopra la Dottrina Cristiana*, Genova, Olzati, 1778, 3 voll. (Milano, Frigerio, 1771¹), 113-114 (worms); *Avvertimenti Morali, Civili e Politici ad una Sposa Novella*, Feltre, Stamperia del Seminario per Edoardo Foglietta, 1778 (different species); *Istruzioni sopra gli Obblighi sì Generali che Particolari d’ogni Cristiano che viva nel Secolo*, In Venezia, Rossi, 1796 (1760¹), p. 216 (animals); A. Pepoli Sampieri, *La donna saggia ed amabile*, Capolago, Tipografia e Libreria Elvetica, 1838, pp. 30-32 (animals), p. 128 (horses and dogs loved by masters more than servants); A. Vertua Gentile, *Come devo comportarmi?*, Milano, Hoepli, 1915⁸, p. 286 (dogs), etc.

32 I am grateful to Rebecca Spagnolo for allowing me to read her forthcoming papers on pre- and post revolutionary Russia.

33 *Bando Generale della Legazione di Bologna e duo Contado Fatto pubblicare li 12. Ottobre 1756. dall’Eminentiss., e Reverendiss. Sig. Cardinale Fabrizio Serbelloni Legato a Latere di detta Città*, Clemente Maria Sassi per la Stamperia Camerale, Bologna, 1756, p. 89, quoted in Sarti 2005b. On the fear of servants and suspicion on them see for instance Petitfrère 1986, pp. 149-176; Romano 1991, 1996; Arru 1995, etc.

Servants who did/do not have the same religion or nationality as their masters might/may be considered particularly threatening, especially as they were/are likely to belong to a hostile nation or religion. Even in recent times, for instance, the Dutch considered almost all the thousands of German maids who were employed in the Netherlands in the 1930s as spies for the Nazis, and this conviction, though not supported by any evidence, prevented new immigration of German maids after the second world war (Henkes 1998). We know that Jewish families employing Catholic maids often anxiously perceived them as individuals who might seriously endanger their family unity (Kertzer 1997), and we have already seen that European governesses employed by the elites of the Ottoman Empire were increasingly seen as a threatening expression of an imperialistic and hostile power, to quote but some examples (Petzen 2001, 2002).

Other foreign governesses, the French *mademoiselles* employed in Germany in the 17th and 18th centuries, were simply called *Französinnen*, i.e. French women (Hardach-Pinke 1993). In other words, at that time being a French woman and being a governess was the same in the eyes of the Germans. In history, we find several similar cases. The English word *slave*, the Italian *schiaivo*, the French *esclave*, the Spanish *sclavo*, the German *Sklave*, etc., all directly or indirectly derive from the Latin *sclavus* that originally defined a nationality, i.e. the people from “Sclavonia”. Only in the Middle Ages did it also assume the meaning of *servus* (slave) because of the high number of slaves “imported” into Italy and other countries from the areas that, at that time, were considered Slavonic (Verlinden 1942, 1977, pp. 999-1010). In Britain, “by the mid-twentieth century Irish women had become recognised as archetypical servants” (Walter 2005): a phenomenon that was also present in the USA, and to an even wider extent. In America “the Irish Bridget or Biddy, the generic nickname given to all Irish domestics, was so closely associated with domestic service that (...) after 1850 domestic servants and the Irish became virtually synonymous” (Lynch-Brennan 2005 quoting Blaine McKinley 1969³⁴). This kind of phenomenon has not stopped in more recent times: in the 1970s in Paris the common Spanish personal name *Conchita* became a synonymous for domestic worker (Colectivo IOÉ 2000, p. 155); in the last twenty years, in Italy the word *Filippina/o*, i.e. person from the Philippines, has also assumed the meaning of domestic worker. The same has happened with the Greek term *Filipineza*. Similarly, in Hong Kong, the term *banmui* means both “Philippine girl” and “servant” (Ebron 2002; Magat 2005).

34 Blaine Edward McKinley, “*The Stranger in the Gates*”: *Employer Reactions toward Domestic Servants in America, 1825-1875* (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1969).

A case reported by Grace Ebron (2002), an American Filipina, is particularly revealing: “I arrive at the Rome Airport, thrilled at the notion of living in Italy. As I step out of the customs hall, I immediately see my boyfriend, waiting to meet me. His parents, whom I’ve never met, are with him and as I turn to them with my perfectly-rehearsed Italian greeting, they appear very confused. ‘No- no’ they stammer, a perplexed expression on their faces. They turn to Massimo: ‘But where is your girlfriend—the American? Why did she send the maid?’” Ebron goes on to explain that her “first weeks in Italy were marred by recurrences of the airport scene”, to the point that she felt she was “losing what I thought of as my unquestionable ‘American’ identity”, and this “proved so difficult” that she “almost fled the country” (Ebron 2002).

Significantly, in pre-industrial Europe, words to define servants often also meant “young”, though with the important medieval exception of the aforementioned word slave and some others such as *Französinnen*. Words such as *maid* in English, *Magd* and *Knabe/Knecht* in German, *garçon* in French, *garzone* in Italian, *garzon* in Spanish, etc. reveal a strong association between domestic service and youth that reminds us of “life-cycle service” (Mitterauer 1990). The later more frequent association between national groups such as the Irish or the Filipinos and the concept of servant clearly reflects the increasing presence of long distance and/or trans-national domestic workers. Yet possibly things are going even further.

According to Brownen Walter (2005), in late 19th century Britain the Irish were “openly racialised”, while according to Lynch-Brennan, in the USA Irish domestics were seen “by white, native-born Americans more as a separate race than as an ethnic group”, even though they were white too. Moreover, in the USA over the 20th century “Bridget, the stereotyped, full-time, live-in servant of the nineteenth century, left the scene, replaced by Beulah, the part-time black maid of the twentieth” (Lynch-Brennan 2005, quoting Susan Strasser 1982). In other words, the American labour market for domestic service is shown to be not only strongly influenced by the national origin of the domestic workers, but also highly racialized, and possibly increasingly “colorized”, i.e. a kind of ghetto for black and coloured women (Nakano Glenn 1992). Unfortunately, an increasing racialization of the domestic labour market seems to be developing also in European countries such as Italy (Andall 2000, 2004; Scrinzi 2004b, 2005) which until very recently did not suffer from this problem, possibly simply because of the lack of migrant domestic workers, and more generally in

Western Europe as a whole (Andall 2003a; on Britain Cox 1999). We will discuss this point more carefully below³⁵.

People who see race difference and hierarchies as something determined by nature, rather than as a social and cultural construct, may develop such a fear of any possible contact between different races that may consider hiring a domestic servant or serving an employer of a different race highly dangerous (for the “purity” of race and/or for the maintenance of race hierarchies). Significantly, in Nazi Germany the laws for the protection of German blood (1935) prevented Jewish families from employing German female servants younger than forty five to diminish the risks of sexual intercourse between Germans and Jews, while Italian racial laws, introduced in 1938 by the Fascist regime, forbade Jews to have “Aryan” Italian servants (Sarti 2005d and forthcoming).

Apart from these (seemingly) extreme cases, racialization often represents a way of keeping or constructing social hierarchies and asymmetric identities. It is a mechanism, partially similar to that of treating servants as cattle that aims to create boundaries and distance. Emphasizing distance, it can be reassuring, indeed, for those who need to feel superior to their “servants”: they need to be reassured that they have the “right” to give orders and even exploit their domestic worker(s). According to Brownen Walter (2005), because of the central role played by the home in the constructions of British national identity, racialized Irish domestic servants with their almost invisible work “made a specific contribution to such national constructions” by way of allowing the “functioning of ‘respectable’ English homes” where “middle-class women performed the ‘labour of leisure’” that highlighted the “men’s ability to create wealth through work”. In other words, domestic servants did not only contribute to the construction of the social and gendered identity of

35 A particularly important event on the importance of the skin colour is represented by the 1777 French *Déclaration du Roi pour la Police des Noirs* that has to do exactly with people mainly employed in France as domestic servants and apprentices. The development of the colonial economy and the involvement of the French in the slave trade in the 17th and 18th centuries put strain on the old “Freedom Principle” dating back to the 16th century, according to which any slave who set foot on French soil became free. In fact, slave-owners increasingly travelled from the colonies to France with their enslaved domestics and obviously did not want to free them when entering the motherland. Their pressures led the king to allow slaveholding under certain circumstances. Yet the Parisian court (*Parlement de Paris*) remained faithful to the old “Freedom Principle”. As a consequence, on the one hand, slaves were sold and bought, while on the other, from the 1750s onward, all the slaves that petitioned for their freedom before the Parisian court were freed. Paradoxically, to stop the slave trade, France started a racist and “colorist” policy: in 1777 a measure was introduced that prevented blacks and mulattos from entering France (*Déclaration du Roi pour la Police des Noirs*). However, this measure was also due to the fear that a multiracial society would develop as a consequence of the increasing arrival of blacks from the colonies, generally employed as domestic servants or apprentices. The French Revolution completely restored the “Freedom Principle” and also abolished slavery in the colonies (1794). Yet Napoleon reintroduced colonial slavery and the *Police des Noirs*; it was abolished again in 1818, but not for slaves: in France and its colonies, slavery was finally abolished in 1848 (Peabody 1996; Bellhouse 2002; Sarti 2005b).

the British middle and upper classes but also contributed to define the British national identity. According to Lynch Brennan, the Irish – who represented the first large-scale free immigration of non-Anglo-Saxon people into America (Lynch-Brennan 2005, quoting Charles Fanning 1997³⁶) – were racialized in the USA too. They “were *different*” because of their “generally peasant class origin and culture, as well as their ethnicity and Roman Catholic religion”. Since at that time “to be American was considered synonymous with being Protestant”, the Irish were perceived as *others*. Thus in this case too, middle and upper class households were crossed by a hidden frontier that at the same time divided and brought different people into contact with each other.

Nevertheless domestic service, represented for Irish migrants a channel for acculturation to the American lifestyle that facilitated social upward mobility, and it also was an acculturating occupation for German and Scandinavian immigrants, and for German-Americans. Yet this was rarely the case for the Black women who increasingly replaced the Irish and other European migrants as domestic workers during the 20th century. Racism and the legacy of slavery precluded from them job opportunities other than domestic service. Interestingly enough the civil rights movement led to wider job opportunities for African-American women and so fewer entered domestic service. Significantly, today Latino women are identified with domestic workers in the USA and domestic service seems to be in some respects an acculturating occupation for them. Yet for undocumented migrants it is very difficult to find another job, so for them household work is once again becoming an occupational ghetto (Lynch-Brennan 2005)³⁷. We can speculate on what is happening in Europe.

2.3. Bridge or ghetto?

More than forty years ago, two scholars, Broom and Smith (1963), classed domestic service as a so-called “bridging occupation”. In their original version, this category aimed to conceptualize what makes a particular occupation into a channel for horizontal mobility. However, in later times some researchers – developing some points already present in Broom and Smith’s article – also interpreted domestic service as a bridge towards higher status, i.e. as a channel for upward vertical mobility. Yet there is no agreement among scholars on this, because domestic workers might/may

36 Charles FANNING (ed.), *The Exiles of Erin: Nineteenth-century Irish-American Fiction*, 2nd ed., (Chester Springs, Pa.: Dufour Editions, 1997)

37 On domestic service in the USA see Salmon 1901, 1897¹; Stigler 1946; Katzman 1978; Sutherland 1981; Dudden 1983, 1986; Nakano Glenn 1992; Romero 1992; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2001; Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2003, etc.

also be downwardly mobile. Women servants, for instance, were/are likely to become prostitutes (on these interpretations, Sarti 1997a, 2005c).

While asking whether, today, domestic service represents a “bridge” or rather a ghetto, I am not wondering whether it *always* facilitates upward mobility nor do I use it with exactly the same meaning suggested by Broom and Smith, because the original formulation does not allow encompassing current phenomena such as the “contradictory class mobility” experienced by several domestic workers. Rather, I try to understand whether, for migrant people, it represents a first employment in the host country from which it is possible to move away towards other jobs. In other words: for the “new” migrant domestic workers, does domestic service represent (and will it represent) a bridge towards better living conditions or a discriminatory ghetto? Are we experiencing the “emergence of a new service caste in Europe” (Andall 2003a)?

In part the answer to these questions depends on the aims and projects of each person employed in the sector. In their research on East-European migrant domestic workers in Germany, Lutz and Schwalgin (2005), for instance, found that “in most cases migrant domestic workers do not attempt a life long emigration, but a mobility flexible in time and space to overcome immediate financial problems”. The Polish and other East-European women “leave home in order to stay at home”³⁸, and this “results in pendular migration instead of emigration”. Also people who are not experiencing this kind of “commuting migration”, however, are scarcely likely to be interested in establishing themselves permanently in the host country: another migrant domestic worker interviewed by Lutz and Schwalgin was “preparing her return to Uruguay” and was “saving money to establish her own business, a restaurant, after her return”. The Kerala Indians employed as domestic workers in the Italian town of Macerata see their migration as a limited phase in their lives to the point that when their children reach school age, they send them back into the home country, to attend school there (Bartolomei forthcoming). Giovanna Campani (2002), in her paper presented in Florence about different national groups of domestic workers employed in Italy in the last thirty years, schematizing a more nuanced reality, distinguished different cases and attitudes toward domestic work: the Capverdians and Eritreans who arrived from very poor countries, mainly in the 1970s, were generally not literate and often remained (and still remain) in domestic service all their lives (but some migrated to other countries where they found different jobs, as shown by Andall

38 M. Morokvašic, *Pendeln statt Auswandern. Das Beispiel der Polen* in M. Morokvašic und H. Rudolph (eds.), *Wanderungsraum Europa. Menschen und Grenzen in Bewegung*, Berlin, 1994, quoted by Lutz & Schwalgin 2005.

2000, pp. 171-174); the Somalis, who were part of a diaspora where domestic work was perceived as a survival strategy for the whole group (though often abhorred, according to Andall 2000, p. 170); the Filipina/os, increasingly numerous from the 1980s, who tried/try to find other jobs or at least to turn themselves into live-out domestic workers but often found/find difficulties in realizing this aspiration; the women from Maghreb, who generally have arrived in Italy thanks to family reunifications and in any case try to have their families in Italy; and, in more recent times, the Latinos and the East-Europeans, who often would also like to find a different job. This schematization, however, must not hide the fact that single individuals have personal plans and aspirations which are not necessarily shared by her/his compatriots, even though there is, it seems, a certain shared culture in the attitudes of certain nationalities that helps explaining why some are particularly represented among domestic workers, while others are (almost) absent (Moya, forthcoming). So some migrants hope to use domestic service as a way to get established in the host country while others simply want to use it to accumulate savings and to improve their life at home. Yet projects and aspirations may turn out to be unrealistic and/or change over time.

The fact that some migrant domestic workers don't aim to become integrated in the host country does not mean that they are not interested in moving from the domestic work sector to other sectors where the working conditions are better.

A recent survey on 400 migrant domestic workers employed in Italy has shown, indeed, that 71 percent of them hoped to change employment: this desire was particularly strong among Filipino, Peruvian and Polish domestic workers while it was less strong among the Africans, who are less educated and possibly more disillusioned (Cnel/Fondazione Silvano Andolfi 2003).

Other researches reveal a more resigned attitude among the Filipinas. In her comparative study on Filipina/o domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles, Parreñas (2001, p. 196) concluded that, in "in Rome, they are resigned to domestic work and have settled with the job. In Los Angeles, they do not underplay their dissatisfaction and abhor domestic work. Their resolution is probably influenced by the fact that they are all domestic workers in Rome. In contrast, domestic workers in Los Angeles have to cope with the added pressures of seeing more 'successful' Filipino migrants, such as the slew of health professionals migrating in the last three decades". Magat (2005), whose field consultants also believe that most Filipinos in Italy no longer aspire to take up other professions, is frightened by the possibility that "for generations to come, the Filipino community in Rome will be a community almost exclusively made up of members specializing as domestic

workers". The experience of Grace Ebron quoted above clearly shows that Filipino identity in Italy is strongly associated with domestic work, which makes it particularly difficult for people from the Philippines to find other jobs.

A male Filipino engineer employed as live-in domestic worker in Germany interviewed by Kyoko Shinozaki (2003) clearly expressed the concept that, being in Germany illegally, he had no chance of finding a job as an engineer. Yet he also believed that finding a better job would be difficult even if with a residence permit. This seems to me a crucial point. Indeed, migration policies are likely to affect the number and type of undocumented migrants destined to work "in the twilight zone of the informal labour market" (Lutz 2003, 2004; Lutz & Schwalgin 2005; Botman 2003). Since often undocumented women seek employment as domestic workers, state migration policies affect the supply of (undocumented) migrant domestic workers: very severe but ineffective restrictions can lead to the expansion of irregular work, and particularly in domestic service (Blackett 2005, Lynch-Brennan 2005). Indeed, as Lutz and Schwalgin (2005) point out, "private households seem to offer more protection against police controls of residence and work permits (...). Domestic work is still un-addressed by public discourse and households are still seen as a private sphere. Therefore, in contrast to other segments of the informal labour market domestic work is relatively safe from state control. Thus, at first glance domestic work seems to be a 'space of protection' for illegalised migrant women. Simultaneously this 'space of protection' may turn out to be a 'dangerous space' because denial of wage payment, injuries, sexual harassment and violence are not subjected to any control and legal regulation".

State policies relating to migration and control of workplaces (including private households) are thus crucial as for the "emergence of a new service caste in Europe" (Andall 2003a) with almost no rights, in clear contrast to European values expressed in the European Constitution.

Yet state policies on migration may also contribute to creating "a new service caste" of legal migrants who have more rights than the undocumented but are "bound" to their employers and/or their job, which is also in contrast with the principle of free labour. Indeed several countries allowed/allow legal migration for domestic workers given the lack of native people willing to do this job (Momsen 1999, p. 1). In Britain, for instance, "by 1947, 65 percent of work permits issued were for domestic servants (...). The continuing need for workers in this low-paid sector led to

special quotas being set aside for domestic-worker immigrants until 1979”³⁹, while in later times “the only non-European domestic workers who [were] able to enter Britain legally (other than those joining resident family members) [were] live-in domestics who arrive with their employers”. Until 1998, “they were not allowed to change jobs while in Britain”. Consequently, they might have to tolerate abusive employers, and, if their employment terminated, they had to leave Britain (Cox 1999, p. 136 for the quotations; see also Anderson 1993; Social Alert 2000, p. 41; Institute of Race Relations 2003)⁴⁰. In Spain, the number of migrants in the sector of domestic service increased in the 1990s. From 1994 onwards this growth was stimulated by the immigration policy of the Spanish government (quotas for domestic workers, regularizations). As a consequence, between 1992 and 1998 the number of work permits in this sector increased very much (+140 percent) (Colectivo IOÉ 2000, p. 449). Also in Italy there is traditionally special provision for domestic workers (Andall 2000) and a high share of work permits are issued for domestic work: 44-69 percent between 1992 and 1995, when the only extra-European people who were allowed to legally enter and work in the country were those who had asked to work as domestic workers in Italy before emigrating. These people were obliged to work as domestics for two years; 69 percent in 2000 (see Sarti 2004, p. 25). Moreover, the Italian amnesties for irregular domestic workers have often given particularly chances to domestics: the last one (2002), only allowed regularization to dependent and domestic workers.

These policies have therefore a double-face: on the one hand, they make domestic service the sole, or one of the few channels for legal immigration: thus a “bridge” to move legally from the home to the host country. Yet as long as they only or mostly allow regular immigration for domestic workers and, even more, “bind” migrant domestic workers to their job and/or employers, they contribute to creating an occupational ghetto. As a consequence of the 2002 Italian amnesty, in 2003 almost 350.000 domestic workers were regularized in Italy, getting both residence and work permit (a country where, in previous years, there were only about 250,000 regular domestic workers). While before the amnesty foreigners represented 56 percent of regular domestic workers,

39 According to Chaplin 1978, p. 111, “so concerned was even the post-war Labour government with the plight of servantless housewives that special permits were issued for the importation of foreign girls in spite of a general policy of restricting immigration”.

40 “Five years ago, Kalayaan successfully campaigned for a change in the law to allow domestic migrant workers to leave their employer. Before 1998, their legal status in the UK was entirely dependent on the consent of their employers and so those who left - often fleeing from abuse - were classed as overstayers and could be deported. In 1998, the government also regularised the immigration status of a number of migrants who had been put in this position under the earlier legislation. But, the success of the 1998 reform has been undermined through the practice of employers holding on to passports” (Institute of Race Relations, 2003).

now they are more than 80 percent (INPS/Caritas 2004) and it will be interesting to see whether they will stay in this sector in the coming years.

By now, research on migrant domestic workers in Italy has shown little mobility among them to the point that certain migrants move to other countries to find better working and living conditions (Andall 2000). Domestic workers are generally at best able to move from the live-in to the live-out sector. Significantly enough, the survey already mentioned survey has shown that 57 percent of undocumented migrants worked as live-in, compared to only 38 percent of those with a residence permit. In other words being legally in Italy is crucial to moving out of the live-in sector, where working conditions are, from many points of view, harsher (INPS/Caritas 2004, p. 38). However, in a country such as Italy where amnesties take place quite regularly (Barbagli, Colombo & Sciortino 2004), undocumented migrants have (at least) the opportunity to be regularized.

The recent Italian amnesty of irregular domestic workers (Barbagli, Colombo & Sciortino 2004; Ioli 2005; Sarti 2005c) shows, however, that regularizing the workers' residence status as concerns the stay permits does not necessarily imply a complete regularization of their working conditions. Indeed, even though regularized domestic workers get both residence and work permit, this measure overcomes "illegalization" deriving from irregular migration but does not lead to a corresponding result on irregular employment. This is firstly because (obviously) Italian law does not foresee any possible labour contract for 24 hours of work a day, as is often the case for international migrants, particularly for the carers of the elderly (De Filippo 1994; Mingozi 2005). Thus, if they continue to work as they did before the regularization, they are inevitably employed irregularly for a part of their work. Secondly, many families (and some workers) are not willing to declare the maximum number of work hours allowed by Italian work-contracts, and only declare a little part of them (Mingozi 2005). In others words this measure is insufficient to guarantee domestic workers the rights guaranteed by Italian law to "really" regular domestic workers. At the same time, it does not allow to implement the right to "limitation of maximum working hours, to daily and weekly rest periods and to an annual period of paid leave" established by the article II/91 of the European Constitution.

Yet the possibility, for migrant domestic workers, of moving into other sectors is not only affected by the type and content of State regulation, but clearly also by the existence of racialized or ethnicized niches – or ghettos – in the labour market whose existence is not simply due to direct

state intervention. The existence of such niches is increasingly confirmed by current research on several different European countries (Anderson 1993, 2000; Cox 1999; Odierna 2000; Lutz 2002a-c; Andall 2000, 2003; Andall & Sarti 2004; Parreñas 2001; Colectivo IOÉ 2000; Parella Rubio 2003b; Widding-Isaksen 2005; Platzer forthcoming, etc.). The existence of prejudices on the “right” place for migrants or for migrants of a certain nationality is creating segmentations in the labour market and also within the domestic service sectors: as shown by Cox (1999), in Britain nationality “is perceived to be the best guide to personality and skill-level of a domestic worker” and many other studies have also shown the existence of stereotypes based on nationalities for the best nannies, housekeepers or elderly carers that tends to be self-reinforcing. Domestic workers themselves, manipulating these stereotypes to their own advantage, are likely to contribute to perpetuating racialization and ethnicization. Filipina/o domestic workers, for instance, present themselves as the “Mercedes Benz” among domestic workers (Mozère 2001; Parreñas 2001; Lynch-Brennan 2005, etc.).

Significantly enough, the stereotypes are not the same everywhere (with the sole possible exception of the Filipino/as), partially because in different countries there are different nationalities, partially because they are mainly based on unfounded prejudices. Changing immigrations flows are thus likely to question the existing prejudices and stereotypes and also to create new ones.

Eleonore von Oertzen (2005) has noted that the increasing employment of Third World immigrants as domestic workers in Western Europe has introduced new aspects of ethnic and cultural differences into the relations between employers and employees which resemble those of “traditional” Latin American patterns. In Latin America, domestic servants are mostly women of ethnically discriminated groups, such as the Indios and the Afro-Americans. As a consequence, the ambiguous mixture of exploitation and paternalism towards domestics intermingles with racial/ethnic domination, deeply rooted in colonial and postcolonial history (on domestic service in South-America see Chaney & Castro 1989; Gill 1994; Pereira de Melo 1998 and w.d. etc.). Europeans are thus possibly importing the worst pattern of relationship they have created in extra-European countries through colonization and imperialism, when they should be actively trying to create a more fair world both inside and outside Europe, and “strive for peace, justice and solidarity throughout the world” as stated by the Preamble of the European Constitution.

Several different factors show that, today, the emergence of a new service caste is a real risk. As denounced in chapter VI of the *Scientific Description*, there is a crucial lack of statistics on

domestic work. Yet it seems that an enlargement of the number of live-in domestic servants is occurring, and not only in Southern Europe (Anderson 2000; Andall 2000, 2003; Parreñas 2001; Parella Rubio 2003b, etc.) but also in Northern Europe, where in the second half of the 20th century this kind of arrangement – for centuries more common in the North than in the South (Sarti 2000b)⁴¹ – almost completely disappeared, as far as we know (for instance Wall 1983, Table 2; Odierna 2000, pp. 68-70; Giles 2001; Widding Isaksen 2005; Platzer forthcoming). Because of the overlapping of workplace and home, the intermingling of employment relationship and family relationships, the lesser regulation of work hours etc., live-in domestic service appears a less “modern” job than live-out service (despite the fact that in early modern times live-out domestics did exist, Pelaja 1988; Roche 1981; Sarti 1991, 1999, 2000; Colectivo IOÉ 2000, p. 152; Steedman 2002b, etc.). The law may contribute to making the social identity of live-in domestic workers even more ambiguous. In Britain, according to a document by the Institute of Race Relations (2003) “workers who are considered to be ‘part of the family’ are exempt from minimum wage legislation, working time directives, race relations legislation and so on – in other words, all the legislation that defines a modern work relationship. Until now, migrant domestic workers have been considered ‘part of the family’ in legal terms, which means that they can be paid next to nothing, made to work all hours in the day or racially abused”⁴². Clearly this too contributes to making the risk of a new service caste real.

The nationalities who have profited more of the aforementioned 2002 Italian amnesty are the East-Europeans (Ukraine, Romania, Poland, Moldavia, Albania). As a consequence of the regularization, East-Europeans now represent 54 percent of regular domestic workers. Before, they were around 22 percent and the majority of foreign domestic workers came from Asia. Though precise data are lacking, East-Europeans domestic workers are also very common in other countries, such as Germany. The enlargement of the European Union is making it easier for East-Europeans to migrate in the West. We can wonder whether this will contribute to a reversal of the (frightening) trend towards the possible emergence of a racialized and/or ethnicized service caste (thanks to the fact that many East-Europeans are or are becoming EU citizens), or on the contrary, will lead to a split Europe with the East supplying the West with domestic workers.

41 However, significantly enough, as late as 1978 Chaplin (1978, p. 115) wrote in relation to Spain that “the incidence of live-in domestic servants in Spain is much lower than would be ‘normal’ for its level of economic development”.

42 “However, at a recent industrial tribunal hearing, a migrant domestic worker won £ 40,000 for non-payment of the minimum wage, and a legal definition of working as ‘part of the family’ was provided” (Institute of Race Relations, 2003).

2.4. Conflicts in the "open" house: gender

In Western countries men continue to do little or no home nor care work and the labour market is still mainly organized, particularly in the more professionalized and specialized sectors, as if all workers were male breadwinners without any other particular burden apart from their profession. As a consequence, the growing numbers of women who enter the labour market are condemned to either to remain in less professionalized sectors and/or to renounce to have a career, if they continue to spend much of their energy on housework and care. Otherwise, they have to find a way to reduce this double burden. As long as their men are not willing to help them and social services are limited, hiring a domestic worker may represent a "good" solution. And indeed according to several scholars international domestic workers are precisely freeing Western women from the drudgery of domestic chores, thus allowing them to concentrate on their careers. Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1992) identifies this as a "racial division of reproductive labor". In other words, migrant domestic workers increasingly perform in Western countries the tasks traditionally done by wives. "In globalization, it is migrant women workers from the global south who are increasingly freeing women in the global north of this burden" (Parreñas 2005), or – as we have seen – from Eastern Europe in relationship to the Western.

To consider housework and care as a female problem that women have to face and solve "among themselves" is highly misleading. Each individual – male and female – likes to eat from a clean plate and to be cared for when she or he is ill, so it is extremely unfair to delegate the task of guaranteeing cleanliness and care for one's family members only to women (as housewives or employers of another woman as a substitute). As a consequence, guaranteeing everyone's welfare has to be a task for both women and men, private families and the State, particularly when we consider that the increasing need for (paid) care is certainly not mainly due to selfish women who dislike caring for their poor children and husbands in order to have a brilliant career. Rather, it is due to the insufficient or absent re-organization of the division of labour and care within and outside the families as women increasingly become involved in the labour market. Besides, we also have to consider that the ageing of the European population is extremely widening the need for care, and this contributes to putting strain on the solutions traditionally adopted to care for the elderly (for instance Widding Isaksen 2005; Sarti forthcoming). Finally, in the recent decades, the idea that only women are actually involved in domestic work, and that domestic work is and has to be a woman's concern has become increasingly false, at least in some European countries. Indeed, while native

men generally continue to dislike housework and care, the widening gap between rich and impoverished countries has transformed domestic service into a (relatively) “appealing” job opportunity not only for migrant women, but also for migrant men, particularly from Asia, even though, clearly, to a lesser extent. In Italy, for instance, men are probably less than 3-4 percent of native domestic workers, while they are around 20-25 percent of migrants (Sarti 2000, 2003, 2004; Andall 2003; INPS/Caritas 2004). In Spain almost 90% of foreign domestic workers are women, but “the percentage of men has increased in recent years (Parella Rubio 2003a, p. 512). In France recently there has an increase in male domestics⁴³; ongoing research shows their presence also in Germany (Shinozaki 2003) and scholars reveal a growing interest in male domestic workers and male carers, both in Europe and outside⁴⁴, i.e. in men that do a job that in Europe, in the last two centuries, became strictly associated with femininity (but it was not so everywhere, as shown by Karen Tranberg Hansen (1989) in her path-breaking work on Zambia).

In other words, the hierarchy between natives and migrants is so strong that it affects the traditional gendered division of roles within the households, with *native* men *and* women highly involved in the labour market and *migrant* women *and* men widely employed in the (traditionally female) domestic work sector, even though men still represent a little share of domestic workers. Today, greater gender equality for Western Europeans is obtained at the cost of continuing or even widening of the social gap between social classes and countries. The “traditional” Western model of the male breadwinner and the female housewife that was mainly developed in the 19th century and in the first five or six decades of the 20th, is almost completely dissolving – European women are today widely largely in the labour market (Table 3) – but without leading to the fairer society dreamed of by the feminist movement thirty years ago. We have to work to realize that dream, for women and men, both native and migrant⁴⁵, to create systems where both social and gender equality are granted, and where domestic workers are not “racialized”. As stated by the European Constitution, “equality between women and men must be ensured in all areas, including

43 According to original population census data, in 1982 men represented 2 percent (2.7 according to the data corrected by Marchand & Thelot (1991, p. 187) while according to the data published by Rayssac, Pouquet, Simon, Le Dantec & Legrand 1999, p. 265, in 1995 they were 6.3 percent.

44 Sarti 1991, 2000a-b, 2004; Andall & Sarti 2004; INPS/Caritas 2003; Bartolomei forthcoming; Shinozaki 2003; Gollins 2001; Ray 2000; Chopra 2003; etc.

45 Clearly this change also has to do with the traditional division of labour in the domestic workers home country, and is therefore affected by changing migration flows. For instance, in some part of Africa and Asia male domestic service was common until recently, as shown in a reach comparative survey by Jose Moya (forthcoming. I am grateful to the author to allowing me to read and mention this forthcoming paper). Yet it seems extremely interesting to analyze whether the high demand for domestic workers in Western Countries and the norms about migration policies are convincing also men from countries where male domestic service is uncommon to become a domestic worker in Western Europe. This seems the case with certain men from Eastern Europe currently employed in Italy as carers (Sarti 2004).

employment, work and pay” (art. II-83). We cannot allow that Westerns Europeans – men and women – become able to combine work and family because other people (East-Europeans and non-Europeans) sacrifice their own family life.

3. Life-cycle service, family life and European identity

3.1. The “institution” of service

The afore-mentioned danger of the emergence of a racialized or ethnicized service caste would represent a real break in the European history. As mentioned in foreign pages, for a high percentage of our ancestors domestic service was simply a phase in their life.

The study of life-cycle service owes a lot to two important scholars, John Hajnal and Peter Laslett. Some years ago, they suggested that domestic service played a central role in the so-called European household formation system that they considered not only a peculiar feature of the old continent in pre-industrial times, but also a crucial factor in its socio-economic development (Hajnal 1965, 1983; Laslett 1969, 1977a-b, 1983, 1988). In their view, domestic service was a real “institution”. Inevitably, therefore, the Servant Project has had to deal with this hypothesis within the Servant Project, contributing with new research to show its weak and strong points.

In a very influential article published in 1965, Hajnal wrote that Western Europe was characterized by a peculiar marriage pattern whose distinctive features were a high proportion of single persons and late age at marriage. These two features reduced fertility, contributing to a slow down in population growth. In his view this original solution to reduce population pressure was peculiar to Western Europe: east of an imaginary line between Trieste and St. Petersburg, as well as in the rest of the world, marriage was early and almost universal. Consequently demographic pressure was much stronger than in Western Europe, where nuptiality, rather than mortality, played a central role in maintaining the balance between population growth and resources. According to Hajnal, Western Europeans married late because they had to acquire the abilities and means to support a family before marrying. They often reached this end by working as servants. Life-time single persons were often servants too. Service was thus at the very core of Hajnal’s theory.

In following years Hajnal, Peter Laslett and the scholars of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure further developed this model, which has also been

discussed by several authors within the seminars organized by the Servant Network (Cooper 2005a-b; Moring 2005; Wall 2005; Lundh 2005; Faragó 1998, 2005; Paping 2005; Dennison 2003 etc.). The homeostatic mechanism initially suggested by Hajnal has been shown to be effective in North-Western and Central Europe, but not in other parts of the continent, both in the East and in the South (in particular in the Mediterranean region). So we cannot conclude that life-cycle service was a factor of identity in all of Europe, nor in all of Western Europe.

Yet the results of this kind of research help to understand why entering domestic service was so common in several European regions, since they confirm that in North-Western Europe (the British Isles except for Ireland, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Northern France, Holland, some parts of Germany, Sardinia) both men and women married late (women after 23 and men after 26) and were expected to establish an independent household upon marriage, often after a period spent working as servants. In other European areas (part of Sweden, most of Germany, Austria, part of the Alpine area and of Northern Italy, Southern France, the North-western part of the Iberian Peninsula) it was quite common in the rural zones (where most of the population lived) to hand over the farm or most of it to an heir. As a consequence, the heir's siblings were forced to find some kind of living: some of them migrated, others found jobs as artisans, journeymen, etc. Many worked as servants – sometimes even in the family of their lucky brother who had inherited the farm – until they were able to find a better position and to marry, but sometimes they worked as unmarried servants all their lives. In the urban context the young who were to become artisans spent several years as apprentices, whose condition, as previously mentioned, was very similar to that of servants. Moreover several young women entered domestic service before marrying.

In short: in much of Europe domestic service was the main means by which many young people could get the money to marry and/or learn a job to feed a family. Consequently, domestic service really was a crucial element of the mechanism that adapted population growth to the existing economic resources. In fact, in bad times it was more difficult to accumulate savings to marry, so a higher percentage of unmarried servants were forced to postpone marriage, sometimes until it was too late. Clearly this slowed population growth helping to balance population and resources (until the 18th century illegitimate children were not very numerous). This mechanism in some cases was reinforced by laws precluding servant marriage (Sarti 2005b, with further references). It probably really prevented an excessive impoverishment of the population, stimulating at the same the accumulation of savings and wealth.

3.2. Domestic service and marriage

This kind of mechanism was not specifically European. First, in some parts of Europe, particularly in the South and in the East, things were different. Second, recent research has found a similar system in extra-European countries such as part of Japan, as shown for instance by Mary Louise Powell Nagata (2005 a-b). She notes that even though Central Japan and North-Eastern Japan were characterized by universal marriage, in the Northeast and later in Central Japan marriage was early. Villagers in Central Japan were generally unmarried when they entered service and would marry and establish an independent household after the service period ended, at the age of about 23 for women and 28 for men. In sum, “service in Central Japan had some similarities with life-cycle service in Europe”. On the other hand, because of early and universal marriage in North-Eastern Japan, servants were often married. Yet in this case too, domestic service probably negatively affected fertility and population growth, by way of separating husband and wife during the time spent in service. So the role of domestic service in keeping a balance between population and resources does not seem peculiar only to Western Europe in pre-industrial times, as it had been (indirectly) suggested.

Moreover, even today at present days domestic service may interfere negatively with marriage. According to Magat (2005), for instance, younger women from the Philippines who migrate abroad to work as domestic workers often delay marriage, while many live-in domestic workers studied by Andall (2005) had simply to give-up the possibility of having a family. In other words, domestic service still today makes the family life of the employers easier while representing a serious hindrance to that of the domestic workers. This is particularly painful because today, in contrast to the past, many domestic workers actually have a family: they often have left a family back home. Since West-European countries are today extracting care from the East- and Extra-European, migrant domestic workers are forced into trans-national parenting or, if they are live-in and have their children with them in the host countries, have to place them with friends, relatives or residential homes (Hochschild 2000; Parreñas 2001, 2005; Andall 2001; Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2003, etc.).

But let’s go back to past centuries. Interestingly enough, Europeans who were born in contexts where life-cycle service was common abandoned the traditional pattern when they migrated to contexts with lesser economic and cultural constraints. As shown by Richard Wall

(Wall 2002), the age at first marriage of the European migrants in America (at least in the Northern colonies) fell sharply, while the incidence of life cycle service declined⁴⁶. Since land was abundant, it was not necessary to delay marriage to have the means to feed a family. Moreover, because of labour shortages and nearby frontiers, indentured servants generally did not remain in service after having reimbursed their employers for the cost of crossing the Atlantic. Yet this change was also due to the ideological and legal changes that accompanied and followed the American Revolution, and particularly to the new emphasis on personal freedom (Wall 2002; Grégoire 1814; Salmon 1901, 1897¹; Katzman 1978; Steinfeld 1991).

4. Domestic servants and workers between dependence and personal freedom⁴⁷

4.1. A hierarchic world

More than 2300 years ago, Aristotle claimed that power was exerted within the home in ways that paralleled the world of politics: “the wife should be treated as a citizen of a free state” by the father, the undisputed head of the family; “the children should be under kingly power” and the servants were under tyrannical rule⁴⁸. Thereafter, for centuries, hundreds of authors stressed that the household was the first component of society; that political government (partially) mirrored the domestic situation and vice-versa; that domestic government had three parts (i.e. wife, children and servants) and that keeping domestic order was essential to get social order (Brunner 1950; Frigo 1985; Bianchini, Frigo & Mozzarelli 1985; Costa 1999, etc.). This representation was increasingly challenged by the idea that was spreading particularly thanks to Hobbes and the other Jusnaturalists,

46 Information provided by Wall on age at marriage and life cycle service in America is based on research by D. S. Smith.

47 I am particularly grateful to Stefano Visentin for his comments on this section.

48 Aristotle, *A Treatise on Government*, book I, Chapter 12, “There are then three parts of domestic government, the masters, of which we have already treated, the fathers, and the husbands; now the government of the wife and children should both be that of free persons, but not the] same; for the wife should be treated as a citizen of a free state, the children should be under kingly power; for the male is by nature superior to the female, except when something happens contrary to the usual course of nature, as is the elder and perfect to the younger and imperfect. Now in the generality of free states, the governors and the governed alternately change place; for an equality without any preference is what nature chooses; however, when one governs and another is governed, she endeavours that there should be a distinction between them in forms, expressions, and honours; according to what Amasis said of his lover. This then should be the established rule between the, man and the woman. The government of children should be kingly; for the power of the father over the child is founded in affection and seniority, which is a species of kingly government; for which reason Homer very properly calls Jupiter “the father of gods and men,” who was king of both these; for nature requires that a king should be of the same species with those whom he governs, though superior in some particulars, as is the case between the elder and the younger, the father and the son”; part 3, Chapter 6: “the authority which a man has over his wife, and children, and his family, which we call domestic government, is either for the benefit of those who are under subjection, or else for the common benefit of the whole: but its particular object is the benefit of the governed”.

that in the in state of nature all human beings were equal. Nevertheless an army of authors still repeated it for another couple of centuries or even longer. Indeed, even though the family head's rules on wives, children and servants were clearly distinguished, wives, children and servants were often assimilated because of their common subjection to the father, whom they all owed obedience and respect. For instance, the Italian 17th century jurist Giambattista de Luca, analyzing the different types of *servitù* (servitude) also treated the servitude of the children towards their father⁴⁹ while about a century later the author of the entry *domestique* of the French *Encyclopédie* maintained that the term *domestique* did not define only wage servants: it could also be used with reference to the wife and the children⁵⁰ (Sarti 2005b). Similarly, the Hungarian word *cséled* had four different meanings from the medieval period until the 19th century: member of a household, a house and/or a family; child; woman; servant (Faragó 2005).

In other words, not only people whose occupation was that of servant could be defined as such, and, as mentioned, they were extremely diverse, ranging from farm servants to convent servants (Rey Castelao & Iglesias Estepa 2005), from little maids of all work the members of the complex and hierarchic staff of the elite households, which also comprised persons with a high education who performed specialized tasks, such as secretaries, bookkeepers, tutors and governesses, besides poor uneducated servants who carried out really menial duties. Indeed, all people dependant on a head or a master could be defined servants, both within the family relationships and in the (partially overlapping) sphere of labour relationships. In this sense, every kind of subordinate worker could be considered a servant (Steinfeld 1991, pp. 17-22), to the point that even recently some British legal texts maintained that “as a matter of legal terminology there is no distinction between master and servant, and employer and employed” (Batt 1967, 1929¹, p. 7). Things could go even further, as the master and servant relationship represented a model for every kind of asymmetric relationship: proclaiming oneself to be the “most humble” or the “most obedient servant” (or an “umilissimo e devotissimo servitore”, a “très humble et très obéissant serviteur”, etc.) while signing a letter might be less metaphoric than we can imagine⁵¹.

49 Giovan Battista De Luca, *Dottor Volgare ovvero il compendio di tutta la legge Civile, Canonica, Feudale, e Municipale, nelle cose più ricevute in pratica; Moralizzato in Lingua Italiana*, vol. 1, In Colonia, 1755 (1673¹), A spese di Modesto Fenzo Stampatore in Venezia, p. 471.

50 “Quelquefois le mot domestique s’étend jusqu’à la femme et aux enfants”, *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, Paris, chez Briasson, David l’aîné, Le Breton, Durand, vol. 5, 1755, p. 29, Article “Domestique”.

51 Significantly enough in monarchic states these phrases of civility are still in use today see, for instance, www.bottin-mondain.com/savoir-vivre/svco/correspondant.htm.

In sum, in pre-industrial times the social identity of domestic servants was quite ambiguous. Domestic service, though also being an employment, was not a specific job, but rather a *type of relationship*: a servant was defined as such because he or she had a master, not because he or she carried out a specific task. The ministers of princes and kings, as well as farm servants, could be considered as servants. Being a servant was a condition rather than a profession requiring peculiar abilities and implying the performance of specific tasks (Fairchilds 1984, pp. 2-3; on this themes see also Dürr 1995 and 2005). Moreover, it was not an absolute condition: servants could be in turn masters, just like sons can also be fathers (Sarti 1997, 2000b).

The notion of service was so extended, that even people in the highest social position might present themselves as servants: the Pope as “*servus servorum Dei*”, while “the good Prince”, who was “entrusted with the well being of his people, must serve all of his subjects”⁵². This lack of precision in the concept of servant contributes to making the study of domestic service in pre-industrial times very difficult. It also created problems in past centuries, particularly when laws and norms about servants had to be enforced and it was thus necessary to clearly establish who was affected by them (some examples in Steedman 2002a and Sarti 1997, 2000a-b). At the same time, however, the pervading presence of (some kind of) the master-servant relationship made this relationship a central component of pre-industrial European societies at cultural, political, social and economic levels. Some aspects of the European way of conceiving and regulating the master-servant relationship were also exported into Extra-European societies alongside the colonial and imperialistic expansion, thus representing an aspect of the Western domination (Hay & Craven 2004 on the British case).

4.2. The difficult journey toward equality

Democracy rather than aristocracy, equality among citizens rather than asymmetry are commonly identified today as central values of European and Western culture. Indeed, we could maintain, to put it in a simplified way, that while in early modern times the master-servant relationship was crucial for the European identity, modern European and Western culture has been characterized – though with enormous contradictions – by a struggle *against* dependency and for

52 Pio Rossi, *Convito Morale per gli Etici, Economici, e Politici Ordinato et intrecciato si della Ragion di Stato, come delle principali materie militari*, Gueriglij, Venetia, 2 vols., 1639-1657, vol. 1, pp. 433-437; vol. 2, pp. 380-381 (quoted by Sarti 2005a. See also Sogner 2005). Pio Rossi provides us with an early representation of the king as a servant. This kind of representation is often considered an 18th century feature (Sarti 1991 with further references).

equality among human beings that implies putting aside and overcoming the master-servant relationship.

Obviously, in pre-modern times there was also an important democratic tradition that went back to ancient Greece. Yet, within this tradition, democracy was not conceived as it is in contemporary thought. Besides other differences we cannot analyze here, a major one was that in ancient *conceptions* of democracy the *demos* did not include the whole people of the *polis*, nor did it include all citizens: it only included the poor ones (Duso 2004, pp. 18-19). Democracy did *not* imply equality among individuals. However, the *practical functioning* of the Athenians *polis* implied that *all* citizens were involved in decision making: from this point of view the real functioning of Athens and other *poleis* was close to our idea of direct democracy. Yet it has to be stressed that not every dweller was a citizen. In Athens and more generally in ancient societies slaves and foreigners (and slaves were often foreigners) were excluded from citizenship, and children and women also suffered extensive limitations (Finley 1972; Canfora 1991). This point is crucial because this pattern affected the conception of citizenship in medieval and early modern times, also had an influence much later and still plays some role today (Costa 1999; Sarti 2000, etc.)

Actually, this ancient tradition heavily affected the first phases of the development of new political systems between the late 18th and the early 19th centuries. In that period servants were excluded from citizenship in several countries and this exclusion in many cases lasted several decades. As it is well known, women were generally barred from the franchise for even longer.

Yet the attitude toward servants was quite ambiguous: during the French Revolution, they were not considered citizens in any Constitution except for that of 1793. On the one hand, there was an increasing contempt and stigmatization of domestics, who accepted the humiliating condition of being dependent on a master; on the other hand the notion of servants was better defined and restricted, so that the exclusion affected a diminishing share of the population. In August 1790, in particular, it had been decided that “clerks or administrators, secretaries, carters or farm managers employed by owners, tenants or share croppers (...), librarians, tutors, craftsmen who have completed their apprenticeship, shop assistants and book-keepers” should not be considered as servants. And a later measure (21st August 1792) had further reduced the number of people who could be classed as domestics, excluding from them farm workers, wage-earners and odd-job men.

Thereafter, the idea spread that any form of dependence preventing an individual from following his own will was destined to disappear in a political regime based on freedom; in this kind of regime there would no longer be any form of personal subjection (Rosanvallon 1992. Ital. transl 1994, p. 133). Significantly, new playing cards published in 1793 replaced the *valet* (Jack) with equality (Grégoire 1814, p. 187). The declaration of rights of the Jacobin Constitution proclaimed that “the law did not recognize any domesticity; there can be only a bond of care and gratitude between the person who works and the person who employs him” (art. 19).⁵³ Coherently, the Jacobin Constitution of 1793 did not exclude servants from the franchise. Yet it was never enforced: in France, discrimination against domestics was abolished in 1806 but thereafter was re-introduced. Male domestic servants were enfranchised in 1848 and suffered some discrimination until as late as 1930 (Maza 1983, p. 312; Rosanvallon 1994 (or. ed. 1992), pp. 210, 426-427; Sarti 2005b). The conflicting attitude towards domestics that characterized 19th century France was further confirmed, for instance, by the simultaneous presence, in the French Civil Code (1804), of quite inconsistent norms. Indeed, on the one side people could be employed only for a limited period or in a determined undertaking to avoid any possible confusion between free workers and slaves (Article 1780).⁵⁴ On the other side, article 1781 established a kind of moral superiority of masters compared to servants since it affirmed that “the master is believed on his affirmation in matters of the share of wages, the payment of the year expired and the advances given for the current year”⁵⁵. Moreover, before article 1781 – that was rooted in an *Ancien Régime* tradition – was cancelled in 1868, some social groups tried to extend its application to factory workers (Castaldo 1977; Sarti 2000a, with further references). Significantly enough, in 1870 (at a time when French women were still barred from franchise) a journalist maintained that “la domesticité est le seul obstacle qui se dresse devant l’égalité complète en France”⁵⁶. In Belgium the corresponding article was abolished in 1883, while in Spain – where until 1889 was still possible to subscribe a service contract for all one’s life – an analogous article establishing that the master was to be believed in case of conflict on the wage (art. 1584 of the Civil Code of 1889) was abolished more than a century later, in 1984 (Colectivo IOÉ 2000, p. 170).

Similarly to France, in Italy all the so-called “Jacobin” constitutions except the Bolognese one of 1796 (another one that was never applied) barred servants from the enjoyment of political

53 Art. 19 of the Declaration of Rights, 29 May 1793; art. 18 of the Constitution of 24 June 1793.

54 “On ne peut engager ses services qu’à temps et pour une entreprise déterminée”.

55 “Le maître est cru sur son affirmation, pour la quotité des gages; pour le paiement du salaire de l’année échue; et pour les à-comptes donnés pour l’année courante”.

56 P. Courty, *Opinion National*, 2 April 1870, quoted by Guiral & Thuilier 1978, p. 248.

rights (Sarti 2000a-b). In Spain the 1812 Constitution also excluded domestics (art. 25⁵⁷). In Norway, as shown by Sogner (2005), “when in 1814, an extremely liberal constitution for its time extended the vote to large contingents of the male population, it withheld the vote from ‘dependants’, that is persons in the service of others – universal suffrage for men only came in 1899”. In England – where during the English Revolution even the Levellers had excluded servants from the franchise, although they were against suffrage restricted to the rich – “servants were one of the last groups to gain citizenship either in the form of the franchise or citizen’s rights in the form of insurance” (Davidoff 1974, p. 417).

This exclusion was rooted in the aforementioned ancient tradition that, from certain points of view, could be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome (according to Roman law *servus* and *civis* were antithetical concepts). However, the idea that only male independent individuals (mainly coinciding with the *pater familias*) should enjoy political rights and represent the dependent members of their households in the public sphere was extremely common over the centuries until quite recent times.

Probably, in some countries this exclusion contributed to the feminization of domestic staff in the 19th century (Sarti 1997b; 2000a-b), since it made an employment as a servant less appealing for men aspiring to be respected citizens, particularly because it often intermingled with an increasing stigmatization of domestic servants. As noted by Sogner (2005), “the egalitarian ethos of society worked contrary to the ethos of service”.

4.3. Language

These conflicting attitudes were also mirrored in the language: during the French Revolution defining someone as *domestique* seemed offensive, so that new terms were introduced such as *familier* and *homme de peine* (Grégoire 1814, p. 187). Obviously, a simple change of name did not radically improve the servant condition. In Italy in the early decades of the 19th century learned people discussed whether to accept or refuse the new noun *domestico*, derived from the French term *domestique*. It had the disadvantage of being a Gallicism. Yet, paradoxically, according to Italians it had the advantage – if compared with Italian terms *servo*, *servente*, *servitore* that it generally

57 Art. 25: “El ejercicio de los mismos derechos se suspende (...) 3.º Por el estado de siviente doméstico”. I am grateful to Pier Maria Stabile for information on this point.

substituted – of stressing that the servant belonged to the domus (i.e. the house) thus making his/her condition less humiliating.

Things went even further in the USA, and started a profound change in the relationship between master and servant. Servants, indeed, no longer accepted being defined as such and claimed to be defined as *helps*. According to European criteria American domestics were extremely arrogant, but at the same time (according to some sources) they performed any menial office, as did the European. Only indentured servants, blacks and slaves were still defined as servants. Interestingly enough, the term “servant” went back into common use in the second half of the century, when domestic servants were increasingly migrants rather than native American (Wall 2002; Grégoire 1814; Salmon 1901, 1897¹; Katzman 1978; Steinfeld 1991, pp. 123-128). In Soviet Russia (where domestic workers did not disappear) the word *servant* (*domashniaia prisluga*) was frowned upon since 1923-24 and was substituted by the word domestic worker (*domashniaia rabotnitsa*). This change took place in the framework of an ambitious project that aimed to improve the domestic workers working condition: in was not a only a nominalistic operation, bur it is significative that it also implied a change of name (Alpern Engel 2004, p. 177; Spagnolo 2005b).

In much more recent times too, we find efforts to give domestic workers a new status (also thanks to the introduction of a new name: about forty years ago (1964), for instance, an Italian Catholic association of domestic workers, the Acli-colf, introduced the term *collaboratrice familiare* (abbreviated as *colf*, i.e. family collaborator) to highlight the importance of domestic workers for the family’s welfare, and this term has widely entered the Italian language (Andall 2001, 2004). However, these kind of changes probably had important consequences only if and when they were accompanied by a significant tranformation of the servants’ rights.

More spontaneous language transformations are possibly more revealing of concrete changes: the previously mentioned Hungarian term *cséled*, for instance, from the mid 19th century slowly lost the meaning of “woman”, while an old form of the term – *család* – was reintroduced and replaced *cséled* in the sense of child and member of a household. The term *cséled* held the sole meaning of “servant”, though it referred to different kinds of workers at different times, i.e. domestic servants, farmhands in small farms, farmhands in large estates. These language changes reflected important ongoing processes: the separation of the family and the servants; a declining patriarchalism; the specialization of service as an occupation (Faragó 2005). Other European languages underwent a similar change: the Italian word *famiglia* (= family), for example, during the

19th century lost the meaning of “group of servants”, “group of dependent persons” that it had had for centuries together with other meanings (this was the original meaning of the Latin word *familia*, Sarti 2002, pp. 31-33)⁵⁸. The labour performed by servants was increasingly seen as a “normal” job (work in exchange for salary), while other possible reasons to enter into service (to learn a job, to have a patron, to have a surrogate family, etc.,) lost their importance.

4.4. Professionalization?

The 19th and 20th century professionalization of domestic service, which increasingly became a job for poor women migrating from the countryside to the cities (generally from longer distances than previously) did not eliminate any ambiguity. First, professionalization was not a linear process, because in this period several highly specialized members of domestic staff disappeared or “emancipated” themselves from the (by now) stigmatized servitude, becoming professionals (as was the case, for instance, of bookkeepers) (Sarti 2000b). Moreover, the increasing casualization of domestic work was likely to imply a loss of specialization, while the “a de-rationalization of the domestic economy” possibly occurred as fewer servants were “asked to undertake a wider range of jobs” (Chaplin 1978, p. 104).

Moreover, professionalization proceeded slowly. As shown by Lotta Vikström (2005a-b), in late 19th century Sweden, for example, the meaning of the term *piga* i.e. maidservant, was still highly ambiguous. In Norway, domestic service at the end of the 19th century was not considered a work performed by a real worker but as a “service” carried out by a member of the family. Thus paternalism still dominated the relationship between master and servant: as late as 1900 some individuals in the nominative census were classified as servants in the column “household position” of the Norwegian census, but not in the column “occupation” (Thorvaldsen 2005). In other countries, such as England and Wales, ambiguity was even greater, as demonstrated by the fact that even in late 19th-early 20th century population censuses sometimes included servants and family members in the same category (Ebery & Preston 1976; Higgs 1986; Woollard 2005). Yet, even where there was no confusion between servants and family members, the continuous changes in servant categories in the 19th and 20th century censuses of most European countries show that the concept of the domestic worker was far from being clear.

58 Obviously the term “famiglia” also had other meanings. See also Sarasúa 2005 for the Spanish word “familia”.

Besides, professionalization was never completely accomplished: it was an issue on the agenda in the 19th-early 20th century as it is at present times, while complaints on the fact that domestic service was/is not considered a “real” work were/are to be heard both a century ago and today (Sarti 2001c, 2005d, with further references). Significantly enough, on 22 June 2004 the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council adopted a recommendation (1663) that urged the Committee of Ministers to “elaborate a charter of rights for domestic workers” that should guarantee, among other, “the recognition of domestic work in private households as ‘proper work’, i.e. to which full employment rights and social protection apply, including the minimum wage (where it exists), sickness and maternity pay and pension rights”.

In Franco’s Spain, the 1944 law (destined to come into effect 15 years later) that extended subsidies and national insurance to domestic servants, explained why domestic workers had been excluded from former national system, supplying us with a particularly clear example of the domestic workers’ ambiguous position: “It has been traditional in the Spanish family, due to its deep Christian roots, to consider domestic servants as an extension of itself, and this is the reason for not permit them to share the benefits of subsidies and the National Health Insurance” (Muñoz 2005). As demonstrated by several studies showing how much paternalism/maternalism, personalisms, “faith” in the pretended domestic female nature, etc. affect domestic service even today (Hodagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2001; Shinozaki 2005, etc.). Often, for instance, both domestic workers and employers, when they decide to stop a job, behave as *fiancées* who are interrupting their relationship (Hodagneu-Sotelo 2003; Alemani 2004). Yet, quite surprisingly, several domestic workers interviewed in recent times declared to appreciate to be treated as “one of the family” rather than as a “stranger”, possibly because this is a way to reduce the unease of working as a domestic worker (particularly for live-ins) and also gives the employee a greater “power” in the relationship with the employer, though also exposing her/him to emotional and psychological blackmail (Parreñas 2001; Shinozaki 2003; on the different approach of Latino domestic workers in the USA see Romero 1992).

Finally, the servants’ rights in the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century generally did not improve, or did not improve as did the rights of other workers, in particular factory workers, even though their strictly material life conditions (food, etc.) were possibly better, as shown by Peter Ward (2003). At the beginning of the 20th century complaints were generalized because domestic service had been excluded almost overall and almost completely from the first protection laws (Sarti 2005d). Meaningfully in 1951 the International Labour Organisation

stressed the social importance of domestic service, and urged all countries to introduce a minimal regulation (Tillhet-Pretnar 1976). Indeed, in many European countries in the last fifty-sixty years domestic workers have made up at least part of their “retard” in relation to other workers.

We have just seen that in Spain, subsidies and national insurance were extended to domestic workers in 1944 (though this law was not really enforced in 1959, when was created the Montepío Nacional del Servicio Domestico). In previous times, in spite of the fact that, during the Second Republic, domestic service had not been excluded from the *Ley de Contratos de Trabajo* (Law on work contract) of 1931, it was not included in the norms regulating working time, insurance etc., and in any case, the 1931 law was abolished by Franco. Significantly enough, domestic workers 14-55 years old had to enrol into the Montepío but they were required to be unmarried or widows: in other words, married women were not supposed to work as domestics and if they did so, they had no right to social protection. In 1969 it was created the so-called *Régimen especial de la Seguridad para el Servicio domestico*, that was enforced in 1970 and granted some more rights to the domestic workers. Yet, the end of the Franco’s regime did not implied an important improvement of the working conditions of Spanish domestic workers, because they were not included in the *Estatuto de los Trabajadores* of 1980. Domestic service was regulated in 1985 by the *Real Decreto* 1424 which assumed that the private sphere can not be “invaded” by the law. Social security is granted only to people who work at least 72 hours monthly during at least 12 days⁵⁹.

In Norway, the Norwegian Codex of 1687 was definitively replaced as late as 1948 (Aubert 1955; Schrumpf 2003; Sogner 2005).

In Italy, for a long time domestic workers were not included in the law protecting work⁶⁰. The only provisions from which domestic worker benefited in the first forty years of the 20th were those of 1923 on obligatory insurance against invalidity and old age, extended, in 1927, to tuberculosis. The Italian Civil Code of 1942 had some articles on domestic service (artt. 2240-2246). Yet these articles, as the law which in 1958 was to intervene to discipline this matter, starting off with the recognition of the specificity of domestic workers, did not extend to them many rights

59 Muñoz 2005; Colectivo IOÉ 2000, pp. 154-157; 171-176; Pedregal 1951, 21-22; on the debate on domestic service in Franco’s Spain see also Martín De Nicolas 1943, Pérez González 1944; Galvarriato 1946; Unsaín 1948; Lozano Montero 1948; Garcia Araujo 1958.

60 They were excluded from those on the work of minors and women and safeguard of maternity; on the limitation of working hours to a maximum of eight per day and forty-eight, then forty, per week; on collective wage agreements; on the subjection of jurisdiction, in the case of dispute, to work tribunals established by the authorities; on protection in case of involuntary unemployment and so on.

which were granted to other categories. For instance the 1958 law merely regulated not the maximum working hours, as happened for other categories, but the minimum rest periods, fixed at eight consecutive hours per night and a “convenient” rest period during the day⁶¹. Since this law is still in force, only collective agreements have partially obviated legislative limits, establishing that live-ins cannot work more than ten hours a day, and live-outs cannot exceed eight hours, adding up to a weekly total of fifty-four for the former and forty-eight for the latter. Besides, the 1958 law did not make it obligatory for employers to hire domestic staff from the official unemployed list, flaunting the constitutional principle (now abolished) that employment is a public function. Moreover, as late as 1969, the Constitutional court declared as illegitimate the article of the Civil Code which excluded collective agreements from the sector of domestic work. The first national contract finally saw the light in 1974. The law prohibiting the dismissal of a pregnant female worker dates back to 1929. Still today, the prohibition of dismissal during pregnancy and until the child has reached the age of one year is not fully valid in the case of domestic workers, despite the fact that Italy has undersigned international agreements extending prohibition of dismissal to all pregnant female workers. Only collective agreements have partially obviated legislative limits (Alemani & Fasoli 1994; Alemani 2004, 2005b; Basenghi 2000; Sarti 1999a, 2000a).

In Belgium too, domestic servants were long excluded from most protection laws: that on work contract (1900); on injuries and accidents at work (1903); on free Sunday (1905), on daily and weekly working hours (respectively 8 and 48); on paid holidays (1936); on social security (1944). Only in the 1960s social protection, right to holidays, fixed working hours, maternity protection, were extended to domestic workers and a specific law on the domestic work contract was approved in the end approved in 1970 (Piette 2000, pp. 104-109; Pasleau & Schopp 2001, pp. 250-255).

In France, according to Guiral and Thuillier (1978, p. 250), “l’ancien régime de la domesitcité a duré jusqu’aux années 1950”. In fact, in France things were not so bad as in other European countries. In France too, domestics had been excluded from the first laws regulating labour, introduced in 19th century. Yet at the beginning of 20th century they had begun to enjoy some rights. In 1909 they were not excluded from the law which forbade dismissing a pregnant woman four weeks before the birth and four weeks thereafter (Cusenier 1912, pp. 73-74 and 322). Nor were they kept out when the pension for workers and peasant was introduced (1910). But only in 1923 the protection in case of industrial injury, introduced for workers already in 1898, was at

61 Not without certain contradictions, it also established that in some cases, night service should be followed by a “suitable compensatory” rest period during the day.

last extended to servants as well. From the end of the 1920s their inclusion speeded up: they were explicitly mentioned among people having right to social insurance (1928, 1930, 1945) and to paid holidays (1936) (Martin-Huan 1997, p. 135). But they were excluded from many others laws, in particular from the regulation of daily working time, weekly rest periods and collective bargaining (Lazard 1939). An important step toward a greater regulation was represented by the law of 1950 about collective bargaining, which expressly named domestic service among the fields in which it was applicable. In 1951 a national contract was signed, but it could not enter in force, because masters were not entitled to have unions. Only in 1957 the employers of domestic personnel were definitively authorised to have unions, a fact that led to draw up many collective agreements, normally on a departmental level, which allowed overcoming the numerous gaps existing in labour law with respect to domestics. In 1980 it was at last signed the first national contract effectively applied. Other important steps were the law of 1956 about paid leaves and that which extended to domestics the jurisdiction of the so-called “prud’hommes” (with a delay of about 150 years in comparison with industrial workers) (Tillhet-Pretnar 1976; Martin-Huan 1997, pp. 140-142).

The listing could continue, but this information seems to be sufficient to show how difficult and slow has been, for domestic service, the progress toward modern work regulation, that in several cases still need further improvements to become similar to that enjoyed by other workers.

The (male) servants’ exclusion from citizenship I just described was mainly a consequence of the idea that they were not in a condition to choose and vote freely because of their dependence on their master. Differently, the more recent exclusion of domestic workers from several norms regulating and protecting work was primarily due to the ambiguous position of servants (by then almost exclusively female), who were paid for carrying out the “natural” unpaid (and “unproductive”, see Sarasua 2005) duties of wives and mothers.

So in the last decades the gap between factory and domestic workers has generally narrowed, if we consider the rights enjoyed by the latter according to the law. Yet, ironically, the widening of the servants’ rights has often been (more or less) paralleled by a dramatic increase in the number of persons – mainly migrants, but also native – who work irregularly (Sarti 2005b). So from certain points of view paid domestic work remains the icon of bad working conditions and marginality. Moreover, it still bears the signs of its original feature, i.e. personal dependency, as if it were an original sin. Significantly enough, when men slowly got independence, domestic service became feminized; now that European women have been enfranchised and have entered the labour

market, domestic servants are increasingly migrants, as if only people who are not full citizens might be fitting to be employed as domestic workers (Sarti 2000a).

So even today (short of a ban of domestic service) we are asking for “robust legal regulatory interventions, of the nature that can only be promoted if domestic work is treated both and at once as work like any other, and as work like no other”. Domestic work has in any case to be recognized as a real employment, even though it is “performed in the private, non-productive female sphere, diminished when the worker is a member of a subordinated, racialized, and often immigrant community who performs the labour of love for a menial pay” (Blackett 2005).

In sum, today domestic service is a factor of European identity, “that exposes deep contradictions while underscoring the extent to which the most basic objectives outlined within the international framework, notably as concern forced labour, the elimination of discrimination, and the freedom of association/ right to bargain collectively, are mere dreams for many who live and work on European soil”. As a consequence, “taking domestic workers’ concerns seriously would entail characterizing European identity in a manner that includes these “other” women, rather than attempting to close international borders on them in an attempt to seal out social inequities” (Blackett 2005).

4.5. Towards independence

For centuries domestic service has often implied mobility and migration. Leaving the parental home rather early and changing masters quite often, several domestic servants possibly loosened their links with their families while becoming quite individualistic and independent individuals. As summarized by Krausman Ben-Amos (1988, p. 41), on the one hand “it has been argued that the wider dissemination of service and apprenticeship in the early modern period brought about the prolongation of the period of social infancy; that paternal power was exercised on servants and apprentices; and that on the whole generational relations were characterised by adult domination and the strict control on the young. On the other hand, it has been noted that the mobility of young men away from home had the potential of undermining the parental authority, and that the status of a servant as a hired worker placed him in a semi-independent position as well”.

Significantly enough, according to David Reher (1998), family ties are today stronger and public welfare is less developed in those European regions, such as the Mediterranean, where in the past life-cycle service was uncommon, i.e. where young people did not commonly leave the parental home at an early age and long before marrying: another possible contribution of domestic service in shaping, over time, the European identity.

Maintaining that domestic servants – the symbol of dependency – might develop an independent and individualistic personality might seem paradoxical and surprising. Yet several papers presented during the seminars within the Servant Project show us young people (male and female) migrating alone, sometimes over long distances both in past and present⁶². Others reveal that, in practice, domestic servants might enjoy more freedom and independence than expected (Ewan 2005; Dubert 2002; Arrizabalaga 2003). Indeed, in domestic service we often found and find enterprising individuals who took and take the risk of moving and working in a new environment, that might and may turn out to be highly dangerous, as confirmed by frequent sexual abuses and exploitation of domestic workers (for instance Anderson 1993; Mantecón 2003; Casalini 2005; Blackett 2005), but also might and may offer some chances to improve one's life. Yet while moving and taking this risk, they contributed and contribute to that circulation of individuals and cultures that is crucial in shaping and changing over time local, regional, national and continental identities, such as the European one. The EU owes it to domestic workers to *at least* make domestic work safe through a regulation (really enforced) that will drastically reduce any risks of exploitation and guarantee domestic workers' full dignity and rights. Yet it should do much more to improve the domestic work sector (that is crucial for everyone's wellbeing), by way of developing new forms of public welfare and a higher integration between the public and private services. I hope that this Report will help in reaching this goal.

62 Moring 2005; Lundh 2005; Casalini & Salinari 2003; Vikström 2005b; Wrag 2003; Walter 2005; Lynch-Brennan 2005; Sarti 2005c; Lutz & Schwalgin 2005; Widding Isaksen 2005; Magat 2005; Parreñas 2005; Blackett 2005. See also Fauve-Chamoux & Fialová (eds) 1997; Fauve-Chamoux 1998; Borderias 1991; Sarti 2004.

5. Domestic service, welfare and employment

So far, I have simply assumed that both in the past and present there were and are domestic workers. Is this obvious and inevitable?

5.1. The “ineluctable” march of progress and the expected disappearance of domestic service

“When two middle-class ladies talk together, nine times out of ten they devote their chatter to the servants”, complaining about their faults, wrote the Italian scholar Riccardo Bachi in 1900 – and the complaints are the same in Italy, France, Spain, Britain, Holland (Bachi 1900, p. 24; Piette 2000, pp. 329-332). In reality, complaints about servants were not new (for instance Müller-Staats 1987). Yet between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th all over Europe people shared the idea that there was a crisis in domestic service and frequently discussed the so-called “servant problem”, “servant shortage”, “great question” or “crise de la domesticité” in French, “crisi delle domestiche” in Italian, “Dienstbotenfrage” in German, etc.⁶³. And the problem did not involve “only” the old continent: according to Lucy Maynard Salmon, despite the differences between the European and American contexts, “employers on both sides of the Atlantic meet with the same serious difficulties in their efforts to secure competent household employees”⁶⁴, while according to many other Americans in the USA the problem was even worse than in Europe (Salmon 1901, 1897¹, pp. 275-276). Yet let us focus mainly on Europe.

In the old continent, public opinion partly dreamed of an (idealised) good old servant, loyal and faithful to his or her masters, and hoped to revive this ideal through intensive propaganda that exalted the value of domestic service (often in contrast with factory work) and urged masters to adopt (or to keep) a paternalistic attitude toward servants. Since the problem was to find domestics who were morally impeccable and good at their jobs, the drive for obedient and respectful servants often intermingled with efforts to “professionalize” domestic personnel. The first sentence of a short text published in France at the beginning of the 20th century summarises this conservative attitude:

63 See for instance Bouniceau-Gesmon 1896; Cusenier 1912; Stillich 1902; Kesten-Conrad 1910; Bachi 1900; Giusti Pesci 1913; Rignano Sullam 1914; Salmon 1901 (1897¹); Rubinow 1906; etc. As for research on this period, see on Italy: Reggiani 1992; on France: Guiral, Thuillier 1978; Martin-Fugier 1979, pp. 33-38; on Belgium: Piette 2000, pp. 327-311; on Germany: Ottmüller 1978; Müller 1985; Zull 1984; Wierling 1987; Pierenkemper 1988; Janßen w.d.; on Austria: Tichy 1984, pp. 16-23; on England: Horn 1975, pp. 151-165; McBride, 1976, p. 28 and *passim*; on Norway Schrupf 2002; Thorvaldsen 2005.

64 Salmon 1901, p. 278 (1st ed. 1897; the chapter on Europe was added in the 2nd ed.).

the servant “is *in* the household and will be *part of* the household if she lives *for* the household”⁶⁵: the good servant should be completely disposable; her purpose should be the welfare of her master’s family and to realize it she should give up her own desires and wishes.

Many others, particularly those who saw the shortage of servants as a consequence of backward working conditions within domestic service⁶⁶, did not dream of the revival of a mythical past but rather of the realization of a better future. In 1899, for instance, the French author Lucien Deslinières wrote in his book, *L’application du système collectiviste*, prefaced by the French socialist leader Jean Jaurès, that hiring domestic servants would become increasingly difficult as education and welfare spread. Yet in his opinion it was “inadmissible to keep people in misery and ignorance to facilitate the recruitment of servants”: the march of progress was unstoppable, and it had to be followed. However, the high development of social services (together with other improvements to be introduced) would, in the future, secure a way of life not less agreeable than that already experienced (Deslinières 1899, pp. 369-371). The Italian scholar Riccardo Bachi (1900, p. 40) thought that domestic servants would become salaried workers in cooperative or municipal restaurants or other institutions: in his view domestic service would, in sum, be domestic no longer. The British author Elizabeth Lewis called for the provision of a “culinary dépôt in every street from which meals could be sent out”. This would eliminate the problems and wastefulness of running a family and would imply a change of the whole domestic system⁶⁷. In Germany, the socialist leader August Bebel had also suggested that private kitchens should be replaced by communal kitchens equipped with electricity for heating and lighting, and with every kind of modern (electric) appliance to make work easier, quicker, safer and less expensive. Communal solutions should be adopted for washing and laundry too⁶⁸. This radical revolution of the household would lead to the

65 “La Domestique. En trois mots j’aurai dit toute ma pensée: Elle est *dans* la maison; Elle sera *de* la maison, Si elle est *pour* la maison”, *La domestique*, Impr. Ch. Basseville, Paris, [1906].

66 According to Lucy Maynard Salmon (1901, pp. 278-279), both in Europe and America women “prefer work in factories where the hours of work are definitely prescribed and evenings and Sundays are free; (...) in shops where their individual life is less under control (...); in hotels (...) since these give opportunity for specialized work, a life of variety and excitement, and larger wages in the form of fees; because they prefer short engagements with moderate wages in families; because the growing spirit of democracy rebels against the inferior social position accorded household employees, even to those whose work is rightly classed as skilled labor”. On the different ways of interpreting the crisis, its reasons and its possible solutions see among others Zull 1984, pp. 52-198; Wierling 1987, pp. 183-222, 283-296; Janßen w.d.; Reggiani 1992; Piette 2000, in particular pp. 362-367.

67 Lewis E., *A Reformation of Domestic Service in Nineteenth century*, January 1893, quoted by Horn 1975, p. 155.

68 Bebel 1910, chap. 27, section 3 (Kommunistische Küche), available online, see website <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/bebel/frausoz/frau2741.htm>.

disappearance of both servant and mistress⁶⁹. Lily Braun, probably the most interested in domestic service among German socialists, also agreed on the need to introduce communal kitchens⁷⁰.

While in Germany Marxist socialists thought that private households should be replaced by centralised services, reformist socialists aimed at bettering the servants' conditions by abolishing the so-called *Gesindeordnungen* (Servant Law) that implied the servant's personal dependence upon his or her master; introducing collective contracts and wage rates; defining work-time; and bettering living conditions in the master's house – a programme with several points in common with that of many social reformers both in Germany and in other countries (Giusti Pesci 1913; Sullam 1914). However, many reformist socialists as well as many social reformers thought that these reforms should overcome the master-servant co-residence that made dependence of one upon the other particularly easy⁷¹, an the same point was in the programme of the Russian Professional Union of Female and Male Servants in 1918 (Spagnolo 2005b).

On the other side of the Atlantic, the “apostle of democracy” (Fargo Brown 1943), Lucy Maynard Salmon (1901, 1897¹, p. 267), also suggested, among other things, “the working out of ways and means for taking both work and worker out of the house of the employer”: this would result “in greater personal independence and in openings for specialized work”. A few years later Christine Frederick – the “apostle” of a new rationalised housekeeping based on the application of efficiency and Taylorism to housework and an author whose books and articles had enormous influence in Europe – maintained that “we shall never absolutely solve the question [i.e. the servant question] until the worker ceases to live with us (...) I can see no practical reason why we shall not have servants – skilled servants – work for us, who live their independent lives at their own homes, and come to us daily” (Frederick 1914, p. 178).

I could add many other examples (Sarti 2005d), but I think that these few cases are sufficient to show that a century ago the belief that traditional servants were going to disappear was quite common. It was probably shared by people who simply noticed, and often regretted, that hiring a (good) servant was becoming increasingly difficult. It was definitely shared by people who thought that servants would or should be replaced by a new kind of domestic worker, more independent and similar to a factory worker, and by people who aimed to establish a completely new society without

69 *Ibid.*, chap. 27, section 4 (Umwandlung des häuslichen Lebens).

70 Janßen w.d.; Müller 1985 p. 172 (on the forecast of the development of households without servants see. *ibid.*, pp. 172-178). On Lily Braun's role see also Walser 1986, pp. 104-109.

71 Zull 1984, pp. 190-198. Marxist socialists also agreed on the necessity of abolishing the *Gesindeordnungen*.

any kind of servant. All these people would probably be surprised, if they could know that today, in the 21st century (the age of high technology, internet, space exploration), domestic workers – even live-ins – are still present and that their number is probably even expanding, though the lack of statistics does not allow pinpointing a precise trend. They probably would be astonished, if they could hear or read what today is quite frequently repeated, i.e. that in the present employing domestic workers is not a luxury but a necessity (for instance Andall 2003; Alemani 2004). And they probably would be shocked, if they could see that, today, there still are people willing to do this work. We can wonder what happened, and why their forecasts and hopes have proved wrong.

5.2. Expected disappearance and current revival: problems with statistics

First, we can wonder how domestic service changed between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Were domestics really becoming as rare as we might imagine from reading some sources of the time? Since at that time European countries had statistical offices that collected data and carried out population censuses, answering this question seems quite easy. Yet it isn't. Scholars who have worked with censuses have often complained that categories changed from one census to the other, making comparison over time very difficult⁷². These problems are magnified by the fact that sometimes changes in census categories reflected important changes in the social position of a certain group, as is the case, for instance, of Italian doorkeepers who during Fascism were allowed to have a trade union (a "corporation") and a few years later were no longer classified among domestic servants, who were not allowed to unionize (Sarti 2001c, pp. 10-174, 180-181; 2004, p. 37).

On the contrary, in other cases, category changes seem simply to reflect the difficulty of clearly defining servants and possibly the presence of differing and competing opinions among the statistical officers responsible for working out the census categories. From 1901 onwards, for instance, Italian butlers ("maestri di casa") were seemingly no longer classified among domestic personnel but among professionals. Yet in the 1930s the "maggior-domi" – a definition that could have the same meaning as "maestro di casa" – were again included among domestics (Sarti 2001c, pp. 160-170, 180-181).

72 Martin-Fugier 1978, pp. 34-36; Ebery & Preston 1976; Higgs 1978, 1983, 1986, 1987, 1996; Sarti 1999a; Fialová 2005; Thorvaldsen 2005; Woollard 2005; Dubert, forthcoming, etc.

The ambiguity that has always characterized the concept of domestic servants explains such changes as well as the mistaken inclusion among servants of people who should be classified in other categories. In England, for instance, the instructions to tabulators in 1861 explained that by a “‘Domestic Servant’ is meant a servant (whether in or out of place) who is employed in *some other family* than her own. Children or other members of a family living at home, who are *called* servants, but who may be presumed to be only engaged in their own household duties, must be treated as undescribed relatives, and referred to ‘Daughter, Niece’, etc. as the case may be”⁷³.

In fact, in 1851 a large number of “housekeepers who were almost certainly working at home” had been abstracted as domestics in the published census, as revealed by Edward Higgs who carefully studied the case of Rochdale (Higgs 1987, p. 71). Some years later (1871), however, instructions to census clerks laid down that “when a sister, daughter, or other relative, is described as ‘Housekeeper’, ‘Servant’, ‘Governess’, etc. she must be referred to these occupations”⁷⁴.

Such a statement confirms, if confirmation were needed, how difficult it is to distinguish people who carried out the same tasks in households, to the point where, some years ago, it was suggested that “it is perhaps unwise (...) to look at domestic service as a distinct ‘occupation’. Rather it should be studied as a series of social relationships with a similar work content on a spectrum from close kinship to the cash nexus”⁷⁵. However – even though domestic service is the occupation “which may be the most difficult to interpret” (Higgs 1987, p. 68) – the classification of every kind of female activity created big problems for census officials all over Europe, because almost all women did the job of a housewife to a lesser or greater extent, and so were likely to be included among housewives in spite of the fact that they also worked as peasants, shopkeepers, etc. (Sarti 1999a).

A further problem faced by the census officials (and due to the aforementioned ambiguity) was the classification of farm servants. As shown in the notes to Table 1, in most countries there

73 Quoted by Woollard 2005. There were similar problems with the women defined as “ménagères” in Belgium, see Piette 2000, pp. 43-44 and Gubin 2001, pp. 33-59.

74 Quoted by Higgs 1987, p. 71. On the problem of the classification of kin and relatives in the servant category see Higgs 1987, 1996; M. Anderson 1988, 1998; Drake 1999. Some people “really” worked as servants in the house of a relative, while others were included in this category even though they simply carried out, at home, their duties as wives, daughters, children.

75 Higgs 1987, p. 69. Interestingly, in the 1900 Spanish census the category called “Trabajo doméstico” (housework) had two sub-groups: a) “Miembros de la familia” (family members) and “Sirvientes domesticos” (domestic servants), see *Censo de la población de España según el empadronamiento hecho en la Península é Islas adyacentes en 31 de diciembre de 1900*, tomo IV, Imprenta de la Dirección general del Instituto geográfico y estadístico, Madrid, 1907, p. 216.

were norms stating that farm servants should not be classified with domestic servants. Yet in practice it was often difficult, or even impossible, to neatly distinguish between farm and domestic servants, as sometimes the statistical authorities complained. In France, for example, before 1896 many farm servants were included among domestic personnel “even though the instructions always prescribed classification of farm servants with workers” (“bien que les instructions aient toujours prescrit de classer les domestiques de ferme avec les ouvriers”)⁷⁶.

Luckily, in some cases census results are published in such a detailed way that it is possible for scholars to construct (more or less) comparable categories that allow the gathering of some information on long term changes. Yet in other cases this is absolutely impossible, and not only because of changes in the category of servants but also because of modifications to the classification of the working population, the unemployed, possible secondary occupation(s) and so on. Considering how difficult it is to make comparisons over time on a national level, we can easily figure out the enormous problems that arise when one tries to compare different countries: not surprisingly, earlier proposals to use comparables categories did not succeed (Woollard 2005).

However, one would expect that all these problems have been overcome in more recent times, and that contemporary statistical data are much more precise and reliable. Unfortunately, this is not the case. As we have stressed in chapter VI of the *Scientific Description*, giving precise details on the current statistical resources, there is today a crucial lack of statistics, and the situation is even worse than fifty or even hundred years ago, because the domestic workers are often merged in the same category with different kind of workers (possibly exactly because they were expected to disappear), and this makes any analysis and comparison impossible (see also Table 1, sources and notes).

76 République Française, Ministère du commerce, de l'industrie, des Postes et des Télégraphes, Direction du Travail, Service du recensement des industries et des professions, *Dénombrement Général de la Population du 29 Mars 1896*, Tome IV, *Résultats Généraux*, Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1901, P. XVII. For a similar statement by Italian statistical authorities see Ministero di Agricoltura, Industria e Commercio, Direzione Generale della Statistica, *Censimento della popolazione del Regno d'Italia al 10 febbraio 1901*, vol. V., *Relazione sul metodo e sui risultati del censimento, raffrontati con quelli dei censimenti italiani precedenti e dei censimenti esteri*, Tipografia Nazionale G. Bertero e C., Roma, 1904, p. XCVII.

5.3. Expected disappearance and current revival: some quantitative data

1850-1900

After listing this long series of faults in and limits to censuses, we would expect quite random data on the European level. Yet it is only partially so. Surprisingly, in fact, according to census data, in the 19th and early 20th centuries the trend is the same in several countries, with the percentage of servants in the active population reaching its peak in 1880-1881 and then decreasing⁷⁷ (Table 1). It is so in England and Wales and Italy, two states for which I was able to create more or less similar categories, but also in France, a country for which I have used the data standardized by Marchand and Thelot (1991), and even in the Czech Republic, where the category of domestic staff was completely different and explicitly included people working in agriculture, industry and trade (Fialová 2005). Moreover, the trend was similar in Belgium, where, according to the original census data, the peak was reached a few years later, i.e. in 1890. In the case of Germany we don't have data for the whole country before 1882 (as is well known, Germany was unified in 1871). Yet, after this date, the incidence of servants also decreases. According to the original census data, it diminished in Spain too, but in this case there was no peak in the 1880s, and the negative trend had seemingly already started in 1860⁷⁸. The picture was radically different only in Norway, where a positive trend (possibly similar to the positive trend that seemed to characterise England and Wales as well as Belgium in the second half of the century, France from 1866 and Italy from 1871) continued not only beyond the 1880s-1890s but also beyond 1900. So we may conclude that in most European countries census data, despite enormous faults, confirmed the contemporary impression that, in the late 19th-early 20th century it was increasingly difficult to recruit domestic servants and that they were diminishing, at least relative to other workers.

Besides revealing a similar trend, the figures in Table 1 also show that the percentage of servants among the active population was seemingly particularly high in England, Norway and, to a lesser extent, Germany. Around 1880, for instance, it was 13.8 percent in England, about 12 percent in Norway and almost 10 percent in Germany, while in Belgium, France, Spain and Italy it was 4-6 percent. In the Czech Republic it was 8 percent, but in this case the category was probably completely different. In other cases, too, the difference among European countries was possibly due

77 On the 1880s in France and England see McBride 1976, p. 34; Marchand & Thelot, 1991, p. 102.

78 Dubert warns us that Spanish censuses of this period were absolutely not reliable.

to differing ways of classifying domestic servants in population censuses. Yet it probably also reflected the different role historically played by domestic service in different European areas (as previously mentioned, domestic service was more common in Northern Europe)⁷⁹. Things in the 19th and 20th centuries were rapidly changing, but differences in the incidence of domestic service that have been identified for pre-industrial times still seemed to play a certain role.

This data also prompts us to consider the relationship between industrialization and changes in domestic service. The fact that in 19th century England, the first industrialised country, there was an expansion of domestic service before the 1880s seems to confirm that the old thesis (long criticized), according to which the transition from pre-industrial to industrial societies implied a progressive diminution of domestic servants, is absolutely inadequate⁸⁰. At the same time, it seems to confirm that Theresa McBride was right when she wrote that both in England and France “domestic service reached its peak during the early decades of industrialisation” (McBride 1976, p. 34). Since she concentrated on the period 1820-1920, in reaching this judgement she probably did not intend to compare the 19th-20th centuries with pre-industrial times, but simply to stress the growth of domestic service in the 19th century and support Ester Boserup’s thesis that, during the intermediate stage of economic development, the personal services sector is very large; urbanization creates a demand for service personnel in bars and restaurants as well as in the homes of the newly-rich entrepreneurial class. Domestic labour becomes commercialised and absorbs a large segment of the unskilled labour which migrates to the urban centres (Boserup 1970, pp. 102-104).

The Cambridge Group data on the percentage of servants in the population confirms that in 19th century England there was an expansion of domestic service⁸¹, even though it seems very likely that 17th-18th century levels were no longer reached, as suggested by Richard Wall (1983, Table 2) and, more recently, by Leonard Schwarz (1999).

79 As previously mentioned, I was able to “create” both for England and Italy a quite similar servant category and the classification used by Marchand and Thelot (1991) is also more or less the same. Therefore the big differences in the incidence of domestic servants in these countries cannot be due to the use of different servant categories.

80 In 1969, for instance, Rolf Engelsing suggested that between the feudal period and the industrial there was an intermediate phase during which there was a (not industrial) economic expansion which had as a consequence an increasing demand for services. In his opinion in Germany this phase took place between 1770-1780 and 1840-50, see Engelsing (1969), in part. p. 103.

81 According to this data the expansion took place between 1831 and 1871. If one considers the total population, the peak is in 1871, also using census data. See Schwarz 1999, pp. 236-256, Tables 4 and 7.

Yet the fact that the turning point was apparently the same – the 1880s – in Italy, too⁸² induces us to be more cautious. Italy, in fact, was a “late comer” to industrialization. In the 1880s, when the percentage of domestic servants in the active population began to decrease, Italian industrial development was still in its first phases. Consequently, for Italy the old theory according to which industrialization would have as a consequence the disappearance of servants, may be more fitting. The Spanish example (or, more exactly, that of Galicia) prompts further caution. As shown by Isidro Dubert, in Galicia domestic service underwent a process of reduction, feminization and ruralization – i.e. phenomena often associated with urbanization and industrialization – at a time when there was no significant industrial development or urbanization (Dubert 1999, 2001, forthcoming). So, if we consider the reduction of domestic servants as an aspect of “modernity”, we should conclude that some modernity might be present in contexts where the processes generally associated with modernization, i.e. industrialization and urbanization, were almost absent. As will soon become evident, the transformation of domestic service was in fact influenced not only by industrialization and urbanization, but by a wider range of variables, some more general and some peculiar to specific contexts. Clearly this does not help us to understand why the turning point was seemingly the same in several different countries, a question that needs more comparative research (see Table 1 and notes, at the end of this chapter).

82 As shown in the notes/appendix of Table 1, the 1880s are a turning point in Italy also, provided that one uses in 1901 a servant category more similar to that of 1881.

1900-1950

In the first decade of the 20th century, there was a reduction in the percentage of domestic servants in the economically active population of several European countries, and this trend continued in the 1910s. Yet between the 1920s and the 1930s the trend reversed. In France this percentage grew only slightly, but in Italy it increased significantly: in 1936 it was even higher than in 1901 (Table 1)⁸³. In other countries, such as Norway, England and Belgium, there was also a quite strong increase, as well as in the USA⁸⁴. Surprisingly enough, there was a growth even in post-revolutionary Russia (Spagnolo 2005b). In their studies on England and France, Pamela Horn and Theresa McBride (1976, p. 112) maintain that the expansion was a consequence of the Great Depression, which forced more girls “to enter domestic service because other avenues of employment were closed to them” (Horn 1975, p. 170). There also were concrete attempts to transfer unemployed women into domestic service. Yet part of them (for instance among unemployed factory workers) were reluctant to move into service (Pope 2000).

In Italy not only the Depression but also the policy of the Fascist regime was responsible for the reversal of the trend. In spite of the emphasis on the role of peasants and agriculture, this policy was more beneficial to traditional agrarian elites than to the rural lower classes, and to industry more than to the agriculture. Because of both the economic crisis and this policy, many rural families faced a particularly difficult time. As a consequence, at a time when massive international emigration was no longer possible, an increasing number of rural women probably migrated to the cities to work as servants. Significantly, the *servette* (“female servants”) were never covered by fascist laws which tried (not very successfully) to stop migration to the cities in order to prevent the unemployed from concentrating in urban areas, thus increasing the risk of social protests. Between 1921 and 1931 the proportion of female servants jumped from 7.2 percent to 11.4 percent of economically active women. However, this outcome was most likely due also to other reasons, first

83 According to the original French census data, domestic servants represented 4.9 percent of the active population in 1901; 4.4 percent in 1911; 3.6 percent in 1921 and in 1926; and 3.7 percent both in 1931 and 1936. For the census data corrected by Marchand & Thelot 1991 (Table 6t, p. 187) see Table 1. Unless otherwise indicated, in this paper the percentage of the economically active population is calculated as a proportion of people of working age. As is well known, the use of censuses is often problematic. For a wide discussion of the Italian census data on domestic servants, see Sarti, “La domesticité”; Id., “Work and Toil”.

84 For Norway and England see Table 1. As concerns Belgium, according to Gubin 2001, pp. 41-42, domestic workers were the 17 percent of active women in 1910, the 15 percent in 1920 and the 18 percent in 1930, while among men they represented the 0,7 percent both in 1910 and 1920, and the 0,6 percent in 1930. For 1910 she does not use the same servant category as Piette (see Table 1). On the USA see Stigler 1946; Chaplin 1978 etc.

of all the “misogyny” of Fascism (in the same period the proportion of male servants decreased from 0.5 percent of economically active men in 1921 to 0.3 percent in 1931) (Sarti 2001c).

Fascism emphasised the role of women as wives and mothers, even though mass mobilization also included women and involved them in manifestations that took place in the public sphere. Through discriminatory laws, it tried to force women out of the labour force, particularly from qualified and professional employment. To stimulate the growth of the Italian population and thus support its power politics, Fascism encouraged and protected maternity, and this also worsened the position of women in the labour market. According to census data, between 1921 and 1931 the proportion of economically active women shrank from 33.3 percent to 23.5 percent (Sarti 2001c with further references).

In France almost no discriminatory law against women’s work was introduced (Bard 1999, pp. 169-192). In spite of this, in France, too, the proportion of economically active women fell⁸⁵. However, the percentage of female servants among economically active women only increased very little in the 1920s-30s: according to the census data reworked by Marchand and Thelot (1991) they were 8.7 percent of the economically active women in 1926, 8.9 per cent in 1936⁸⁶. At the same time there was almost no change in the proportion of male domestics among economically active men. This raises the problem of the influence of state policies on domestic service. For instance, it stimulates us to inquire whether different “fascist” regimes such as Italian Fascism and German National Socialism were similar in this respect. We need more comparative research to answer this question. However, we can try to pick out some salient features.

As previously mentioned, in the 1930s the proportion of servants increased significantly both in Italy and England, whereas this was not the case in France. In Germany, according to census data the number of people employed in the domestic work sector (*Häusliche Dienste*) shrank from 1,393,896 in 1925 to 1,269,582 in 1933 (-8.9 percent), decreasing from 4.3 percent to 3.9 percent of the economically active population. The more specific sub-category of domestic servants (*Hausangestellte*) shrank from 1,325,587 to 1,218,587 (-8.1 percent). The percentage of female servants (*weibliche Hausangestellte*) among economically active women fell from 11.4 percent to

85 According to the original census data, the female activity rate was 42.3 percent in 1921 and 34.4 percent in 1936 while according to the data corrected by Marchand & Thelot 1991 (Table 5f, p. 179) it reduced from 43.4 percent to 38.4 percent.

86 Though statistically limited, the phenomenon was noticed by the contemporaries: in 1936 the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne Française (JOCF) noticed that there were factory workers who were becoming maids of all work because of the economic crises (Martin Huan 1997, p. 92).

10.5 percent⁸⁷. Gretel Keller (1950, p. 76) put this decrease down to rising unemployment, yet the aforementioned census data also include the unemployed. If we exclude them, the fall is much more dramatic⁸⁸. Keller also added that the Nazi regime conceived the expansion of domestic service as a particularly appropriate way to reduce the number of unemployed women⁸⁹. Thus, as early as 1933-34 it lowered social security contributions and introduced tax benefits for employers to encourage German families to hire more *Hausgehilfinnen*, even though this worsened the position of domestics on pensions and social insurance. In 1934 the so-called *Hauswirtschaftliche Jahr für Mädel* (Housekeeping Year for Girls) started. This was to protect from unemployment girls who had finished their school education and could not find either professional training or job opportunities; to teach them the rudiments of housekeeping; and to educate them in the values of German womanhood by placing them in proper families. In theory, hiring these girls should by no means have implied the dismissal of any domestic servant, nor should it have prevented any family from taking into service a “real” *Hausgehilfin*. But in practice it was almost impossible to secure the observance of this condition. Also in 1934 the biannual *Hauswirtschaftliche Lehre* (housekeeping teaching) was introduced. Girls both worked in proper families and attended professional school courses for two years; then, after an examination, they could become “certified *Hausgehilfin*” (Keller 1950, pp. 80-83).

Within a few years, the situation changed radically. As German economic conditions improved, on the one hand demand for domestic workers increased, but on the other the supply shrank, because women could find better job opportunities in other sectors. The laws that forbade rural workers from changing their employment increased this scarcity. To reduce it, some big cities such as Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen removed the norms (established in 1934) which restricted job opportunities for servants coming from elsewhere. Moreover, female organisations emphasised the moral value of working in a household to stimulate girls to enter domestic service.

This strategy did not prove to be particularly successful. In 1938, therefore, a 4-year plan to increase female activity in agriculture and the domestic economy established that companies, both

87 Statistisches Reichsamt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich. Fünfundfünfzigster Jahrgang 1936*, Verlag für Sozialpolitik, Wirtschaft und Statistik G.m.b.H., Berlin, 1936, pp. 17–9. See also Willms 1983, pp. 25–54 (Table 1, p. 35).

88 Women included in the domestic work sector (*Häusliche Dienste*) represented 11.8 percent of economically active women in 1925, 10.9 percent in 1933. Excluding the unemployed, these percentages were respectively 13.2 percent and 10.5 percent. It is not possible to do this calculation on the more specific category of the *Hausangestellte*.

89 As previously mentioned, also the British authorities tried to stimulate unemployed women to enter domestic service, see Pope 2000.

private and public, could hire unmarried women younger than 25 only if they had worked for at least a year in agriculture or domestic service. The immediate effect of this measure was to reduce the scarcity of domestic workers. Yet it soon prompted families which before the plan could not afford any servant to apply for a cheap girl. Moreover, the compulsory year possibly encouraged women to look for other jobs, as girls were often exploited. According to Willms (1983a, Table 1, p. 34) the percentage of domestic workers among economically active women was the same as in 1933 (10.5 percent), while, according to Keller (1950, p. 88), in 1940 there were less domestic servants than in 1938.

There was such a scarcity that in 1939 domestic servants were excluded from compulsory work in war-related industry. Moreover, when laws against the mobility of the labour force were introduced, families with at least one child under 14 were allowed to hire a servant without any authorisation. From 1941 people employing more than one *Hausgehilfin* had to inform the employment office, so that it could then assign the second, third, fourth *Hausgehilfin*, etc. to other households, particularly those with many children. At the same time a “dowry allowance” for girls working for at least five years in families with three or more children under 14 was introduced. From 1942 onwards women who were not willing to move into families where the work was particularly heavy could be forced to. Moreover, a domestic worker could be assigned to two different families. To single out servants who could work more, in 1943 all families employing some kind of domestic help were obliged to notify this to the authorities. *Hausgehilfinnen* were called back from the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* and the *Kriegshilfedienst*. German women working as servants abroad were called back as well. Finally, workers from countries occupied by the Nazis were forced to work as servants in Germany. Other measures can be added to this long list. In 1942 the authorities forbade advertisements in journals in order to prevent domestic workers from finding better workplaces. And as salaries were rising because of servant scarcity, from 1940 they tried to fix maximum wages (Keller 1950, pp. 89-91; Winkler 2000, pp. 146-148).

In conclusion, the Nazis made an enormous effort to expand domestic service, but their policies were not particularly successful. In the 1930s the percentage of domestics among working women did not change and was lower than in 1925. This trend differentiated the German case from the Italian, in exactly the same way as the diverging policies of Nazi and Fascist authorities do. The Nazis heavily intervened in the domestic service labour market. Moreover, they established some guidelines (even if not binding) to regulate work time and the employer/employee relationship. Finally they intruded in domestic service to realise their racist policy. To avoid sexual intercourse

between Germans and Jews, the laws for the protection of German blood (1935) prevented Jewish families from employing German female servants younger than forty five (Bock 2001, p. 216).

Italian racial laws, introduced in 1938, also involved domestic service, forbidding Jews to have “Aryan” Italian servants (Sarti 2001c). Furthermore, the new Civil Code of 1942 devoted seven articles (2240-2246) to domestic service. In spite of this, Fascism did not make any particular effort to regulate it. The articles of the Civil Code were introduced at a late stage. In addition, recognising the specific circumstances of domestic workers, they did not extend to them many rights which were granted to other categories of workers. In other words, they did not radically change the previous “deregulation” of domestic service⁹⁰. Finally, as far as I know, no measure was taken that *directly* and *explicitly* aimed at expanding it. The number of domestic workers increased as a consequence of Fascist policy in *other* sectors, even though this growth was coherent with Fascist ideology on a woman’s place.

Both Fascism and Nazism pursued in a partially contradictory way the respective ideals of the woman *madre e sposa esemplare* (“exemplary mother and wife”) and of *Kinder, Küche und Kirche* (“children, kitchen and church”) (on Italy Sarti 2001c, with further references; on Germany Bock 1992, 2001). Paradoxically, the number, percentage and gender ratio of domestic workers changed more in Fascist Italy, where authorities did not develop any interventionist policy for domestic service, than in Germany, where they strongly did. Moreover, in Italy the features of domestic personnel changed in accordance with the ideal of femininity praised by Fascism. Thus, if we look at these countries from the particular vantage point of domestic service, the contradictions seem bigger in Germany than in Italy. However, the result of these different trends led (it seems) to a similar situation in the two nations. In fact, according to available data, both in 1936 Italy and in 1939 Germany domestic workers represented about 10.5 percent of economically active women. Furthermore, thanks to the increasing number of women servants, in the second half of the 1930s the gender make-up of Italian domestic personnel grew more similar to that in Germany, which had experienced such a feminization earlier⁹¹.

90 Significantly, Fascist Italy never had a “corporation” nor a “trade union” for domestics, even though it was a “corporative” state, Sarti 2001c, p. 191.

91 According to the data one can draw from Willms 1983, pp. 107–186 (Tables A2-A3, pp. 175–176), in 1925 women represented 97.8 percent of German servants while both in 1933 and 1939 they were 98.8 percent. In Italy female servants were 85.4 percent in 1921, 90.6 percent in 1931 and 95.0 percent in 1936, see Sarti 2001c, Table 4, pp. 182–183. However, because of different female activity rates, the percentage of female servants of the *total* population of the country was different: in Italy it was about 1.1 percent, while in Germany it was double (about 2.2 percent).

As for Spain, in 1930 domestic workers represented 30.9 percent of economically active women: a percentage much higher than that to be found in Italy (11.4 percent in 1931), in Germany (10.5% in 1933) or France (8.7 percent in 1931). This high percentage was due to the fact that in Spain female activity rates were particularly low (9 percent, see Nash 1983). Indeed, the absolute number of domestic workers was not particularly high (around 340.000). In spite of these differences, in later years – i.e. during the Franco’s regime – domestic service in Spain had, it seems, an evolution quite similar to that we just described for Italy. In 1950 the percentage of domestic workers among economically active women had further increased (31.3 percent), while their incidence among working men had decreased (from 0.6 percent in 1930 to 0.2% in 1950). As in Italy, feminization progressed: women were 88.3 percent of domestic workers in 1930, 96.5 percent in 1950. In Italy they were 85.4 percent in 1921, 95 percent in 1936, while there was so further feminization in France, or Britain (Sarti 2004). As it is well known, the Franco’s regime stressed the domestic role of women, and this evolution of domestic service is coherent with Franco’s gender ideology and policy (Bussy Genevois 1992). Spanish women working in domestic service still were very numerous in the 1960s, as far as we know⁹².

1950-2000

In the 1930s, while Italian women had to face Fascist efforts to marginalise and expel them from the labour market, Alva Myrdal and other Swedish women discussed “how to combine family life with professional careers” (Platzer, forthcoming). In Sweden the need for well educated women was growing and it seemed inevitable that they would be increasingly involved in the labour market, even though men and workers’ trade unions disliked this possibility because of high unemployment. Employing domestic personnel seemed to Alva Myrdal the best solution. However, the economic recovery created new employment opportunities for lower-class women, and domestics became scarce. So household management entered the political agenda, particularly since fertility was falling and this was interpreted as a sign of the difficulty – for women – of combining care and professional work⁹³. As far as either household technology or diminishing self-production

92 Sarti 2005d; Dubert forthcoming; Muñoz 2005; Colectivo IOÉ 2000, pp. 154-157; 171-176; Pedregal 1951, 21-22; on the debate on domestic service in Franco’s Spain see also Martín De Nicolas 1943, Pérez González 1944; Galvarriato 1946; Unsaín 1948; Lozano Montero 1948; Garcia Araujo 1958. I am grateful to Jesús Mirás-Araujo for information on Spain.

93 Domestic workers have been seen as a factor that is likely to facilitate the employers fertility is very different contexts: one of the reasons of the Nazi’s policy that tried to develop domestic service aimed exactly to stimulate fertility; in post-war Britain the “servant shortage” was presented as a hindrance to childbearing

did not seem sufficient to eliminate the need for servants, it was suggested to transform part of domestic work “into wage labour with the State as employer”. In the following decades reproductive work was increasingly organised collectively. People working in public care services enjoyed better working conditions than private domestic servants, who almost disappeared. According to Swedish census data they represented 2.9 percent of the economically active population in 1950, only 0.005 percent in 1990⁹⁴. Also other countries with well developed welfare systems witnessed a very strong reduction of domestics. In Western Germany (FRG) people employed in the domestic service sector (*Häusliche Dienste*) reduced from 4.1 percent of the economically active population in 1951 to 2.3 percent in 1961 and 0.6 percent both in 1970 and 1980 (see Table 1). Moreover, according to Simone Odierna, after the Second World War live-in domestic workers rapidly disappeared and by the 1950s there were only live-out domestic helps (Odierna 2000, pp. 68-70; Keller 1950 spoke of *Hausflucht*, i.e. flight from the home).

Similarly, in Britain “although there has been some debate over the precise timing of the demise of residential domestic service, there is general agreement that by the 1950s the practice of ‘servant-keeping’ had all but disappeared except in a few aristocratic households” (Giles 2001, p. 301). While both in 1951 and 1961 domestic workers represented 5 percent of the economically active population according to census data (Table 1), if we do not consider charwomen and office cleaners they reduced from 3.9 to 1.7 percent during the decade. As a consequence, “consumption of commodities and services” “became one of the markers of [middle] class identity rather than ‘servantkeeping’” (Giles 2001, p. 307). Middle-class women were obliged to live without co-resident domestic help and to take on several menial tasks. As written by Chaplin (1978, p. 111),

(Giles 2001, p. 313). In the current Italian public debate the “utility” of domestic workers is also sometimes seen as a factor that may help (among other) increasing the low fertility rate of Italian women.

94 On Sweden see Platzer, forthcoming. I am grateful to the author for allowing me to quote it. I am also grateful to Beatrice Kalnins (SCB BV/BI) for providing me with Swedish census data. Domestic workers (in Swedish *Hushållsarbete*), represented 2.9 percent of the economically active population in 1950, 2.2 percent in 1960, 1.3 percent in 1970, when also children children's nurses (*barnsköterska*) were included in the category, besides domestic servants (*hembiträde*), 0.005 percent in 1990, when the category included au-pairs (*barnflicka*), domestic servants (*hembiträde*), domestic helps (*hemhjälp*), housekeepers (*hushållerska*), domestic workers (*hushållsarbete*), domestic assistants (*hushållsbiträde*), matrons (*husmoder*). They represented 11 percent of economically active women in 1950, 7.5 percent in 1960, 3.4 percent in 1970, 0,1 percent in 1990. In Norway, as written by Sølvi Sogner (2005), in the 1960s “the number of domestic servants was dwindling fast (...), approaching zero”. Similarly, Ellen Schrupf (2002) maintained that in the 1950s “there were very few domestic servants left in Norway”. The census data used in Table 1 does not support these statements, because in Norway the percentage of domestic workers on the economically active population, though falling, never went under the 2.7 percent, a level much higher than in several other European countries. Possibly the employed category (*Personlig tjenesteyting*, i.e. “Personal services”) does not include only domestic workers. Unfortunately, in spite of several efforts and the kind help of both Sølvi Sogner and Gunnar Thorvaldsen, I have not been able to find any precise information on the composition of this category at that time. However, as early as 1955 the sociologist Aubert, focusing on Norway, considered the housemaid “an occupational role in crises”.

with the “disappearance of domestic servants”, middle-class wives became “the ‘slaves’ of their families” (on this see point see also Fraisse 1979 as concerns France). Yet, according to Giles, the increasing frustrations of middle-class educated women, “trapped, as they saw it, in domesticity, fuelled the re-emergence of a strong feminist movement” some times later (Giles 2001, p. 319).

Even in Italy there are some clues of the “merging” of servant and mistress into the housewife: in 1942 the periodical “La brava domestica” (i.e. “The good servant”), changed its title into “La casalinga e la brava domestica” (i.e. “The housewife and the good servant”). Few years later, in 1946, the title was changed again and became “La casalinga: brava massaia” (i.e. “The housewife: good *massaia*: *massaia* is another term for housewife) (Sarti 1994, p. 348). As shown by table 1, domestic workers were reducing also in Italy. Recent research by Asher Colombo⁹⁵ (forthcoming) shows that in 1951 there were 23.3 co-resident domestic workers per thousand families, only 11.1 in 1961, and the percentage further reduced in the following years.

Significantly enough, after the second World War, the idea that domestic service was a declining and increasingly obsolescent occupation became (again) common (Stigler 1946; Aubert 1955; Coser 1973). The ongoing trends really seemed to support it (table 1). However, scholars were aware that the number of domestic servants was not only affected by wealth or economic development: in 1946 Stigler wrote that “the *equality* of distribution of income, rather than the amount, may be a factor of considerable importance” (p. 6) and in 1978 Chaplin developed his analysis concluding that “social inequality turns out to be the primary basis for high servant-employer ratio”, focussing on the role of immigration policies (pp. 108, 110-111) and the presence of segregated or ethnic minorities (pp. 114-120). Indeed, he considered domestic service as an index not only of the level, but also of the quality of industrialization and modernization, and as a measure of mass welfare (p. 123).

According to our data, in the early 1980s domestic workers were more numerous in the European countries whose public social expenditure was low, while they were less numerous in those countries whose public social expenditure was high. More precisely, with the sole exception of Italy, the higher the public social expenditure as a percentage of the GDP, the lower was the percentage of domestic workers in the economically active population. In other countries with less developed welfare systems, such as the Mediterranean, and particularly Spain, domestic workers

95 I am grateful to the A. for allowing me to use this data.

represented a higher percentage of the economically active population: in Spain they were 5.1 percent in 1950 and 3.9 in 1981. In other words, while in early modern times and even in the first decades of the 20th century domestic workers were more numerous in Northern Europe, after the Second World War a more rapid change led to a reversal of this long-term balance (Table 2).

Table 2. Public social expenditure, domestic workers and female employment rates

Country	Public social expenditure 1981 (% of the GDP)	% of domestic workers in the economically active population 1980-82	Female employment rates 1981
Spain	17,0	3,4	32,0
Norway	17,9 (1980)	2,7	63,9
Italy	19,8	0,9	40,0
France	22,2	1,4	55,0
Germany	23,7	0,6	53,1
Sweden	29,8	0,05	75,5

Source: OECD, Social expenditure database 2004 (www.oecd.org/els/social/depenses); OECD, Labour market statistics 2004 (www1.oecd.org/scripts/cde); for data about domestic workers see Table 1. For Sweden: *Arbetsmarknadsstatistik årsbok 1982-1983*, Stockholm, Sveriges officiella statistik, Statistiska centralbyrån, 1983, p. 49, Table 2.3.2 (1980).

This data should absolutely not to be considered conclusive. Even though, in the early 1980s, the share of informal work in the domestic service sector was probably lesser than today, data about the percentage of domestic workers is possibly not reliable (Odierna 2000; Sarti 2004. See also chapter VI of the *Scientific Description*). Moreover, it would be necessary to use more refined indicators of social expenditures: Sciortino (2004), for instance, has recently maintained that Italian households must “provide a very large share of personal services to their members (...) partly self-produced, partly acquired through public bodies and partly bought on the market” because they “have a fairly high likelihood of being recipients of some kind of public monetary transfer” while, with the exception of health care, “transfer and protections are embedded in a context where few services are available on a generalized basis”. Nevertheless, the data of Table 2 is extremely interesting, seeming to confirm that private domestic service is not at all a necessity, if there are good public services. With few exceptions this seems to be true also in more recent times (Table 3). But to interpret this data we have to consider that in more recent times in some country, as Denmark, public social expenditure also supports the hiring of domestic workers by private households (see below).

Table 3. Employment by NACE 2-digit sector as percentage of working-age population, 1997 (Private households); public social expenditure as percentage of GDP, 1997; female employment rates, 1997

Country	Private households	Public social expenditure	Female employment rates
IR - 1	0.0	16.8	45.3
S - 1	0.0	31.0	67.9
B - 2	0.1	27.5	47.0
FIN - 2	0.1	28.7	60.9
DK - 2	0.1	30.7	71.2
D - 3	0.2	27.6	53.6
N - 3	0.3	24.0	55.0
A - 3	0.3	26.0	59.6
UK - 4	0.4	22.0	63.9
I - 5	0.5	24.2	36.7
GR - 6	0.6	22.1	40.1
L - 7	0.9	22.6	41.5
E - 8	1.3	20.9	33.9
F - 9	1.4	29.4	52.7
P - 10	1.6	18.9	58.7
E15	0.6	24.8	50.5

Source: Employment Rates Report 1998. Employment Performance in the Member States (http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/empl_esf/empl99/rates_en.htm), Tables 1, 5; OECD, Social expenditure database 2004 (www.oecd.org/els/social/depenses).

Moreover, this data shows that high female employment rates do not necessarily imply high percentages of domestic workers in the economically active population. Indeed, in the 1980s, in particular, the lowest percentage of domestic workers in the economically active population was to be found in Sweden, where female employment rates were the highest, while the country with most domestic workers was Spain, where working women were few (Table 2). In part, this result is true also from the data of table 3.

One of the aims of the Swedish welfare system was to reduce cleavages between social classes.

Yet it took for granted gender inequality. As a consequence, it was upset by the reduction of the inequality between men and women due to spreading female full-time employment (Plutzer forthcoming).

Northern European welfare systems assumed that women would continue to do an important share of caring work and domestic chores. Yet from the 1980s onwards Scandinavian women have

been increasingly working outside the home full-time, while men have embraced housework only to a limited extent. This considerably reduced the “care reservoir” (Widding Isaksen 2005) represented by women exactly at a time when both ageing of population ageing and growing fertility increased the need for care. Sweden and Norway are trying different solutions for this new problem. Norway, for example, as shown by Widding Isaksen, “exports” the elderly to Spain where costs for care are lower while both in Sweden and Norway employers have begun to offer domestic service as a wage benefit to their employees (sometimes only to women!). At the same time families increasingly have recourse to private domestic workers (Widding Isaksen 2005; Platzer forthcoming).

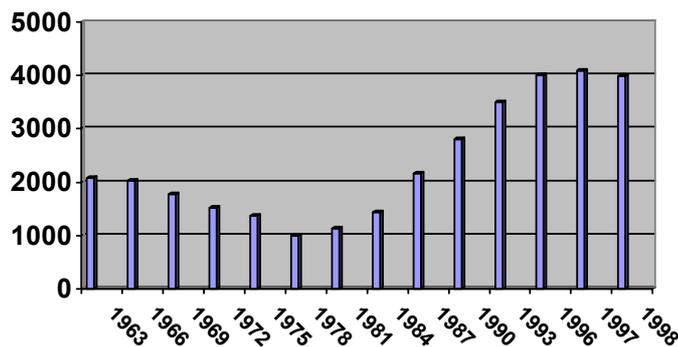
In other words, in these countries “modernization” really implied a near complete disappearance of paid domestic work; yet their welfare systems could efficiently work as far as women continued to carry out that part of their traditional chores which was not taken over by the state. As a consequence, increasing female full-time female activity rates (together with demographic change and other factors) have led to the present welfare difficulties as well as to the current “resurgence” of private domestic work.

As far as concerns family care is concerned, Italy or Spain never had a welfare system as developed as the Scandinavian. The “Mediterranean model” was and is based on the assumption that families (i.e. mothers and wives) were (and should be) the main care givers. Until recently, working women were few and women were encouraged to retire very young to devote themselves to housework, while public support for children and elderly care was limited. Increasing female activity rates and ageing of the population with related increasing needs for care have led many Italian and Spanish women to avoid maternity or drastically reduce fertility: Italian and Spanish fertility rates are today the lowest in the world (Bettio & Villa 1998), while families with children and elderly members have increasing recourse to private domestic workers (Colombo, forthcoming): a choice, that is possible because of the aforementioned large number of people willing to work as a domestic or carer in Western Europe.

So both Northern and Southern Europe are experiencing, it seems, a revival of paid domestic work. Solid quantitative evidence is lacking, not least because many domestic workers work irregularly. However in the United Kingdom “accurate records of household expenditure on domestic service date back to 1963. The amount spent in real terms that is after allowing for inflation, declined steadily until 1978, when it reached a figure of just under £1 billion. Expenditure on domestic services then increased steadily every year from 1978 until 1997, when it stood at over

£4 billion” (Social Trends 30). This data also include expenses for not strictly domestic services (see Figure 1, note), but are in any case quite impressive. “Personal and domestic services constitute one of the fastest growing sectors in the Danish economy. In 1998, the growth was 24% with a turnover of around € 130 million” (Renooy, Ivarsson, van der Wusten-Gritsai & Meijer 2004, p. 171). In Germany, according to Nicole Mayer-Ahuja (2004), the number of private household employees increased from 667,000 in 1987 to about a million in 1992 and 1.2 million in 1997 and in 2002 the Hartz Commission concluded that in the household sector there were between 1.2 and 2.9 million of undeclared employment (Renooy, Ivarsson, van der Wusten-Gritsai & Meijer 2004, 169). In France in the last ten years there has been an “explosion of domestic help”: *assistantes maternelles, gardiennes d’enfants e travailleuses familiales* were 261,440 in 1990 and 538,390 in 1999 (Amossé 2001). In Italy (Sarti 2004) paid domestic workers possibly numbered 953,900 in 1992 and presumably reached 1049,500 in 2000, according to evaluation by the Italian Statistical Office (which however is not completely convincing, see Colombo, forthcoming). Data on Spain are quite contradictory⁹⁶, however, according to the results of the Encuesta de Población Activa between 1997 and 1999 there was a growth of 54.000 employees (+8 percent yearly) (Colectivo IOÉ 2000, p. 449).

Fig. 1
Expenditure on domestic services
at constant prices, United Kingdom, 1963-1998



96 According to results of the *Encuesta de Población Activa*, it is possible to identify three different phases: 1977-1987: decrease of 99,000 employments (-1,9 percent yearly); 1987-1997: further decrease of 102.000 employments (-2,3 percent yearly); 1997-1999: growth of 54.000 employees (+8 percent yearly). On the other hand, according to the research by the Banco de Bilbao-Vizcaya between 1977 and 1983 occupied were 430,000; between 1983 and 1987 they decreased (-20,000 occupied) while in the period 1983-1993 they increased (+121,000). Possibly the difference is due to the fact that the first source probably leaves generally out moonlighting activities in the sector, while the second includes them to a larger extent (Colectivo IOÉ 2000, p. 449).

Source: *Expenditure on domestic services at constant prices, 1963-1998 (Selected Years): Social Trends 30* (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/xsdataset.asp?vlnk=480&Pos=&ColRank=1&Rank=272>)

Note: “This category includes domestic help, childcare payments and nursery, creche and playschool payments. The type of domestic service we are likely to spend money on has, of course, changed over the years” (*ibid.*)

If we consider current demographic and socio-economic trends, in particular ageing of the population and increasing female employment, as well as income and quality of life imbalances on a global scale, we can expect a further increase in the recourse to paid domestic work.

However, we also have to consider political choices. From the 1950s, for instance, a public cleaning service was created in Germany in schools, hospitals and state offices to offer job opportunities and social protection to needy women. Yet this strategy was abandoned from the 1970s. Cleaning jobs were transferred to private companies. In more recent times German authorities encouraged an expansion of cleaning in private households, contributing to increased social inequality (Mayer-Ahuja 2004).

European authorities and governments consider proximity services as potential sources of employment and therefore try to expand them, as we shall see. Thus we can expect a further increase in the recourse to paid domestic work also as a consequence of these policies.

As mentioned, much research has presented the “new” domestic service less as a luxury or a status symbol than as a need of overburdened families not necessarily belonging to upper and middle classes (Alemani & Fasoli 1994; Eurispes 2002; Flipo 1998; Andall 2003; Alemani 2004). In the ongoing French debate Yves Mérian and Mahrez Okba (1998) write that in a modern country it is necessary to develop services at home for the elderly, children and other people. Other authors give more importance to the externalisation and the “industrialization” of the offer of services (Debonneuil & Lahidji 1998, p. 41). Yet a central issue in this debate is how to use proximity services to create occupation, to reduce social inequalities and to improve the quality of family life. Cette, Héritier, Taddei and Théry (1998) suggest to develop a kind of quasi-money (the *tickets-services*) to buy proximity services. These tickets should be funded by the state in proportion to the needs of different kinds of families to reduce social inequality. At the same time, as other analysts these authors stress the importance of overcoming the traditional master/servant relationship (*relations de domesticité*) and recall the role, from this point of view, of collective agreements and intermediate organisms between employers and employees (already quite common in France) that can act as employers of the domestic workers. They do not suggest to “externalize” completely the

offer of services. Yet they propose a growing externalization of the labour relationship even when the home is maintained as workplace. Both in their analysis and in previous debate, private households do not seem right for the development of correct labour relationships, as they are not controlled and the traditional master/servants relationship represents a threatening model (Cette, Héritier, Taddei & Théry 1998, pp. 16-30; Dussuet 2001, p. 293).

These proposals seem quite interesting in order to create an integrated public/private welfare system that could be useful both to cope with the new needs for care and to create new employment escaping the risks of the revival of backwards employments relationships⁹⁷.

5.4. Expanding regular domestic service to create occupation and fight the black economy

The data I just quoted about the increasing number of domestic workers in Italy is partially conjectural, since they include irregular workers, who were supposed to represent 74.5 percent in 1992 and 77 percent in 2000 (before the aforementioned amnesty) (Sarti 2004, p. 19). The presence of many irregular among domestic workers is not peculiar to Italy. Colectivo IOÉ (2000, p. 450) estimated, for instance, that in 1999 there were in Spain 565.000 domestic workers. In 2001 those registered with the Department of Social Security's Special Regime for Domestic Workers were only 155.900 (Parella Rubio 2003a, p. 512). This makes it difficult to compare the situation in different countries as well as to analyse change over time, in particular because the share of the irregular is not always the same (in Italy in the 1970s they presumably represented only 20-25 percent)⁹⁸.

As previously mentioned, in recent times, international migrants increasingly supplied the necessary workforce in the field of domestic service and, as a consequence, migration policies have a decisive impact on the number and the features of irregular workers (see above, point 2.3). Yet, the presence of undocumented migrants is not the sole reasons for the high number of irregular domestic workers.

97 In Italy local authorities are currently experimenting several different kind of private/public integration, mainly in the caring sector, see Rossi 2004.

98 My calculation on the data published by Turrini 1977, p. 21 and pp. 51-53.

In the last decades, an aim pursued by policies concerning domestic service in several European countries has been to expand it to (re)insert unemployed and marginal workers into the labour market. The so-called “proximity services” belong to the new sources of employment defined in 1995 by the EC (Cancedda 2001; Pasleau & Schopp 2005a).

Some years ago the Danish “Minister of Industry and Business saw the development of services as the main path for future economic growth, and especially the decrease in household services from 127,000 employees in 1966 to 63,000 in 1990 indicated that ‘do it yourself’ work could be substituted by professionals – without ‘going back to the old days’ relationship between ‘masters and servants’” (Lind 2001). The Act on the Home Service Scheme (*Hjemmeservice*) came into force in 1994. According to it, the State paid a subsidy for some defined private household services. The subsidy was 50 percent of the wages. Interestingly enough, “the Act was designed to reduce unemployment among persons with no or little formal education and provide private households with services such as cleaning, window polishing, shopping, cooking, laundering and walking the dog (...) with the intention that more people should afford to use such services and thus especially improve the conditions for families and the elderly”. Yet the home service scheme was criticized because it created an “artificial market” of household services and because it provided bad jobs, considered as “slave labour” by part of the public opinion. Many people thought that this policy was recreating “a new humble proletariat of domestic servants”. They believed that this was and unfair and that individuals “should provide for themselves”. In spite of criticism, the scheme survived and in 1997 became permanent. Critics also maintained that this system was too expensive for the taxpayer. Moreover, there also was a lot of fraud, because there was little control on the companies of domestic workers (to obtain the subsidy, the work has to be carried out by an authorized company). As a consequence, the subsidy was removed from window polishing, shopping, walking the dog etc., while gardening and other outdoor maintenance received a subsidy of 35 per cent from 2000. For the other services the subsidy currently represents 40 percent of the labour costs (expenses for materials are not subsidized). In 1998, 80% of Danish households had recourse to the Home Service Scheme, on average five times a year, and almost 90 percent of the consumers were satisfied. In 1997 the scheme had created 2,000 jobs, 3,700 by the year 2000. Yet in 2001 the Danish Ministry of Business Affairs admitted that the scheme had little influence on turning undeclared labour into formal labour. Indeed, according to a survey, only 10 percent of the users employed undeclared labour to perform domestic chores before the introduction of the scheme (Lind 2001; Renooy, Ivarsson, van der Wusten-Gritsai & Meijer 2004, p. 170).

French authorities, too, particularly after 1992, encouraged the expansion of paid domestic services. They introduced tax discounts and exemption from social charges for employers. Moreover, they reduced the red tape involved in employing workers. As a result, an increasing number of households declared to enjoy some kind of paid domestic help, particularly after the introduction, in 1994, of the *chèque emploi service*, which allows the buying of domestic services without hiring a domestic worker. In 1995, there were around 250,000 permanent users of domestic services, while in 1998 they were 469,000 and in 2002 almost 800,000. Yet, employees have not increased correspondently: they were 370,261 in 1998, 425,845 in 2002. Moreover, they often work only few hours weekly, often in different households: by 1996 the system had created only 40,000 full time jobs, and with a high cost for the State (at that time the public deficit was roughly € 1,200 for each created job). Besides, the *chèques* were mainly used by the rich, and, among the employers, the percentage of the elderly (70 and over) decreased from 36.2 percent in 1998 to 33 percent in 2002, even though their absolute number was growing (Audirac, Tanay & Zilberman 1998; Renooy, Ivarsson, van der Wusten-Gritsai & Meijer 2004, pp. 165-166). Therefore, diverging opinions have been expressed about this system: its supporters stress the reduction of informal work, the creation of employment, the “professionalization” of the new services, the “democratization” of the possibility to have recourse to domestic help; its critics denounce the risk of a “new domesticity” and oppose that it only creates some *petits boulots* (minor casual jobs). However in France domestic workers paid with the *chèques emploi service* enjoy all social rights (Dussuet 2001, pp. 279-280)⁹⁹. As far as I can evaluate, the situation is more problematic in other countries, like Belgium, for instance.

Belgian authorities tried to make domestic service more interesting for potential employers through exemptions from the payment of social charges and fiscal advantages. Yet the impact of these measures has been extremely limited, probably because black labour remains more convenient, as well as the labour performed by the unemployed who work with the *Agences locales pour l'Emploi* (ALE) or *Plaatselijke Werkgelegenheidsagentschappen* (PWA). The ALE-PWA were created to help unemployed and to supply services difficult to be found in the regular work

99 Besides the *chèques emploi service* (CES), in France in 1996 was introduced the *titre emploi service* (TES). “It allows work councils, regional and local authorities and welfare associations to guarantee financial assistance to their own staff members who hire someone to provide domestic services in their homes. Like the CES, the objective of the TES is to simplify hiring domestic services in a legal way. The main difference from the CES is that with TES, the private person does not employ someone, but is a client of a company that operates as the service provider. The private person receives the TES from his or her employer as part of the salary. Thus, unlike the CES, the TES is not for sale in a bank, for example. The TES is intended mainly for private households that normally do not have access to domestic services. In this group, however, little extra demand has been generated” (Renooy, Ivarsson, van der Wusten-Gritsai & Meijer 2004, p.166).

circuits. Between 1995 and 2000 persons working in the ALE-PWA increased from 10,808 to 40,049. Thus the ALE-PWA system creates some employment and has also pushed some “black” workers out of undeclared jobs (according to one evaluation, 4 percent of the jobs carried out within the system were formerly undeclared). Yet it also creates confusion between proximity services and “odd jobs” (in 1999 the ALE-PWA workers worked on average 29 hours monthly). Furthermore many important rights were not recognised for ALE-PWA employees¹⁰⁰. If one considers that it is difficult to move from an ALE-PWA to the regular circuit, the conclusion is that the ALE-PWA system creates “grey” labourers who often are condemned to a very precarious existence. However, a reform of the ALE-PWA system is currently underway. Since 2003-2004, a “service vouchers” scheme has been in force in Belgium. The user/employer (private individuals) buys service vouchers of 6.2 € for one hour’s work (amount which is deductible up to a limit of 2140 € per year) from an issuing company (Accor TRB) or a local employment agency; then she/he can ask a specifically authorized company (a commercial company, a non-profit-making organization, a mutual insurance company, a public centre for social aid (“CPAS” in French), a social-purpose business, a self-employed worker) to send a worker to her/his residence to carry out the requested service(s). Contrary to the “chèque-ALE” system, there are no requirements linked to a minimum unemployment period for the service providers. Moreover, they become proper wage-earners hired by a company by signing an open-ended contract (at least part-time) (Pasleau & Schopp 2005a; see also Renooy, Ivarsson, van der Wusten-Gritsai & Meijer 2004, pp. 159-162)¹⁰¹.

German authorities fight unemployment offering tax reductions and other incentives to potential employers: the idea is that wide occupation could be created if low-skill services were sufficiently cheap. The so-called Hartz Commission has given precise recommendation on this. The law implementing these recommendations has been enforced in April 2003. According to this law, the so called *minijobs* in private households worth up to € 400 per month are taxed only an all-inclusive rate of 12 percent and are free from any other taxes or contributions to social insurance (5 percent for pension insurance scheme, 5 percent for health insurance system and 2 percent as a lump sum tax). Before the introduction of the reform, the limit was € 325, and the all-inclusive rate for the employer was 22 percent). As explained by Jaehrling (2005), “combined to that, the households get a tax credit amounting to 10% of their expenses (up to a limit of € 510 per year)”.

100 No wage is due during non-working periods of the A.L.E. contract, the worker has no right to a wage in case of sickness, accident or if he is absent when responding to a job-offer or for family reasons. Several laws concerning holidays, welfare etc. are not applicable to him/her, Pasleau & Schopp 2005a, Pasleau & Schopp, 2001 (pp. 258-260).

101 I am grateful to Isabelle Schopp for her very useful information on the Belgian system.

“These jobs come with almost no social insurance. The employees are not provided with health and unemployment insurance, and their contributions to the pension scheme will not even add up to a pension that exceeds the public welfare benefit. That is to say, the core of the reform consists of a financial subsidy that encourages private households to act as employers, but this time only for part-time jobs not covered by social insurance. It is now in the responsibility of the employees themselves to arrange for social protection in the case of illness, unemployment and age”. At the same time, the scheme extends financial subsidies to professional service companies, granting households a tax credit of 20 per cent of their expenses for services provided by these companies (up to a limit of € 600 per year). Yet for these companies, this advantage is almost nullified by the fact of having to pay a sales tax of 16 percent “in addition to the full social insurance contributions of both employers and employees”: in other words, customers will pay a price substantially higher in the case of the service company than it is in the case of the *minijob*. This raises serious worries, because “there is no big difference left between a *minijob* and informal work”. However, advantages for employers are few, and this probably explains why some months after the reform there were only few registered jobs in private households than before (33.500 compared to around 27.000 in 2002). In short these measures are likely to have as an outcome (if any) an expansion of the “grey labour market” (Mayer-Ahuja 2004; also Renooy, Ivarsson, van der Wusten-Gritsai & Meijer 2004, pp. 168-171; Jaehrling 2005).

In other words, solutions adopted until now have not been completely successful in creating new regular employments adequately protected, i.e. in implementing the principles established by the European Constitution, and particularly by article II-91 (“1. Every worker has the right to working conditions which respect his or her health, safety and dignity”; “2. Every worker has the right to limitation of maximum working hours, to daily and weekly rest periods and to an annual period of paid leave”).

Indeed our societies are still in search of a satisfactory solution for the problem of managing production and reproduction, and hopefully historical and sociological analysis can help in this task. There is no doubt, however, that neither restoration of traditional hierarchies nor exploitation of new inequalities can offer a real solution to the dilemma.

In the executive summary of this Report, we have suggested the measures that, in our view, should be taken to avoid the current conjuncture resulting into an unfair society, where the European values of equality and solidarity would be a dream for many people.

Table 1. Percentage of servants in the economically active population in different European countries (1851–2001)

Year	Norway	England and Wales	Germany	Belgium	France	Spain	Italy	Czech Republic
1851		10.1			5.4			
1856				3.7				
1857								6.1
1860						11.4		
1861		10.2					3.6	
1866				5.6	5.0			
1869								7.8
1871		11.5					3.2	
1875	11.8							
1876					5.3			
1877						5.7		
1880				5.7				8.1
1881		13.8			6.0		4.1	
1882			9.2					
1886					5.8			
1887						5.7		
1890	12.1			6.0				3.1
1891		12.0			5.3			
1895			8.1					
1896					4.8			
1851		10.1			5.4			
1856				3.7				
1857								6.1
1860						11.4		
1861		10.2					3.6	
1866				5.6	5.0			
1869								7.8
1871		11.5					3.2	
1875	11.8							
1876					5.3			
1877						5.7		
1880				5.7				8.1
1881		13.8			6.0		4.1	
1882			9.2					
1886					5.8			
1887						5.7		
1890	12.1			6.0				3.1
1891		12.0			5.3			
1895			8.1					
1896					4.8			
1900	12.6			5.1		4.1		3.5
1901		11.2			4.5		3.0	
1906					4.4			
1907			6.4					
1910	13.3			5.0				3.1
1911		10.3			4.4		2.9	
1920	10.8							
1921		7.7 (7.0)			3.5		2.4	3.4
1925			4.3					
1926					3.2			
1928								
1930	12.3					4.5		3.0
1931		8.2 (7.5)			3.3		2.9	
1933			3.9					
1936					3.3		3.2	
1939			3.9					
1940						4.0		
1946	7.9							
1950	6.4					5.1		
1951		5.0 (3.9)	4.1				1.9	
1954					2.9			
1960	5.3							
1961		5.0 (1.7)	2.3				1.9	
1962					2.7			
1968					2.5			
1970	3.9		0.6					
1971		3.9 (1.9)					1.2	
1975					1.8			
1980	2.7							
1981		0.4	0.6			3.4	0.9	
1982					1.4			
1990	3.3							
1991		0.3						
2001	3.1		0.7					

Sources and notes, by country, to Table 1:

NORWAY

See: <http://www.ssb.no/historisk/tabeller/9-9-1t.txt> (1875-1990); <http://www.ssb.no/english/yearbook/tab/t-0601-245.html> (2001). In Norway the economically active population included people aged 15 and over from 1875 to 1960; people 16 and over from 1970; people aged 16-74 in 2001. Moreover, for 1980, 1990 and 2001 those people who worked at least 1,000 hours per year were considered economically active, because “there is a good correlation between working at least 1000 hours per year and having a main occupation as the main source of livelihood, a term used in earlier censuses”. The domestic servant category should not include farm servants. Yet it probably includes people who also carried out farm work because of the difficulty, or even the impossibility, of clearly distinguishing farm servants from domestic servants. See Gunnar Thorvaldsen, “Norwegian servants towards 1900. A quantitative overview”, forthcoming in the *Proceedings of the Servant Project (= SPP)* edited by Suzy Pasleau and Isabelle Schopp. According to Thorvaldsen, all type of servants represented 10.9% of persons aged 15 and over in 1866 and 11% in 1900 (i.e. 19.9% of economically active people, according to my calculations).

ENGLAND AND WALES

My calculation on the census data reported by Matthew Woollard, “The Classification of Domestic Servants in England and Wales, 1851-1951”, forthcoming in the *SPP* (1851-1951); 1961-1981 data supplied by the United Kingdom Census Customer Services (I am grateful to Sue Bates for supplying me with this data). For the following years it does not seem possible to have data on domestic workers, who are merged in broader categories. Woollard explains that the economically active population includes people aged 5 and over from 1851 to 1881; 10 and over from 1891 to 1911; 12 and over in 1921; 14 and over in 1931; 15 and over in 1951. According to the instructions to tabulators, farm servants should not be ranked as domestic servants. English censuses allow the construction of a servant category by selecting some of the sub-divisions included in the broader category of the service occupations. I have considered the following sub-divisions:

- 1851: Domestic Servant (General), Coachman, Groom, Gardener, Housekeeper, Cook, Housemaid, Nurse, Charwoman.
- 1861: Domestic Servant, Coachman, Groom, Gardener, Housekeeper, Cook, Housemaid, Nurse, Laundry Maid, Charwoman, Park/Gate/Lodge Keepers (in 1861 cooks and nurses who were not part of domestic staff were classified separately and are not considered here; laundry maid are taken into account because this heading probably refers to domestic laundry maid, as in the next census).
- 1871: Domestic Servant (General), Domestic Coachman, Domestic Groom, Domestic Gardener, Domestic Cook, Domestic Housemaid, Domestic Nurse, Domestic Laundry-Maid, Housekeeper, Charwoman, Ladies Companion, Park/Gate/Lodge Keeper (not Government).
- 1881: Domestic Coachman, Groom, Domestic Gardener, Domestic Indoor Servant, Lodge/Gate/Park Keeper (not Government), Charwoman.
- 1891: Domestic Indoor Service, Lodge/Gate/Park Keeper (not Government), Charwoman. In this census Domestic Coachmen, Grooms and Gardeners were not classified within domestic servants but with their non-domestic colleagues. Moreover, in 1891 “all female relatives and daughters returned as “helping at home” are to be included with domestics”, which is different from previous and following censuses (Ebery, Preston 1976, p. 13; Higgs 1987, pp. 59-81 and Woollard 2005. Using data reworked by Charles Booth in the 19th century and by W.A. Armstrong in 1972, Ebery and Preston supply information about the number of coachmen, grooms and gardeners (p. 111). According to their (re-worked) data, in 1891 domestic servants represented 12.6% of the occupied (my calculation).
- 1901: Other Domestic Indoor Servants (i.e. Domestic Indoor Servants who did not work in “Hotels, Lodging Houses, and Eating Houses”), Domestic Coachmen - Grooms, Domestic Gardeners, Charwomen.
- 1911: Other Domestic Indoor Servants (i.e. Domestic Indoor Servants who did not work “in Hotels, Lodging Houses, and Eating Houses”), Domestic Coachmen - Grooms, Domestic Motor Car Drivers - Motor Car Attendants, Domestic Gardeners, Park/ Lodge/Gate Keepers (not Government), Day Girls - Day Servants, Charwomen.
- 1921: Domestic Servants (Indoor), Charwomen, Office Cleaners (Charwomen and Office Cleaners are in the same category; the number of people included in this category is similar to that of 1911, when the heading was “Charwomen”). Gardeners, coachmen and grooms were no longer ranked as domestic servants.
7.0%: percentage without Charwomen and Office Cleaners.
- 1931: Domestic Servants (Indoor), Charwomen - Office Cleaners (Charwomen and Office Cleaners are in the same category).
7.5%: percentage without Charwomen and Office Cleaners.
- 1951: Charwomen - Office Cleaners (Charwomen and Office Cleaners are in the same category), Domestic Service Indoor: Chefs - Cooks, Kitchen hands, Chambermaids - Housemaids - Parlourmaids, Other Domestic Servants (indoor).
3.9%: percentage without Charwomen and Office Cleaners.
- 1961: Maids, valets and related service workers n.c.c., Charwomen, Office Cleaners, Window Cleaners (Charwomen, Office Cleaners, and Window Cleaners, are in the same category).
1.7%: percentage without Charwomen, Office Cleaners, and Window Cleaners.
- 1971: Domestic housekeeper, Maids, valets and related service workers n.c.c., Charwomen, office cleaners, window cleaners, chimney sweeps (Charwomen, office cleaners, window cleaners, and chimney sweeps are in the same category).
1.9%: percentage without Charwomen, office cleaners, window cleaners, and chimney sweeps.
- 1981: Domestic Services (without sub-divisions).
- 1991: Domestic Services (without sub-divisions).

GERMANY

- 1882-1933: *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich*, herausgegeben vom Statistischen Reichsamte, Dreiundfünfzigsten Jahrgang 1934, Reimar Hobbing, Berlin, 1934, p. 16, category “häusliche Dienste” (domestic services). Data is standardised according to the criteria adopted in 1933. It does not include the Saar.
- 1939: My calculation on the data supplied by Angelika Willms, “Segregation auf Dauer? Zur Entwicklung des Verhältnisses von Frauenarbeit und Männerarbeit in Deutschland, 1882-1980”, in Walter Müller, Johann Handl, Angelika Willms, *Strukturwandel der Frauenarbeit 1880-1980*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt New York, 1983, pp. 107-186, tables A2 and A3, pp. 176-177, category “häusliche Dienste” (domestic services).
- 1951: *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1954*, edited by the Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden, W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart-Köln, p. 126, category “häusliche Dienste” (domestic services), 30.06.1951. Data for the period 1951-1981 refers only to West Germany.
- 1961: *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1962*, edited by the Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden, W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart-Mainz, p. 151, category “häusliche Dienste” (domestic services), 30.09.1961 (West Berlin also included).
- 1970: My calculation on the data supplied by Angelika Willms, “Segregation auf Dauer?”, tables A2 and A3, pp. 176-177, category “häusliche Dienste” (domestic services).
- 1981: *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1982 für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, edited by the Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden, W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart-Mainz, p. 98, category “hauswirtschaftliche Berufe” (jobs pertaining to the domestic economy), April 1980.

- 2001: *Statistisches Jahrbuch 2002 für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden, 2002, p. 107, category “haus- und ernährungswirtschaftliche Berufe” (jobs pertaining to the domestic economy and nutrition), April 2001. The data refers to re-unified Germany.

BELGIUM

- Valérie Piette, *Domestiques et servantes. Des vies sous condition. Essai sur le travail domestique en Belgique au 19^e siècle*, Bruxelles, Académie Royale de Belgique, 2000, pp. 42-51.
- 1856: In 1856 the following headings were included among domestic servants: coachmen (*cochers*), chamber maids and nannies (*femmes de chambre et bonnes d'enfants*); female servants (*servantes*), wet nurses (*nourrices*), nurses (*gardes-couches*), porters (*portiers*), doorkeepers (*concierges*), valets (*valet de chambre*), domestics other than farm servants and other servants (*domestiques autres que ceux attachés aux exploitations agricoles et autres serviteurs*). The figure reported by Piette (p. 47) is 3.9% but calculating with the figures she reports, the result is 3.7%.
- 1866: The 1866 classification only differed from that of 1856 because of the addition of the heading “grooms” (*palefreniers*). Even though categories were almost identical, the number of domestic servants in 1866 was unlikely higher than in 1856.
- 1880: Domestics in charge of preserving and preparing victuals (*domestiques chargés de la manutention et de la préparation des vivres*): house stewards/treasurers/supply officers (*économés*), cooks (*cuisiniers et cuisinières*), cellar men (*sommeliers*); domestics in charge of personal services (*domestiques préposés aux services des personnes*): valets (*valets de chambre*); footmen (*valets de pied*), lackeys (*laquais*), whipper-ins (*piqueurs*), chambermaids (*femmes de chambre*), wetnurses (*nourrices*), nannies (*bonnes d'enfants*), female servants (*servantes*); domestics in charge of leading and caring for horses and dogs (*domestiques chargés de conduire ou de soigner les chevaux ou les chiens*): coachmen (*cochers de maison, cochers de fiacres*), postilions (*postillons*), carters (*charretiers*), grooms (*palefreniers*), jockeys (*jockeys*), trainers (*entraîneurs*), huntsmen (*veneurs*¹⁰²). Doorkeepers, gamekeepers, foresters and waiters are no longer included among domestics. Governesses (whose classification in previous censuses is unknown) were not included either.
- 1890: Same classification as in 1880.
- 1900: Same classification as in 1880.
- 1910: Domestics in charge of preserving and preparing victuals [including female servants] (*domestiques chargés de la manutention et de la préparation des vivres [y compris les servantes]*); domestics in charge of personal services (*domestiques au service des personnes*); domestics in charge of leading horses etc. (*domestiques chargés de conduire les chevaux etc.*). In this census two new categories were added: 1) charwomen, scouring persons and floor polishers (*femmes de ménage, frotteurs et cirleurs*); 2) companions, readers, stenographers or dactylographers (not employed in industrial or commercial enterprises or in the public services), private secretary (*dame, demoiselle de compagnie, lectrice, sténographe ou dactylographe (en dehors d'une entreprise industrielle et commerciale ou d'un service public)*). Following Piette, I have not taken them into account. Had I done so, the percentage of domestic servants in the economically active population would be 5.9%. Governesses, waiters and servants working in restaurants and hotels were not included among domestics.

FRANCE

- Olivier Marchand and Claude Thelot, *Deux siècles de travail en France. Population active et structure sociale, durée et productivité du travail*, Insee, Paris, 1991, table 6t, p. 187. This data has been standardised by the authors. For the definition of economically active population and the methods used see in particular pp. 80-85. The servant category (*domestiques de la personne*) includes: domestic servants (*domestiques*), charwomen (*femmes de ménage*), cooks (in private households), coachmen (*cochers*), cooks (*cuisiniers*), wetnurses (*nourrices*), lady companions (*dames de compagnie*), employees of rentiers (*employés des rentiers*). Manual workers employed by rentiers (*ouvriers des rentiers*) were not included in this category, nor are farm servants (*domestiques des exploitations agricoles*), guards (*gardiens*) and doorkeepers (*concierges*), see pp. 109 and 103.

SPAIN

- 1860-1887: Dubert, forthcoming;
- 1900: *Censo de la población de España según el empadronamiento hecho en la Península é Islas adyacentes en 31 de diciembre de 1900*, tomo IV, Imprenta de la Dirección general del Instituto geográfico y estadístico, Madrid, 1907, pp. 216-219; category *servientes domésticos* (domestic servants). The census does not report the total number of economically active people. I have calculated their number by subtracting the rentiers (*personas que viven principalmente de su rentas*, i.e. category IX), the people (all women) classified as “family members” (*miembros de la familia*, i.e. category IX-55-a) as well as unproductive people and the people whose profession was unknown (*improductivos, profesión desconocida*, i.e. category XII) from the total population.
- 1930: *Censo de población de 1930, clasificación de los habitantes inscritos en la población de hecho, por sexo, edad, estado civil y profesiones o industrias. Resumen de la nación, capitales y posesiones del Norte y Costa occidental de Africa*, pp. 8-9, category *servicio doméstico* (domestic service). The census does not report the total number of economically active people. I have calculated their number by subtracting the categories XXIII-XXVII from the total population, i.e. rentiers and pensioners, students, unproductive people, family members and people whose profession was unknown (*rentistas y pensionistas, población escolar, improductivos, miembros de la familia, profesión desconocida*).
- 1940: Presidencia del Gobierno, Instituto Nacional de Estadística, *Censo de la Población de España según la inscripción de 31 diciembre de 1940. Resumen nacional de las clasificaciones por sexo, edad, instrucción elemental, fecundidad y profesión de la población presente (HECHO), correspondientes a los totales de las provincias, de las capitales y de los municipios no capitales mayores de 20.000 habitantes*, Barranco, Madrid, [1945], pp. 11, 15 category *servicio doméstico* (domestic service). The census does not report the total number of economically active people. I have calculated their number by subtracting the categories XXIII-XXVII from the total population, i.e. rentiers, retired people, students, institutionalised and hospitalised people, prisoners, beggars, unemployed, people without any profession, family members, children, and people whose profession was unknown (*rentistas, retirados, alumnos primera enseñanza, estudiantes, acogidos, hospitalizados, presos, mendigos, etc., sin trabajo, sin profesión, miembros de familia, niños pequeños, desconocida*).
- 1950: Presidencia del Gobierno, Instituto Nacional de Estadística, *Censo de la Población de España y territorios de su soberanía y protectorado, según el empadronamiento realizado el 31 de diciembre de 1950*, tomo III, *Clasificaciones de la población de hecho de la península e islas adyacentes, obtenidas mediante una muestra del 10 por 100*, Talleres Gráficos “Victoria”, Madrid, 1959, pp. 588-590 (pp. 593-597), category *servicios domésticos y análogos* (domestic service and similar). In this census people were also classified according to the place where they worked. According to this classification, the percentage of people working in domestic service was 4.9%.
- 1981: Instituto nacional de estadística, Censo de la población de 1981, tomo I, vol. I, *Resultados nacionales. Características de la población*, I.N.E. Artes Graficas, Madrid, 1985, p. 75 (pp. 76-77), category *servicios personales y domésticos* (personal and domestic services). The economically active population included people aged 16 and over.

ITALY

My calculation on the Italian Population Censuses. For more details see Sarti 2001c. As far as the economically active population is concerned, in the first censuses (1861 and 1871) there was no age limit; in 1881 and 1901 the economically active population included people aged 9 and over; 10 and over from 1911 to 1961; 14 and over in 1971 and 1981. For the following years it does not seem possible to have data on domestic workers, who are merged in broader categories. Most Italian censuses allow the construction of a servant category by selecting some of the sub-divisions included in the broader category of the service occupations. In Table I have considered the following categories and/or sub-divisions:

- 1861: No sub-categories (the category is called *domesticità*, i.e. “domesticity”).
- 1871: Private employees, land stewards and butlers (*impiegati privati, intendenti e maggiordomi*), valets without any special qualification (*Camerieri senza speciale qualificazione*); Governesses (*Governanti*), Servants, domestics, doorkeepers, wardens, etc. (*Servi, domestici, portinaj, guardiani* etc.), wet(nurses) (*nutrici e balie*). Without the first sub-groups (private employees etc.) the percentage of servants in the total population would be 3.1%.
- 1881: Land stewards and private collectors (*intendenti ed esattori privati*), book-keepers and copyists (*scritturali e copisti* [only private]); Governesses and companions (*governanti e damigelle di compagnia*); (wet)nurses (*nutrici*); cooks, confectioners, kitchen hands/stewards (*cuochi, credenzieri e dispensieri*), domestic servants, doorkeepers and maidservants (*servitori domestici, portinaj e fantesche*). Without the first two groups (stewards etc; book-keepers etc.) servants would be 3.7% of the economically active population.
- 1901: Governesses, valets, chamber-maids, (wet)nurses, servants, cooks, scullery-boys and scullery-maids, doorkeepers and other people working in domestic service (*governanti, camerieri, cameriere, nutrici, servitori, cuochi, sguatter, portieri e altre persone addette ai servizi domestici*). In 1901 there are no sub-groups. Land stewards, home stewards, secretaries, private collectors, copyists etc. were no longer classified in the same category as domestic servants.
- 1911: Domestic servants (*domestici*). In 1911 there were no sub-groups.
- 1921: Domestic servants, cooks, doorkeepers, (wet)nurses, companions, governesses and female private teachers (*domestici, cuochi, portieri, balie, damigelle di compagnia, governanti ed istitutrici*). In 1921 there were no sub-groups.
- 1931: Domestic servants, cooks, (wet)nurses, companions, governesses and female private teachers, drivers etc. (*domestici, cuochi, balie, damigelle di compagnia, governanti ed istitutrici, autisti* etc.). In 1931 doorkeepers and gatekeepers were allocated to a sub-category different from domestic servants. If we add them to domestic servants, creating a servant category similar to that of 1921, this category would represent 3.1% of the economically active population.
- 1936: Lift boys, grooms (*ascensoristi, grooms*), cooks (*cuochi*), companions (*dame di compagnia*), domestic servants (*domestici*), linen maids and boys, kitchen hands/steward etc. (*guardarobieri, dispensieri, etc.*), (wet)nurses (*nutrici e balie*), butlers, masters of ceremonies, home stewards (*maggiordomi, cerimonieri, maestri di casa*), scullery maids and boys and lowly kitchen staff (*sguatter e basso personale di cucina*). In 1936 doorkeepers and gatekeepers were classified in a completely different category. This census distinguishes people working in the domestic economy from people working in other sectors. For each sub-category I have considered only those employed in the domestic economy.
- 1951: Butlers and similar people (*maggiordomi e simili*), domestic servants (*domestici*), (wet)nurses (*nutrici e balie*), other (*altri*).
- 1961: Employments pertaining to domestic service (*professioni inerenti ai servizi domestici*).
- 1971: Domestics (*domestici*).
- 1981: Domestics (*domestici*).

CZECH REPUBLIC

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