

Editorial: Care work at Home and Abroad

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Demographic changes, technological development and the transformation of social policies addressing the new societal challenges are among the factors that are re-shaping care work in the past decades around the globe. Population ageing and international migration led to a significant transformation of population structure, the growth of life expectancy conducting to an extended number of seniors in need of long-term care, while international migration supplied labour force involved in care work in affluent societies and dried it out from home societies of immigrants. Technological development contributed to the extension of a healthy and independent life of seniors and eased the care work by providing medical treatment, appliances and equipment that reduced considerably the amount of work required by long term care. On the other hand, part of the care work performed mainly by women, such as emotional work or looking after children's education is not so much re-shaped by new technologies.

The new developments of social policies generated by the increase in women employment, the transformation of the traditional family pattern and marketization of care work changed family's contribution, as well as the roles inside family in care provision.

Post-communist societies, Romania among them, are particularly affected by these trends, due to the intersection of demographic change and the reconfiguration of social policies during the past three decades. The growth of life expectancy, low fertility rate and massive external migration put significant pressure on care providers, while the restructuring of welfare system after 1990 led to the reduction of state involvement in the provision of care.

The current issue looks at gender roles and housework division from very different angles, shedding light on how gender roles are negotiated and renegotiated under the impact of current societal challenges, as well as on the implications that derive from the readjustment of the gender roles. Although the main focus of this issue is on post-communist countries, the connection between gender roles, the gendered division of housework and its consequences is analysed from a comparative perspective by most of the articles. The articles approach a wide range of topics, using both qualitative and quantitative methods and combining the analysis of gender policies with historical analysis for explaining how post-communist transition intersects with various societal trends, such as international migration, the salience of religious identity in the context of rising religious diversity or the efforts of building a common European gender policy framework.

The articles

This special issue of *Analyze Journal* welcomed both theoretical and empirical contributions tackling the connection between demographic change, the transformation of care work and gender roles in post-communist societies.

Pogan provides an overview of the connection between the gender policies employed by the EU member states and gender roles and the gendered division of housework. Building on the main theoretical approaches in the field, the author shows how the gender policies adopted by the EU member states translate into gaps between men and women concerning employment, earnings, care work and housework. Using administrative data provided by EUROSTAT, the paper underlines the big disparities existing among the EU member states concerning gender roles. Although the approach is a comparative one, the article focuses on Romania and shows that in spite of the very low gender gap on the labour market, Romanian women still carry the burden of care and housework at home.

Voicu inquires on the association between religious identity and housework, considering also how communist past may impact on the gender division of chores. The approach is a cross-sectional comparative one, employing large scale survey data coming from the International Social Survey Programm 2012 and using multilevel regression models. The paper builds on the idea that religious identity intersects with gender identity and people "do gender" to "do religion". Thus, employing tradition gender division of housework, that is rooted in the religious prescription of gender norms, is a way to display your religious identity and this mechanism is more salient in the case of Muslims because Islam is a lived religion and their day to day behaviour is important for displaying religious identity. Also, the paper shows that the gender gap in housework is deeper in case of post-communist countries, because of the uneven division of gender roles within the household promoted by the communist states.

Perini looks at the intersection of several social vulnerabilities affecting the lives of female migrants from Ukraine involved in paid domestic work in Poland. The article employs a historical perspective, analysing how the migration of Polish women for working abroad created a niche on the informal labour market in Poland for immigrants originated in Ukraine. Thus, the status of illegal immigrant combines with the one of a worker on a black labour market in precarious jobs as homemaker and care provider exposing women to important social risks. Moreover, this vulnerability is booster by the communist past and the strong traditional family pattern existing in Poland and relying on the Catholic tradition.

'Nannies that care. An emergent socio-professional category between legal regulations and working arrangements' by Ionela Baluta and Anca Dohotariu is based on qualitative research on nannies' work understood as part of the childcare process. The article investigates how the care workers are related to childcare, to the relationships with both the parents they work for and with the children they take care of. However, the care work goes deeper and acquires the understanding of the economic constraints, as well as the social and cultural factors that contribute to this solution to childcare provision. Besides, the authors formulate theoretical statements regarding the contractualisation of the 'care' occupation that can be often identified and observed as 'informal' work. To reflect more on the nannies' individual choices and professional trajectories, the authors conducted 31 interviews with nannies living and working in the Bucharest – Ilfov region. The content analysis reflects the social dynamics of care working arrangements and gender roles in the current social values and practices regarding the childcare process in Romania.

Delia Badoi in 'Gender regimes and precariousness in the neoliberal academy: The specific case of Romania' examines how the neoliberal requirements and new managerial changes are affecting the employment situation in the Romanian higher education. She investigates how these changes are affecting the gender representation in higher education in terms of the structure of gendered career opportunities interconnected with the care issues and work-related precariousness. Her analysis on secondary data from the EUROSTAT, Labour Force Survey, National Statistics Institute of Romania, MORE 3 Survey and labour policy analysis intended to critically expose an example of 'privileged' precariousness of the academic work in a comparative context of Romania and the European Union countries. One of article's conclusion is showing that the interrelations between gender, care and precariousness (Canizzo, 2017; Busso & Rivetti, 2014) have an impact on career and life prospects that affects women differently than men - emotionally, intellectually and socially (Murgia et al, 2018, Ivancheva et. 2019, Cardozo, 2016).

This special issue opens the door o further investigation of how gender roles and housework transformed in the past three decades. However, many areas remained unexplored and future research should focus on new developments of gendered housework division in the context of transnationalism and Europeanization, by looking at the convergence and divergence of gender roles and gender norms in Europe.

References

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