REGULATING DOMESTIC WORK IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC:

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM AND WHAT'S NOT?

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ABSTRACT

In the wake of the adoption of the ILO Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (No.189), efforts to regulate domestic work have intensified. More frequently than ever, social movements turn to a number of political domains at a local, national, and transnational level to demand policy change that would address the precariousness experienced by domestic workers worldwide. In the Czech Republic, the government recently proposed to intervene in the domestic services sector by implementation of a voucher policy, referred to as the 'Services for Households'. The country thus seemed to follow the practices developed in other EU member states, such as France or Belgium, by incentivizing households to facilitate domestic worker contracts. Based on Carol Bacchi's 'What's the problem represented to be' approach to policy analysis, this thesis examines the Czech government's proposal to regulate the domestic services sector and assesses its potential to remedy social injustices and gender inequalities pertinent to domestic work. While many would applaud the state's policy decision to intervene in the sector, given the social injustices experienced by domestic workers, this thesis adopts a rather skeptical view towards the suggested voucher policy. Drawing on feminist political economy literature and feminist policy scholarship, I argue that the policy removes gender from the framing of the problem and silences social injustices pertinent to domestic work. If implemented, I posit, it will result in an ineffective policy and give a real life effect to the workings of power inherent in the policy proposal. This argumentation is further complemented with problematization of the Czech government's position towards the regulation of domestic work as a way to protect and improve the working and living conditions of domestic workers, which the Czech government has excluded from the policy processes.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
EC	European Commission
EFSI	European Federation for Services to Individuals
EP	European Parliament
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EWL	European Women's Lobby
ILO	International Labour Organization
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
UZS	The Union of Employers' Association
WPR	What's the problem represented to be

1. INTRODUCTION

The global scope of paid domestic work and the necessity of improving its harsh working conditions, invisibility and undervaluation worldwide were recognized in 2011 by the adoption of the international labour standards contained in the ILO Convention (No. 189) and the Recommendation (No. 201) concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers. Given its isolation from the public gaze and its gendered nature, by which I mean that it rests on "the daily operations of both masculinity and femininity in relationship to each other and to the workings of power" (Enloe 2004, 244), domestic work tends to be systematically rendered invisible and undervalued, including within the sphere of public policy.[1] In many countries, domestic workers are excluded from the national labour regimes, or treated as inferior workers. Even when the labour standards do apply, they are often poorly met by employers and undermined by a lack of enforcement mechanisms (Chen 2011, 178). The present international regulatory framework, thus, aims to address the long-standing policy gaps and to encourage efforts to professionalize, formalize and recognize the value of paid domestic work, which is associated with, and overwhelmingly performed by women marginalized along class, race/ethnic or geopolitical axes of power.

In the wake of the ILO Convention, efforts to regulate domestic work have intensified. While policy and legal scholars have been debating how to best protect and improve the working and living conditions of domestic workers worldwide (Fredman 2014; McCann and Murray 2014), a number of policy papers and manuals have been issued discussing the different approaches to designing the labour laws and to the formulation of proactive measures to promote decent work for domestic workers (ILO 2012; ILO 2015). One of the postulated solutions, which could enhance social justice, is the adoption of a voucher system. The ILO (2015, 6), for instance, suggests that a voucher policy "can be used by employers to hire regularly domestic workers and hence provide them with social security coverage, even if they are in an irregular migration situation." To date, the voucher system has been, for example, implemented in Belgium, France and Austria, and it has been promoted as a good practice advancing the struggle for decent work in the domestic work sector.

Inspired by this innovative measure in "Western" Europe, the Government of the Czech Republic has recently shaped a policy proposal to regulate domestic work with the

[1] In this thesis, I use Dye's (1987, 2) definition of public policy; that is "whatever governments choose to do or not to do."

implementation of voucher schemes. The 'Services for Households' policy, as the system of regulation has been termed in the Czech Republic, should enable households to purchase domestic services, including housekeeping as well as provision of home-based care, at a subsidized price through vouchers. Moreover, the government proposes basing the regulation on a triangular relationship, which involves an agency as an intermediary actor of the arrangement between a household and a domestic worker, to decrease the administrative burden for private individuals. In other words, the agency will become an employer of a domestic worker on one hand and a service provider to a household on the other; bridging thus the direct employment relationship between the two parties.

In addition, the voucher policy purports to address three principal problems. First, the development of the Services for Households is offered as a solution to long-term unemployment and social exclusion of welfare recipients, who will be mainly targeted for a number of the new positions in the domestic work sector that the policy is expected to create. Second, the policy proponents seek to facilitate transfer of informal domestic work into the formal economy by incentivizing households to purchase domestic services in the official market. Third, the development of the Services for Households is also seen as a measure contributing to reconciling work and family life given its possibility to reduce the burden of unpaid work and care responsibilities for the families in the Czech Republic.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the proposal of the Czech government to regulate the domestic services sector and assess its potential to remedy social injustices and gender inequalities pertinent to domestic work. For this purpose, I employ Carol Bacchi's (1999, 2009) 'What's the Problem Represented to be' (WPR) approach to policy analysis, which allows me to examine the underlying assumptions beneath the postulated policy solution and the relations of power involved in its discursive framing. In conjunction with the author, I, therefore, shift the analysis from the mainstream evidence-based paradigm treating policies as attempted solutions to problems towards a social-constructivist approach. In this context, in my understanding policies "constitut[e] competing interpretations or representations of political issues," within which deep cultural assumptions and power structures may be embedded (Bacchi 1999, 2). Based on the WPR approach, I have formulated the following research question: What is the problem of paid domestic work represented to be and what assumptions are implied or taken for granted in the given problem representations? The analysis is based on empirical material consisting of policy texts covering relevant legislation, policy statements and proposals, policy strategies, governmental and parliamentary reports, debate transcriptions, project proposals, project outputs and civil society material. I complement this material with

transcriptions of sixteen semi-structured interviews with stakeholders influencing the policy processes concerning domestic work. My participants include government officials, a member of parliament and civil society representatives.

While many would consider the Czech government's proposal to intervene in the domestic services sector as positive because of the lingering injustices experienced by domestic workers, this thesis takes up a rather cautious stance towards the suggested voucher policy. Drawing on feminist political economy literature and feminist policy scholarship, I argue that the policy removes gender from the framing of the problem and silences social injustices pertinent to domestic work; hence, if implemented, it will result in an ineffective policy and give a real life effect to the workings of power inherent in the policy proposal. In order to further strengthen my argument, I unpack the Czech government's position towards the regulation of domestic work, which rests on the ILO's representation of the problem and on many other actors demanding that the state intervenes in the sector to protect and improve the working and living conditions of domestic workers. It is shown that this problem representation privileging social justice has not been included in the Czech Republic's policy processes.

Earlier feminist analyses scrutinizing the interplay of public policies and paid domestic work focused mainly on the role of the broader political economy shifts and regulatory transformations in the global reconfiguration of social reproduction (Bakker 2007). It has been argued that especially the way that a country's care regime intersects with employment and migration policies and normative practices influences the nature of the domestic work sector (Williams 2010). What these studies have, to a large extent, omitted, however, was a direct intervention of states in the domestic service sector and the politics and discourses underpinning these processes of regulation that have become a research interest only in recent years (Morel 2015). So far, these critical policy analyses have concentrated mainly on "Western" Europe, while East-Central Europe has been left in the scholarship, with a few exceptions (Hrzenjak 2008), as a region of origin for migrant domestic workers. This thesis, therefore, aims to contribute to filling these gaps by examining the discourses underpinning the policy processes concerning the regulation of paid domestic work in the Czech Republic.

This thesis extends the scholarly literature on policy discourses and the politics underpinning the regulation of domestic work by exploring how the problematizations have been grounded in the context of the semi-peripheral East-central European country with a relatively small number of domestic workers, such as the Czech Republic. From a policy perspective, its contribution particularly lies in highlighting the need to seek underlying assumptions beneath policies purporting to regulate the domestic service sector. In this matter,

I draw on my internship experience in the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe, which was central to my MA studies and where I became especially interested in paid domestic work as a public policy concern. Part of my work therein related to technical support concerning measures regulating domestic work through the use of service vouchers promoted by the ILO, but also other domestic workers' rights' advocates, including some of the Czech activists, as a way to combat irregularity and informality in order to protect domestic workers (see, e.g. ILO ACTAV 2013; ILO 2015; WIEGO 2016). In the Czech Republic, however, the measure rests on primarily gendered, classed and raced assumptions that reproduce global inequalities rather than seeking social justice for domestic workers, as I demonstrate in my thesis.

I proceed as follows. In the next chapter, I outline my theoretical framework and then move on to describe my methodology in detail. In the fourth chapter of the thesis, I introduce the local context to my analysis and consider the intersections of care, migration and employment policies to set a scene against which the policy processes concerning the regulation of domestic work in the Czech Republic take place. In the fifth chapter, I analyze the problem representations of the Services for Households policy as a component of Czech employment and family policy. Against this backdrop, in the sixth chapter, I examine the Czech government's position towards the ILO's and domestic workers' rights' advocates' representation of the problem. I conclude with outlining the on-going advocacy processes for domestic workers' rights in the Czech Republic and laying out considerations for the future struggle for policy change in the domestic work sector.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter outlines a theoretical framework, which informs my empirical analysis of policy discourses on the regulation of paid domestic work in the Czech Republic. I begin with the early feminist theorization of the gendered division of labour as the basis of women's oppression to underscore the interconnections between unpaid and paid domestic work, and the gender inequalities that underpin it. Next, through the feminist political economy lens, I situate paid domestic work in its relation to global circuits of capital, and move on to summarize the scholarship on the nature of domestic work in the European context. In these accounts, I highlight the state influence on the shape of the domestic service sector and finish by situating my analysis in the scholarship of the regulation of domestic work.

For conceptual clarity, in this thesis, I will use the term 'domestic work' as presented by Lan (2006, 12) to mean: "a range of activities that maintain the daily subsistence and social reproduction" of a household. I acknowledge that these tasks involve very different types of work, ranging from cooking, and cleaning to shopping, as well as provision of emotional and physical care. Scholars have also pointed out that much of domestic work overlaps between care and household tasks, which makes it hard to differentiate the two (Lutz 2008). My focus here is primarily on the phenomenon of outsourcing unpaid domestic work to the market, though I recognize that there are linkages between unpaid and paid domestic work that are also present in my empirical analysis. Finally, the term domestic work, along with household, family, labour, and skills, are not used as neutral concepts in this thesis but instead are shaped by hierarchical and asymmetrical relations of power that are subject to change.

2.1 From unpaid to paid domestic work

The vast majority of domestic work has been, in most societies, relegated to women. The notion that the gendered division of labour, entrenched in power hierarchies, is not a natural state of affairs has been central to the feminist challenge of male bias regarding unpaid household labour. To illustrate, sociologist Maria Mies (1982, 2) has argued that the unequal allocation of responsibility for domestic work has been sustained by an ideology which establishes the housewife as a universal model of womanhood and which links women's nature with domestic work performance. Putting domestic work under scrutiny of what later became known as a gender lens thus enabled Mies and many other feminist authors to show that the reasons why

women carry out the burden of domestic labour are not inevitably tied to nature nor women's biology, as orthodox economists of the time claimed (Gardiner 1997, 4). Rather, the burden of domestic labour was seen as a consequence of complex processes of social, historical and political constructions (Scott 1986).

Furthermore, the assigned women's role in social reproduction has been identified in the feminist literature as a fundamental process influencing the different forms of women's subordination in capitalist societies. Early theorizing on the issue was undertaken in the 1970s mainly by British and Italian socialists, and Marxist and materialist feminists, in what has come to be termed as the 'domestic labour debate' (see, e.g. Dalla Costa and James 1973; Federici 1975; Gardiner 1975; Molyneux 1979).[2] These early theories took women's work in the family and its relate to the political economy of a capitalist society as a central point of analysis, and therefore questions whether domestic labour created surplus value or not. For example, those authors who argued that women are in fact part of the cycle of production, advocated for wages for housework provided by the state as a remuneration for subsidizing the capitalist production (Dalla Costa and James 1973; Federici 1975). This demand, however, did not consider entrenched gender roles, and therefore left the involvement of men in sharing the responsibility for domestic labour out of the question (Bracke 2013, 637). Others have, however, argued that domestic work does not necessarily produce a surplus labour, but rather that it functions as an essential precondition for capitalist accumulation given its separation of production from reproduction (Vogel 1983). All in all, the lasting contribution of these debates is the emphasis that a household is a place of economic activity, which both capitalists and Marxists rendered invisible as they, among others, failed to assign a value to unpaid domestic work outside of market-based commodity production. In other words, as they developed, critiques of the masculinist connotations that viewed formal employment as the only valuable economic contribution, and the goal to shift the boundaries of what counted as economic activity by underscoring the neglected contribution of domestic labour to the economy, are key to these theories (Waring 1988).

Challenging the vast use of women as a homogenous class, other scholars extended a feminist critique of state capitalism to globalised capitalism, rooted in colonial legacies and

[2] The topic of housework also appeared in writing of various liberal feminists, who were primarily concerned with its experiential aspects. See for example, Betty Friedan, who in her book called *the Feminine Mystique* (1963) illustrated how repetitive, boring, socially isolating nature typifies domestic work. Friedan recast paid formal work and engagement in the so-called public sphere as liberation from worthless housework. Arguably, such portrayal, was not even characteristic of the therein position of the majority of white middle class women as some have shown (see Eisenstein 1981), reinforced the devaluation of housework and worth of domestic workers (Boris 2015).

structural inequalities that not only account for gender and class, but also for other axes of domination such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, or geopolitical location (Davis 1981; Lorde 1984; Mies 1982; Mohanty 1988). In the context of this thesis, Angela Davis (1981), for instance, criticized the idea of wages for housework and the general depiction of women, regardless of their class and race, as housewives, by pointing out that women of colour in the United States have been paid for housework for decades as domestic workers in a white woman's house. Most of the domestic labour debate's participants failed to acknowledge that not all women were engaging in housework since some of them have been employing other women to perform the tasks for which they would have been deemed responsible.

In spite of the interconnections between paid and unpaid domestic work that past theorists have relatively rarely spelled out (with the exception of Davidoff 1974), the research on waged domestic labour has evolved as a separate field of inquiry. Although a long standing tradition, waged domestic labour has only been more systematically investigated since the 1960s, mainly thanks to historians (Sarti 2014).[3] Sarti (2014, 292–293) has shown how social scientists' lack of interest in the topic was influenced, in particular, by modernization theories predicting complete disappearance of domestic service. That these assumptions about the evaporation of domestic service proved wrong became apparent over the past two decades as the number of domestic workers on a global scale has increased significantly (ILO 2013, 24). Such development eventually intrigued scholars to focus on the phenomenon, and to date "hundreds of articles and books have been (and continue to be) published" highlighting both the continuities and discontinuities between the past and present contours of paid domestic work (Sarti 2014, 301; see, e.g. Romero 1992; Gregson and Lowe 1994; Andall 2000). In this context it has been argued that, unlike previously when domestic work was underpinned with basic social stratification, presently, its relatively broad scope is nothing but a result of the tremendous global inequalities pertinent to the gendered social and economic processes of globalization (Anderson 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2001; Lutz 2002; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). Notwithstanding the increase in demand, until recently, domestic work as a source of employment, as well as holding an important role in sustaining households, has remained unnoticed. In particular, feminist scholars working within a political economy perspective have theorized about this invisibility, whose main arguments I outline next.

[3] For a holistic review of the historical research on paid domestic work focused on Europe see Sarti 2014.

2.2 Domestic work in the global political economy

The processes of neoliberal globalization have accelerated transformations of labour markets worldwide. The work that formerly was performed under regulated working conditions has been increasingly reorganized into heterogeneous arrangements that involve precarious employment with low remuneration and social insecurity (Pearson 2014). The number of masculinized stable, socially valued, and unionized positions has been, therefore, decreasing, while the incidence of feminized low-wage, semi- and low-skilled work is on the rise. Given gender stereotypes, women are perceived as particularly suitable for these positions. However, marginalized men are too drawn more frequently into precarious work, since these shifts have for many of them translated into a loss of stable employment. Altogether, women and "feminized others," in the words of Peterson, comprise "the vast majority of poor, less skilled, insecure, informalised and flexibilised workers" (Peterson 2005, 508).

Moreover, feminist scholars have argued that these on-going changes are deeply structured by the masculinist connotations that assign value to different kinds of work (Waring 1988; Elson 1995; Bakker 2007; Hoskyns and Rai 2007; Bakker and Silvey 2008). Given the gendered assumptions that construct the market only in productive economic terms, it is the formal waged work that is appraised by global capital. On the other hand, the sphere of social reproduction has been more and more devalued due to the feminization practices of globalization. What is more, the structural changes in the global political economy stimulated the commodification of intimacy as the discourse favours private capital and accumulation of wealth over social reproduction and the welfare state (Peterson 2003, 79). The result of these processes has been the relocation of care and domestic work, previously situated within the unpaid domestic or family sphere, to the market economy (Peterson 2003; Yeates 2005). Coinciding with the processes that produce cheap and feminized labour, these tasks have been increasingly taken care of by marginalized women and the feminized others, who have been virtually invisible because of the nature and location of their work.

This has led Chang and Ling (2000) to argue that globalization has a dual character. According to the authors, its visible face, connected to processes such as deregulation and privatisation, is closely linked to, and rests on, another kind of globalization - "the regime of labour intimacy" - operating low-wage, low skilled, and highly feminized labour that services the professional class; most likely under informal, unregulated, and insecure conditions. In other words, paid domestic work as a global phenomenon is the hidden, private, and "intimate

other," which enables the functioning of the "techno muscular capitalism" associated with "Western" capitalist masculinity (Chang and Ling 2000). To further underscore the interdependent personal relationships as well as the interconnections between productive and reproductive spheres of economy, researchers have used phrases such as a 'global care chain' and later the 'transnational transfer of reproduction' as a reference to an increase in the employment of migrant domestic workers and to the linkages among women situated at unequal points along global power hierarchies (Hochshild 2000; Parreñas 2001; Cheng 2006; Lutz 2011). How these inequalities shape the character of domestic work is the subject of the next section.

2.3 Recognizing the unique nature of domestic work

Much of the research in this field has mapped the nature of paid domestic labour, including the living and working conditions of domestic workers (e.g. Anderson 2000; Parreñas 2001; Lutz 2002). Scholars have argued that even though there is a need to highlight the heterogeneous experiences of domestic workers that are, in words of Blackett, shaped by the "interplay between cultural, social, racial, religious and linguistic dimensions and economic, historical and political factors" (Blackett 1998, 4), similarities in the experiences of domestic workers should be drawn to emphasize the intrinsically gendered character of housework that rationalizes the marginalization of its providers. In particular, given that domestic work takes place at home within the private domain of the family, it collides into the dichotomies of public/private and market/household that have delineated it as a separate "invisible" area of work (Judge 2012a, 15). Its location within the home, an environment constructed in liberal theory as a private realm outside of the world of work, in which a state is less likely to intervene, has for many also been explanatory of why domestic work tends to be excluded entirely or partially from the scope of labour protection and social coverage (Albin 2012; Fredman and Fudge 2013; Fudge 2014).

Moreover, given its intimate location, this type of work is characterized by highly personalized relationships, often involving mutual dependency that all parties involved negotiate (see, e.g. Mendez 1998; Anderson 2000; Souralova 2014). As Tomei (2011, 186) notes, under these circumstances, employers often perceive their relationship with domestic workers as a household-like establishment, rather than in terms of employee-employer. However, positioning domestic workers as part of the family "may disarm workers so that they

are continually on call and the boundaries between work and privacy become blurred" (Williams 2010, 386). That is why a high power imbalance between a worker and an employee tends to underpin this personalized mode of relationship.

Another characteristic, already mentioned above, which typifies the nature of domestic work relates to its associations with women's work. Such connotations often lead to its invisibility and undervaluation in terms of skills and remuneration, rather than perceptions that it is a work like any other requiring secured working conditions. Others have deemed legacy of slavery, colonialism, and geopolitical and ethnic hierarchies as causal of poor enforcement of domestic worker's rights (Jones 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). Altogether, scholars have argued that domestic work represents a specific sector ruled by "[...] structure and culture [that] impact on workers in the direction of disadvantage" (Albin 2012, 231).

Because of this 'sectoral disadvantage' (Albin 2012) and the fact that their workplace is "understood to be separate from the public gaze and state regulation" (Peterson 2003, 103), domestic work is particularly precarious work. Indeed, despite providing socially necessary labour, domestic workers face multiple problems, ranging from unending working hours, informal employment relationships, and discrimination on various grounds to reports of exploitation and abuse (Anderson 2000; Williams 2010; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010). They tend to be poorly remunerated and frequently lack access to health and social security benefits. Moreover, the exploitative aspects of domestic work can be reinforced based on ethnic and racial stereotypes, and immigration status. Especially when considering migrant domestic workers, researchers have underscored the specific marginalization they might face as their situation can be further exacerbated with restrictive immigration policies. These frequently require a domestic worker to obtain a visa permit tied to a specific employer, which significantly undermines the worker's exercise of rights (Parreñas 2001). The lack of bargaining power has been emphasized in the case of undocumented workers, who are unlikely to pursue legal claims against their exploitative employers for fear of income loss and possible deportation (Mantouvalou 2013, 373).

This account by no means aims to undermine domestic workers' agency, neither do I argue that all of them face abuse and exploitation. On the contrary, scholars have made sufficient efforts to show that the lived experiences of household workers tend to be more complex. The living situation of migrant domestic workers may materially improve. Migrant women's negotiating power can increase as a result of the responsibility of sustaining their families through remittances (Anderson 2000; Visel 2013). Other scholars have shown that many women find self-realization in domestic work and provision of care, and therefore feel

valued for what they do (Albin and Mantouvalou 2012, 68). Also, the roles of an employer and employee may be more complicated than necessarily reflecting the situation of a white European woman relying on the labour of a migrant woman as Souralova (2014) shows in her study of Vietnamese immigrants demanding caregiving of Czech nannies. However, despite these complexities, paid domestic work rests on essential social constructions that have materialized in its undervaluation, invisibility, and frequent failure to perceive domestic work as real work, which leaves domestic workers with scarce possibilities to challenge exploitative employment conditions.

The apparent lack of state involvement, however, does not mean that the domestic work sector is a market characterized by an "unstructured system of supply and demand of domestic services," as Tomei suggests (2011, 189). Conversely, research has shown that the operation of domestic services' market cannot be fully comprehended without focusing on the active role of states in promoting, sustaining, and structuring the globalized domestic service economy (Chin 1998; Chang 2000; Cheng 2003; Elias 2013). For instance, the Philippine government supervises, regulates and markets overseas domestic work, which forms part of the country's national development strategy (Chang and Ling 2000, 36). Likewise, labour-receiving states have in many ways mediated the demand and supply of domestic workers. In the United Kingdom, as in many other countries, the government structures the conditions through special temporary visas for migrant domestic workers (Anderson 2014). Similarly, the on-going withdrawal of the state from the public provision of care has immensely influenced the increase in transferring care responsibilities to someone else for pay. As illustrated, scholars have shown that it has been mainly through labour, migration and care policies, and through normative practices, that the state shapes the nature of the domestic work sector (Williams 2010). Given the role of states in structuring domestic workers' lived experiences, it is, therefore, no coincidence that they are increasingly under pressure to reform the situation in the domestic service sector to ensure decent work principles for domestic workers.

2.4 Towards the regulation of domestic work

While advocates for domestic workers' rights, including domestic workers themselves, have been confronting the ideological constructs surrounding household labour throughout the world for decades (see, e.g. Boris and Fish 2015), the plight of domestic workers situated in the changing global political economy arguably increased the level of organizing (Boris and Fish

2014, 414). More frequently than ever, social movements turn to a number of political domains at a local, national, and transnational level to demand policy change that would address the injustices within the sector. Domestic workers' unions and organizations, along with an intriguing range of other actors including feminist, human rights, and faith-based groups, and different NGOs or grassroots organizations, have been fighting for the recognition of domestic workers' situations and better employment protections.

In some countries, the complex interactions between local contestations, transnational action, and institutional opportunities have generated the development of instruments that aim to improve formalization and standardization of the domestic service sector. Within this context, different authors have mapped the policy-related efforts; many times triggered by the signature of the ILO Convention and Recommendation concerning decent work for domestic workers (ILO 2011). This Convention is "the first global policy on household labour" (Boris and Fish 2015, 530), and urges its member states to develop new instruments to address the special conditions of domestic work and ensure equal protection of domestic workers under labour law (for discussion on the Convention see, e.g. Tomei and Belser 2011; Albin and Mantouvalou 2012; Visel 2013; Rosewarne 2013; Kavar 2014; Pape 2016). In that event, it addresses the long-standing policy gaps in regulation of domestic work, and undoubtedly legitimizes the demands of various actors for the sector's formalization.

To illustrate, domestic workers in Spain were only covered by the Special Regime of Domestic Workers until recently, which provided less protection than the general labour law (Kvist and Peterson 2010, 194). Pressured by domestic workers' associations, whose long-standing claims intensified with international pressure, now institutionalized by the ILO, the Spanish government introduced a reform to increase domestic workers' access to social and labour rights and to recognize it legally as work like any other (León 2013). Even though this is undoubtedly progress, considering the previous situation, the reform has been considered insubstantial given its limitation to legal change (Pla-Julián 2014). In this context, Pla-Julián (2014, 562), recommends implementation of different labour, migration, and gender policies to decrease the level of informality within the sector. This could be done by learning from "a number of important initiatives in Europe, such as 'domestic service cheques [vouchers]', [which were] applied successfully in France, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the United Kingdom and Switzerland," the writer suggests (Pla-Julián 2014, 573).

Indeed, in some of these "Western" EU member states, different measures, including the above-mentioned service vouchers, tax credits, and incentives, and other schemes facilitating domestic worker contracts have been enforced over the past two decades. They

have often been seen as good practices and therefore promoted to advance the struggle against lingering injustices in the domestic work sector (see, e.g. ILO ACTRAV 2013; ILO 2015; WIEGO 2016). Recently, however, scholars have begun to systematically scrutinize these often taken-for-granted reforms that regulate domestic work (see, e.g. Devetter 2013; Morel 2015; Morel and Carbonnier 2015; Pérez and Stallaert 2015; Shire 2015). They have shown that besides aiming to stimulate formalization and standardization of domestic work, these policies have intended to encourage the growth of the domestic service sector as a means of job creation, in particular among those facing the risk of labour market exclusion (Kvist 2012). Given that the policies have brought about mainly low-paid, flexible, part-time, precarious jobs designated for feminized labour (see, e.g. Hobson and Bede 2015; Morel 2015; Morel and Carbonnier 2015), the domestic workers' advocates, I posit, should be warranted to uncritically promote these measures as a way towards decent work for domestic workers.

Against this backdrop, I take as a departure point for my thesis the notion that any analysis of policies intending to reform the domestic work sector warrants critical scrutiny. To build on such presumption, in this research, I examine the underlying assumptions beneath the proposed policy, which aims to regulate the domestic service sector in the Czech Republic. While the informality of paid domestic work has not been constituted for long as a policy issue which would require political attention therein, in recent years, different policy actors have been trying to shift the discursive politics of the state to reform the sector and give the phenomenon of domestic work new meaning. My research, therefore, aspires to scrutinize these developments with particular attention given to the normative assumptions surrounding gender (in)equality and social (in)justice and contribute to the debate on the regulation of domestic service sector.

Thus far, research on social and political developments related to the domestic work sector in Europe has focused on East-Central Europe as a region of labour-sending countries. Studies, therefore, mapped mainly the experiences of women migrating to "Western" Europe to work as nannies, au-pairs, cleaners, and so on (see, e.g. Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010; Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2012; Miller and Buríková 2010). The social and political developments within the region remain under-researched; yet, a few scholars have taken up the scrutiny of the issue to show that both the demand for domestic work and supply of domestic workers has also increased within the region (see, e.g. Hrzenjak 2012; Ezzedine et al. 2014; Souralová 2014; Tolstokorova 2014; Hrzenjak and Pajnik 2015; Kordasiewicz 2015; Mavrinac 2015). My intent is to build further on this research, which focuses mainly on individual experiences of domestic workers, and to move to the mesolevel of analysis to examine policy processes concerning paid

domestic work in the context of post-socialist East-Central Europe. In the next chapter, I outline the methodology of my research.

3. METHODOLOGY

As Annemarie Moll (2002, 154) writes: "[M]ethods are not a way of opening a window to the world, but a way of interfering with it." In other words, a method (or methods) can be seen as a tool for producing the realities; hence, the choice thereof "matters politically" (Bacchi and Rönnblom 2014, 171). Suffice it to say, the politics of my positionality influences my methodological approach, which I pursue with an objective to carry out an engaged feminist and social justice research with an emancipatory agenda. For these reasons, I find support in Foucauldian post-structural policy analysis, which, in the words of Bacchi and Rönnblom (2014, 179), "ensures that attention is directed to how things come to be, rather than assuming that what is constitutes what must be." My choice of methods is therefore informed by my conviction of a need to examine critically, question and deconstruct what comes to be seen as natural and static to uncover its effects and create space for change and transformation.

In this context, as opposed to understanding policies as given, I draw in this thesis on Carol Bacchi's (1999, 2009) 'What's the problem represented to be' (WPR) approach to policy analysis to highlight that policies "rest upon culturally influenced presuppositions and assumptions ('unexamined ways of thinking') that may well have deleterious consequences for some social groups" (Bacchi 2010b, 62). Combining Foucauldian discourse analysis, feminist theory and governmentality scholarship, the WPR approach entails constant scrutinizing of the underlying norms and concepts, including those of a researcher (Bacchi 2009, 262–267). As illustrated, WPR as a method challenges the dominant positivist, arguably depoliticized, the problem-solving paradigm of policy studies and instead offers a nuanced framework for policy analysis from a feminist perspective. That being the case, WPR fits well with my position of a student of Critical Gender Studies, as well as with the objectives of my thesis.

As mentioned above, Bacchi's WPR approach seeks to examine how a policy problem in itself is represented and to scrutinize what lies beneath these representations that govern us. For this purpose, the WPR method draws on the Foucauldian concept of problematizations (Bacchi 2012a). In the writings of Foucault, problematization has a double, yet interconnected meaning. First, Foucault refers to the term as an analytical method of 'thinking problematically', which involves studying taken-for-granted objects (problematizations) (Foucault 1977, 185–186), or as Deacon writes, examining how an issue is "questioned, analysed, classified and regulated at specific times and under specific circumstances" (Deacon 2000, 127). Second, Foucault also uses the concept of problematization as a "historical process

of producing objects for thought" attending to the circumstances of why and how certain topics emerge as problems (Foucault 1985, 115) and to the effects of these productions (Bacchi 2012a, 5).

Furthermore, Foucault contends that problematizations arise from 'practices' which he describes as "places" where "rules imposed and reasons given" gather and intertwine (Foucault 1991, 75). A practice thus has a regulating aspect influencing people's ways of acting, which are legitimated by its second feature – "production of a true discourse" (Bacchi 2012a, 3). All in all, thinking problematically about problematizations starts by investigating practices that are incorporated in what he calls 'practical or prescriptive texts', which are "written for the purpose of offering rules, opinions, and advice on how to behave as one should" (Foucault 1986, 12–13). Bacchi draws on these points to argue that all policies or policy proposals function as prescriptive texts that reflect practices based on a particular problematization (or particular problematizations) (Bacchi 2012a, 2). In line with Foucault's analytical method, also that of Bacchi, suggests to investigate how issues are problematized "within these practical guides to practice," which opens a window to "inquire into how governing takes place" (Bacchi 2012a, 3).

In this regard, the WPR approach problematizes the conventional way of thinking about policy processes. Instead of seeing the stakeholders' action/non-action towards a problem as a reaction, Bacchi sees it in terms of creation. She argues that policy problems are given certain interpretations of what the issue is (and is not), therefore they are created (2010a, 2). Importantly, these interpretations are not necessarily an intended outcome of policy actors, who, as acknowledged in mainstream policy studies literature, often aim to shift a meaning to bring about policy change (e.g. Schon 1983; Derry 1984). Instead, Bacchi draws attention to how meanings are shaped by 'knowledges', in the Foucauldian sense, that underline policy thinking. She argues that "no political actor, neither analyst nor theorist, stands outside these processes" to emphasize that "we are all implicated in the structuring discourses of our era and our cultures" (Bacchi 1999, 48). That being said, the WPR approach aims to examine how normative assumptions and privilege translate in policymaking.

Moreover, as a consequence of the biased interpretations, the problem representations have implications for our lives, which as Bacchi (2010a, 3) aptly points out "need to be assessed and evaluated" to inquire into how we are governed. The WPR approach makes it possible to reflect upon what constitutes the policies, as well as what is silenced and left out. Drawing on Foucault's theory of governmentality, particular attention is therefore given to how these articulations produce and assign different subject positions, which in turn may be influential

on our subjectivities. However, as Bacchi writes (2010a, 6), the impact of subject positions on political subjects should not be seen in a deterministic way, but rather in terms of generating different meanings and contestations. To conclude, using the WPR approach helps me to carry out research, which "reflect[s] upon the shape of claims made about social problems; consider[s] the implications which flow from the shape of these claims; and reflect[s] upon what is missing from the shape of some claims and what implications follow from this" (Bacchi 1999, 59).

To this end, Bacchi (2009, 47) developed a set of questions which guide my analysis problematizing paid domestic work in the Czech Republic. The questions are the following (for a detailed account see Bacchi 2009):

1. What's the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the 'problem'?
3. How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'? Consider three kinds of interconnected effects: discursive effects, subjectification effects, lived effects.
6. How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?

My intent is not necessarily to answer in detail all these questions as I write since that would be unfeasible for the scope of my project, which examines more than one representation of the problem of paid domestic work. Rather I use them to guide my analysis to identify themes that focus primarily on normative assumptions and silences surrounding gender (in)equality and social (in)justice, and the effects of the different problematizations.

3.1 Empirical material and data collection

In order to map a recent history of problematizing paid domestic work as a policy issue in the Czech Republic, I conducted policy process analysis to map the policy developments between 2010 – 2016 (April) chronologically. In addition to identifying all relevant actors and situating them within political and governance context, I also looked for the main challenges in policy-

making as well as the existing outputs and outcomes of the policy development process. Simultaneously, I collected all available textual material, which represents the main source of my data, consisting of relevant legislation, policy statements and proposals, policy strategies, governmental and parliamentary reports, debate transcriptions, project proposals and project outputs. Having an undeniable role in shaping how the issue of paid domestic work has been interpreted in the Czech Republic, I additionally draw on civil society material, including position papers, reports, project outputs, conference, and debate transcriptions. Some of the data also come from the transnational or supranational level of policy-making, which allows me to trace the global-local nexus and its resonance in the policy debates in the Czech Republic.

Second, I complement the textual material with 'elite' interviewing to inquire further into the complexity of a policy process and gain insight into those aspects of policy-making related to, for instance, interactions, conflicts or contradictions that are difficult to capture from publicized information.[4] In line with Rönnblom and Keisu (2013), I regard the transcriptions of the interviews in my thesis as policy texts (Rönnblom and Keisu 2013) to justify the interview data analysis with the WPR approach. Moreover, the combined approach to data collection allows for a more thorough understanding of the topic, as well as provides a holistic data set, which makes it possible to scrutinize closely how domestic work is produced in policy processes in the Czech Republic.

This part of the empirical material consists of sixteen semi-structured interviews, fifteen of which were carried out during my research stay in Prague, the Czech Republic in February and the beginning of March. The interviews were conducted in the Czech language in a face-to-face manner, except two which took place over Skype because of distance barriers. This includes my last participant whom I interviewed in April. My interviewees include a member of parliament, government officials, researchers and civil society representatives, who have somewhat contributed to discussions or development of the issue at stake at various levels of policy processes (for the full list of participants, see Appendix 1).[5] On average, they were fifty-five minutes long (ranging from twenty minutes to one hour and forty minutes). The interview guide covered themes related to the current policy and legal framework shaping the nature of domestic work in the Czech Republic, diagnosis of the policy problem, politics involved in the policy process, evaluation of different local as well as transnational strategic initiatives, and future prognosis of policy development.

[4] The term 'elite' in context of interviewing can be used to describe individuals or groups with particular professional expertise and/or proximity to power (Morris 2009).
[5] Some of them fit in more than one of these fixed categories.

Most of the time, I contacted my respondents via email without a previous personal connection. To legitimize my project and gain access, I used my position of a Czech graduate student at a foreign university and emphasized the ethics of my research, including conventions of anonymity and confidentiality.[6] Other participants, I reached by attending a conference on migrant workers, where I established personal contacts that facilitated my encounter with the principal persons. Also, at the initial stage of my fieldwork, a snowball effect occurred as I asked my research participants to assist me in identifying other potential interviewees. Despite not necessarily facing problems in gaining access to elite participants, throughout my fieldwork experience, I did encounter, however, with other aspects of elite interviewing that do not necessarily reflect many of the "feminist accounts of doing research" (Puwar 1997).

While feminist methodology literature (see, e.g. Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002; Naples 2003) has been mostly concerned with a position of a researcher in terms of having control and power over an interview, I sometimes – but not always – found myself in a situation that the control and power imbalance was in favour of an interviewee (both female and male). For instance, in most cases, my participants determined the location of an interview and set strict time boundaries. Knowing only a little or nothing until the last moment about the setting and eventual circumstances of an interview, I had to be particularly flexible and reflexive throughout my fieldwork experience. Nevertheless, some of the interviews, in my view, approximated to the feminist notions of sharing space, and hence, challenged the conceptualization of elite research participants as "a homogeneous group […] with fixed and consistent power" (Lancaster 2016, 5). In contrast, my experience confirms a need to view "dynamics between the participant and interviewer" as "fluid and context-dependent" (ibid.).

Finally, I would like to address the issues of anonymity as an essential concept in the context of my research examining policy processes in real time, rather than as closed episodes of the past. Acknowledging a small number of individuals, who have somehow shaped the problematizations of paid domestic work, I have been particularly aware of the constraints in keeping my research participants anonymous. Despite gaining some of my participants' consent to disclose their individual identities, I eventually decided to keep all of them anonymous to extend the sample in order to protect the anonymity of other respondents. Additionally, I excluded from the analysis categories that are irrelevant for the purposes of my study, such as age or education. Therefore, reporting of the research results does not include

[6] In certain circumstances, my positionality made an access to my respondents easier. In other times, however, I felt my position of a graduate student from a foreign institution, rather than a local one, let some of my informants to perceive me as an "outsider" having implications in terms of both gaining access and trust.

any attributable information that could reveal my participants' identities. In what follows, I provide a context to the empirical part of the thesis.

4. GLOCAL CONTEXT

The employment of what used to be called servants was not uncommon before World War II in the Czech lands. In fact, in the early 20th century, every third Czech-speaking and every second German-speaking household employed at least one domestic worker in Prague (Machkova Prajzova 2009). While in previous decades, some of the servants were male (although most likely performing "more prestigious" and better-paid tasks than women) by 1900 domestic work became a highly feminized occupation (Fialova 2004). Over the course of the 20th century, however, the number dropped dramatically as different economic and social changes rendered the job obsolete. Moreover, being contradictory to the state-socialist project of industrial economic development and emancipation encouraging "women's paid employment outside of the home" (de Haan 2012, 89), domestic work was ideologically dismissed by the communist leaders. By 1950 the occupation was no longer of interest to the statistical collection in the Czechoslovak Republic (Kurfirtova 2009, 30). The collapse of communism in 1989, however, propelled the country's incorporation into the global capitalist economy, which brought along turbulent socio-economic changes and transformations. Against this backdrop, scholars have revealed that the demand and supply of domestic workers have again been increasing in the Czech Republic (Redlova 2012; Ezzedine et al. 2014).

As a prelude to my empirical study, this chapter briefly outlines the dynamics of gender regime with emphasis on practices of care, labour, and immigration, since their intersections have been identified in the literature as the most influential forces structuring the nature of the domestic work sector (Williams 2010). I situate the local context of the Czech Republic in the socio-economic processes of global economic restructuring to highlight how these gendered discourses, shaped multi-dimensionally by the local and the global (Freeman 2001), have been particularly influential in producing the subjectivities of those performing domestic work today. Moreover, I assert, not only do they influence the composition of the current workforce, but the gendered practices of care, labour, immigration also produce the imaginations of the policy-makers, who perceive the unemployed and the socially excluded citizens as the most suitable workforce for developing the domestic services in the Czech Republic. I finish by summarizing the findings of the research, conducted thus far, mapping the nature of the domestic work sector in the Czech Republic at present to underscore the social injustices that domestic workers may or do face, and which also remain omitted by most of the policy-makers therein.

4.1 Gender relations at the intersections

Despite the differences among socialist societies before 1989, the countries shared a commitment to women's participation outside of the home. Being no exception, the incorporation of all able-bodied women into the labour market was key to the communist agenda in Czechoslovakia, especially given the acute demand for their labour (de Haan 2012). To meet the ends of the women's emancipation project, the state developed a set of positive measures, implemented far ahead of many "Western" countries, such as paid maternity leave with job guarantees or establishment of a network of childcare facilities that would allow women to reconcile childrearing and work (Fodor 2005, 3). As a result, the society normalized the notion of a full-time, year-round, life-long female labourer, whose career was interrupted for a few years while on maternity leave (Havelkova 1993; Fodor 2005; Haskova and Klenner 2010). Nevertheless, despite these advances, women still participated in the labour market as inferior to men (Fodor 2005; Kampichler and Kispeter 2014). In addition, they became subject to at least a double burden as men's involvement in unpaid work remained unquestioned (Havelkova 1993; Fodor 2003; Gal and Kligman 2000). In other words, even though women's integration into the waged economy increased, the inequalities in and outside of the household overall persisted.

Following the collapse of the state-socialist regime by the end of 1989, the global economic restructuring, founded in a thorough embracement of neoliberal market-oriented principles and foreign direct investment, radically transformed the political economy of everyday life in Czechoslovakia, and thus the Czech Republic. Unknown levels of unemployment arose, while the cuts in social welfare were set on the political agenda of the state, as well as in the guidelines for economic development provided by international organizations, such as the IMF, the World Bank, or the EU (Fodor 2005; Fodor and Horn 2015). At the same time, the emancipation project was socially as well as politically discredited given its communist legacy. Instead, women's withdrawal from the labour market seemed to the engineers of emerging capitalist economy as a reasonable solution to buffer the increasing unemployment rates and transformation costs (True 2003). The state, for instance, further institutionalized the lengthy parental leave, which avails almost exclusively women, and nearly abolished provision of institutional care for children under the age of three (Sirovátka and Saxonberg 2008). Setting aside the unequal distribution of unpaid work between men and women and undervaluation of women's role in social reproduction in general, these policies

reinforced social and economic hierarchies that have been reflected in many aspects of women's lives, ranging from unequal pay, gendered pension schemes, or disproportionate rates of women with caring responsibilities falling into poverty (Fodor and Horn 2015; Haskova, Krizkova and Dudova 2015). This ambition to revive the idea of men as the main breadwinners, who would be best supported by their wives from the kitchen, sustained with the privatization of care through familialist policies, are just some of the many illustrations revealing the gendered dynamics of the socio-economic restructuring in the Czech Republic.

Even though the spreading marketization, privatization and an emphasis on individual responsibility increased social inequalities, especially along class, ethnic and gender lines (Bandelj and Mahutga 2010), women's level of participation in the labour market has remained relatively high (Fodor 2005). By the beginning of this year, the employment rate for women was 63 percent, which is, however, significantly lower in comparison to 78.8 percent for men (CSU 2016). Nonetheless, in addition to their participation in paid work, women remain disproportionately responsible for the unpaid activities of households. According to a survey conducted in 2010, economically active women spend 27.6 hours weekly on care for dependents and housework in comparison with 14.9 hours for men. In total, the numbers are even higher as women spend on average 38 hours per week performing unpaid domestic work in contrast to 15.5 hours for men (Vohlidalova 2012, 44). These figures, however, reveal only a partial picture of women's work in the market-based economy given the fact that they are unable to demonstrate the changing ways of how women work today in the Czech Republic.

Going hand in hand with the high undervaluation of domestic work in the current global political economy, gender inequalities intersecting with deepening class and ethnic power hierarchies have been clearly shaping the current contours of the transforming labour market. In this context, True (2003, 79–80) has persuasively written about the emergence of a 'three-tiered labour market' as a result of socio-economic restructuring in the Czech Republic. According to the author, the post-socialist labour market has been composed of the 'labour aristocracy', i.e. of highly skilled, high-earning professional workers; low-skilled 'precarious workers or unemployed;' and 'unofficial workers', often of Roma ethnic origin, undertaking informal economic activities. While more and more women take up professional jobs in the top tier, True (2003, 80) adds, "they are the majority of those precarious workers or unemployed in the second tier and as sex workers and trafficked persons, they are an integral part of the unofficial, third-tier of the labour market." This hierarchical segmentation, furthermore, concurs with highly gendered horizontal segregation, and arguably reflects the undervaluation of occupations in which women tend to be concentrated. Presently, almost half of all employed

women fit into only ten categories, eight of which are highly feminized jobs, i.e. jobs in which women comprise more than 70 percent of workers (Krizkova and Sloboda 2009, 21). These include chiefly administrative employees, nurses and caregivers, elementary school and pre-school teachers, cleaners and housekeepers or shop assistants (Krizkova and Sloboda 2009, 23). In sum, while women are underrepresented in what are considered prestigious jobs, they make up a high proportion of the less-valued segments of the labour market.

Correspondingly, as True (2003) earlier suggested, scholars have over the past years not only mapped women's overrepresentation in the less-valued, "low-skilled" jobs, but also increasing flexibilization, deterioration of working conditions, and cases of subcontracting in employment of structurally disadvantaged women (see e.g. Tomasek and Dudova 2008; Vohlidalova and Formankova 2012; Simerska 2015; Kucera 2016). This has also been a case of other marginalized populations, such as "low-skilled" migrant workers, mostly coming from other CEE countries and to a lesser extent from Asia, whose cheap and flexible labour became increasingly targeted by the global capital from the midst of the 1990s (Canek 2014, 11). However, in addition to being of special interest in the job market, "low-skilled" migrant workers also became subject to particular attention of the state, which controls their supply as a way to sustain the country's economic competitiveness (Canek 2012). As a result, migrant workers are subject to restrictive immigration policy and ad hoc instrumentalization of temporary migration programmes in times of economic recession (Cizinsky and Hradecna 2012; Canek 2012). In combination with a low regard for the migrants' rights in the Czech Republic, such regulation has often led many of the migrant workers into precariousness and informality, sometimes involving work in the domestic service sector (Canek 2011, 2014; Faltova 2014).[7] On the whole, these accounts somewhat complicate True's (2003) conceptualization by pointing out a more diverse composition of today's bottom tiers of the Czech labour market.

What is more, studies suggest that the changing nature of employment and living conditions has blurred the boundaries of the two lower tiers of the job market that no longer, if ever, uphold the separation of low-skilled 'precarious workers or unemployed' from 'unofficial workers', as suggested earlier by True (2003, 80). Notably, scholars have drawn attention to a number of informal activities taking place in the formal enterprises in the Czech Republic (e.g. Hofirek and Nekorjak 2008; Drbohlav 2009; Canek 2011; 2014). In a like manner, workers

[7] By 'migrants' I refer to people who do not have the right of abode in the Czech Republic including EU nationals as well as foreign nationals who are subject to immigration controls.

themselves mingle between the formal and the informal economy to safeguard sufficient household income. Regardless of their employment status, they take up a range of positions across these false binaries of formal/informal or employed/unemployed (Sindlerova 2006; Dudova and Haskova 2014; Ezzedine et al. 2014). For example, Dudova and Haskova (2014) show a multiplicity of precarious work strategies including a variety of both formal and informal employment schemes that women with caring responsibilities adopt to navigate the uncertainty of livelihood. Notably, these authors posit that many female caregivers have a hard time finding stable positions in the labour market given the current work/care practices. These include mainly the naturalized gendered division of labour emphasizing home-based care, the stubborn persistence of women's discrimination in the labour market, combined with a lack of measures for a reconciliation of work and family, such as stable part-time jobs, and overall scarcity of public care institutions (Dudova and Haskova 2014, 26). Altogether, these efforts to meet household subsistence reveal the porousness of the informal/formal binary, as well as the complicity of the state in reinforcing precariousness by various means of policy intervention, or the lack thereof.

More importantly, the gendered dichotomies of formal/informal, but also public/private, reproductive/productive have to be deconstructed to highlight the false separation of the household from the market (Peterson 2010). I have already pointed out how women bear the brunt of unpaid work and activities. However, as in many other countries, the global economic restructuring of the Czech Republic has resulted in an increasing number of women generating income in households. To illustrate, in her study of home work, Sindlerova (2006) uncovers a number of activities for which mostly women are recruited by small business as well as corporations to reduce the overall costs. These range from piece work involving assembling hair colour swatch charts, lampworking, rosary and jewellery making, shoes and clothes making to tasks involving administration or meal preparation. Finally, more recent accounts of scholarship have revealed women's concentration in another "invisible" area, which does not necessarily involve work in a household of the worker's own, but of others' (Redlova 2012; Ezzedine 2012; Ezzedine et al. 2014; Souralova 2014; 2015). In what follows, I briefly outline what is known about the nature of the domestic work sector in the Czech Republic today.

4.2 Domestic workers of today

Given the specific regional developments, connected mainly to the former state socialist emphasis on work outside of the household, the share of domestic workers in Central and Eastern Europe is the lowest in the world. The ILO estimates that domestic workers in CEE comprise around one percent of the sector's workforce worldwide (ILO 2013).[8] Therefore, for the majority of the population, the trend of delegating domestic and caring responsibilities to someone else for pay remains rather unusual. Though, it tends to be increasingly accepted, legitimized, and will most likely increase in scope in the future due to the demographics (Ezzedine and Semerak 2014, 26) and also policy preferences, as I illustrate in this thesis.

More detailed national statistical accounts or estimates of the size of the domestic work sector are however non-existent. The only official data that is available indicates that by the end of 2015, there were forty-three migrant domestic workers, including both the EU and third country nationals, in the Czech Republic (MoLSA 2016b). This obvious undercount has been long criticized by the Czech NGOs assisting migrant workers, whose representatives have based on their practitioner expertise argued that the number, in reality, runs into tens of thousands (Redlova and Hermanova 2013). Also, other sources counteract the official misrepresentation, yet the calculations vary. For example, the ILO data from 2008 suggested that 3,000 persons were performing domestic work for a wage in the Czech Republic, out of which 2,000 were women (LABORSTA 2008). Whereas the Hamburg Institute of International Economics (2009) estimated that only 12 percent of migrants in an irregular situation (around 23,400) work in the sector in the Czech Republic (Heimeshoff 2011, 52). Despite these numerical discrepancies that reflect the difficulties of mapping the domestic labour's scope (e.g. Chen 2011; Schwenken and Heimeshoff 2011), it is evident that the number is in reality much higher. In other words, these figures are illustrative of the extensive undercounting of the domestic work sector in the Czech national statistics.

Against this backdrop, a few scholars, focusing to a large extent on migrant domestic workers, have worked over the past years to visibilize the narratives portraying the nature of the sector in the Czech Republic (Redlova 2012; Ezzedine 2012; Ezzedine et al. 2014; Souralova 2014; 2015). Thus far, they have revealed that the vast majority of migrant workers performing domestic work come from Ukraine and other post-Soviet states. This category of domestic workers, which works several shifts throughout a week for different households is

[8] This data covers 21 countries of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ILO 2013).

then complemented with a smaller group of live-in domestic workers, who receive their room and board in their employer's home (Ezzedine et al. 2014). The live-in domestic workers have been mostly recruited by intermediary agencies, whose owners, inspired by international practices, have almost exclusively targeted the Philippines as "a traditional country of origin for nannies" (Redlova 2012, 194). Given the services of intermediaries, the Filipino domestic workers tend to have full-time employment contracts, which, however, often provide misleading job titles, such as nurses or teachers (Redlova 2012; Ezzedine and Semerak 2014). Otherwise, the employment status of domestic workers varies. Some work formally on short-term contracts, others work informally or as self-employed contractors, and many take up various positions on the formal-informal continuum (Ezzedine and Semerak 2014).

Touching upon policy implications, the research has also uncovered the incidence of poor working conditions ranging from work for excessively long hours, lack of food provision, unfixed terms and conditions of employment, unpaid overtime to unresponsiveness of enforcement authorities or physical abuse (Redlova 2012; Ezzedine and Semerak 2014). Some of the Czech NGOs have recently also assisted victims of forced labour and trafficking for domestic servitude (Interview with an NGO representative, 26 February 2016). The plight of domestic workers in the Czech Republic is further complicated by insufficient trade union representation and the aforementioned restrictive immigration policies that include an employment-based visa system for third country nationals that ties a migrant domestic worker to an individual employer.

Much less is known in the scholarship about Czech nationals as domestic workers. The only exception has been Souralova's research (2014; 2015) focusing on the Vietnamese community of immigrants to the Czech Republic. Its members commonly rely on older Czech women for intensive caregiving to their children, while they spend long hours working to secure sufficient income for the family. Given the Vietnamese parents' limited possibilities for remuneration of the nannies, most of the Czech caregivers are paid way below minimum wage despite the vast number of hours worked. However, as Souralova points out, financial motivations are for the Czech nannies only secondary. That is because it presents only extra money to their regular income, which is often some form of state support, i.e. pension or disability benefit. The primary motivations of these women, who under these circumstances can afford to be a nanny to a Vietnamese child, the author argues, come from the Czech women's search for emotional attachment. Such account, therefore, troubles the mainstream conceptualization of the relationship as necessarily exploitative and reveals the complexity of strong kinship-like relations among all the parties involved. For policy considerations, its

importance lies in highlighting the number of diverse experiences that should be taken into account when crafting measures to regulate the sector, so that there are no detrimental effects against those who are sought to be protected.

Nevertheless, other studies show that domestic work, in a form such as housekeeping, ironing, delegated childcare or tutoring, increasingly appears in the narratives of Czech women among the precarious strategies that they undertake to secure household subsistence (Dudova and Haskova 2014; Haskova, Krizkova and Dudova 2015). According to this research, many women, especially with caring responsibilities or another socially constructed disadvantage, perceive such precarious work as a last resort, from which it is hard to escape. Instead, they eventually hope to find a job with a standard employment contract and decent working conditions to avoid long-term disadvantage and marginalization, which this work otherwise may entail (ibid.). As much as one should consider the previous account of Souralova (2014, 2015), which illustrates that women may find self-realization in domestic work, these lived experiences that point to structural disadvantages, I maintain, have to be taken into account when crafting a policy to regulate domestic work.

To conclude, this chapter briefly outlined the gendered dynamics of practices considering care, labour, and immigration in the Czech Republic and aimed to show how their intersections increasingly produce a suitable workforce for paid domestic labour. Namely, I highlighted the gendered nature compounded with other power hierarchies that structure the Czech labour market and pointed out the flexibilization and informalization that have been transforming the employment relations at its lowest segments. These experiences have been furthermore shaped by restrictive immigration policies towards low-skilled migrant workers and gendered discourses of care that lead many of the marginalized to precariousness and informality. I finished by laying out the main narratives describing what it is like to be a domestic worker in the Czech Republic today. Against this backdrop, the rest of this thesis analyses policy discourses and representations of a problem of domestic work, for which the regulation of the sector, in a form of a voucher policy, has been offered as a solution. The analysis of this policy through the WPR lens (Bacchi 1999, 2009) is subject of the next chapter.

5. REGULATING DOMESTIC WORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS?

The idea to regulate domestic work sector has recently found ground in the policy processes in the Czech Republic. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs proposes to implement a voucher policy ('Services for Households'), which will allow households to purchase domestic services at a subsidized price from an authorized agency via vouchers. The purpose of the measure is three-fold. In the view of its proponents, it will create new jobs, facilitate transfer of the informal domestic work into the formal economy, and contribute to reconciling work and family life. Currently, the stakeholders have been preparing regional pilot projects to translate the knowledge of the *Implementation Methodology for Services for Households* (MoLSA 2015a), developed by the end of the last year, into action. This is also supposed to avail time for the necessary legislative changes before its country-wide enforcement.

While many would applaud this step given the social injustices in the domestic work sector, I take a rather skeptical view towards the voucher policy due to its underlying assumptions that rather than disproving the on-going effects of global inequalities, as I show, uphold them. Applying Carol Bacchi's (1999, 2009) 'WPR' approach to policy analysis, this chapter, scrutinizes the problematizations beneath the postulated solution put forward by the government. I argue that the policy removes gender from the framing of the problem and silences social injustices pertinent to domestic work; hence, if implemented, it will result in an ineffective policy and give a real life effect to the workings of power inherent in the policy proposal.

5.1 Promoting the Services for Households in the Czech Republic

Since 2013, the Union of Employers' Association (UZS) has been a forerunner in lobbying for the development of the 'Services for Households' as the system of regulation has been termed in the Czech Republic. Inspired by the progressive "Western" European practices, which UZS's president argued, the post-communist countries yet lag behind (EFSI 2014, 13), the Association promoted the measure as a solution to three main problems. First, by increasing demand for domestic services the policy seeks to stimulate job creation, and curb long-term unemployment and social exclusion of welfare recipients. Second, the regulation is supposed to reduce the incidence of purchasing the domestic services in the informal economy. Third,

given the high prioritizing of work-life balance rhetoric by the current government, the development of the Services for Households has been recently framed as a gender equality measure. This has been decisive for its embracement by the Ministry of Social and Labour Affairs as not only a pillar of active labour market policy, but also as a component of family policy (Interview with the UZS representative, 25 April 2016).

Before I analyze these policy problems in detail; I take a moment to trace roots of the current problem representation to scrutinize how the problematizations gained a particular shape. As Bacchi (2009, 10–11) explains, "genealogy […] has a destabilizing effect on problem representations that are often taken for granted." How has the problem of paid domestic work come about in the policy texts on Services for Households in the Czech Republic and whether there have been contestations surrounding representation of the 'problem' are the questions, I seek to answer next.

5.1.1 Genealogy of the problem representation

As part of an employment strategy, several national as well as transnational actors in the European Union have been seeking to develop 'personal and household services' and find out "How to fully exploit their benefits for our societies" – as literally suggested by the title of the 2013 conference organized by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, which gathered national, regional and local authorities, social partners, NGOs, academics, and other stakeholders to discuss how to best promote the development of the domestic services sector (EFSI 2014). At the conference, the Czech representative of UZS pronounced that the organization advocates for the implementation of "a quite new concept known from countries such as Belgium, Finland, Sweden or France" (EFSI 2014, 12). By these examples, the speaker referred to the implementation of the measures in a number of the "Western" EU member states that consist of specific regulatory policies that encourage the development of the domestic services sector in the formal economy (Cabonnier and Morel 2015).

In order to stimulate the demand of households, many countries in the EU context today provide public financial subsidies in the form of tax credits and incentives, cash-for-care benefits, or schemes simplifying employment procedures and facilitating contracting. To illustrate, the three Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden have introduced a model of tax deductions on domestic services for private households (Kvist, Carbin, and Harjunen

2009; Hobson and Bede 2015). In Belgium, France and Austria, governments introduced a voucher system that simplifies administration and the payment of services (Windebank 2006; Kvist 2012). Finally, in Germany, as part of the promotion of non-standard employment referred to as 'Minijobs', the state introduced a scheme according to which households get a 20 percent tax deduction for the costs of hiring a worker, who is employed with an agency (Shire 2015). Thus far, scholars have shown that while there are cross-country variations when considering the above policies, there seems to be an agreement among these EU member states on the desirability to regulate and develop the domestic services sector (Kvist 2012).

As illustrated above, the policies have been not only actively promoted by national governments and lobby groups, but also by transnational organizations such as the European Federation for Services to Individuals, and primarily by the supranational European Commission, whose discourse has crystallized in some of the member states. The EC's interest in the promotion of the domestic services sector can be traced to the 1993 white paper entitled *Growth, competitiveness, employment* (EC 1993). Authored by the then EC president Jacques Delors, the white paper, which in general communicates the Commission's plans for EU action, focused on the problem of unemployment, especially among the "low-skilled." As Morel (2015) shows, one of the recommendations to solve this policy problem that the EC suggested was to explore the possibility of creating new jobs in 'local services', including childcare and tutoring, care for the aged and the disabled, or meal preparation and housework, as a means to combat unemployment (EC 1993, 19). The EC's proposal thus linked domestic work with employment logic based on the premise that the underdevelopment of the domestic services sector offered an opportunity for job creation.

In addition, the EC justified the employment rationale underlying promotion of domestic employment by the necessity to fulfill the 'new needs' emerging because of the shifting social dynamics, concerning particularly women's intensive employment and population aging that otherwise require extensive public investment (EC 1993, 19). Contrary to the support of publicly funded solutions that were deemed expensive in the white paper, the Commission encouraged the European Community to decrease the high prices of the services by providing subsidies to stimulate either demand with tax deductions or issuing of service vouchers; or supply with "traditional subsidies for the setting-up of undertakings which could be increased in cases where a 'social employer' undertakes to employ formerly unemployed people," for whom specific training would be provided (EC 1993, 20). The newly emerged needs, as articulated by the EC, were thus framed as marketable services with a high potential

for employment growth, and hence connected with economic objectives, rather than represented as social and collective issues (Morel 2015, 6).

Besides, the reformulation of the language concerning work and family reconciliation at the EU level, which has since the late 1990s prioritized women's incorporation into the labour market for purposes of economic growth (Stratigaki 2004), has led the EC to present the promotion of 'personal and household services', as they are currently referred to, in gender equality terms. For example, in the Commission Staff Working Document *On exploiting the employment potential of the personal and household services* (EC 2012, 6), it is emphasized that "female employment is an important part of our economic prosperity, better conditions should be put in place to contribute to a better work-life balance and support women's labour market participation." The promotion of paid domestic work is thus contextualized as a measure facilitating female participation in the labour market by relieving the burden of unpaid work in order to increase their productivity (EC 2012, 5). Based on these assumptions, the EC's encouragement to develop the 'personal and household services' (PHS) in the EU has also been disguised as a policy contributing to gender equality.

As illustrated, the motives of the EC prompting the regulation of paid domestic work and care lie in exploiting the economic potential of unpaid work for the creation of jobs designated for the unskilled, in conjunction with the outsourcing of care into the market, and hence drawing away from treating it as a public good. To further underscore the EC's position on the matter, it should be noted that domestic workers have been historically excluded from the EU working conditions laws and such treatment persists until today in some of the EU directives (McCann 2012, 116). To illustrate, Article 3a of the Occupational Health and Safety Directive 89/391/EEC of 1989 defines a worker as: "any person employed by an employer, including trainees and apprentices but excluding domestic servants." Suffice it to say then that the EC's representation of the problem considering the need to regulate domestic services sector has been remarkably different from the ILO's encouragement for state intervention in order to enhance the protection of domestic workers.

However, with the increasingly vocal advocacy for domestic workers' rights at the global level and the adoption of the ILO Convention, a variety of actors have also aimed to shift the discursive politics of the EU to bring more attention to the injustices domestic workers face and their gendered dynamics. For instance, the European Women's Lobby issued a statement addressed to the EC critical of the gender-blind rhetoric, considering Personal and Household Services (EWL 2013). The organization emphasized that women are highly overrepresented in this sector and cautioned against relegating them to occupations that

reinforce traditional gender roles. In addition, several other EU networks of non-governmental organizations such as the European Trade Union Confederation, RESPECT Network, the European Network of Migrant Women, or the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants have been lobbying for domestic workers' rights and equal treatment within the EU (see, e.g. ENoMW 2014). All these examples point to the EC's long silencing of the gendered effects and perpetuation of inequalities that the exploration of the employment potential in PHS sector entails, as well as a lack of effort and commitment to mitigate the feminized undervaluation and precariousness of domestic labour.

Nonetheless, as Bacchi (2009, 10) writes, problem representations are subject to different twists and turns, rather than being "inevitable product[s] of 'natural' evolution over time." Given the vocal advocacy for domestic workers' rights and the proliferating global discourse accentuating the injustices pertinent to the sector, other EU institutions have recently recognized the issues that emerged in the narratives of the domestic workers labouring in the EU member states. In that event, not only did the EU Council adopt the *Decision authorising Member States to ratify the ILO Convention concerning decent work for domestic workers* (EU Council 2014), but in April 2016 the European Parliament also passed the *Report on Domestic Workers and Carers* calling on the EU to recognize their employment and social rights (EP 2016). While the effects of these recent instruments are yet hard to predict, my aim was to highlight the present policy contestations and formations on the regulation of domestic work in the EU context that, as illustrated, are subject to interactive and multi-directional processes of debate, translation and interpretation of various policy actors, including the state and non-state actors at the national level. In what follows, I lay out a background into the formulation of policy on Services for Households in the Czech Republic and then examine whether these processes of contestation appeared in the proposal on the development of domestic services therein.

5.1.2 Towards the use of vouchers

Over the past years, the UZS managed to gain strong support for its policy proposal from the Labour Office of the Czech Republic, as well as from the Social Democratic party (CSSD), which, as of early 2014, leads the governing Cabinet of the Czech Republic and chairs the

Ministry of Social and Labour Affairs.[9] Thus far, the policy on the development of the domestic services sector has been subject to discussions at two events that were both inaccessible to the public. Namely, the Services for Households were debated at a roundtable, taking place at the Directorate-General of the Labour Office, and, more importantly, at a conference in the Senate of the Czech Republic Parliament in February 2014, in which, in addition to many high policy stakeholders, also several foreign guest presenters, including an EC's representative, participated (Senate 2014). During these negotiations, the state social care providers have expressed preoccupations about the increasing competition this policy may bring about. This has been settled by emphasizing that the Services for Households will only function as complementary to the current system of specialized care. Moreover, the policy proponents have proposed to allow state social care providers also to enroll in the voucher schemes to earn extra cash in addition to their salary. Other than that, the promotion of the development of domestic services has not been subject to any greater resistance.

The apparent consensus and effective lobbying possibly gave an impetus to the Ministry of Labour and Social affairs to realize a year-long project financed by the European Social Fund that allowed the Ministry to commission the *Implementation Methodology for Services for Households* (MoLSA 2015a) for designing and introducing the voucher policy. Coinciding with the preparation of the new national Family Strategy, whose authors have been keen to extend paid domestic work in the Czech Republic to facilitate the outsourcing of home-based care and the reconciliation of work and family, the Ministry of Labour and Social affairs finally decided to conduct a pilot project and apply in practice the conclusions and recommendations of the study (Interview with the UZS representative, 25 April 2016).

The model of regulation, which the Ministry appraised, draws on the voucher scheme practices mainly from Belgium and to a lesser extent from France. Under the voucher system, as the policy texts at present suggest, households would be able to purchase housekeeping, childcare and other kinds of home care for 60 CZK per hour (approx. € 2.25) up to the limit of 200 vouchers per household member, regardless of age, per year.[10] At this price, the households would benefit from a 30 percent subsidy on the total price of a voucher's value. A long-term contract is supposed to ensure that a family will be purchasing these services regularly as opposed to taking advantage of them on ad-hoc occasions. Domestic workers should be paid

[9] The Labour Office of the Czech Republic ('Urad prace Ceske Republiky') is state administrative body, which carries out a number of tasks concerning employment, state social support, and inspection on the provision of social services. It is administratively divided into Directorate-General and regional branches.
[10] The rationale behind limiting the number of the vouchers that one can purchase is to avoid misuse of subsidies.

on an hourly basis, while, in the long run, policy proponents aim to build full-time employment schemes. Furthermore, the Services for Households should be based on a triangular employment relationship, which involves a licensed agency that also functions as an employer, the employees of such an agency, whom I refer to as domestic workers, and end users of the services – households. The legal relationship should be established therefore between an agency and a household on one hand, and among a domestic worker and an agency on the other. Instead of direct payment in exchange for the service, the households will give domestic workers vouchers, who will exchange them for a reimbursement of their hours worked.

Approaching the voucher policy from a post-positivist perspective, however, entails more than outlining it as a proposal for change. As Bacchi (1999, 2009) argues, it involves an examination of implicit representations of the problem the policy purports to address. To counter the tendency to think about policies as reacting to problems, I proceed with analysis of the Services for Households policy by investigating 'what's the problem represented to be'.

5.2 What's the problem represented to be?

The proposal for the development of the domestic services sector contains what its proponents believe is problematic. Thinking about this policy differently, therefore, requires to "dig deeply into the meaning-creation" involved in the voucher policy (Bacchi 2009, 21). In the rest of this chapter, I examine how the policy on regulation of domestic work has been produced thus far in the Czech Republic. First, I explore how domestic work and domestic workers have been constructed in the policy texts. I then move on to analyze the three principal problem representations that emerged from the Services for Households policy in the Czech Republic. The focus of this thesis is on how the policy removes gender from the framing of the problem and silences social injustices, which in effect obscures the workings of power inherent in the proposal.

5.2.1 Constructing domestic work-ers

Domestic work, which in this case encompasses both care and housekeeping, is throughout the policy texts mainly referred to as a service, no matter whether monetized or performed without pay. As represented by the policy proponents, the problem of considering domestic work in the

broadest sense is its unutilized potential for economic growth, for which the solution is its marketization. Because of an insufficiently high household income level, the argument goes, the families are unable to transfer their domestic responsibilities to the market. To illustrate:

> The service sector undoubtedly offers significant opportunities for increasing the scope of its use. This is currently prevented particularly due to the financial constraints of households that can afford to purchase only "essential services," which they are unable to provide for themselves. Other services are performed by household members in their free time, thus free of charge (MoLSA 2015b, 4).

Within this framing, the policy proponents encourage deepening the marketization of unpaid domestic work and care, and legitimize their integration into the process of capital accumulation. The policy, therefore, goes hand in hand with the trends of the recent decades pertinent to global economic restructuring - increasing commodification of reproductive work previously excluded from the market, the spread of consumerism and an invasion into our intimate lives, which proves that "the logic of profit-making respects no boundaries but subsumes all within it" (Peterson 2003, 78). Shaped by both the power of the state and the global economy, households, therefore, represent important sites of power and contestation as feminist scholars have long argued (Sen 1990; Folbre 1991; Agarwal 1997; Peterson 2010). However, as illustrated by the above quotation, the policy texts construct households rather as single units, where the consumption is balanced and labour equally divided. The composition and internal social dynamics involved with mainly, but not exclusively, gender, class and ethnicity, are thus made invisible in the policy narrative on Services for Households. As a result, domestic work is seen as a seemingly neutral activity, the potential of which lies in marketization that would free household members from menial tasks.

Furthermore, domestic work is not only presented as an insufficiently outsourced service to market but partially also as an illegal activity, which should be transferred into the formal economy. According to the proposal, it is estimated that 80-90 percent of paid domestic work in the Czech Republic is performed on an informal basis (MoLSA 2015a, 50). Given the source of the information being "studies from abroad and [informal] research between regional labour offices" (MoLSA 2015a, 29), to what extent these data are reliable is rather unclear. While the measurement techniques of domestic work's scope are themselves subject to various debates and conceptualizations (see, e.g. Chen 2011), it is important to repeat that domestic

workers have been to a large extent rendered invisible in the Czech statistical collection and appropriate data on which the proposal could be based are hence absent. These gendered statistical failures, attributed in feminist economic literature to androcentric bias in drawing the production boundary in national accounts, have been apparent even more so when it comes to the estimates of the domestic work's magnitude in the informal economy (Waring 1988; Nelson 1996; Folbre 2006). Regardless of the data accuracy, the above-mentioned statistic in the policy texts functions as a particular knowledge, which, importantly from the perspective of this study, erases the disproportionate involvement of often marginalized women in domestic work. The policy, therefore, does not explicitly address women and men, neither does it consider, as I will show, the differential impact it might have.

By the same token, the reality that most domestic workers are women is obscured by the proponents' choice of language, who opted for gender-neutral agent nouns such as 'workers', 'employers' or 'persons'. As Okin notes, however, "gender neutral terms frequently obscure the fact that so much of the real experiences of 'persons', so long as they live in gender-structured societies, does, in fact, depend on what sex they are" (Okin 1989, 11). For the rest of this chapter, my intention is not only to draw attention to how language renders women invisible in descriptive terms, but to underscore the gender-blind understanding of the problem representations involved in the Services for Households policy. Setting aside the centrality of asymmetrical power relations, domestic work is therefore produced in the policy texts, I assert, as a seemingly degendered economic activity removed from social and structural context. In this way, the voucher policy functions in line with the neoliberal logic of incorporating women performing domestic work into circuits of the global economy, whilst it reinforces global social injustices.

5.2.2 Creating new jobs for the unemployed and socially excluded

One of the aforementioned main objectives of this policy proposing regulation of the domestic services sector is to create jobs for "persons at risk of long-term unemployment and social exclusion and thereby reduce unemployment of these persons" (MoLSA 2015a, 2). As suggested earlier, it is argued that the sector offers extensive opportunities for its expansion, yet thus far the development of domestic work has been hindered mainly by the amount of family income. From this problem representation, then, follows the proposition to subsidize the costs of domestic work on the demand side to broaden access to these services to the wider

public. That is to say; the policy is supposed to stimulate marketization of unpaid domestic work in order to create new job opportunities for those persons deemed as long-term unqualified and socially excluded.

Specifically, when considering the subjects that should be targeted by the policy on Services for Households, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs mentions that, for instance, parents of little children, graduates, disabled people, or people aged over fifty years fall into this group, to which special attention is given to the active labour market policies in the Czech Republic (MoLSA 2016a). Despite the policy's goal to create jobs, especially for "persons" within these groups, the gendered dynamics underpinning domestic work, as well as women's disproportionate number of these "persons at risk of long-term unemployment and social exclusion," as depicted by the government, suggest that the policy will target primarily systematically disadvantaged women to become providers of domestic work. Considering the groups excluded from the labour market, one of the policy proponents asserted: "For example, women 50+ are ideal [for these jobs]. They are like young grannies - ideal for child caregiving, so why shouldn't we use them?" (Interview with the UZS Representative, 25 April 2016). The assumptions that the marginalized women are perceived as preferable candidates for these jobs are also apparent in the policy texts when justifying the regulation of the domestic services sector by illustrating the experience of two earlier Czech projects ran by non-profit organizations with the financial support of the European Social Fund and the state. While the first project targeted unemployed women over fifty years of age to work as babysitters and nannies, the second aimed to requalify primary caregivers to little children, the vast majority of whom are women, to work as nannies after their long-term absence in the labour market due to care responsibilities (MoLSA 2015b, 37). Leaving unproblematized, or implicitly reinforcing, associations of domestic work with women, and more so in connection with particular class, ethnicity, age, or abilities, the policy not only reproduces social norms embedded in the labour market but will also most likely lead to practices of selective recruiting of marginalized women as the most suitable candidates for these positions.

In addition, the problem representation leaves untroubled the concepts of the long-term unemployment and social exclusion, and mainly their causes and assumptions underlying them. Unlike the policy proponents, who take both unemployment and social exclusion of the marginalized for granted, scholars have long considered the systematic barriers people face in terms of access to the labour market or social inclusion, as well as the limitations of the "empowerment" through paid work. In order to highlight the structural injustices considering gender, the labour markets have been in feminist theory conceptualized as gendered institutions

(Beneria 2007; Elson 1999). As Elson (1999, 612) argues, the labour markets "reflect existing problems of gender domination and subordination, and also the tensions, contradictions and potential for change which is characteristic of any pattern of gender relations, no matter how unequally power is distributed." To illustrate, in the Czech Republic, the emphasis on motherly, yet greatly undervalued, home-care, accompanied by a scarcity of childcare facilities and a lack of antidiscrimination enforcement are some of the factors researchers pointed out as causing an extremely negative impact of motherhood on women's lives in the Czech Republic (Krizkova, Penner, and Peterson 2008, 58). Given the lack of respect and recognition, both material and ideational, for the immense amount of reproductive work women do in Czech society, far from being inactive, many women on the lengthy parental leave, in fact, look for an extra income in the informal economy and often end up performing precarious work (Dudova and Hasova 2014; Fodor and Kispeter 2014). Following the logic of dismissing the value of unpaid reproductive labour to the economy, the policy on Services for Households similarly assumes demarcations of public and private spheres, formal and informal sectors, which in effect frame women's unemployment and social exclusion as deviant from the normalized male narrative of waged labour privileging production over reproduction.

Because of these assumptions, both the long-term unemployment and social exclusion of the marginalized figure in the policy texts as individualized choices. In that event, they are decontextualized from the unequal power relations and the practices of the state that often contribute to this marginalization. As Bacchi (2009, 45) argues, problem representations in the policy texts play a crucial role in the way in which "groups are assigned position and value within policy discourses." In this policy discourse, the unemployed and socially excluded are constructed as the problem themselves - as "the marginal other," for whom specific attention is required. The impression is left that we are dealing with barriers to individual achievement rather than unequal power relations between and among groups. Interestingly, the policy texts have rendered invisible ethnic minorities, particularly the Roma (women), who, in the Czech Republic struggle against society-wide systemic racism, segregation and discrimination (FRA 2014), and otherwise are given special attention as people at risk of long-term unemployment and social exclusion in active labour market policies. Also, migrants (women) have never been mentioned in the policy texts, which suggests that the government intends to target citizens' unemployment and social exclusion. All in all, such selective framing reaffirms the notion that rather than being neutral, labour markets are complex institutions shaped by unequal power relations and social norms that also underlie the assumptions of policy proponents about who

is suitable to enter the private spaces within the Czech households to perform domestic services subsidized by the state.

In addition, while I acknowledge the possibilities for empowerment that the "unemployed and socially excluded" can gain from waged work as feminist scholars would aptly point out, to reject reductive analysis (Kabeer 2000), I contend that it is nonetheless important to consider how some segments of the society in the Czech Republic became the preferable workforce for paid domestic work that should be targeted for these jobs. In spite of being essential for human well-being and capitalist accumulation, domestic work has been culturally codified from positions of power as highly gendered and increasingly ethnicized occupation, perceived as unskilled, menial and underpaid. Also, for the advocates of the voucher policy in the Czech Republic, all one needs for this job are "two legs and a head" (Interview with the UZS Representative, 25 April 2016). This specific social and historical order is not only inscribed in its value but also in "the gendered and racialized inscription of its labour force" (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2011). In other words, the delegation of domestic work to the marginalized segments of the population denotes power hierarchies in society and the feminization of labour that pervades today's economy also in the Czech Republic.

Given the reinforcement of the hegemonic discourse constructing domestic work as an unskilled occupation suitable for the unqualified and the socially excluded, further exacerbated by making it possible for domestic services to be purchased at a low, subsidised price, it is suggestive that, also in the Czech Republic as in other EU countries, the regulation of domestic work within this scheme would unlikely counter the undervaluation of domestic work. Indeed, scholars have observed that, even under service voucher schemes, domestic service remains one of the most degraded occupations, and is, therefore, assigned to stigmatized populations (Devetter 2013, 82). To illustrate, when analysing the experiences of migrant domestic workers under the Belgian service voucher scheme, Inés Pérez and Christiane Stallaert (2015) find that notwithstanding the regulation, paid domestic work remains identified "as a 'dirty' and 'servile' job from which migrants – particularly Latin Americans – cannot escape, no matter what their personal qualifications or previous job experience" (Pérez and Stallaert 2015, 12). Moreover, the undervaluation can be arguably further reinforced by the rhetoric of choice entrenched in neoliberal policies of deregulation and welfare retrenchment, which also provides the 'customers' of domestic services with the freedom to express their stereotypical preferences and "consume" according to their ethnic, age, nationality etc. bias (Hobson and Bede 2015, 345). One of my respondents associated with the above-mentioned Czech project financed by the ESF, providing requalification to primary caregivers to little children in order

to work as nannies, confirmed such a tendency already within his initiative. He said that the parents were open to collaboration primarily with female nannies, since "very few would have wanted the children to be taken care of by a guy" (Interview with an NGO representative, 16 February 2016). Thus, delegating tasks that are associated with gender roles, without at all questioning it, may lead to further entrenchment and institutionalization of inequalities between women and men and among women as transferring the burden of housework from better-off women to the less privileged ones reinforces intra-gender, socio-economic inequalities along ethnic, nationality, and class lines (Tomei 2011, 190).

Furthermore, it has been argued elsewhere that the quantity of the jobs within formalized domestic services sectors in the EU did not coincide with the quality of employment standards, but rather with expansion of part-time, flexible occupations that deviate from the regular protections connected to full-time and open-ended employment (Guiraudon and Ledoux 2015, 42). In the Czech Republic, the quality of the employment schemes, including those based full-time, has been one of the objectives of the proposal. Nevertheless, in recent analyses, it became obvious that practical obstacles make it very difficult to contract domestic workers on a full-time basis, unless the demand significantly rises (MoLSA 2015a 120). Namely, full-time contracts require an employer to determine the number of working hours per week and a salary rate. Yet the unpredictable demand for the services hinders the possibility to determine the real number of hours worked. Therefore, it has been suggested that, rather than concluding employment contracts, working relationships shall be regulated with Agreements on work performed outside an employment relationship (LC, Act No. 262/2006 Coll.) that allows for the compensation of workers on an hourly basis, and what is more, on the actual hours worked.

In this context, the quality of paid domestic work that is to be purchased with service vouchers in the Czech Republic may resemble the findings from other EU countries. One of the main drawbacks of 'agreements on work performed outside employment relationship' is setting a maximum number of working hours to 20 per week, which does not allow one to earn a decent salary, especially taking into account the remuneration thus far suggested (gross: 95 CZK ~ 3.5 Eur per hour). Moreover, the unpredictability concerning working hours, reinforced by the possibility of working on an as-needed basis, which can be included in the agreements, may result in similar consequences that Hobson and Bede (2015, 340) map in their study of the Swedish subsidized domestic service market. They have found that the pressure to uphold the market expectations induces domestic workers to be constantly available, flexible, and commute long distances without pay. Also, as many have shown, the creation of marginal part-

time employment goes hand in hand with reductions in social securities of domestic workers (Carbonnier and Morel 2015). In the Czech case, an agreement on work performed outside a formal employment relationship does not entitle workers to a right to paid leave, including cases of sickness or caregiving, and their health and social contributions are also limited. These circumstances, which were detailed only recently in Implementation Methodology of the Services for Households in the Czech Republic (MoLSA 2015a), led to a slight shift of framing highlighting the benefits of flexible, part-time employment schemes, the extensive scarcity of which has been emphasized in the Czech Republic primarily in connection with women's lack of possibility to reconcile work and family life.

All things considered, the jobs are less likely designed for securing a livelihood. This suggests that the policy texts assume that the women who should take up these occupations are not independent workers, but bring only contributions to households in addition to a man's wage. It can be expected that a lived effect of the Services for Households policy may be that domestic workers will depend on others, most likely male breadwinners for livelihoods and social protections, or will be forced to engage in forms of informal income-generating activity as the current trend suggests (Freeman 2001, 1023). According to Shire, it is precisely the gendered family form that underpins the introduction of marginal part-time employment in the domestic services (Shire 2015, 209). The notion that women are secondary earners who can rely upon the earnings of men to buffer them against the risk of economic insecurity is the backdrop of the domestic workers' employment profile. In reality, however, shrinking opportunities for male employment, because of the reduced opportunities for traditional forms of profit making and the fall of government revenues, have meant that family and community survival has been increasingly falling on women's shoulders (Sassen 2000, 505). This is also why many women, including migrant women, have been already performing domestic work. How the policy produces the problem of informality in domestic work sector is the subject of the next section.

5.2.3 Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy

The potential for transferring informal domestic work into formal economy emerged as one of the goals of the domestic work's regulations in all the EU member states that have so far incentivized the development of the sector. Similarly, in the Czech Republic, the problem that the Services for Households are supposed to solve is the high incidence of informal contracting

among domestic workers and households. It is argued that, given the high prices in the formal economy, families are pushed to employ a domestic worker on an informal basis. Here, the argumentation of the policy texts therefore meets with that of justifying job creation, as the emphasis is put on financial constraints of the households as well:

> The reason for the use of informal employment are primarily the lower costs of services [for a household] offered in the informal market, as opposed to those the costs of the formally provided services, which are usually highly priced for families (MoLSA 2015b, 5).

Representing the problem in terms of households' financial lack of access to the outsourcing of domestic work in the formal economy strengthens the argument of the policy proponents to subsidize the costs of domestic work on the demand side. The solution is to level the playing field for households by reducing the costs of domestic services, so they are at a similar level with those in the informal economy. Consequently, lower prices for domestic services should motivate the families to transfer their economic activities to the formal economy. To further problematize the issue, the policy proponents argue that, otherwise, in the informal economy the households lack certain guarantees, such as insufficient assurance of service quality, or inadequate liability insurance. Hence, the state should step in to facilitate the relocation of the domestic work into the formal economy, so the families can fully benefit from the services.

Such problem representation rather builds up a positive image of households, whose preference for informal contracting stems from an ill-crafted system and market failure. Conversely, the avoidance of their responsibilities as employers, or the disproportionate benefits families gain from outsourcing domestic work in the informal economy remain hidden. Examining the segmentation of the informal economy, Chen (2007), however, illustrates the discrepancies in benefits between informal employers as gaining the most out of the relationship in contrast to domestic workers, who belong to the lowest waged and feminized segments pervaded with deteriorating working conditions. Leaving the position of employers towards domestic workers unproblematized, the policy texts, therefore, obscure the power imbalances within these informal arrangements. As a result, the hierarchical employment relationship is disguised and so are the profits of households as informal employers of domestic workers.

Blurring the unarticulated issues of power between an employer and a domestic worker may, nonetheless, facilitate the intensity of the relationship, in which the labour standards may

be difficult to uphold. Many studies have highlighted how the structural inequality embedded already within a regular employment relationship is further reinforced with the intimate location of domestic work and the complexity of the personal relationships involving mutual dependency that both parties negotiate (see, e.g. Mendez 1998; Anderson 2000; Souralova 2015). In cases of caregiving, the employer-employee dyad is further complicated with the involvement of a care recipient, and thus tends to be "marked by the interplay between emotional attachments and detachments" (Souralova 2015, 184). For this reason, Fredman (2014, 404) suggests that even though efforts to set certain boundaries and recognize the complexity of the relationship involves action from all parties, the employers' role to ensure the enforcement of domestic workers' rights is central given their position. Since some employers do not even consider themselves to be ones, it is crucial to concentrate on the role of the employer and the relationship itself (ibid.).

Perhaps the solution could be to modify the direct employment relationship to involve additional parties – authorized agencies, which would mediate the arrangement between a household and a domestic worker, as proposed in the policy on Services for Households in the Czech Republic. In fact, many have claimed that replacing the individualistic employer-employee relationship connoted with the master-slave bond with a more impersonal structure setting could mitigate many of the negative aspects that prevail the phenomenon of domestic work (see, e.g. Salzinger 1991; Romero 1992). Testing this hypothesis, other scholars have shown, however, that despite the agencies' involvement, many of the problems, which domestic workers face, are integrated into the functioning of agencies. For example, comparing the private arrangements with agency employment in the US, Mendez (1998, 132) argues that similar to households, agencies also rely on personalism to increase domestic workers' productivity. Moreover, they "embody gendered ideologies concerning women as 'inauthentic' workers, whose primary life interest revolves around care-taking in the home" (ibid.). Besides, the main reason why the Czech proponents opted for the indirect triangle relationship has been the conviction that Czech households would never take on the responsibilities that an employer otherwise has, such as payment of social security and taxes (Interview with the UZS representative, 25 April 2016). That is to say, the rationale to involve the agency in the relationship is not so much to mediate the unequal relationship, but suggests to persevere further and reinforce the households' lack of responsibility for the domestic workers' working conditions. For this reason, the policy texts reinforce the assumption that domestic work is a service and households its consumers. Hence, even more so, domestic work may in effect

become a commodity that households purchase from other entities on the market with the direct support of the state.

In sum, favoring the households and dismissing the particularities of the employment relationship pertinent to domestic work, to a much lesser extent the problem representation then takes into account domestic workers' position in the informal economy. While the policy recognizes the costs of working informally, such as being deprived of stable contracts, access to credit or welfare benefits, they are not explicitly coined as a result of households' or structural failure. Rather they appear as outcomes of individual decisions to work informally enabled by "high tolerance for work [sic] in the black market" (MoLSA 2015b 2015, 36). Thinking about the problem from a different angle, as Bacchi (2009) proposes, perhaps it could also be argued that the state is highly tolerant to employing paid domestic workers informally or that domestic workers also face high costs when working on a formal basis. In fact, numerous studies show that the informal work of domestic workers tends to be a result of complex marginalizations tied to structural factors involving gender, class, ethnic, geopolitical or post-colonial dynamics, going hand in hand with the polarization of the labour market, which has resulted not only in increasing demand for highly skilled professionals, but also unskilled, cheap and feminized labour force (Anderson 2000; Hochschild 2000; Sassen 2000; Parreñas 2001). Given the disproportionate effects that the global capitalist economy has on some at the expense of others, the formal employment becomes less accessible for the less privileged, among whom marginalized women are overrepresented. While some workers may have opted out of formal employment as a matter of preference, as assumed in the policy texts on Services for Households in the Czech Republic, many more workers navigate the informality because of poverty, social exclusion, or restrictive migration policies.

It is safe to say that, for some domestic workers, the formalization of their employment relationship will have some positive effects. For instance, Camargo (2015) analyzes domestic workers' perception of this change under the Belgian voucher policy and finds that their experiences mainly improved with having the opportunity to claim labour rights and benefits. Nonetheless, as already suggested, given the embedded structures of the labour market that undervalue domestic and feminized work, most of the previous practices will be reproduced within the voucher system, especially when no attention is given to the powers proliferating domestic work. What is more, scholars have analyzed the negative impact of the voucher system on those workers who are not able to enter the formal market, mainly because of their irregular migrant status (Camargo 2015). As a result, domestic workers might lose their employers, who get attracted to the voucher system as Camargo finds (ibid.). Most likely, they

will also be forced to decrease the prices of their work significantly in order to be able to compete with the subsidized domestic service sector. Similar lived experiences can be expected to become embodied by migrant domestic workers in the Czech Republic, who otherwise belong to the most marginalized segment of the sector, and for whose better conditions Czech NGOs have consistently advocated (Ezzedine et al. 2014). Since the policy texts do not take their positions or the restrictive immigration policies into consideration, the reform will do little to address the marginalized position of migrant domestic workers both formally and informally employed in private households in the Czech Republic. Conversely, the policy will more likely exacerbate the exploitation of domestic workers working within the bottom tier of the sector. To sum up, this rhetoric on transitioning from the informal to the formal economy is one-sided as it obviously promotes access to the benefits the formal economy offers only to some at the expense of others. Similarly, double-edged framing also entails the next problematization of the Services for households; I have identified.

5.2.4 Facilitating reconciliation of work and family life

Last but not least, the policy has also been framed as a measure facilitating reconciliation of work and family life, for both women involved in paid work and those on care leave, whom the policy enables to return to the labour market. In words of one of the policy proponents, the Services for Households, in fact, will kill two birds with one stone. On one hand it will allow unemployed and marginalized women to have a job. On the other hand, the solution supports women's, especially mothers', attachment to the labour market as they will be able to transfer their care and housework responsibilities to another woman (Interview with the UZS representative, 25 April 2016). That is why it is argued in the policy texts that the policy is giving women a certain advantage in the labour market, in comparison with men, because they will be the ones most benefiting from the new measure, given their higher share of unpaid domestic work (MoLSA 2015a, 111).

Suffice it to say that, within this representation of the problem, the concerns of improving reconciliation of work and life put emphasis on the female purchasers of the Services for Households, while inadequate attention is given to the providers of this outsourced domestic work and care, and others who cannot benefit from the policy. That the possibility to enrol in the voucher system would be available only to certain women advantaged along class, ethnic and citizenship axes of privilege is obvious from proposing to incentivize demand,

which in addition to the state's encouragement for capitalist consumerist behaviour, redistributes public means in favour of the wealthier (Morel 2015, 185). This has been shown by the recent evaluations of the policies in the other EU member states, where the main beneficiaries of the incentives have been affluent two-earner households (see Carbonnier and Morel 2015). In the Czech Republic, the policy texts explicitly suggest that the proponents expect that the voucher system will benefit the middle, and upper-class heterosexual households. To illustrate, it is asserted that one of the aims and appealing effects of the policy will be an increase of fertility rate within high- income-earning groups, which is held as "an economically, demographically, and politically extremely important reason for supporting Services for Households" in the name of both national interest and fiscal politics (MoLSA 2015a, 43–44). Highly qualified women are thus instrumentalized by the voucher policy to be both active in the labour market and have children to sustain the nation. In contrast, 'less worthy' women are categorized as less desirable mothers and unlikely beneficiaries of the voucher scheme. The process of developing the domestic services sector in the Czech Republic, therefore, suggests having rather ambivalent results, since the marginalized women cannot benefit in the same way as the higher earners. As such, it raises concerns about the impact of service vouchers on inequalities among high and low-income earners, among women and among women and men.

A feminist critical theorist, Zuzana Uhde (2016), would refer to this situation as distorted emancipation, by which she means the instrumentalization of selected claims for women's emancipation pursued on the basis of structures of global inequalities and at the expense of a possibility for structural change. As she writes, "the emancipation of some groups of women is in fact conditioned by gender and social injustices for other groups, partial positive moments become historically contingent on global economic and cultural inequalities in the long term" (Uhde 2016, 6). In this vein, the problematizations suggesting that some women shall be relieved from the delegated responsibilities at the expense of others rest on complex hierarchies and power relations linked not only to gender but also class, race, ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship status. Notwithstanding the opportunities that the privileged women might gain, the problem representation upholds the continuing oppression of marginalized women trapped in search of better livelihood strategies, whose burden of reproductive work in their own households has been largely downplayed and neglected. Although the policy-makers have suggested that the schemes will contribute to the creation of part-time employment, which will facilitate these women's inclusion into the labour market by performing domestic work, especially upon return from care leave, the processes shaping the labour market and social

status of this occupation have been silenced. Neither did the proponents question how the domestic workers themselves would deal with the burden of reproductive work, for which they have been deemed responsible for in their own houses. In the words of Pearson (2014, 22), "paid work does not mean that women's primary responsibility for reproductive work within the family and the community is diminished". Given the scarcity of care facilities and men's involvement in the reproductive work, domestic workers are left on their own to navigate the double burden of housework, both unpaid and paid. To conclude, such representation of reconciliation of work and family leaves the gendered division of labour within heterosexual nuclear families intact and hence reinforces the association of woman and domestic work and care in all cases.

This chapter has shown that the policy on regulation of domestic work, as currently formulated in the Czech Republic, silences the ways how domestic work is embedded in complex hierarchies and power relations, and hence falls short to recognize the social injustices experienced by domestic workers. Unpacking and problematizing the power dynamics within social and economic interactions reflected in the assumptions underlying the problem representations of the proposal on the Services for Households, I have illustrated that rather than providing a remedy to inequalities of gender, class, race or citizenship status, the policy is likely to reinforce the unequally structured social and economic relationships. In order to further develop my argument and accentuate the need to seek for problematizations beneath postulated solutions, in the next chapter, I analyze the policy texts considering the government's position towards the regulation of domestic work, which resonates with the ILO's representation of the problem and of many other actors demanding for the state to intervene in the sector to protect and improve the working and living conditions of domestic workers.

6. DOMESTIC WORKERS FROM 'THE OTHER' PERSPECTIVE

Together with the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic is one of the only EU governments to abstain in the 2011 vote for the ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. A year later, obliged to consider the Convention's ratification, the Czech authorities confirmed their stance towards the ILO's representation of the problem, which depicts the regulation of domestic work as a way to protect and improve the working and living conditions of domestic workers worldwide. They refused to ratify the Convention claiming that, in the Czech Republic, it constitutes a marginal issue. Concretely, the government has argued that "within the Czech Republic the question of paid domestic work is not of such significance to justify the changes in the national labour laws, otherwise necessary in the event of ratification of the Convention" (The Government 2012a). Such representation has remained stable in spite of the rotation in the government, as of early 2014.

In contrast to the idea of exploiting the potential of the domestic services sector for economic growth, the problem representation of paid domestic work as an issue of social justice has not yet found ground among the majority of Czech policy-makers. Rather, in policy discourses concerning domestic workers' rights, the subjectivities of domestic workers were deemed negligible for state intervention due two main assumptions. First, it was argued that the number of domestic workers, as well as of the cases of the breach of their rights is minimal. Second, the government has assumed that they are equally covered under the provisions of the general labour laws as other workers. Acknowledging that producing particular meanings of the problem of paid domestic work "affects what gets done or not done, and how people live their lives" (Bacchi 2012b, 22), in this section I interrogate the "unexamined assumptions and deep-seated conceptual logics" within the problem representations of paid domestic work, as they emerge from the policy texts concerning domestic workers' rights (ibid.). I finish by pointing out the on-going efforts of civil society actors and the country's gender equality machinery in advocating for domestic workers' rights.

6.1 Producing the lack of evidence

The government has been rejecting the policy proposal to regulate the domestic work sector based on the presumption that the problem of domestic workers' rights constitutes an insignificant issue in the Czech Republic. How subjectivities of domestic workers, in connection with the questions of their rights and protections, have been envisioned by the State has been reflected, for example, in this statement issued by the government in the event of the refusal to ratify the ILO Convention:

> By December 31, 2011, 49 [foreign] workers were employed in the area of "activities of households as employers," including 15 workers from the EU member states and 34 workers from other countries. […] Since domestic workers are not a sufficiently significant group in terms of their presence in the labour market or in the records of complaints submitted to the labour inspection […], it is not expedient at the present time to ratify the Convention (The Government 2012b, 2).

The public administrators of recently argued similarly: "We have statistics of how many of those people are reported, […] it considers only dozens of people. This is a very marginal group" (Interview with Public administrator, 19 February 2016). As Luke puts it, policy-making "involve[s] how one is being named, positioned, desired, and described and in which languages, texts, and terms of reference" (Luke 1995, 6). Within the policy texts considering domestic workers' rights in the Czech Republic, domestic workers have been constructed as a negligible group of essentially migrant workers, too small to be worth considering for the policy change.

This account has been silent, however, on "what counts and what does not," in the words of Waring (1997, 31), in the policy texts. As suggested earlier, to date, the only figures assessing the scope of paid domestic work that are available in the Czech national statistics, capture the number of officially employed and recorded non-Czech-citizen domestic workers. Meanwhile, the data on the number of domestic workers holding Czech citizenship is missing. As a result, by the end of 2015, the state registered only 43 (migrant) domestic workers, an

even lower number than noted above (MoLSA 2016b).[11] In this context, feminist political economists have devoted a good deal of attention to criticizing the gendered failures and underestimation of women's economic activities in statistical recording derived from the entrenched masculinist mechanisms undervaluing reproductive economy that make domestic work, both unpaid and paid, within the household invisible (Boserup 1970; Perez-Ramirez 1978; Waring 1988). Clearly, these numerical limitations have been compounded with widespread informality in the domestic services sector, which has not been subject to the government's considerations when dismissing the need for the protection of domestic workers. While the difficulties of obtaining reliable data on the nature of the informal economy cannot be underestimated, the government's understanding of the question of domestic workers' rights failed to recognize the importance of this sector and the high participation of marginalized women in it. In other words, the policy knowledge underpinning the representation of the domestic work sector in the policy texts neither accounts for estimates of the incidence of informal employment nor inquires into its gendered, ethnicized and classed dimensions.

At the same time, the policy texts have normalized the perception of domestic workers as an unproblematic group, which has been rationalized with the minimum of cases illustrating the breach of their rights as recorded by the Labour Inspectorates. There are no complaints in the domestic work sector, it has been argued, providing evidence that this group requires no policy intervention (Interview with a Public administrator, 24 February 2016). This argumentation, however, obscures the causes of these limitations in records of the labour inspection. For the most part, under the current law provisions, inspectors have no remit to enter households, which arguably explains the scarcity of numbers that the government highlights. Moreover, scholars and labour rights activists have both consistently asserted that the institution does not have sufficient capacity and power to carry out effectively the monitoring of adherence to labour rights (see, e.g. Canek 2012; Consortium 2015). Similarly, the numbers should be questioned as domestic workers working in the informal economy, migrants in particular, might be deterred from seeking protections because of the Inspectors' focus on sanctioning illegal employment above overseeing working conditions and safety (Consortium 2015). Leaving these concerns unproblematized, the government's representation of the issue of domestic workers' has instead relied on the demarcations of public and private

[11] The data is collected through the European NACE code 9700: Activities of households as employers of domestic personnel.

spheres and formal and informal sectors of the economy, which has allowed them to capture only limited and biased evidence.

Dissenting accounts have come from Czech NGOs assisting migrant domestic workers that have criticized these representations for being incomplete and inadequate, mainly based on their practitioner experience. They have asserted that almost every migrant woman seeking the organization's assistance carried out some form of domestic work, especially upon entry into the country (approx. 8000). Challenging further the lack of evidence of precariousness in the domestic work sector as depicted by the government, the Czech NGOs conducted a statistical research analysing experiences of 105 migrant domestic workers, which also mapped the precariousness in the sector (Ezzedine and Semerak 2014). Equally important have been a few ethnographic studies (Ezzedine 2012; Soukalova 2014; Redlova 2012) that have scrutinized the employment of migrant domestic workers in the Czech Republic. For instance, the aforementioned research of Redlova (2012) has shown that many of the employment contracts of Filipina domestic workers would often provide different job titles such as a teacher or a secretary, which is arguably information that can hardly be read from the statistical data that the Czech authorities have privileged as evidence for the policy-making concerning domestic workers' rights.

Altogether, the government's creation of this particular understanding of the problem concerning domestic workers' rights depicts a lack of evidence of the precariousness in the domestic work sector in the Czech Republic as the constituting knowledge. Such representation has favoured preserving the status quo and has contributed to producing the precariousness of domestic workers as a non-issue in the policy processes. The problematization of the government's representation of the knowledge supporting the decision to uphold the status quo in the domestic work sector has shed light on how the weight of evidence and measurable outcomes have created a particular understanding of the policy problem. Feminist scholars would attribute the powerholders' choices concerning relevant evidence or data collection to androcentrism in epistemological and ontological assumptions of science and its interpretations (Harding 1986; Hawkesworth 1994). Holding this incomplete and biased evidence as credible, while dismissing practitioner research of NGOs or feminist scholars, perpetuates values of social injustice and ultimately reinforces precariousness in the domestic work sector in the Czech Republic.

6.2 Domestic workers as workers like any other

Yet another assumption underlying the government's refusal to intervene in the domestic work sector has been based on an assertion that domestic workers are equally covered under the provisions of the general labour laws as other workers. It has been argued that:

> A crucial aspect is the fact that these services are either provided by independent contractors (self-employed) on the basis of a business relationship, or are performed under the employment relationship, though fully covered, in contrast to the situation in some other countries, under the protection of the general labour law, establishing the same position as of any other employees (The Government 2012b, 2).

Before the Convention's adoption, the ILO (2010, 119) classified the Czech Republic in its report among countries that implicitly include domestic workers in standards governing working conditions. What this means, however, as other studies point out, is that, in effect, domestic workers do not fully enjoy the same legal protections as other workers (Mundlak and Shamir 2011). In particular, given that the work takes place at home, within the private domain of the family, domestic workers are confronted with the gendered distinctions between the private and public, home and market, that have been historically carved into the current policy discourses and associated institutions of state regulation (Fudge 2012a, 15). The invocation of the public/private boundary is, as mentioned above, reflected in the capacities of the Czech Labour Inspectorate, which has no remit to inspect private households while it is entitled to audit proper application of labour laws in other worksites. Similarly, households are not effectively obliged to implement health and safety measures, in contrast to other employers. As illustrated, the issue with this labour regulatory discourse shaped by the distinction between the public and private is that it results in the patterns of hierarchy and exclusion that inevitably inform domestic workers' lived experiences.

Not only are the boundaries of the private and public inscribed in the current institutional framework excluding domestic work from the full legal coverage under the labour laws, but the discourse that the state should persevere the public/private divide has also played out in the thus far refusal of Czech policy-makers to intervene in the sector:

> Some things such as those concerning the home as a workspace, including setting the privacy boundaries between an employer and a [domestic] worker are clearly resolved in our legal system by delineating it as a private affair. And, it is not appropriate to intervene into our core values because of one group (Interview with a Public Administrator, 25 February 2016).

Drawing on the ideological distinction between home and work, which favours households' privacy interests and reinforces the structure of the employment relationship as a private matter, has rendered domestic workers' position at the nexus of this split insufficiently compelling for the state to step in within these policy texts. This intervention/non-intervention narrative reinforcing the public/private divide, however, falls short of realizing that the state intervenes in and shapes our lives constantly, even in its apparent absence (Chunn 1997). Not regulating the domestic work sector, for instance, is an intervention in the domestic workers' lives, and affects how they will navigate their living and working conditions. Yet, by placing domestic work in the category in which the logic of non-intervention supposedly reigns, the ways how the state structures the precariousness of domestic work, even when not regulated, go unnoticed.

Moreover, conceptualizing the public/private as a marker that has been continuously indeterminate and shifting, feminist scholars have underscored the permeability of the divide in relation to time and space, as well as to particular problems and groups (Boyd 1997). This notion has led Olsen (1993, 325) to argue that the categories of private and public are structured along social hierarchies. As a consequence, the notion of privacy is "enjoyed by those in power," while for "the powerless, the private realm is frequently a sphere not of freedom but of uncertainty and insecurity" (ibid.). On this line of critique, while the Czech state has been reluctant to intervene in "private" to protect a domestic worker, it has not been so hesitant when promoting interests of employers. To illustrate, under the Czech Labour Code (§ 192), an employer has the right to carry out a control in the homes of the employees throughout the first 14 days of an employee's sick leave. This inconsistency of the Czech state's approach towards the household in relation to an employment relationship points to what feminists have long argued: that the public/private boundary is open to manipulation, which tends to privilege the interests of power-holders.

6.3 Excluding migrant domestic workers

he depiction that all domestic workers are covered by the national laws has been particularly problematic with regards to the Czech Republic's treatment of migrant workers, who as in many other countries increasingly take up jobs in the domestic work sector (Ezzedine and Semerak 2014). In recent years, scholars have illustrated how immigration policies and practices contribute to producing labour with particular types of relations to employers and to labour markets (see, e.g. Anderson 2010; Fudge 2012b; Shutes 2012). Importantly, when combined with a less formalised migratory process, immigration controls "help produce 'precarious workers' that cluster in particular jobs and segments of the labour market," as Anderson (2010, 301) points out. In this context, claiming that all domestic workers are covered by national laws especially obscures the way in which immigration policy plays out in institutionalizing and producing precarious employment in the domestic work sector.

As in many other countries, different types of residence status for different groups of migrants are established by the Czech immigration policy, from which certain rights and constraints follow. Crucial restrictions in terms of access to the Czech labour market consider primarily "low-skilled" non-EU nationals without permanent residency status, who in order to get authorization to work need to obtain a single permit both to work and reside in the country.[12] Under these combined regulations, the migrant worker's immigration status is conditioned on an employment relationship with a specific employer. The migrant worker can exercise the right to change an employer only when the employment relationship was terminated by agreement or dismissal. In that case, the migrant worker has to find a new job within three months, which has been itself criticized by a number of NGOs as a strikingly short period for such a purpose (Consortium 2015). What is more, this provision does not apply when the relationship ends as a matter of a contract violation from the side of the worker, or when the worker voluntarily decides to leave the job, unless the employer does not pay wages. Combined with the migrants' dependence on employers for the permit renewal, the regulations give significant power to employers over migrant labour, and in effect undermine the worker's exercise of rights, including freedom of labour movement (Faltova 2014, 61). For domestic workers, whose position is furthermore bounded up with the privacy of their workplace, the

[12] This category of migrant workers excludes those who are not required to obtain work permits, such as non-nationals granted permanent residency, asylum or subsidiary protection, or full time students (Law on Employment, §2). In conjunction with the EU policy, highly-qualified and high-earning non-EU citizen workers may obtain privileged access to the labour market and certain rights as holders of the 'Blue card'.

high power imbalance between a worker and an employee and the personalized relationship among those involved, the immigration policy particularly restricts domestic workers' capabilities to navigate their lives and limits the ability to voice complaints over their conditions (Anderson 2008, 9). Notwithstanding that this may lead to abuse and unfree labour, the government chooses to "at once jealously guard the public borders of the state through immigration laws, while reifying the private borders of the home despite the public activity that proliferates behind its doors" (Blackett 2004, 247–248).

Moreover, the state has also restricted mainly non-EU migrant workers' access to social citizenship, thereby bolstering the portrayal of migrants as potential burdens to the welfare system. Many scholars and activists have long criticized the government's discriminatory practices towards migrant workers' access to social rights (Consortium 2015; Cizinsky and Fiala 2015). This has been especially the case considering the above-mentioned group of non-EU nationals without permanent residency, who are obliged to contribute to the national health insurance and social security system, as well as to the to pay the contributions to the state employment policy, but are not able in turn to claim the benefits (Cizinsky and Fiala 2015). As Cizinsky and Fiala have asserted, if the worker loses employment, he or she is neither eligible for welfare or health benefits, nor has a right to be recorded as unemployed in the state registration facilitating a return to the labour market (Cizinsky and Fiala 2015). Given women's role in social reproduction, these provisions can disproportionately affect them (Peterson 2005).

In addition, migrant workers do not receive benefits nor are they allowed to work while the renewal of their work permit is in progress. Such provision restricting access to the benefits, as well as to work, has been clearly problematic for domestic workers, who often depend on their labour as a means of survival, not only their own but many times also that of their families in their country of origin (Sassen 2000). Given that the state administration tends to delay the process for months, sometimes years, the migrant may have no other chance than to take up jobs in the informal economy, including in the domestic work sector (Faltova 2014). As many have shown, in these conditions, exacerbated by the unique nature and location of domestic work, the employers may take advantage of the threat of denouncing the worker's status to impose poor working conditions, including non-payment or underpayment of wages (Anderson 2010). At the same time, the fear of being reported to immigration authorities and of being deported fuels rejections of migrant domestic workers to seek protections. The restrictive immigration controls and many of these ill-crafted policies which privilege the reinforcement

of the idea of the nation over the protection of "low-skilled" migrant workers point to the state's complicity in reproducing the precariousness of domestic work.

6.4 Towards domestic work as work like no other

Finally, another limitation to the assumption of the Czech policy-makers that domestic workers are fully covered by the labour laws considers the personalized relationship and household-like establishment pertinent to domestic work, for which the current conceptualization of labour law and policy is inadequate. As Stewart (2011, 313) argues, given the employment relationship being "personalized, less time bound and conducted in 'private' workplaces […], the conditions in which the content – affect – is performed can result in more extraction of the workers' labour than is acceptable." The ILO Convention aims to remedy this, for instance, in Article 9, which enshrines the right to privacy of domestic workers by providing that the state should take measures to ensure that live-in domestic workers are not obliged to reside in the household while on rest or leave. Regarding this provision, the government has argued that the legislation is not in contradiction, although no positive steps are being taken for its guarantee (The Government 2012c, 4). This example precisely exposes the belief of the Czech policy-makers that domestic work is work like any other, for which the labour protection historically structured around an industrial worker (without responsibilities in social reproduction) is sufficient. Consequently, the presuppositions of this representation fail to recognize the 'sectoral disadvantage' historically embedded in domestic work, resulting from the location of the work, the personal relationship, and the gendered nature it entails (Albin 2012, 247).

In order to correct the specific causes of domestic workers' precariousness, scholars have argued that it is crucial for policy-makers to recognize that domestic work is 'work like no other' (see, e.g. Albin 2012; Mantouvalou 2012; du Toit and Huyasamen 2013). Such approach entails sectoral focus and proactive targeting, which would tackle the particularities of domestic work. The ILO Convention has made some important steps in this direction as it, for instance, limits the constant availability of domestic workers, requires enforcement of health and safety measures, or recognizes the "significant contribution of domestic workers to the global economy" (ILO 2011). While it is barely a perfect instrument (see, e.g. Albin 2012; Rosewarne 2013; Fredman 2014), its ratification and primarily its implementation, which not only entails change of legislation, as the Czech government assumes, but also a set of proactive

policies, should certainly be a first step for the Czech Republic to take in order to combat the precariousness in the domestic work sector.

6.5 On the road to the ILO Convention?

Against this backdrop and in the context of relatively passive trade unions, NGOs assisting migrants, as mentioned earlier, have taken up the issue to challenge the government's representation of the problem by concentrating on the exploitation of migrant domestic workers in the Czech Republic. Not only have they criticized the government's marginalization of the issue, but throughout a two-year project called *Equal Opportunities on the threshold of Czech Homes*, the NGOs also gathered more evidence, provided legal and social assistance to migrant domestic workers, and raised awareness through media that targeted the broader public, as well as employers and migrant domestic workers themselves.

The representation of the problem, as depicted by the NGOs assisting migrant workers, has been, however, limited given its focus on advancing migrant domestic workers' rights formulated in terms of equal rights to citizen domestic workers. To illustrate, the main website of the project called *Equal Opportunities on the threshold of Czech Homes* advises the visitor to "read the stories of migrant [domestic workers] and provide them with the same conditions as [they would to the] Czech female [domestic workers]" (Pracovnice v domacnosti 2016). Moreover, this problem representation has also been reflected in the policy recommendations of the NGOs that have concerned almost exclusively the migrants' disadvantages, mostly in connection with the visa permits tied to a specific employer and access to social benefits (Ezzedine et al. 2014). While these are undoubtedly important demands, little attention has been paid to the structural disadvantages embedded in the domestic work sector. Similarly, the gendered hierarchies, manifested among other in its undervaluation, have been largely left unproblematized. The consequence of this frame has been the perception that the precariousness linked with domestic work is vastly an issue of immigration status. Given the low attention of the government towards the exploitation of migrant workers in the labour market in general, and even more so in the current context of the state's rhetoric categorizing migrants as a security threat, the NGOs' advocacy for policy change has been, therefore, rather unsuccessful.

However, drawing further on these efforts and influenced by the international discourse emphasizing the need to regulate domestic work and protect domestic workers, the country's

gender equality machinery and an affiliated Committee for Reconciliation of Personal, Family and Working Life have placed this representation of the problem on their agenda. Over the past months, they have aimed to shift the discursive politics on domestic work at the government level by using the ILO Convention as an advocacy tool (Interview with a Gender Equality Council Representative, 23 February 2016). Consequently, in April 2016, the Government Council for Gender Equality, which is a permanent advisory body to the Czech Cabinet "in the area of promoting equality between women and men and the inclusion of gender equality in government policies," recommended the government to re-open the process of ratification of the ILO Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (Statute of the Council 2015, 1). Since the role of the Council is only consultative, it is yet unclear whether this advice will be endorsed by the government. Namely, in the upcoming months, it is up to the Minister of Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Legislation to persuade the competent members of the government and public administration to agree that lack of labour standards enforcement in the field of domestic work is not a marginal issue, as it has been represented up to this date among the majority of Czech policy-makers.

Notwithstanding the unpredictable outcome, the Council's taking up of the problem has been important in a sense that domestic work has been framed as an issue of gender inequalities. As the Council stated in its Recommendation for the ratification of the ILO Convention: "A crucial aspect of domestic work is also the fact that it is performed in the majority of cases by women, therefore, non-ratification of the Convention ultimately upholds inequality between women and men in their working lives" (Government Council for Gender Equality 2016, 2). This has been a significant move in rephrasing the problem to capture the gendered aspects of domestic work that should be addressed. Nevertheless, even the ILO Convention's representation of the problem entails a limited vision of 'gender equality,' which, I posit, should caution the advocates of domestic workers' rights in their future strategic endeavors.

As I argued in this thesis, the precariousness lived by many domestic workers stems from the structural inequalities embedded in the global political economy that also influence the decisions of marginalized women to take up these jobs. While the Convention provides a rightly applauded framework, which has the potential to buffer the short-term problems, namely the lack of rights and protections of domestic workers, it is insufficient to remedy the global inequalities that shape today's nature of domestic work. These require long-term efforts recognizing the linkages between paid and unpaid domestic labour, the gendered undervaluation of social reproduction, and global capital's extraction of emotional and economic value from domestic work. Especially in the current context of the EU, which puts

emphasis more than ever on engagement of women in paid work to accelerate economic growth at expense of increasing devaluation of their unpaid work and care, these should be grounded in the advocacy processes (Anderson 2015, 649).

The global challenge of the problem is rooted in the global economic structures and normalization of socio-economic hierarchies that among other things translate in consistent polarization of global labour force and on-going displacement and migration, underpinned by gendered dynamics. It is, therefore, suggestive to incorporate issues of class, poverty and exploitation more profoundly into feminist discourses in the Czech Republic. Finally, the role of the state should be foregrounded in any of these economic and social processes at a local and global level given that the state policies largely shape the nature of domestic work, women's employment and their lives overall, as I have demonstrated throughout this thesis.

This does not entail focusing only on indirect intervention concerning primarily labour, care, and immigration practices, but also direct interference by the state in the sector. The latter has been recently proposed in the form of a policy on Services for Households, discussed in the previous chapter, whose formulation, as seen, evolved completely separately from these policy processes focusing on domestic workers' rights in the Czech Republic. Suffice it to say that putting forward the representations of paid domestic work that lay it out as a feminist and social justice issue has been at this time particularly important to avoid the implementation of an ineffective policy on regulation of domestic work as presently postulated.

To conclude, this chapter has complemented the analysis of the voucher policy with the scrutiny of the government's position towards the regulation of domestic work as a way to protect and improve the working and living conditions of domestic workers. It has been shown that, thus far, this problem representation has not been accepted among the Czech policy-makers given two main assumptions. First, it has been posited that the problem of domestic work constitutes a marginal issue. I have highlighted the shortcomings of this representation by pointing out the biased selection of evidence and the gendered failures embedded in collection of statistics. Second, the government has argued that domestic workers are as sufficiently covered by general labour laws as any other workers. Against this backdrop, I have underscored the sectoral disadvantages embedded in the domestic work sector that go beyond legal change by requiring intervention through positive measures. Additionally, I have emphasized the need to consider the position of migrant domestic workers, whose experiences are structured by restrictive immigration policies. Finally, I have briefly outlined the on-going advocacy processes for domestic workers' rights and finished by laying out considerations for the future struggle for policy change.

7. CONCLUSION

More frequently than ever, various actors turn to a number of political domains as advocates for better protections and improvement in the working and living conditions of domestic workers. Given the role of states in structuring domestic workers' lived experiences, they are increasingly under pressure to reform the situation in the domestic service sector to ensure decent work principles for domestic workers. Against the backdrop of these on-going struggles privileging social justice, this thesis aimed to highlight the necessity to seek for underlying assumptions underneath the policies purporting to regulate the domestic service sector in the context of the structural changes embedded in the global political economy. I exemplified this need to critically examine, question and deconstruct the policy proposals for the state intervention into the domestic work sector on the case of the Czech Republic, where the government recently appraised the implementation of a voucher policy, referred to as Services for Households.

In this endeavor, I have drawn on Carol Bacchi's WPR approach to policy analysis that allowed me to examine the implicit representations of the problem that the policy purports to address. To scrutinize how the problem of domestic work took on a particular shape, I have first traced the genealogy of the policy. It was demonstrated that the proposal on the development of the Services for Households is clearly influenced by the EC's discourse promoting marketization of domestic work in a pursuit of economic growth. Nonetheless, I have emphasized that this lobbying for exploitation of the economic potential of unpaid work at the EU level is not a straightforward process. Rather, as a result of the increasingly recognized transnational policy narrative, which represents the precariousness in the domestic work sector as a problem, the EU policy debates have been subject to interactive and multi-directional processes of translation and interpretation of the issue by various policy actors.

This contestation, however, has not found ground in the policy proposal on the Services for Households in the Czech Republic as my research findings illustrate. By closely scrutinizing the three principal problems that the voucher policy aims to address, I have revealed a lack of the proponents' considerations for social injustices and gender inequalities pertinent to domestic work as well as hierarchical power relations in general. First, the development of the Services for Households is offered as a solution to long-term unemployment and social exclusion of welfare recipients, who will be mainly targeted for a number of the new positions in the domestic work sector that the policy is expected to create.

I have argued that by leaving unproblematized the gendered associations of domestic work with women's work and its undervaluation, marginalized women will be most likely recruited for these positions given their socially constructed disadvantaged position. This is mainly because the policy decontextualizes unemployment and social exclusion from the context of structural inequalities and considers them as neutral concepts. In other words, the development of the domestic services sector takes advantage of the hierarchical relations to delegate domestic work to marginalized segments of population. I have also shown that the policy is likely to generate precarious employment in the domestic work sector.

Second, I have highlighted that because of the policy's lack of recognition of the particularities of domestic work, the goal of transferring domestic work from the informal economy to the formal economy is likely to reproduce most of the practices underpinning the informal employment arrangements. Moreover, since the policy texts do not take into account the restrictive immigration policies, the policy will more likely exacerbate the exploitation of migrant domestic workers working within the bottom tier of the sector. The rhetoric that the voucher policy adopts, therefore, promotes access to the benefits the formal economy offers only to some at the expense of others.

Third, the development of the Services for Households is also seen as a measure contributing to reconciling work and family life. In this case, I have pointed out the double-edged representation of the problem, which rests on proposal to relieve more privileged women from the delegated responsibilities at the expense of marginalized women. What is more, the representation of reconciliation of work and family, as currently postulated, leaves the gendered division of labour within households intact and hence reinforces the association of woman and domestic work and care. Altogether, unpacking and problematizing the power dynamics within social and economic interactions reflected in the assumptions underlying the problem representations of the proposal on the Services for Households, I have illustrated that rather than providing a remedy to inequalities of gender, class, race or citizenship status, the policy is likely to reinforce unequally structured social and economic relationships

This policy analysis was, furthermore, complemented with problematization of the Czech government's position towards the regulation of domestic work as a way to protect and improve the working and living conditions of domestic workers. I have demonstrated that domestic work has been in the policy texts constituted as a marginal issue given the gendered dichotomies upholding the demarcation of the public/private and formal/informal that have rendered domestic workers invisible. Finally, I criticized the lack of acknowledgment of the sectoral disadvantage rooted in domestic work. This part of analysis has, therefore, confirmed

my reservations towards the voucher policy. Given the on-going efforts to promote decent work for domestic workers in the Czech Republic, and elsewhere, I hope I have persuasively illustrated that domestic workers' rights' advocates should be warranted to uncritically promote these measures as a way towards decent work for domestic workers.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

List of Interview Participants

Date	Position	Organization	Location
15-Feb-16	Public administrator	Gender equality machinery	Prague, Czech Republic
16-Feb-16	Representative	NGO assisting migrants	Prague, Czech Republic
16-Feb-16	Representative	NGO working in area of work and family reconciliation	Prague, Czech Republic
18-Feb-16	MP	Parliament of the Czech Republic	Prague, Czech Republic
19-Feb-16	Public administrator	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Directorate of Foreign Employment	Prague, Czech Republic
22-Feb-16	Past representative	NGO assisting migrants	Skype interview
23-Feb-16	Representative	Government Council for Gender Equality	Prague, Czech Republic
24-Feb-16	Public administrator	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Directorate of International Cooperation	Prague, Czech Republic
25-Feb-16	Public administrator	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Directorate of Foreign Employment	Prague, Czech Republic
25-Feb-16	Public administrator	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Directorate of Family Policy	Prague, Czech Republic
26-Feb-16	Representative	NGO assisting migrants	Prague, Czech Republic
29-Feb-16	Social and feminist theorist	Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences	Prague, Czech Republic
1-Mar-16	Representative	Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions	Prague, Czech Republic
2-Mar-16	Public administrator	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Diplomatic Protocol	Prague, Czech Republic
3-Mar-16	Public administrator	Gender equality machinery	Prague, Czech Republic
25-Apr-16	Representative	Union of Employers' Association	Skype interview

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