

FILLING THE GAPS:

MIGRANTS AND CARE WORK IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

This paper explores the hypothesis that there is less demand for migrant care workers in societies with strong welfare states and well-organized social provisions for children, the elderly, and those with disabilities, than in societies with weaker welfare states, where such services are poorly organized and/or left up to the market. A sub-hypothesis is that even in strong welfare states, the *type* of provisions matters: in states with largely formalized, institutional, and professionalized services, there is less demand for migrant workers than in states with “cash-for-care” schemes. A second sub-hypothesis is that migrants who do not speak the native language of a particular country are more likely to find work in elder and disability care than in child care. A third hypothesis is that there is greater demand for female than male migrants, and that the gender of these workers and their isolation within individual households rather than within formal employment affects the quality of migrants’ working conditions. The paper uses secondary analysis of data produced for a number of recent nationally specific studies of migrants in care work across Europe and North America.

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