Global Woman

Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy

Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild

EDITORS

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Love and Gold

ARLIE RUSSELL HOCHSCHILD

Whether they know it or not, Clinton and Princela Bautista, two children growing up in a small town in the Philippines apart from their two migrant parents, are the recipients of an international pledge. It says that a child "should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love, and understanding," and "not be separated from his or her parents against their will..." Part of Article 9 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1959), these words stand now as a fairy-tale ideal, the promise of a shield between children and the costs of globalization.

At the moment this shield is not protecting the Bautista family from those human costs. In the basement bedroom of her employer's home in Washington, D.C., Rowena Bautista keeps four pictures on her dresser: two of her own children, back in Camiling, a Philippine farming village, and two of children she has cared for as a nanny in the United States. The pictures of her own children, Clinton and Princela, are from five years ago. As she recently told *Wall Street Journal* reporter Robert Frank, the recent photos "remind me how much I've missed." She has missed the last two Christmases,

alone repeated

and on her last visit home, her son Clinton, now eight, refused to touch his mother. "Why," he asked, "did you come back?"

The daughter of a teacher and an engineer, Rowena Bautista worked three years toward an engineering degree before she quit and went abroad for work and adventure. A few years later, during her travels, she fell in love with a Ghanaian construction worker, had two children with him, and returned to the Philippines with them. Unable to find a job in the Philippines, the father of her children went to Korea in search of work and, over time, he faded from his children's lives.

Rowena again traveled north, joining the growing ranks of Third World mothers who work abroad for long periods of time because they cannot make ends meet at home. She left her children with her mother, hired a nanny to help out at home, and flew to Washington, D.C., where she took a job as a nanny for the same pay that a small-town doctor would make in the Philippines. Of the 792,000 legal household workers in the United States, 40 percent were born abroad, like Rowena. Of Filipino migrants, 70 percent, like Rowena, are women.

Rowena calls Noa, the American child she tends, "my baby." One of Noa's first words was "Ena," short for Rowena. And Noa has started babbling in Tagalog, the language Rowena spoke in the Philippines. Rowena lifts Noa from her crib mornings at 7:00 A.M., takes her to the library, pushes her on the swing at the playground, and curls up with her for naps. As Rowena explained to Frank, "I give Noa what I can't give to my children." In turn, the American child gives Rowena what she doesn't get at home. As Rowena puts it, "She makes me feel like a mother."

Rowena's own children live in a four-bedroom house with her parents and twelve other family members—eight of them children, some of whom also have mothers who work abroad. The central figure in the children's lives—the person they call "Mama"—is Grandma, Rowena's mother. But Grandma works surprisingly long hours as a teacher—from 7:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. As Rowena tells her story to Frank, she says little about her father, the children's grandfather (men are discouraged from participating actively in child rearing in the Philippines). And Rowena's father is not much involved with his grandchildren. So, she has hired Anna de la Cruz, who arrives daily at 8:00 A.M. to cook, clean, and care for the children. Meanwhile,

Anna de la Cruz leaves her teenage son in the care of her eighty-year-old mother-in-law.

Rowena's life reflects an important and growing global trend: the importation of care and love from poor countries to rich ones. For some time now, promising and highly trained professionals have been moving from ill-equipped hospitals, impoverished schools, antiquated banks, and other beleaguered workplaces of the Third World to better opportunities and higher pay in the First World. As rich nations become richer and poor nations become poorer, this one-way flow of talent and training continuously widens the gap between the two. But in addition to this brain drain, there is now a parallel but more hidden and wrenching trend, as women who normally care for the young, the old, and the sick in their own poor countries move to care for the young, the old, and the sick in rich countries, whether as maids and nannies or as day-care and nursing-home aides. It's a care drain.

The movement of care workers from south to north is not altogether new. What is unprecedented, however, is the scope and speed of women's migration to these jobs. Many factors contribute to the growing feminization of migration. One is the growing split between the global rich and poor. In 1949 Harry S. Truman declared in his inaugural speech that the Southern Hemisphere encompassing the postcolonial nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America was underdeveloped, and that it was the role of the north to help the south "catch up." But in the years since then, the gap between north and south has only widened. In 1960, for example, the nations of the north were twenty times richer than those of the south. By 1980, that gap had more than doubled, and the north was forty-six times richer than the south. In fact, according to a United Nations Development Program study, sixty countries are worse off in 1999 than they were in 1980.2 Multinational corporations are the "muscle and brains" behind the new global system with its growing inequality, as William Greider points out, and the 500 largest such corporations (168 in Europe, 157 in the United States, and 119 in Japan) have in the last twenty years increased their sales sevenfold.3

As a result of this polarization, the middle class of the Third World now earns less than the poor of the First World. Before the domestic workers Rhacel Parreñas interviewed in the 1990s migrated from the

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Philippines to the United States and Italy, they had averaged \$176 a month, often as teachers, nurses, and administrative and clerical workers. But by doing less skilled—though no less difficult—work as nannies, maids, and care-service workers, they can earn \$200 a month in Singapore, \$410 a month in Hong Kong, \$700 a month in Italy, or \$1,400 a month in Los Angeles. To take one example, as a fifth-grade dropout in Colombo, Sri Lanka, a woman could earn \$30 a month plus room and board as a house-maid, or she could earn \$30 a month as a salesgirl in a shop, without food or lodging. But as a nanny in Athens she could earn \$500 a month, plus room and board.

The remittances these women send home provide food and shelter for their families and often a nest egg with which to start a small business. Of the \$750 Rowena Bautista earns each month in the United States, she mails \$400 home for her children's food, clothes, and schooling, and \$50 to Anna de la Cruz, who shares some of that with her mother-in-law and her children. As Rowena's story demonstrates, one way to respond to the gap between rich and poor countries is to close it privately—by moving to a better paying job.

Even as the gap between the globe's rich and poor grows wider, the globe itself—its capital, cultural images, consumer tastes, and peoples—becomes more integrated. Thanks to the spread of Western, and especially American, movies and television programs, the people of the poor south now know a great deal about the rich north. But what they learn about the north is what people *have*, in what often seems like a material striptease.

Certainly, rising inequality and the lure of northern prosperity have contributed to what Stephen Castles and Mark Miller call a "globalization of migration." For men and women alike, migration has become a private solution to a public problem. Since 1945 and especially since the mid-1980s, a small but growing proportion of the world's population is migrating. They come from and go to more different countries. Migration is by no means an inexorable process, but as Castles and Miller observe, "migrations are growing in volume in all major regions at the present time." The International Organization for Migration estimates that 120 million people moved from one country to another, legally or illegally, in 1994. Of this group, about 2 percent of the world's population, 15 to 23 million are refugees and asylum

seekers. Of the rest, some move to join family members who have previously migrated. But most move to find work.

As a number of studies show, most migration takes place through personal contact with networks of migrants composed of relatives and friends and relatives and friends of relatives and friends. One migrant inducts another. Whole networks and neighborhoods leave to work abroad, bringing back stories, money, know-how, and contacts. Just as men form networks along which information about jobs are passed, so one domestic worker in New York, Dubai, or Paris passes on information to female relatives or friends about how to arrange papers, travel, find a job, and settle.

Today, half of all the world's migrants are women. In Sri Lanka, one out of every ten citizens—a majority of them women—works abroad. That figure excludes returnees who have worked abroad in the past. As Castles and Miller explain:

Women play an increasing role in all regions and all types of migration. In the past, most labor migrations and many refugee movements were male dominated, and women were often dealt with under the category of family reunion. Since the 1960s, women have played a major role in labor migration. Today women workers form the majority in movements as diverse as those of Cape Verdians to Italy, Filipinos to the Middle East and Thais to Japan.⁶

Of these female workers, a great many migrate to fill domestic jobs. Demand for domestic servants has risen both in developed countries, where it had nearly vanished, and in fast-growing economies such as Hong Kong and Singapore, where, write Miller and Castles, "immigrant servants—from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Korea and Sri Lanka—allow women in the richer economies to take up new employment opportunities."

Vastly more middle-class women in the First World do paid work now than in the past. They work longer hours for more months a year and more years. So they need help caring for the family.⁸ In the United States in 1950, 15 percent of mothers of children aged six and under did paid work while 65 percent of such women do today. Seventy-two percent of all American women now work. Among them are the grandmothers and sisters

who thirty years ago might have stayed home to care for the children of relatives. Just as Third World grandmothers may be doing paid care work abroad in the Third World, so more grandmothers are working in the First World too—another reason First World families are looking outside the family for good care.

Women who want to succeed in a professional or managerial job in the First World thus face strong pressures at work. Most careers are still based on a well-known (male) pattern: doing professional work, competing with fellow professionals, getting credit for work, building a reputation, doing it while you are young, hoarding scarce time, and minimizing family work by finding someone else to do it. In the past, the professional was a man; the "someone else" was his wife. The wife oversaw the family, itself a flexible, preindustrial institution concerned with human experiences the workplace excluded: birth, child rearing, sickness, death. Today, a growing "care industry" has stepped into the traditional wife's role, creating a very real demand for migrant women.

But if First World middle-class women are building careers that are molded according to the old male model, by putting in long hours at demanding jobs, their nannies and other domestic workers suffer a greatly exaggerated version of the same thing. Two women working for pay is not a bad idea. But two working mothers giving their all to work is a good idea gone haywire. In the end, both First and Third World women are small players in a larger economic game whose rules they have not written.

The trends outlined above—global polarization, increasing contact, and the establishment of transcontinental female networks—have caused more women to migrate. They have also changed women's motives for migrating. Fewer women move for "family reunification" and more move in search of work. And when they find work, it is often within the growing "care sector," which, according to the economist Nancy Folbre, currently encompasses 20 percent of all American jobs.⁹

A good number of the women who migrate to fill these positions seem to be single mothers. After all, about a fifth of the world's households are headed by women: 24 percent in the industrial world, 19 percent in Africa, 18 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 13 percent in Asia and

the Pacific. Some such women are on their own because their husbands have left them or because they have escaped abusive marriages. In addition to these single mothers, there is also a shadow group of "almost" single mothers, only nominally married to men who are alcoholics, gamblers, or just too worn down by the hardships of life to make a go of it. For example, one Filipina nanny now working in California was married to a man whose small business collapsed as a result of overseas competition. He could find no well-paid job abroad that he found acceptable, so he urged his wife to "go and earn good money" as a lap dancer in a café in Japan. With that money, he hoped to restart his business. Appalled by his proposal, she separated from him to become a nanny in the United States.

Many if not most women migrants have children. The average age of women migrants into the United States is twenty-nine, and most come from countries, such as the Philippines and Sri Lanka, where female identity centers on motherhood, and where the birth rate is high. Often migrants, especially the undocumented ones, cannot bring their children with them. Most mothers try to leave their children in the care of grandmothers, aunts, and fathers, in roughly that order. An orphanage is a last resort. A number of nannies working in rich countries hire nannies to care for their own children back home either as solo caretakers or as aides to the female relatives left in charge back home. Carmen Ronquillo, for example, migrated from the Philippines to Rome to work as a maid for an architect and single mother of two. She left behind her husband, two teenagers—and a maid.¹⁰

Whatever arrangements these mothers make for their children, however, most feel the separation acutely, expressing guilt and remorse to the researchers who interview them. Says one migrant mother who left her two-month-old baby in the care of a relative, "The first two years I felt like I was going crazy. You have to believe me when I say that it was like I was having intense psychological problems. I would catch myself gazing at nothing, thinking about my child." Recounted another migrant nanny through tears, "When I saw my children again, I thought, 'Oh children do grow up even without their mother.' I left my youngest when she was only five years old. She was already nine when I saw her again, but she still wanted me to carry her." 12

Many more migrant female workers than migrant male workers stay in their adopted countries—in fact, most do. In staying, these mothers remain

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separated from their children, a choice freighted, for many, with a terrible sadness. Some migrant nannies, isolated in their employers' homes and faced with what is often depressing work, find solace in lavishing their affluent charges with the love and care they wish they could provide their own children. In an interview with Rhacel Parreñas, Vicky Diaz, a college-educated schoolteacher who left behind five children in the Philippines, said, "the only thing you can do is to give all your love to the child [in your care]. In my absence from my children, the most I could do with my situation was to give

all my love to that child."13 Without intending it, she has taken part in a

global heart transplant.

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As much as these mothers suffer, their children suffer more. And there are a lot of them. An estimated 30 percent of Filipino children—some eight million—live in households where at least one parent has gone overseas. These children have counterparts in Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Latin America, and the former Soviet Union. How are these children doing? Not very well, according to a survey Manila's Scalabrini Migration Center conducted with more than seven hundred children in 1996. Compared to their classmates, the children of migrant workers more frequently fell ill; they were more likely to express anger, confusion, and apathy; and they performed particularly poorly in school. Other studies of this population show a rise in delinquency and child suicide. When such children were asked whether they would also migrate when they grew up, leaving their own children in the care of others, they all said no.

Faced with these facts, one senses some sort of injustice at work, linking the emotional deprivation of these children with the surfeit of affection their First World counterparts enjoy. In her study of native-born women of color who do domestic work, Sau-Ling Wong argues that the time and energy these workers devote to the children of their employers is diverted from their own children. ¹⁵ But time and energy are not all that's involved; so, too, is love. In this sense, we can speak about love as an unfairly distributed resource—extracted from one place and enjoyed somewhere else.

Is love really a "resource" to which a child has a right? Certainly the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child asserts all children's right to an "atmosphere of happiness, love, and understanding." Yet in some ways, this claim is hard to make. The more we love and are loved, the more deeply we can love. Love is not fixed in the same way that most material resources

are fixed. Put another way, if love is a resource, it's a renewable resource; it creates more of itself. And yet Rowena Bautista can't be in two places at once. Her day has only so many hours. It may also be true that the more love she gives to Noa, the less she gives to her own three children back in the Philippines. Noa in the First World gets more love, and Clinton and Princela in the Third World get less. In this sense, love does appear scarce and limited, like a mineral extracted from the earth.

Perhaps, then, feelings are distributable resources, but they behave somewhat differently from either scarce or renewable material resources. According to Freud, we don't "withdraw" and "invest" feeling but rather displace or redirect it. The process is an unconscious one, whereby we don't actually give up a feeling of, say, love or hate, so much as we find a new object for it—in the case of sexual feeling, a more appropriate object than the original one, whom Freud presumed to be our opposite-sex parent. While Freud applied the idea of displacement mainly to relationships within the nuclear family, it seems only a small stretch to apply it to relationships like Rowena's to Noa. As Rowena told Frank, the Wall Street Journal reporter, "I give Noa what I can't give my children."

Understandably, First World parents welcome and even invite nannies to redirect their love in this manner. The way some employers describe it, a nanny's love of her employer's child is a natural product of her more loving Third World culture, with its warm family ties, strong community life, and long tradition of patient maternal love of children. In hiring a nanny, many such employers implicitly hope to import a poor country's "native culture," thereby replenishing their own rich country's depleted culture of care. They import the benefits of Third World "family values." Says the director of a coop nursery in the San Francisco Bay Area, "This may be odd to say, but the teacher's aides we hire from Mexico and Guatemala know how to love a child better than the middle-class white parents. They are more relaxed, patient, and joyful. They enjoy the kids more. These professional parents are pressured for time and anxious to develop their kids' talents. I tell the parents that they can really learn how to love from the Latinas and the Filipinas."

When asked why Anglo mothers should relate to children so differently than do Filipina teacher's aides, the nursery director speculated, "The Filipinas are brought up in a more relaxed, loving environment. They aren't as anxr, an

rich as we are, but they aren't so pressured for time, so materialistic, so anxious. They have a more loving, family-oriented culture." One mother, an American lawyer, expressed a similar view:

Carmen just enjoys my son. She doesn't worry whether . . . he's learning his letters, or whether he'll get into a good preschool. She just enjoys him. And actually, with anxious busy parents like us, that's really what Thomas needs. I love my son more than anyone in this world. But at this stage Carmen is better for him.

Filipina nannies I have interviewed in California paint a very different picture of the love they share with their First World charges. Theirs is not an import of happy peasant mothering but a love that partly develops on American shores, informed by an American ideology of mother-child bonding and fostered by intense loneliness and longing for their own children. If love is a precious resource, it is not one simply extracted from the Third World and implanted in the First; rather, it owes its very existence to a peculiar cultural alchemy that occurs in the land to which it is imported.

For María Gutierrez, who cares for the eight-month-old baby of two hardworking professionals (a lawyer and a doctor, born in the Philippines but now living in San Jose, California), loneliness and long work hours feed a love for her employers' child. "I love Ana more than my own two children. Yes, more! It's strange, I know. But I have time to be with her. I'm paid. I am lonely here. I work ten hours a day, with one day off. I don't know any neighbors on the block. And so this child gives me what I need."

Not only that, but she is able to provide her employer's child with a different sort of attention and nurturance than she could deliver to her own children. "I'm more patient," she explains, "more relaxed. I put the child first. My kids, I treated them the way my mother treated me."

I asked her how her mother had treated her and she replied:

"My mother grew up in a farming family. It was a hard life. My mother wasn't warm to me. She didn't touch me or say 'I love you.' She didn't think she should do that. Before I was born she had lost

four babies—two in miscarriage and two died as babies. I think she was afraid to love me as a baby because she thought I might die too. Then she put me to work as a 'little mother' caring for my four younger brothers and sisters. I didn't have time to play."

Fortunately, an older woman who lived next door took an affectionate interest in María, often feeding her and even taking her in overnight when she was sick. María felt closer to this woman's relatives than she did to her biological aunts and cousins. She had been, in some measure, informally adopted—a practice she describes as common in the Philippine countryside and even in some towns during the 1960s and 1970s.

In a sense, María experienced a premodern childhood, marked by high infant mortality, child labor, and an absence of sentimentality, set within a culture of strong family commitment and community support. Reminiscent of fifteenth-century France, as Philippe Ariès describes it in *Centuries of Childhood*, this was a childhood before the romanticization of the child and before the modern middle-class ideology of intensive mothering. ¹⁶ Sentiment wasn't the point; commitment was.

María's commitment to her own children, aged twelve and thirteen when she left to work abroad, bears the mark of that upbringing. Through all of their anger and tears, María sends remittances and calls, come hell or high water. The commitment is there. The sentiment, she has to work at. When she calls home now, María says, "I tell my daughter 'I love you.' At first it sounded fake. But after a while it became natural. And now she says it back. It's strange, but I think I learned that it was okay to say that from being in the United States."

María's story points to a paradox. On the one hand, the First World extracts love from the Third World. But what is being extracted is partly produced or "assembled" here: the leisure, the money, the ideology of the child, the intense loneliness and yearning for one's own children. In María's case, a premodern childhood in the Philippines, a postmodern ideology of mothering and childhood in the United States, and the loneliness of migration blend to produce the love she gives to her employers' child. That love is also a product of the nanny's freedom from the time pressure and school anxiety parents feel in a culture that lacks a social safety net—one where both parent and child have to "make it" at work because no state policy, community,

or marital tie is reliable enough to sustain them. In that sense, the love María gives as a nanny does not suffer from the disabling effects of the American version of late capitalism.

If all this is true—if, in fact, the nanny's love is something at least partially produced by the conditions under which it is given—is María's love of a First World child really being extracted from her own Third World children? Yes, because her daily presence has been removed, and with it the daily expression of her love. It is, of course, the nanny herself who is doing the extracting. Still, if her children suffer the loss of her affection, she suffers with them. This, indeed, is globalization's pound of flesh.

Curiously, the suffering of migrant women and their children is rarely visible to the First World beneficiaries of nanny love. Noa's mother focuses on her daughter's relationship with Rowena. Ana's mother focuses on her daughter's relationship with María. Rowena loves Noa, María loves Ana. That's all there is to it. The nanny's love is a thing in itself. It is unique, private—fetishized. Marx talked about the fetishization of things, not feelings. When we make a fetish of an object—an SUV, for example—we see that object as independent of its context. We disregard, he would argue, the men who harvested the rubber latex, the assembly-line workers who bolted on the tires, and so on. Just as we mentally isolate our idea of an object from the human scene within which it was made, so, too, we unwittingly separate the love between nanny and child from the global capitalist order of love to which it very much belongs.

The notion of extracting resources from the Third World in order to enrich the First World is hardly new. It harks back to imperialism in its most literal form: the nineteenth-century extraction of gold, ivory, and rubber from the Third World. That openly coercive, male-centered imperialism, which persists today, was always paralleled by a quieter imperialism in which women were more central. Today, as love and care become the "new gold," the female part of the story has grown in prominence. In both cases, through the death or displacement of their parents, Third World children pay the price.

Imperialism in its classic form involved the north's plunder of physical resources from the south. Its main protagonists were virtually all men: explorers, kings, missionaries, soldiers, and the local men who were forced at gun-

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point to harvest wild rubber latex and the like. European states lent their legit-imacy to these endeavors, and an ideology emerged to support them: "the white man's burden" in Britain and *la mission civilisatrice* in France, both of which emphasized the benefits of colonization for the colonized.

The brutality of that era's imperialism is not to be minimized, even as we compare the extraction of material resources from the Third World of that time to the extraction of emotional resources today. Today's north does not extract love from the south by force: there are no colonial officers in tan helmets, no invading armies, no ships bearing arms sailing off to the colonies. Instead, we see a benign scene of Third World women pushing baby carriages, elder care workers patiently walking, arms linked, with elderly clients on streets or sitting beside them in First World parks.

Today, coercion operates differently. While the sex trade and some domestic service is brutally enforced, in the main the new emotional imperialism does not issue from the barrel of a gun. Women choose to migrate for domestic work. But they choose it because economic pressures all but coerce them to. That yawning gap between rich and poor countries is itself a form of coercion, pushing Third World mothers to seek work in the First for lack of options closer to home. But given the prevailing free market ideology, migration is viewed as a "personal choice." Its consequences are seen as "personal problems." In this sense, migration creates not a white man's burden but, through a series of invisible links, a dark child's burden.

Some children of migrant mothers in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Mexico, and elsewhere may be well cared for by loving kin in their communities. We need more data if we are to find out how such children are really doing. But if we discover that they aren't doing very well, how are we to respond? I can think of three possible approaches. First, we might say that all women everywhere should stay home and take care of their own families. The problem with Rowena is not migration but neglect of her traditional role. A second approach might be to deny that a problem exists: the care drain is an inevitable outcome of globalization, which is itself good for the world. A supply of labor has met a demand—what's the problem? If the first approach condemns global migration, the second celebrates it. Neither acknowledges its human costs.

According to a third approach—the one I take—loving, paid child care with reasonable hours is a very good thing. And globalization brings with it new opportunities, such as a nanny's access to good pay. But it also introduces painful new emotional realities for Third World children. We need to embrace the needs of Third World societies, including their children. We need to develop a global sense of ethics to match emerging global economic realities. If we go out to buy a pair of Nike shoes, we want to know how low the wage and how long the hours were for the Third World worker who made them. Likewise, if Rowena is taking care of a two-year-old six thousand miles from her home, we should want to know what is happening to her own children.

If we take this third approach, what should we or others in the Third World do? One obvious course would be to develop the Philippine and other Third World economies to such a degree that their citizens can earn as much money inside their countries as outside them. Then the Rowenas of the world could support their children in jobs they'd find at home. While such an obvious solution would seem ideal—if not easily achieved—Douglas Massey, a specialist in migration, points to some unexpected problems, at least in the short run. In Massey's view, it is not underdevelopment that sends migrants like Rowena off to the First World but development itself. The higher the percentage of women working in local manufacturing, he finds, the greater the chance that any one woman will leave on a first, undocumented trip abroad. Perhaps these women's horizons broaden. Perhaps they meet others who have gone abroad. Perhaps they come to want better jobs and more goods. Whatever the original motive, the more people in one's community migrate, the more likely one is to migrate too.

If development creates migration, and if we favor some form of development, we need to find more humane responses to the migration such development is likely to cause. For those women who migrate in order to flee abusive husbands, one part of the answer would be to create solutions to that problem closer to home—domestic-violence shelters in these women's home countries, for instance. Another might be to find ways to make it easier for migrating nannies to bring their children with them. Or as a last resort, employers could be required to finance a nanny's regular visits home.

A more basic solution, of course, is to raise the value of caring work itself, so that whoever does it gets more rewards for it. Care, in this case, would no

longer be such a "pass-on" job. And now here's the rub: the value of the labor of raising a child—always low relative to the value of other kinds of labor—has, under the impact of globalization, sunk lower still. Children matter to their parents immeasurably, of course, but the labor of raising them does not earn much credit in the eyes of the world. When middle-class housewives raised children as an unpaid, full-time role, the work was dignified by its aura of middle-classness. That was the one upside to the otherwise confining cult of middle-class, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American womanhood. But when the unpaid work of raising a child became the paid work of child-care workers, its low market value revealed the abidingly low value of caring work generally—and further lowered it.

The low value placed on caring work results neither from an absence of a need for it nor from the simplicity or ease of doing it. Rather, the declining value of child care results from a cultural politics of inequality. It can be compared with the declining value of basic food crops relative to manufactured goods on the international market. Though clearly more necessary to life, crops such as wheat and rice fetch low and declining prices, while manufactured goods are more highly valued. Just as the market price of primary produce keeps the Third World low in the community of nations, so the low market value of care keeps the status of the women who do it—and, ultimately, all women—low.

One excellent way to raise the value of care is to involve fathers in it. If men shared the care of family members worldwide, care would spread laterally instead of being passed down a social class ladder. In Norway, for example, all employed men are eligible for a year's paternity leave at 90 percent pay. Some 80 percent of Norwegian men now take over a month of parental leave. In this way, Norway is a model to the world. For indeed it is men who have for the most part stepped aside from caring work, and it is with them that the "care drain" truly begins.

In all developed societies, women work at paid jobs. According to the International Labor Organization, half of the world's women between ages fifteen and sixty-four do paid work. Between 1960 and 1980, sixty-nine out of eighty-eight countries surveyed showed a growing proportion of women in paid work. Since 1950, the rate of increase has skyrocketed in the United States, while remaining high in Scandinavia and the United Kingdom and moderate in France and Germany. If we want developed societies with

women doctors, political leaders, teachers, bus drivers, and computer programmers, we will need qualified people to give loving care to their children. And there is no reason why every society should not enjoy such loving paid child care. It may even be true that Rowena Bautista or María Guttierez are the people to provide it, so long as their own children either come with them or otherwise receive all the care they need. In the end, Article 9 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child—which the United States has not yet signed—states an important goal for both Clinton and Princela Bautista and for feminism. It says we need to value care as our most precious resource, and to notice where it comes from and ends up. For, these days, the personal is global.

The Nanny Dilemma

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Dominique came to New York eight years ago, but she says it would take a lifetime to figure out New Yorkers. We teach our kids that money can't buy love, and then we go right ahead and buy it for them—hiring strangers to love them, because we have more important things to do. "You are workaholics, that's for sure," she tells me, in the lilting island accent she uses for unpleasant truths. "It's work, work, work with you, and money, money, money. You analyze every little stupid thing, and then you run off to some therapist to get the answers." She shakes her head and laughs, fiddling with a red plastic Thunderzord my five-year-old son has left on the table. Strangest of all, she says, we supersmart New Yorkers are afraid of our children—afraid to say no, afraid to deny them anything that other kids have. "It's hard for the nannies to adjust to our New York way," says Eileen Stein of Town & Country, an agency that has placed Dominique in several jobs. "Here children are the boss. The children run the home. The parents let the children do whatever they want."

If there's a good woman behind every great man, behind every great woman there's a good nanny. The restructuring of the American family has created a huge demand for child care. According to a 1992 Department of

and at worst an obstacle to their aims. "It's a fragile situation," Sally says. "I have to come in every morning and assess the mood in the house and take up the slack. In these marriages, the mothers depend on us so that they can work, and the fathers sometimes get off scot-free—a lot of the time it's as if they didn't even have children." Dominique and Sally have decided that the perfect employer would be a single mother with one child.

Honesty and professionalism go a long way toward helping nannies and families get along, but the circumstances of their employment will always be colored by our worst fears. The nannies know everything about us, and we know little about them. They come from alien cultures to fill our culture's most important job: raising our kids. We've decided to let other women take care of our children so that we can give those children a better life. It's an excruciating decision, as the nannies know better than anyone. The truth is, we are more like our nannies than we realize—strung out between the old ways and the new, between the demands of money and the demands of love. They have chosen to give their children less mothering so that they can make more money, and so have we. There are bad nannies and good nannies, just as there are bad mothers and good mothers, but it's our similarities rather than our differences that make the situation so painful.

The Care Crisis in the Philippines: Children and Transnational Families in the New Global Economy

RHACEL SALAZAR PARREÑAS

A growing crisis of care troubles the world's most developed nations.¹ Even as demand for care has increased, its supply has dwindled. The result is a care deficit,² to which women from the Philippines have responded in force. Roughly two-thirds³ of Filipino migrant workers are women, and their exodus, usually to fill domestic jobs,⁴ has generated tremendous social change in the Philippines. When female migrants are mothers, they leave behind their own children, usually in the care of other women.⁵ Many Filipino children now grow up in divided households, where geographic separation places children under serious emotional strain. And yet it is impossible to overlook the significance of migrant labor to the Philippine economy. Some 34 to 54 percent of the Filipino population is sustained by remittances from migrant workers.⁶

Women in the Philippines, just like their counterparts in postindustrial nations, suffer from a "stalled revolution." Local gender ideology remains a few steps behind the economic reality, which has produced numerous female-headed, transnational households.⁷ Consequently, a far greater degree of anxiety attends the quality of family life for the dependents of migrant mothers than for those of migrant fathers. The dominant gender

ideology, after all, holds that a woman's rightful place is in the home, and the households of migrant mothers present a challenge to this view. In response, government officials and journalists denounce migrating mothers, claiming that they have caused the Filipino family to deteriorate, children to be abandoned, and a crisis of care to take root in the Philippines. To end this crisis, critics admonish, these mothers must return. Indeed, in May 1995, Philippine president Fidel Ramos called for initiatives to keep migrant mothers at home. He declared, "We are not against overseas employment of Filipino women. We are against overseas employment at the cost of family solidarity." Migration, Ramos strongly implied, is morally acceptable only when it is undertaken by single, childless women.

The Philippine media reinforce this position by consistently publishing sensationalist reports on the suffering of children in transnational families.9 These reports tend to vilify migrant mothers, suggesting that their children face more profound problems than do those of migrant fathers; and despite the fact that most of the children in question are left with relatives, journalists tend to refer to them as having been "abandoned." One article reports, "A child's sense of loss appears to be greater when it is the mother who leaves to work abroad."10 Others link the emigration of mothers to the inadequate child care and unstable family life that eventually lead such children to "drugs, gambling, and drinking." Writes one columnist, "Incest and rapes within blood relatives are alarmingly on the rise not only within Metro Manila but also in the provinces. There are some indications that the absence of mothers who have become OCWs [overseas contract workers] has something to do with the situation."12 The same columnist elsewhere expresses the popular view that the children of migrants become a burden on the larger society: "Guidance counselors and social welfare agencies can show grim statistics on how many children have turned into liabilities to our society because of absentee parents."13

From January to July 2000, I conducted sixty-nine in-depth interviews with young adults who grew up in transnational households in the Philippines. Almost none of these children have yet reunited with their migrant parents. I interviewed thirty children with migrant mothers, twenty-six with migrant fathers, and thirteen with two migrant parents. The children I spoke to certainly had endured emotional hardships; but contrary to the media's dark presentation, they did not all experience their mothers' migration as

abandonment. The hardships in their lives were frequently diminished when they received support from extended families and communities, when they enjoyed open communication with their migrant parents, and when they clearly understood the limited financial options that led their parents to migrate in the first place.

To call for the return of migrant mothers is to ignore the fact that the Philippines has grown increasingly dependent on their remittances. To acknowledge this reality could lead the Philippines toward a more egalitarian gender ideology. Casting blame on migrant mothers, however, serves only to divert the society's attention away from these children's needs, finally aggravating their difficulties by stigmatizing their family's choices.

The Philippine media has certainly sensationalized the issue of child welfare in migrating families, but that should not obscure the fact that the Philippines faces a genuine care crisis. Care is now the country's primary export. Remittances—mostly from migrant domestic workers—constitute the economy's largest source of foreign currency, totaling almost \$7 billion in 1999. With limited choices in the Philippines, women migrate to help sustain their families financially, but the price is very high. Both mothers and children suffer from family separation, even under the best of circumstances.

Migrant mothers who work as nannies often face the painful prospect of caring for other people's children while being unable to tend to their own. One such mother in Rome, Rosemarie Samaniego, 15 describes this predicament:

When the girl that I take care of calls her mother "Mama," my heart jumps all the time because my children also call me "Mama." I feel the gap caused by our physical separation especially in the morning, when I pack [her] lunch, because that's what I used to do for my children... I used to do that very same thing for them. I begin thinking that at this hour I should be taking care of my very own children and not someone else's, someone who is not related to me in any way, shape, or form.... The work that I do here is done for my family, but the problem is they are not close to me but are far away in the Philippines. Sometimes, you feel the separation and you

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start to cry. Some days, I just start crying while I am sweeping the floor because I am thinking about my children in the Philippines. Sometimes, when I receive a letter from my children telling me that they are sick, I look up out the window and ask the Lord to look after them and make sure they get better even without me around to care after them. [Starts crying.] If I had wings, I would fly home to my children. Just for a moment, to see my children and take care of their needs, help them, then fly back over here to continue my work.

The children of migrant workers also suffer an incalculable loss when a parent disappears overseas. As Ellen Seneriches, ¹⁶ a twenty-one-year-old daughter of a domestic worker in New York, says:

There are times when you want to talk to her, but she is not there. That is really hard, very difficult. . . . There are times when I want to call her, speak to her, cry to her, and I cannot. It is difficult. The only thing that I can do is write to her. And I cannot cry through the emails and sometimes I just want to cry on her shoulder.

Children like Ellen, who was only ten years old when her mother left for New York, often repress their longings to reunite with their mothers. Knowing that their families have few financial options, they are left with no choice but to put their emotional needs aside. Often, they do so knowing that their mothers' care and attention have been diverted to other children. When I asked her how she felt about her mother's wards in New York, Ellen responded:

Very jealous. I am very, very jealous. There was even a time when she told the children she was caring for that they are very lucky that she was taking care of them, while her children back in the Philippines don't even have a mom to take care of them. It's pathetic, but it's true. We were left alone by ourselves and we had to be responsible at a very young age without a mother. Can you imagine?

Children like Ellen do experience emotional stress when they grow up in transnational households. But it is worth emphasizing that many migrant mothers attempt to sustain ties with their children, and their children often

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recognize and appreciate these efforts. Although her mother, undocumented in the United States, has not returned once to the Philippines in twelve years, Ellen does not doubt that she has struggled to remain close to her children despite the distance. In fact, although Ellen lives only three hours away from her father, she feels closer to and communicates more frequently with her mother. Says Ellen:

I realize that my mother loves us very much. Even if she is far away, she would send us her love. She would make us feel like she really loved us. She would do this by always being there. She would just assure us that whenever we have problems to just call her and tell her. [Pauses.] And so I know that it has been more difficult for her than other mothers. She has had to do extra work because she is so far away from us.

Like Ellen's mother, who managed to "be there" despite a vast distance, other migrant mothers do not necessarily "abandon" their traditional duty of nurturing their families. Rather, they provide emotional care and guidance from afar. Ellen even credits her mother for her success in school. Now a second-year medical school student, Ellen graduated at the top of her class in both high school and college. She says that the constant, open communication she shares with her mother provided the key to her success. She reflects:

We communicate as often as we can, like twice or thrice a week through e-mails. Then she would call us every week. And it is very expensive, I know. . . . My mother and I have a very open relationship. We are like best friends. She would give me advice whenever I had problems. . . . She understands everything I do. She understands why I would act this or that way. She knows me really well. And she is also transparent to me. She always knows when I have problems, and likewise I know when she does. I am closer to her than to my father.

Ellen is clearly not the abandoned child or social liability the Philippine media describe. She not only benefits from sufficient parental support—from both her geographically distant mother and her nearby father—but

also exceeds the bar of excellence in schooling. Her story indicates that children of migrant parents can overcome the emotional strains of transnational family life, and that they can enjoy sufficient family support, even from their geographically distant parent.

Of course, her good fortune is not universal. But it does raise questions about how children withstand such geographical strains; whether and how they maintain solid ties with their distant parents; and what circumstances lead some children to feel that those ties have weakened or given out. The Philippine media tend to equate the absence of a child's biological mother with abandonment, which leads to the assumption that all such children, lacking familial support, will become social liabilities. But I found that positive surrogate parental figures and open communication with the migrant parent, along with acknowledgment of the migrant parent's contribution to the collective mobility of the family, allay many of the emotional insecurities that arise from transnational household arrangements. Children who lack these resources have greater difficulty adjusting.

Extensive research bears out this observation. The Scalabrini Migration Center, a nongovernmental organization for migration research in the Philippines, surveyed 709 elementary-school-age Filipino children in 2000, comparing the experiences of those with a father absent, a mother absent, both parents absent, and both parents present. While the researchers observed that parental absence does prompt feelings of abandonment and loneliness among children, they concluded that "it does not necessarily become an occasion for laziness and unruliness." Rather, if the extended family supports the child and makes him or her aware of the material benefits migration brings, the child may actually be spurred toward greater self-reliance and ambition, despite continued longings for family unity.

Jeek Pereno's life has been defined by those longings. At twenty-five, he is a merchandiser for a large department store in the Philippines. His mother more than adequately provided for her children, managing with her meager wages first as a domestic worker and then as a nurse's aide, to send them \$200 a month and even to purchase a house in a fairly exclusive neighborhood in the city center. But Jeek still feels abandoned and insecure in his mother's affection, he believes that growing up without his parents robbed

him of the discipline he needed. Like other children of migrant workers, Jeek does not feel that his faraway mother's financial support has been enough. Instead, he wishes she had offered him more guidance, concern, and emotional care.

Jeek was eight years old when his parents relocated to New York and left him, along with his three brothers, in the care of their aunt. Eight years later, Jeek's father passed away, and two of his brothers (the oldest and youngest) joined their mother in New York. Visa complications have prevented Jeek and his other brother from following—but their mother has not once returned to visit them in the Philippines. When I expressed surprise at this, Jeek solemnly replied: "Never. It will cost too much, she said."

Years of separation breed unfamiliarity among family members, and Jeek does not have the emotional security of knowing that his mother has genuinely tried to lessen that estrangement. For Jeek, only a visit could shore up this security after seventeen years of separation. His mother's weekly phone calls do not suffice. And because he experiences his mother's absence as indifference, he does not feel comfortable communicating with her openly about his unmet needs. The result is repression, which in turn aggravates the resentment he feels. Jeek told me:

I talk to my mother once in a while. But what happens, whenever she asks how I am doing, I just say okay. It's not like I am really going to tell her that I have problems here. . . . It's not like she can do anything about my problems if I told her about them. Financial problems, yes she can help. But not the other problems, like emotional problems. . . . She will try to give advice, but I am not very interested to talk to her about things like that. . . . Of course, you are still young, you don't really know what is going to happen in the future. Before you realize that your parents left you, you can't do anything about it anymore. You are not in a position to tell them not to leave you. They should have not left us. (Sobs.)

I asked Jeek if his mother knew he felt this way. "No," he said, "she doesn't know." Asked if he received emotional support from anyone, Jeek replied, "As much as possible, if I can handle it, I try not to get emotional support from anyone. I just keep everything inside me."

Jeek feels that his mother not only abandoned him but failed to leave him with an adequate surrogate. His aunt had a family and children of her own. Jeek recalled, "While I do know that my aunt loves me and she took care of us to the best of her ability, I am not convinced that it was enough. . . . Because we were not disciplined enough. She let us do whatever we wanted to do." Jeek feels that his education suffered from this lack of discipline, and he greatly regrets not having concentrated on his studies. Having completed only a two-year vocational program in electronics, he doubts his competency to pursue a college degree. At twenty-five, he feels stuck, with only the limited option of turning from one low-paying job to another.

Children who, unlike Jeek, received good surrogate parenting managed to concentrate on their studies and in the end to fare much better. Rudy Montoya, a nineteen-year-old whose mother has done domestic work in Hong Kong for more than twelve years, credits his mother's brother for helping him succeed in high school:

My uncle is the most influential person in my life. Well, he is in Saudi Arabia now. . . . He would tell me that my mother loves me and not to resent her, and that whatever happens, I should write her. He would encourage me and he would tell me to trust the Lord. And then, I remember in high school, he would push me to study. I learned a lot from him in high school. Showing his love for me, he would help me with my schoolwork. . . . The time that I spent with my uncle was short, but he is the person who helped me grow up to be a better person.

Unlike Jeek's aunt, Rudy's uncle did not have a family of his own. He was able to devote more time to Rudy, instilling discipline in his young charge as well as reassuring him that his mother, who is the sole income provider for her family, did not abandon him. Although his mother has returned to visit him only twice—once when he was in the fourth grade and again two years later—Rudy, who is now a college student, sees his mother as a "good provider" who has made tremendous sacrifices for his sake. This knowledge offers him emotional security, as well as a strong feeling of gratitude. When I asked him about the importance of education, he replied, "I haven't given anything back to my mother for the sacrifices that she has made for me. The

least I could do for her is graduate, so that I can find a good job, so that eventually I will be able to help her out, too."

Many children resolve the emotional insecurity of being left by their parents the way that Rudy has: by viewing migration as a sacrifice to be repaid by adult children. Children who believe that their migrant mothers are struggling for the sake of the family's collective mobility, rather than leaving to live the "good life," are less likely to feel abandoned and more likely to accept their mothers' efforts to sustain close relationships from a distance. One such child is Theresa Bascara, an eighteen-year-old college student whose mother has worked as a domestic in Hong Kong since 1984. As she puts it, "[My inspiration is] my mother, because she is the one suffering over there. So the least I can give back to her is doing well in school."

For Ellen Seneriches, the image of her suffering mother compels her to reciprocate. She explained:

Especially after my mother left, I became more motivated to study harder. I did because my mother was sacrificing a lot and I had to compensate for how hard it is to be away from your children and then crying a lot at night, not knowing what we are doing. She would tell us in voice tapes. She would send us voice tapes every month, twice a month, and we would hear her cry in these tapes.

Having witnessed her mother's suffering even from a distance, Ellen can acknowledge the sacrifices her mother has made and the hardships she has endured in order to be a "good provider" for her family. This knowledge assuaged the resentment Ellen frequently felt when her mother first migrated.

Many of the children I interviewed harbored images of their mothers as martyrs, and they often found comfort in their mothers' grief over not being able to nurture them directly. The expectation among such children that they will continue to receive a significant part of their nurturing from their mothers, despite the distance, points to the conservative gender ideology most of them maintain. ¹⁹ But whether or not they see their mothers as martyrs, children of migrant women feel best cared for when their mothers make consistent efforts to show parental concern from a distance. As Jeek's and Ellen's stories indicate, open communication with the migrant parent

soothes feelings of abandonment; those who enjoy such open channels fare much better than those who lack them. Not only does communication ease children's emotional difficulties; it also fosters a sense of family unity, and it promotes the view that migration is a survival strategy that requires sacrifices from both children and parents for the good of the family.

For daughters of migrant mothers, such sacrifices commonly take the form of assuming some of their absent mothers' responsibilities, including the care of younger siblings. As Ellen told me:

It was a strategy, and all of us had to sacrifice for it.... We all had to adjust, every day of our lives.... Imagine waking up without a mother calling you for breakfast. Then there would be no one to prepare the clothes for my brothers. We are all going to school.... I had to wake up earlier. I had to prepare their clothes. I had to wake them up and help them prepare for school, Then I also had to help them with their homework at night. I had to tutor them.

Asked if she resented this extra work, Ellen replied, "No. I saw it as training, a training that helped me become a leader. It makes you more of a leader doing that every day. I guess that is an advantage to me, and to my siblings as well."

Ellen's effort to assist in the household's daily maintenance was another way she reciprocated for her mother's emotional and financial support. Viewing her added work as a positive life lesson, Ellen believes that these responsibilities enabled her to develop leadership skills. Notably, her high school selected her as its first ever female commander for its government-mandated military training corps.

Unlike Jeek, Ellen is secure in her mother's love. She feels that her mother has struggled to "be there"; Jeek feels that his has not. Hence, Ellen has managed to successfully adjust to her household arrangement, while Jeek has not. The continual open communication between Ellen and her mother has had ramifications for their entire family: in return for her mother's sacrifices, Ellen assumed the role of second mother to her younger siblings, visiting them every weekend during her college years in order to spend quality time with them.

In general, eldest daughters of migrant mothers assume substantial famil-

ial responsibilities, often becoming substitute mothers for their siblings. Similarly, eldest sons stand in for migrant fathers. Armando Martinez, a twenty-nine-year-old entrepreneur whose father worked in Dubai for six months while he was in high school, related his experiences:

I became a father during those six months. It was like, ugghhh, I made the rules. . . . I was able to see that it was hard if your family is not complete, you feel that there is something missing. . . . It's because the major decisions, sometimes, I was not old enough for them. I was only a teenager, and I was not that strong in my convictions when it came to making decisions. It was like work that I should not have been responsible for. I still wanted to play. So it was an added burden on my side.

Even when there is a parent left behind, children of migrant workers tend to assume added familial responsibilities, and these responsibilities vary along gender lines. Nonetheless, the weight tends to fall most heavily on children of migrant mothers, who are often left to struggle with the lack of male responsibility for care work in the Philippines. While a great number of children with migrant fathers receive full-time care from stay-at-home mothers, those with migrant mothers do not receive the same amount of care. Their fathers are likely to hold full-time jobs, and they rarely have the time to assume the role of primary caregiver. Of thirty children of migrant mothers I interviewed, only four had stay-at-home fathers. Most fathers passed the caregiving responsibilities on to other relatives, many of whom, like Jeek's aunt, already had families of their own to care for and regarded the children of migrant relatives as an extra burden. Families of migrant fathers are less likely to rely on the care work of extended kin.²⁰ Among my interviewees, thirteen of twenty-six children with migrant fathers lived with and were cared for primarily by their stay-at-home mothers.

Children of migrant mothers, unlike those of migrant fathers, have the added burden of accepting nontraditional gender roles in their families. The Scalabrini Migration Center reports that these children "tend to be more angry, confused, apathetic, and more afraid than other children." They are caught within an "ideological stall" in the societal acceptance of female-

headed transnational households. Because her family does not fit the traditional nuclear household model, Theresa Bascara sees her family as "broken," even though she describes her relationship to her mother as "very close." She says, "A family, I can say, is only whole if your father is the one working and your mother is only staying at home. It's okay if your mother works too, but somewhere close to you."

Some children in transnational families adjust to their household arrangements with greater success than others do. Those who feel that their mothers strive to nurture them as well as to be good providers are more likely to be accepting. The support of extended kin, or perhaps a sense of public accountability for their welfare, also helps children combat feelings of abandonment. Likewise, a more gender-egalitarian value system enables children to appreciate their mothers as good providers, which in turn allows them to see their mothers' migrations as demonstrations of love.

Even if they are well-adjusted, however, children in transnational families still suffer the loss of family intimacy. They are often forced to compensate by accepting commodities, rather than affection, as the most tangible reassurance of their parents' love. By putting family intimacy on hold, children can only wait for the opportunity to spend quality time with their migrant parents. Even when that time comes, it can be painful. As Theresa related:

When my mother is home, I just sit next to her. I stare at her face, to see the changes in her face, to see how she aged during the years that she was away from us. But when she is about to go back to Hong Kong, it's like my heart is going to burst. I would just cry and cry. I really can't explain the feeling. Sometimes, when my mother is home, preparing to leave for Hong Kong, I would just start crying, because I already start missing her. I ask myself, how many more years will it be until we see each other again?

... Telephone calls. That's not enough. You can't hug her, kiss her, feel her, everything. You can't feel her presence. It's just words that you have. What I want is to have my mother close to me, to see her grow older, and when she is sick, you are the one taking care of her and when you are sick, she is the one taking care of you.

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Not surprisingly, when asked if they would leave their own children to take jobs as migrant workers, almost all of my respondents answered, "Never." When I asked why not, most said that they would never want their children to go through what they had gone through, or to be denied what they were denied, in their childhoods. Armando Martinez best summed up what children in transnational families lose when he said:

You just cannot buy the times when your family is together. Isn't that right? Time together is something that money can neither buy nor replace. . . . The first time your baby speaks, you are not there. Other people would experience that joy. And when your child graduates with honors, you are also not there. . . . Is that right? When your child wins a basketball game, no one will be there to ask him how his game went, how many points he made. Is that right? Your family loses, don't you think?

Children of transnational families repeatedly stress that they lack the pleasure and comfort of daily interaction with their parents. Nonetheless, these children do not necessarily become "delinquent," nor are their families necessarily broken, in the manner the Philippine media depicts. Armando mirrored the opinion of most of the children in my study when he defended transnational families: "Even if [parents] are far away, they are still there. I get that from basketball, specifically zone defense." [He laughed.] "If someone is not there, you just have to adjust. It's like a slight hindrance that you just have to adjust to. Then when they come back, you get a chance to recover. It's like that."

Recognizing that the family is an adaptive unit that responds to external forces, many children make do, even if doing so requires tremendous sacrifices. They give up intimacy and familiarity with their parents. Often, they attempt to make up for their migrant parents' hardships by maintaining close bonds across great distances, even though most of them feel that such bonds could never possibly draw their distant parent close enough. But their efforts are frequently sustained by the belief that such emotional sacrifices are not without meaning—that they are ultimately for the greater good of their families and their future. Jason Halili's mother provided care for elderly

persons in Los Angeles for fifteen years. Jason, now twenty-one, reasons, "If she did not leave, I would not be here right now. So it was the hardest route to take, but at the same time, the best route to take."

Transnational families were not always equated with "broken homes" in the Philippine public discourse. Nor did labor migration emerge as a perceived threat to family life before the late 1980s, when the number of migrant women significantly increased. This suggests that changes to the gendered division of family labor may have as much as anything else to do with the Philippine care crisis.

The Philippine public simply assumes that the proliferation of female-headed transnational households will wreak havoc on the lives of children. The Scalabrini Migration Center explains that children of migrant mothers suffer more than those of migrant fathers because child rearing is "a role women are more adept at, are better prepared for, and pay more attention to."²² The center's study, like the Philippine media, recommends that mothers be kept from migrating. The researchers suggest that "economic programs should be targeted particularly toward the absorption of the female labor force, to facilitate the possibility for mothers to remain in the family."²³ Yet the return migration of mothers is neither a plausible nor a desirable solution. Rather, it implicitly accepts gender inequities in the family, even as it ignores the economic pressures generated by globalization.

As national discourse on the care crisis in the Philippines vilifies migrant women, it also downplays the contributions these women make to the country's economy. Such hand-wringing merely offers the public an opportunity to discipline women morally and to resist reconstituting family life in a manner that reflects the country's increasing dependence on women's foreign remittances. This pattern is not exclusive to the Philippines. As Arjun Appadurai observes, globalization has commonly led to "ideas about gender and modernity that create large female work forces at the same time that cross-national ideologies of 'culture,' 'authenticity,' and national honor put increasing pressure on various communities to morally discipline working women."²⁴

The moral disciplining of women, however, hurts those who most need

protection. It pathologizes the children of migrants, and it downplays the emotional difficulties that mothers like Rosemarie Samaniego face. Moreover, it ignores the struggles of migrant mothers who attempt to nurture their children from a distance. Vilifying migrant women as bad mothers promotes the view that the return to the nuclear family is the only viable solution to the emotional difficulties of children in transnational families. In so doing, it directs attention away from the special needs of children in transnational families—for instance, the need for community projects that would improve communication among far-flung family members, or for special school programs, the like of which did not exist at my field research site. It's also a strategy that sidelines the agency and adaptability of the children themselves.

To say that children are perfectly capable of adjusting to nontraditional households is not to say that they don't suffer hardships. But the overwhelming public support for keeping migrant mothers at home does have a negative impact on these children's adjustment. Implicit in such views is a rejection of the division of labor in families with migrant mothers, and the message such children receive is that their household arrangements are simply wrong. Moreover, calling for the return migration of women does not necessarily solve the problems plaguing families in the Philippines. Domestic violence and male infidelity, for instance—two social problems the government has never adequately addressed—would still threaten the well-being of children.²⁵

Without a doubt, the children of migrant Filipina domestic workers suffer from the extraction of care from the global south to the global north. The plight of these children is a timely and necessary concern for non-governmental, governmental, and academic groups in the Philippines. Blaming migrant mothers, however, has not helped, and has even hurt, those whose relationships suffer most from the movement of care in the global economy. Advocates for children in transnational families should focus their attention not on calling for a return to the nuclear family but on trying to meet the special needs transnational families possess. One of those needs is for a reconstituted gender ideology in the Philippines; another is for the elimination of legislation that penalizes migrant families in the nations where they work.

If we want to secure quality care for the children of transnational

families, gender egalitarian views of child rearing are essential. Such views can be fostered by recognizing the economic contributions women make to their families and by redefining motherhood to include providing for one's family. Gender should be recognized as a fluid social category, and masculinity should be redefined, as the larger society questions the biologically based assumption that only women have an aptitude to provide care. Government officials and the media could then stop vilifying migrant women, redirecting their attention, instead, to men. They could question the lack of male accountability for care work, and they could demand that men, including migrant fathers, take more responsibility for the emotional welfare of their children.

The host societies of migrant Filipina domestic workers should also be held more accountable for their welfare and for that of their families. These women's work allows First World women to enter the paid labor force. As one Dutch employer states, "There are people who would look after children, but other things are more fun. Carers from other countries, if we can use their surplus carers, that's a solution." ²⁶

Yet, as we've seen, one cannot simply assume that the care leaving disadvantaged nations is surplus care. What is a solution for rich nations creates a problem in poor nations. Mothers like Rosemarie Samaniego and children like Ellen Seneriches and Jeek Pereno bear the brunt of this problem, while the receiving countries and the employing families benefit.

Most receiving countries have yet to recognize the contributions of their migrant care workers. They have consistently ignored these workers' rights and limited their full incorporation into society. The wages of migrant workers are so low that they cannot afford to bring their own families to join them, or to regularly visit their children in the Philippines; relegated to the status of guest workers, they are restricted to the low-wage employment sector, and with very few exceptions, the migration of their spouses and children is also restricted.²⁷ These arrangements work to the benefit of employers, since migrant care workers can give the best possible care for their employers' families when they are free of care-giving responsibilities to their own families. But there is a dire need to lobby for more inclusive policies, and for employers to develop a sense of accountability for their workers' children. After all, migrant workers significantly help their employers to reduce their families' care deficit.

Blowups and Other Unhappy Endings

PIERRETTE HONDAGNEU-SOTELO

A conflict begins over a mundane issue: a seemingly misspent hour, a seemingly sharp word. Quickly, the confrontation flares, exploding into a screaming match. Both women say harsh, regrettable things—things that reveal deep antipathies, which perhaps always lurked unspoken between them. It is as though the previously invisible fissures in their relationship were suddenly magnified and projected into plain view. The domestic worker is fired, or she walks out in disgust.

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It's a dramatic way to end a job, but not an uncommon one for domestic workers, who often spend months or years in daily contact with the most intimate aspects of their employers' lives. Most commonly, blowups result from a lack of trust or respect between mistress and maid—surveillance on the part of the employer, perceived insubordination on the part of the worker, or a feeling of betrayal on either side.

Of course, not all domestic jobs end in blowups. But even less combustible arrangements often end more the way relationships do than the way jobs do: with white lies or alibis, designed to spare feelings or avoid conflict. Often, both parties know that the real reason an employee leaves is not a sick relative or a return to her home country. Like estranged partners, they

Appendix: Activist Organizations

Migrants.Net

http://www.migrants.net

Migrants.Net provides online resources for migrant workers.

The Mission for Filipino Migrant Workers (MFMW)

Established in 1981 by various churches, MFMW provides information and outreach to Filipino migrant workers in Hong Kong. The Mission focuses on crisis intervention and prevention, and offers legal and social services.

St. John's Cathedral Garden Road, Central Hong Kong, SAR

Phone: 25228264

E-mail: migrant@pacific.net.hk

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles (CHIRLA)

Formed in 1986, CHIRLA serves as a clearinghouse and library for agencies and individuals with an interest in immigrants' rights. It also provides training and technical assistance to 125 grassroots organizations in Southern California.

1521 Wilshire Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90017 Phone: 213-353-1333

Fax: 213-353-1344

E-mail: chirla@earthlink.net

Notes

Introduction

- 1. See Ellen Galinsky and Dana Friedman, *Women: The New Providers*, Whirlpool Foundation Study, Part 1 (New York: Families and Work Institute, 1995), p. 37.
- 2. Special thanks to Roberta Espinoza, who gathered and designed the flow maps shown in Appendix I. In addition to material directly cited, this introduction draws from the following works: Kathleen M. Adams and Sara Dickey, eds., Home and Hegemony: Domestic Service and Identity Politics in South and Southeast Asia (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Floya Anthias and Gabriella Lazaridis, eds., Gender and Migration in Southern Europe: Women on the Move (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000); Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World (New York and London: The Guilford Press, 1998); Noeleen Heyzer, Geertje Lycklama à Nijehold, and Nedra Weerakoon, eds., The Trade in Domestic Workers: Causes, Mechanisms, and Consequences of International Migration (London: Zed Books, 1994); Eleanore Kofman, Annie Phizacklea, Parvati Raghuram, and Rosemary Sales, Gender and International Migration in Europe: Employment, Welfare, and Politics (New York and London: Routledge, 2000); Douglas S. Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, and J. Edward Taylor, Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999); Janet Henshall Momsen, ed., Gender, Migration, and

Domestic Service (London: Routledge, 1999); Katie Willis and Brenda Yeoh, eds., Gender and Immigration (London: Edward Elgar Publishers, 2000).

- 3. Illegal migrants are said to make up anywhere from 60 percent (as in Sri Lanka) to 87 percent (as in Indonesia) of all migrants. In Singapore in 1994, 95 percent of Filipino overseas contract workers lacked work permits from the Philippine government. The official figures based on legal migration therefore severely underestimate the number of migrants. See Momsen, 1999, p. 7.
- 4. Momsen, 1999, p. 9.
- 5. Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, 1994, as cited in G. Gunatilleke, *The Economic, Demographic, Sociocultural and Political Setting for Emigration from Sri Lanka International Migration*, vol. 23 (3/4), 1995, pp. 667–98.
- Anthias and Lazaridis, 2000; Heyzer, Nijehold, and Weerakoon, 1994, pp. 4–27;
 Momsen, 1999, p. 21; "Wistat: Women's Indicators and Statistics Database," version 3, CD-ROM (United Nations, Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, Statistical Division, 1994).
- 7. Geovanna Campani, "Labor Markets and Family Networks: Filipino Women in Italy," in Hedwig Rudolph and Mirjana Morokvasic, eds., *Bridging States and Markets: International Migration in the Early 1990s* (Berlin: Edition Sigma, 1993), p. 206.
- 8. This "new" source of the Western demand for nannies, maids, child-care, and elder-care workers does not, of course, account for the more status-oriented demand in the Persian Gulf states, where most affluent women don't work outside the home.
- 9. For information on male work at home during the 1990s, see Arlie Russell Hochschild and Anne Machung, *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home* (New York: Avon, 1997), p. 277.
- 10. Kevin Bales, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 43.
- 11. Andrea Tyree and Katharine M. Donato, "A Demographic Overview of the International Migration of Women," in *International Migration: The Female Experience*, ed. Rita Simon and Caroline Bretell (Totowa, N.J: Rowman & Allanheld, 1986), p. 29. Indeed, many immigrant maids and nannies are more educated than the people they work for. See Pei-Chia Lan's paper in this volume.
- 12. Momsen, 1999, pp. 10, 73.
- 13. Grete Brochmann, Middle East Avenue: Female Migration from Sri Lanka to the Gulf (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 179, 215.
- 14. On this point, thanks to Raka Ray, Sociology Department at the University of California, Berkeley.

Love and Gold

1. Information about Rowena Bautista is drawn from Robert Frank, "High-Paying Nanny Positions Puncture Fabric of Family Life in Developing Nations," Wall

Street Journal, December 18, 2001. All interviews not otherwise attributed were conducted by the author. Also see Arlie Hochschild, "The Nanny Chain," American Prospect, January 3, 2000, pp. 32-36. Rhacel Parreñas's discussion of the "globalization of mother" in her dissertation first got me thinking about this subject; see her Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2001). Also see the film When Mother Comes Home for Christmas, directed by Nilita Vachani. On the whole, until very recently there has been little focus on a "care drain," even among academics who focus on gender issues. Much writing on globalization focuses on money, markets, and, presumably, male labor. Much research on women and development, on the other hand, has focused on the impact of "structural adjustments" (World Bank loan requirements that call for austerity measures) and deprivation. Meanwhile, most research on working women in the United States and Europe focuses on the picture of a detached, two-person balancing act or the lone "supermom," omitting child-care workers from the picture. Fortunately, in recent years, scholars such as Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Janet Henshall Momsen, Mary Romero, Grace Chang, and the authors included and referenced in this volume have produced the important research on which this book builds.

- 2. New York Times, September 1, 2001, A8.
- 3. William Greider, One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), p. 21.
- 4. Castles and Miller, 1998, p. 8. See also Hania Zlotnik, "Trends of International Migration Since 1965: What Existing Data Reveal," *International Migration*, vol. 37, no. 1 (1999), pp. 22–61.
- 5. Castles and Miller, 1998, p. 5.

- 6. Castles and Miller, 1998, p. 9. Also see the Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development, the United Nations General Assembly, Special Session on the International Conference on Population and Development, The Hague, The Netherlands, June 29–July 2, 1998, Executive Summary, p. 2. See also *Migrant News*, no. 2 (November 1998), p. 2.
- 7. Castles and Miller, 1998, p. xi.
- 8. Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Time Bind*: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work (New York: Avon, 1997) pp. xxi, 268.
- 9. Nancy Folbre, *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values* (New York: The New Press, 2001), p. 55.
- 10. Rhacel Parreñas, "The Global Servants: (Im)Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers in Rome and Los Angeles," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Ethnic Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1999, p. 60.
- 11. Parreñas, 1999, pp. 123, 154.
- 12. Parreñas, 1999, p. 154.
- 13. Parreñas, 1999, p. 123.

- 14. Frank, 2001.
- 15. Sau-Ling Wong, "Diverted Mothering: Representations of Caregivers of Color in the Age of 'Multiculturalism,'" in Mothering: Ideology, Experience and Agency, ed. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey (London: Rougledge, 1994), pp. 67-91.
- 16. Philippe Ariès, Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life (New York: Vintage, 1962); Sharon Hays, The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

The Care Crisis in the Philippines: Children and Transnational Families in the New Global Economy

- 1. The data collection for this project benefited from the research assistance of Jason David, Luisa Gonzaga, Maria Eva Cecilia Lesondra, Ella Liu, and Sauro Solis. The project received research support from the University of California President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, the Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, and the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- 2. Arlie Hochschild, "The Culture of Politics: Traditional, Post-modern, Cold Modern, Warm Modern Ideals of Care," Social Politics, vol. 2, no. 3 (1995): pp. 331-46.
- 3. While women made up only 12 percent of the total worker outflow in 1975, this figure grew to 47 percent twelve years later in 1987 and surpassed the number of men by 1995. IBON Facts and Figures, "Filipinos as Global Slaves," 22, nos. 5-6 (March 15-31, 1999), p. 6.
- 4. Notably, Filipino women have responded to the care crisis in more developed nations in other ways. They also alleviate the care crisis plaguing hospitals and hospices in more developed nations by providing services as professional nurses. At the expense of the quality of professional care in the Philippines, nurses have sought the better wages available outside the country. Between 1992 and 1999, the government deployed more than thirty-five thousand nurses. See Maruja Asis, Female Labour Migration in South-East Asia: Change and Continuity (Bangkok, Thailand: Asian Research Centre for Migration, Institution of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 2001).
 - 5. Using a 1997 national labor force survey, Hector Morada, the director of the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics in the Philippines, found that femaleheaded transnational households have an average of 2.74 children, with .56 aged less than seven years.
 - 6. Gina Mission, "The Breadwinners: Female Migrant Workers," WIN: Women's International Net Issue (November 1998): p. 15A.
 - 7. Hochschild and Machung, 1989. By "stalled revolution," Hochschild refers to the fact that the economic contributions of women to the family have not been met with a corresponding increase in male responsibility for household work.

Notes

- 8. Agence France-Presse, "Ramos: Overseas Employment a Threat to Filipino Families," Philippine Inquirer (May 26, 1995), p. 11.
- 9. I base this claim on a survey of articles that appeared in Philippine dailies from 1995 to 1998. I obtained the newspaper articles from the library of the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency, which catalogs media reports on migrant Filipino workers.
- 10. Perfecto G. Caparas, "OCWs Children: Bearing the Burden of Separation," Manila Times (September 30, n.d.), pp. 1-2.
- 11. Susan Fernandez, "Pamilya ng OFWs maraming hirap" (Many hardships in the families of OFWs), Abante (January 27, 1997), p. 5.
- 12 Lorie Toledo, "Child Sexual Abuse Awareness," People's Journal (February 19, 1996), p. 4. Although incest is a social problem in the Philippines, its direct correlation to the emigration of mothers is an unproven speculation. For instance, studies have yet to show that there are higher rates of incest among children of migrant mothers than in other families.
- 13. Lorie Toledo, "Overseas job vs. family stability," People's Journal (December 15, 1993), p. 4.
- 14. Bureau of Employment and Labor Statistics, "Remittances from Overseas Filipino Workers by Country of Origin Philippines: 1997-Fourth Quarter 1999," Pinoy Migrants, Shared Government Information System for Migration, http:// emisd.web.dfa.gov.ph/~pinoymigrants/.
- 15. Rosemarie Samaniego is a pseudonym. This excerpt is drawn from Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001).
- 16. Ellen Seneriches and the names of the other children whom I quote in this article are all pseudonyms.
- 17. Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila, "'I'm Here, but I'm There': The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood," Gender and Society, vol. 11, no. 5 (1997), pp. 548-71.
- 18. A two-part special report by Caparas, "OCWs Children," which appeared on the front page of the Manila Times, summarized the media's incredibly negative view on the plight of children in transnational families. It reported that children suffer from a "psychological toll," "extreme loneliness," "unbearable loss," "strained relations," "incest," and consequently delinquency, as indicated, for instance, by rampant "premature pregnancies." See also Caparas's "OCWs and the Changing Lives of Filipino Families," Manila Times (August, 29, n.d.), pp. 1, 5.
- 19. Similarly, I found that children use the corollary image of the struggling "breadwinner" father to negotiate the emotional strains of their transnational household arrangement.
- 20. Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC), Impact of Labor Migration on the Children Left Behind (Quezon City, Philippines: Scalabrini Migration Center, 2000).

- 21. SMC, 2000, p. 65.
- 22. SMC, 2000, p. 57.
- 23. SMC, 2000, p. 65.
- 24. Arjun Appadurai, "Globalization and the Research Imagination," *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 160 (June 1999), p. 231.
- National Commission for the Role of Filipino Women, Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, 1995–2025 (Manila, Philippines: National Commission for the Role of Filipino Women, 1995).
- 26. Marije Meerman, "The Care Chain," episode 42 of *The New World* (Netherlands: VPRO-TV); www.dnv.vpro.nl/carechain.
- 27. Policies in various receiving countries restrict the migration of workers' families. Such restrictions can be found both in countries, such as Singapore and Taiwan, that have illiberal policies and in those, like Canada, with liberal policies. See Abigail Bakan and Daiva Stasiulis, eds., *Not One of the Family: Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

Blowups and Other Unhappy Endings

- 1. Note that each case is reconstructed from one person's story.
- 2. Alejandro Portes, "When More Can Be Less: Labor Standards, Development, and the Informal Economy," in *Contrapunto: The Informal Sector Debate in Latin America*, ed. Cathy A. Rokowski (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 113–29.
- 3. James Bates, "Disney Settles Up with Its Former Studio Boss," *Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 1999, pp. A1, A10.
- 4. Julia Wrigley, Other People's Children: An Intimate Account of the Dilemmas Facing Middle-Class Parents and the Women They Hire to Raise Their Children (New York: Basic Books, 1995), p. 26.
- 5. Deborah Stone, "Valuing 'Caring Work': Rethinking the Nature of Work in Human Services," typescript, Radcliffe Public Policy Institute, April 1998.
- 6. Albert O. Hirschman, Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

Invisible Labors: Caring for the Independent Person

- 1. Thanks to all who agreed to tell me their stories. This research was supported by fellowships from the Ford Foundation as well as the graduate division of the University of California, Berkeley.
- 2. Studies of the nationwide personal attendant workforce have not considered the issue of immigration status; see, e.g., William Crown, Margaret MacAdam et al.,

- "Home Care Workers: A National Profile," Caring Magazine, vol. 11, no. 4 (1992), pp. 34–38. However, the Service Employees International Union reports: "In larger cities, these workers tend to be minority and immigrant women." See Service Employee International Union, "Home Care Workers: A Briefing Paper," submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Washington, D.C., May 1999). Grace Chang (Disposable Domestics: Immigrant Women Workers in the Global Economy [Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2000]) reports that in California, 40 percent of the personal attendants paid for by IHSS (In-Home Supportive Services) are immigrants. Candace Howes and Richard Zawadski ("The Effect of Changes in the Wage/Benefit Package on the Supply of Home Care Workers in San Francisco," paper presented at the Institute of Industrial Relations Seminar, [Berkeley, February 2001]) report that the majority of IHSS workers in the California counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco are immigrant women.
- 3. The racial and ethnic composition of the home-care workforce varies substantially by location. In Los Angeles County the composition of the personal attendants funded by IHSS is the following: 30 percent Latina, 25 percent African-American, and 14 percent of Armenian and Russian descent (M. Cousineau, "Providing Health Insurance to IHSS Providers [Home Care Workers] in Los Angeles County," report to the California Health Care Foundation [June 2000]). In contrast, the IHSS personal attendant workforce in San Francisco County is approximately 28 percent Chinese, 29 percent Russian, 8 percent Latina, 22 percent white non-Russian, and 8 percent African-American (Howes and Zawadski, 2001).
- 4. Cousineau reports that of the personal attendants working for IHSS, most were poor or nearly poor: "80 percent live in a household with income below 200 percent of Federal Poverty Level." Crown et al. report that the median income of personal attendants in 1988 was \$7,999.
- 5. Noticeably absent from my study are the average users of personal-attendant services in the United States, specifically disabled elderly women. However, the consumers in my study are typical of individuals identified as constituents of the Independent Living Movement. See Gerben DeJong, "Defining and Implementing the Independent Living Concept," in Independent Living for Physically Disabled People: Developing, Implementing, and Evaluating Self-Help Rehabilitation Programs, ed. Nancy M. Crewe and Irving K. Zola (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983).
- 6. DeJong, 1983.

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7. S. L. Dawson et al., Direct-Care Health Workers: The Unnecessary Crisis in Long-term Care (Washington, D.C., The Domestic Strategy Group of the Aspen Institute, 2001), p. 44.