Pinay, Balikbayan, Canadian: The Transnational Trajectories of Filipinas (As Domestic Workers)

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines and critiques how the intersections of race, gender, and class in our current neoliberal environment produce particular complexities that are unique to women within the global chain of care. I will specifically investigate how Filipinas engage in domestic work and create transnational labour trajectories that stretch from rural and urban spaces in the Global South (the Philippines), to intermediary households in international ports (Hong Kong) to urban centres in the Global North (Canada). My project expands and nuances existing models of labour migration by Filipinas who perform domestic labour, seeking to understand the creative struggles and strategies they employ in order to create lives for themselves and their families within and outside the Philippines. This project will investigate how these women’s journeys are informed by global neoliberal reform, and will examine the counterhegemonic strategies that Filipinas employ to resist exploitation. By examining the larger macrostructures of global labour alongside the everyday experiences of women who are employed as domestic workers in the Philippines, intermediary countries, and Canada, I seek to also illustrate how these women are agents of resistance, carving out stable spaces for themselves in ever-shifting and uncertain geographical locations. My thesis interweaves feminist theory and geographies, migrant policy, hegemonic discourse, personal interviews, and ethnographic data in order to explore how migrants are constantly reworking, contesting, and transforming hierarchal structures.
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Abbreviations

ADWU – Asian Domestic Workers Union
ATKI – Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers
CAD – Canadian Dollar
CEO – Chief Executive Officer
CPP – Canada Pension Plan
ECC – Employees’ Compensation Commission
EI – Employment Insurance
FDH – Foreign Domestic Helper
FDM – Foreign Domestics Movement
HK – Hong Kong
HKD – Hong Kong Dollar
HKSAR – Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
ILO – International Labour Organization
IMF – International Monetary Fund
LCP – Live-in Caregiver Program
LMO – Labour Market Opinion
MAW – Minimum Allowable Wage
METRAC – Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children
NCR – National Capital Region
OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFW – Overseas Filipino Worker
Pag-IBIG – Home Development Mutual Fund
PHIC/PhilHealth – Philippine Health Insurance Corporation
POEA - Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAP – Structural Adjustment Program
SAR – Special Administrative Region
SSS – Social Security System
UN – United Nations
UNIFIL – United Filipinos in Hong Kong
USD – United States Dollar
WTO – World Trade Organization
Chapter 1: Introduction

Napakaraming kasambahay dito sa amin,  
Ngunit bakit tila walang natira,  
Napakaraming labandera dito sa amin,  
Ngunit bakit tila walang natira,  
Nagaabroad sila,  
(Gusto kong yumaman)5x  
Nagaabroad sila,  
(Gusto kong yumaman)5x

There are so many housemaids in our place,  
But why it seems that no one is left,  
There are a lot of laundry washers here in  
our place,  
But why it seems that no one is left,  
They go abroad,  
(I want to get rich)5x  
They go abroad  
(I want to get rich)5x

- Recorded and released in 2010, Walang Natira (No One is Left) is a popular Filipino hip hop song written in Tagalog and performed by Gloc-9 featuring Sheng Belmonte. The song is notable for its frank portrayal of the hardships that overseas migrant labourers experience while away from the Philippines.

The first time I heard the Tagalog word balikbayan, it was in reference to boxes – very particular boxes that are generally sold in three main sizes: regular (20’x 20’x 20’), 1 large/jumbo (20’x 18’x 24’), and extra large (24’x 24’x 24’). Balikbayan boxes are unique for two reasons: 1) they are sent by post, in only one direction (from any location in the world to the Philippines), and 2) there are no weight limit restrictions for balikbayan boxes sent through any mode of transit. Surprised at first that such an item existed, I found it curious that there would be a specialized container that could be so limitless and restricted at the same time. Why are there such boxes? Why can they only be sent to the Philippines? Why is there no weight limit on something that can be sent by post? It was only much later that I learned the reason for the creation and existence of balikbayan boxes, and understood more about the overseas Filipino population who so frequently make use of its services.

The word balikbayan literally means “returning”, and can refer to returning Filipino migrants from abroad, as well as the innocuous cardboard boxes that are frequently sent back to

1 Measurements are in inches unless otherwise stated.
the Philippines. Balikbayan boxes initially arose in the 1980s as a result of the staggering number of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who had left the Philippines to work abroad; each box contains items sent by overseas workers who desire to send personal goods and gifts back home. Balikbayan boxes are allowed duty and tax-free entry to the Philippines, and are utilized to transport heavy items that would ordinarily cost large amounts to ship by post. Sending balikbayan boxes frequently to the Philippines remains one of the ways that overseas Filipino workers maintain connections with family members and friends back home, and the Philippine government regularly encourages OFWs to make use of the tax-free incentives it gives to immigrants abroad (Del Barco, 2005). The Filipino diaspora is vast and scattered around the globe, and balikbayan boxes remain one of the ways that OFWs ease the pain of familial separation after many long years apart (Bonifacio, 2013; Parreñas, 2001).

**Global Context and Subject Overview: Overseas Filipino Workers**

With increasingly efficient modes of transportation, instantaneous methods of communication, and the digitization of formerly manual processes, the mass migration of the human population to diverse geographical spaces around the globe is a phenomenon that has grown exponentially in recent decades. Due to increased migration across borders and the ability to send money across the globe, Bandana Purkayastha (2012) points out that many groups are now able to “maintain connections across countries so that social lives are constructed, not only in single countries, but in transnational spaces” (p. 56). These transnational spaces are constructed beyond the borders of a single country, and are characterized by movements across, within, and between nation-states (Mohanty 2003, Purkayastha 2012). While many groups are
able to access transnational spaces and are afforded greater mobility on a global scale, there also exist many communities who are unable to access global spaces, and who are often “held in place by relations of domination/recolonization” (Mohanty, 2003, p. 186). Chandra Mohanty (2003) notes that these systems of disempowerment are often generated and sustained through imperialist practices “of corporate culture and discourses of neoliberalism” that institutionalize the marketplace as a primary measurement of success; here, individual capital is a key factor in determining who is able to access transnational spaces (p. 185). Embedded within these systems of capitalist power are workers and labourers, many of whom migrate transnationally from the Global South to the Global North.

In 2013, the United Nations (UN) report “World Migration in Figures” noted that, aside from Kazakhstan, the emigration rate out of the Philippines is the highest of any other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country in Asia. According to an official document released by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), the number of overseas Filipinos as of December 2009 stood at 8,579,378. The Philippines is now the top labor-exporting country in the world. Current outmigration estimates for 2013 climb as high as 12,500,000 abroad, constituting approximately 12% of the entire Philippine population. The POEA additionally reports that an additional 4,500 Filipinos leave the Philippines each day, the majority of whom are overseas Filipino workers (OFWs); these OFWs leave the Philippines to labour in foreign countries, often leaving their families behind and not returning for many years, if ever. What is particularly notable about the phenomenon of

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2 I shall utilize the terms ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’ to correspond to the concepts of ‘First World’ and ‘Third World’; this application is mirrored on the model that Chandra Mohanty (2003) sets out in Feminism without Borders.

3 This is reported by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) in the document “Commission on Filipinos Overseas: Stock Estimate of Overseas Filipinos”; these figures reflect up to December 2009.
Filipino labour exportation is the fact that, over the course of the last two decades, the number of Filipina overseas workers has been increasing exponentially, to the point where the number of women who migrate for labour far outstrips the number of men. In 2011, women comprised 63% of all Filipino overseas foreign workers (OFWs), while men constituted just 37%. What is even more significant about the swelling number of Filipinas who are choosing to migrate overseas is that the vast majority are not employed in professional or manpower sectors, but are hired as domestic labourers or caregivers in a multitude of countries worldwide. Glenda Tibe Bonifacio (2013) points to the significance of these numbers, noting that the outflow of women from the Philippines results in their dispersion to over 193 nation-states and territories globally. This alarming feminization of labour in the field of reproductive care constitutes what Chandra Mohanty (2003) notes as an international division of labour that is becoming increasingly complex and fraught with intersecting issues of gender, race, and class.

My thesis will engage with this increasing feminization of labour and migration, engaging specifically with Filipina women and the criss-crossing trajectories that they forge around the world. In my project, I seek to expand the body of knowledge already written about these women, indicating the need to identify previously unexamined nuances within migration that are influenced in new and particular ways by capitalist neoliberalism. As a result, my thesis

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4 The term ‘Filipino’ will be used throughout my text as both a general noun and a descriptor indicating any relation to the Philippine people, culture, or language; the term ‘Filipina’ will be used exclusively to demarcate female citizens living in, and originating from, the Philippines.
5 While the number of male OFWs increased by 5.4% from 2010-2011, female OFWs increased by 5.6% in the same time period. This is reported in the 2013 document, “Statistics on Filipino Women and Men’s Overseas Employment”.
6 For more information, please see Tubeza (2012) at http://globalnation.inquirer.net/32067/overseas-deployment-of-filipino-domestic-workers-continues-to-rise/
7 By “feminization of labour”, I mean the greater employment of women in certain sectors of, often flexibilized and unstable, work. For a detailed examination of the circumstances that contribute to the feminization of labour within the current neoliberal environment, please see Chapter Two.
will contribute to conversations about resistance, struggle, and solidarity within spaces that have traditionally been invisiblized or subsumed within larger debates on immigration and nation.

Some Notes on the (In)Utility of Categories

The utility of categorizing certain groups of people into precise units of knowledge is a methodology of social science research that is increasingly contested and fraught with debate (Gunaratnam, 2003; McDowell, 2008; Sandoval, 2000; Smith, 1999). Here, the central concern is how categories of difference are produced, and how this production is tied up with oppressive legacies of power (Foucault & Gordon, 1988). Yasmin Gunaratnam (2003) notes the danger of relying on this approach due to the fact that naming narrowly defined spaces of difference often runs the risk of essentializing groups of people and reconstituting the very power relations that researchers seek to oppose. Linda McDowell (2008) outlines the central questions that infuse this debate, asking whether it is more useful to reject analytical categories in the name of deconstruction, or if investigating the connections between social groups of people based on existing analytical categories will serve more purpose. To answer this, I draw upon Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1991) assertion that the modern negotiation of power takes place at the site where categories intersect. If oppression is constructed through the convergence of difference, it follows that conceptualizing resistance to domination must take into account preexisting categories which artificially divide groups of people.

McDowell (2008) proposes that instead of rejecting categories of analysis, a critical assessment of their conventional boundaries would render more useful in theorizing strategies of resistance and subversion. McDowell underscores that where attention is focused on
connections within and between categories, this will make a difference to theorizing the categories themselves. In a similar sense, Gunaratnam (2003) urges rethinking the ways that research constructs difference among groups by acknowledging that divisions are not hermetically sealed and are not homogenous truths, but are produced through political processes of classification which require investigation and analysis.

These political processes, invisible and largely unquestioned, are ones that are caught up in particular agendas. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) reminds us that research, especially research conducted by Global North investigators at Global North academic institutions, is informed by legacies of colonialism which historically constructed categories of difference as a means through which hierarchies of race and gender could be ascribed, and through which various forms of exploitation and abuse could be legitimated. As a solution to this, Smith offers a decolonial framework that critically engages the “binary categories of Western thought”, highlighting the importance of situating histories, acknowledging the plurality of experience, engaging with multiple discourses and contested stories, and engaging in critical self-reflexivity (p. 26). For Smith, the researched are not simply ‘subjects’ of investigation, but are agents of power and transformation in themselves. Thus, research that is accountable “recognizes the power dynamic that is embedded in the relationship” between the researcher and researched, positioning the researcher not as a superior faucet of knowledge, but as a student who learns from the knowledge which is gifted to her by the people who choose to participate (p. 176). In this way, classification in research, while subject to the terms of dominant powers, is capable of challenging and changing those very same terms which seek to establish naturalized hierarchies between people through difference (Sandoval 2000). This project will engage with this challenge by employing a *peminist* theoretical framework that will structure and inform the
knowledge that is extrapolated. Hence, this project will not engage with rigid classifications which seek to set limited boundaries – instead, it will explore the social processes that lead to categorization. This is carried out with the understanding that hegemony and agency are constantly being rethought and reworked at particular historical moments by individual people who create theory through their lived experiences.

**Feminism to Peminism: Through Pinays’ Eyes**

As Chela Sandoval (2000) wrote most succinctly in her keystone work, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, it is not enough to critically approach feminist or antiracist theory through a ‘one size fits all’ configuration. Instead, what is needed is “a specific methodology that can be used as a compass for self-consciously organizing resistance, identity, praxis, and coalition under contemporary U.S., late-capitalist cultural conditions” (p. 61). Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), Chela Sandoval (2000) and Sylvanna Falcón (2008) have all theorized about an alternative and politicized mestiza (mixed) consciousness which decenters traditional white feminism by recognizing the differential ways that women of colour transform social relations and struggle against injustice. Likewise, a similar reimagining of feminist thought is essential for theorizing about, and understanding, Filipina transnational experiences.

Throughout this work I will read several key concepts in relation to Filipina women through a particular feminist lens called peminism. This term was first elucidated by Melinda L. de Jesús in a collection of edited essays released in 2005, *Pinay Power: Theorizing the*

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8 For a detailed explanation of peminism and how it will inform this project, please see below in the section entitled “Feminism to Peminism: Through Pinays’ Eyes”.

7
Filipina/American Experience (Peminist Critical Theory). In her introductory chapter, de Jesús writes of her tenure as a graduate student in the United States during the early 1990s, when a growing awareness of “an experience very different from the implicit (and thus explicit) subject of white liberal feminism” planted the seed of a new form of feminist critical theory, which she aptly calls peminism (p. 5). Here, the linguistic and written separation from the traditional spelling and pronunciation of “feminism” clearly demarcate the creation of a different form of subjectivity, one that can be utilized and accessed in relation to Filipina women and their lived experiences and struggles. Rooted in alternative conceptions of consciousness that challenge white-centered experiences, De Jesús explains that peminism, very specifically, illustrates “Filipina American consciousness, theory, and culture”, with the characteristic p replacing the f in feminism as a reference to the terms Pinay and Pilipina, which are Tagalog words used by Filipina women in reference to themselves (p. 5). Using this model of thought as inspiration, in my text I will use the word Pinay interchangeably with Filipina and Filipino women in order to not only acknowledge the complex colonial histories that Pinay women have lived, but also to give “voice to an empowered, embodied, postcolonial subject long perceived as a victim of contemporary globalization” – the Pinay (Bonifacio, 2013, p. 11).

Glenda Tibe Bonifacio (2013) notes the power of such discursive and epistemological changes when she asserts that peminism is “Filipino women’s own form of feminist consciousness, knowledge, and action”, and while it “recognizes the same activist underpinnings of feminism in the West, [it] draws on Filipino women’s particular histories of oppression” (p. 11). Peminism is an essential rethinking of feminist thought and praxis as it importantly acknowledges the need for intersectional analysis and consciousness while refusing the legacies of Spanish and American colonial imperialism that have impacted Pinay women’s access to
power. Writing from a *peminist* perspective is recognizing the unique positionality that Pinays occupy within global oppositional politics, where white feminist hegemony is repudiated and decolonization is embraced.

Although de Jesús specifies that *peminism* is specific to Filipina-American contexts, I extend this definition to include Pinays who occupy transnational spaces all over the world. Although *peminism* as a theory sprung from a context rooted in the United States, this does not mean that the issues of Pinays in other spaces of the diaspora do not contribute to, and enrich, a global Pinay consciousness. Allyson Goce Tintiangco-Cubales (1995) states that “there is a failure to recognize the interconnectedness between the problems of Pinays in and outside the United States,” especially as the Pinay diaspora is interconnected to narratives and conversations that occur in transnational locations around the world (p. 142). Therefore, I assert that it is not only the “neocolonial relationships between the United States and the Philippines” that have silenced *peminist* theory, culture, and consciousness, but also the settler colonial mentality that characterizes Global North policies regarding migrants from Global South countries, particularly the Philippines (de Jesús, 2005, p. 6). Bonifacio (2013) also notes the relevance of *peminist* thought in Canadian contexts, as Canada “shares the North American orbit of whiteness” that symbolically represents “power, domination, authority, and control in many colonized countries and indigenous communities” (p. 11). Thus, clearly the need to articulate an alternative form of theory which takes Pinays into account is not only one that is relevant within America, but also one that is also applicable to any Global North country embroiled in the legacies of colonization, internationalism, globalization, and the exchange of migrants from the Philippines.
While *peminism* is not inclusive of the entire Pinay population due to stark regional differences within the Philippines, it is nevertheless a differential methodology that seeks to understand the unique spaces which Pinays occupy. Although the context of Pinay experiences may shift and change from one geographical location to the next, resistance against the social structures that limit and restrict Filipina women are a constant locus of struggle and organization (de Jesús, 2005). I acknowledge that my use of the term *peminism* may be called into question as it is employed specifically by Pinays to theorize about their own embedded subjectivities. I do not identify as a Pinay myself, however I assert that my choice to utilize a *peminist* framework in my writing is not an appropriation or an attempt to speak for, or erase the voice of, Filipinas. Rather, my use of *peminism* is an acknowledgement that engaging with Pinays requires a differential way of thinking that traditional white feminism cannot fulfill. Andrea Smith (2008) proposed that in order to begin building theoretical frameworks illuminating how power operates, we must center minority women. Instead of seeking out academic theorists, Smith identifies nonacademic activists as the intellectuals who inform her work. I thus seek to center Pinay women and *peminism* as the basis for my thesis in order to illustrate how current discourse about migration can be transformed. True to *peminist* epistemology, instead of focusing on Pinay women as subjects in a project, I assert that they are the intellectuals who will inform us about the world we live in. If *peminist* methodologies seek to understand marginalized experiences, then this differential consciousness must be utilized in order to identify the complexities and intricacies involved in negotiating globalizing operations that cannot be articulated by any canonical Western thought. *Peminism*, and the ways that it is indicative of a new form of power within the broad movement of feminism, addresses this theoretical gap as it speaks into existence those who were previously ignored or obscured: Pinay women and the
transnational and ever-shifting spaces through which they move in their journeys to self-empowerment.

Collection of Data and Profile of Participants

For this project, I choose to conduct qualitative interviews due to the rich context and in-depth information that could be drawn from such conversations. In order to understand migration and domestic work in a more nuanced manner, qualitative interviews allowed each interviewee to uniquely situate herself directly within complicated systems of power. I specifically decided to hold individual, rather than group, interviews as I felt that each woman would be more comfortable speaking privately about her own diverse, and sometimes difficult, experiences. Eight qualitative interviews were conducted in total: two interviews with women from rural provinces in the Philippines (the Visayas and Bohol) who had migrated domestically to work in Manila and were looking to work abroad in Hong Kong; two interviews with mothers who cared for their grandchildren while their own children were working overseas; one interview with a rural woman from the Visayas who had migrated domestically to Manila, migrated transnationally to Singapore, and was waiting to hear about her application to migrate to the United States; and three interviews with women currently in Canada who originated from rural areas in the Philippines (the Visayas), had migrated domestically to urban Manila, transnationally to Hong Kong, and then had come to Canada via the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP). The choice of these women was purposeful in order to examine the counterhegemonic techniques employed by Pinays who are at different stages of their transnational migration trajectories.
I collected primary data in both the Philippines and Canada, conducting qualitative interviews in Manila and Kingston, Ontario. Before I began this project, I lived for some time in the Philippines. In 2014, I was in Manila conducting interviews via a snowball word-of-mouth approach, wherein I asked domestic workers with whom I was already acquainted to refer me to others who might potentially be interested in discussing their migration journeys with me. I was able to interview a diverse group of women through the snowball method due to the fact that I initially asked domestic workers who did not know each other to suggest potential interviewees – these women occupied varied roles in different households and were able to successfully refer me.

In Canada, I collected primary data via personal connections I have with some Filipino community groups. Although I am not Pinay myself, I do have some situated knowledge of Philippine social arrangements, and a basic command of Tagalog. Here, I also relied on a snowball word-of-mouth approach in order to ask women if they would feel comfortable sharing their experiences. The snowball method was the most effective in connecting me with Pinays who ordinarily spent most of their time in isolated private households. Personal introductions were the preferred means of contacting those who were willing to talk about their migration experiences.

**Methods and Breakdown**

My thesis employs an intersectional analysis to investigate the ways that global neoliberal capitalism underwrites the increasingly feminized and racialized mass migration of women from the Philippines to countries in the Global North. This project will complicate current
understandings of the global chain of care and will investigate the multifaceted ways that Pinays negotiate mobility within transnational spaces.

My work is unique in this area of study for a number of reasons. First, my research employs a four-pronged, multidimensional approach that extends the valuable work of other researchers in this field. Several studies (Bonifacio, 2013; Constable, 2007; Lindio-McGovern, 2011; Parreñas, 2001; Pratt, 2012; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005) have focused on Filipina migrant workers and the unique spaces of constraint and agency they negotiate through their movement. However, these studies generally focus on two primary sites of engagement, usually that of the labour-sending country (the Philippines), and the labour-receiving country (Hong Kong, Italy, United States, Canada). My work complicates these understandings of the global chain of care as it charts the transnational labour trajectories of Pinay labourers through four stages of their journeys in four different geographical spaces – rural areas of the Philippines, urban areas of the Philippines, intermediary countries (Hong Kong), and destination countries (Canada). As well, the diversity of interviews I conducted with several women positioned within differing points of transnational trajectories illustrates the unique evolution and nuanced complexities of global migration.

For this project, my methodology involves engaging in a literature overview of neoliberalism and domestic work, mapping migration trajectories in labour-sending and labour-receiving countries, conducting a discourse analysis of media texts, and focusing on an examination of counterhegemonic techniques employed by Pinays.

First, a literature review (Chapter Two) that identifies and explains neoliberal reforms, and how they affect global migration, delves into the ways that capitalism relies on the exploitation of gender, race, and class differences in order to generate profit. Chapter Two will
touch on a variety of sites, giving context to the processes which underwrite the global exchange of labour. In this section, I draw predominantly from research published by Bakan and Stasiulis (1997; 2005), Mohanty (2003), Parreñas (2001), and Povinelli (2011). I will review historical and current analyses of imperialism and colonization in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada to investigate the processes which structure the contemporary North/South labour divide. Next, tracing the broad historical evolution of domestic work against the backdrop of neoliberal capitalism identifies some key ways that migration is shaped through global economic relations between the Global North and Global South. I map the ways that colonialism and gendered understandings of work have historically contributed to the feminization and racialization of domestic labour globally. I argue that these historical processes are what have shaped the current global chain of care, importantly pointing to how legacies of colonialism and patriarchy continue to inform and perpetuate transnational labour trajectories. In this section, I position my work against the backdrop of transatlantic slavery, seeking to understand how these longer colonial legacies provide a context by which to frame the indentured mobility of Pinay women. I also outline the history of domestic workers and how current policies adopted by both the Philippine, Hong Kong, and Canadian governments regulate the flow of migration across national borders. I do not engage in a review of all countries that participate in the exchange of Filipina domestic labourers; rather, my thesis paints broad strokes of specific historical moments that have facilitated and exacerbated the conditions that make transnational migration necessary. Similarly, I engage only with government policies in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada in order to give specific context to the various transnational relations that result in the formation of migration trajectories from the Global South to the Global North. Through a historical and
political literature review, I draw attention to the complex and nuanced nature of the global chain of care, squarely situating Pinays within global processes of power as both subjects and agents.

Second, I will chronicle the evolution of domestic work (Chapter Three) in four spaces of three critical nation-states: rural and urban areas in the Philippines (the labour-sending country), Hong Kong (the intermediary country), and Canada (the labour-receiving country). I rely primarily on scholarship published by Bonifacio (2013), Constable (2007), Lindio-McGovern (1997; 2012), and Parreñas (2001, 2005, 2011). Chapter Three will expand and complicate current understandings of migration trajectories that Filipina careworkers create, outlining at least four separate stages that characterize contemporary labour trajectories within the sector of domestic work. This chapter will examine exploitative migration and labour policies that shape the choices and decisions that Pinays make as they engage in domestic work in transnational spaces. Excerpts from qualitative interviews I conducted will offer insight into the nuances of migration that are rarely described.

Third, through a Gramscian lens I explore the concept of hegemony and how dominant scripts produced by the Philippine, Hong Kong, and Canadian nation-states mobilize imagined communities of nationhood (Chapter Four). I draw liberally from the 1971 Selections from the Prison Notebooks by Antonio Gramsci in order to explain hegemony and how it operates within society. I then look at newspaper articles in consideration of how state discourses (first in the Philippines, then in Hong Kong, and finally in Canada) work to identify, discipline, and regulate Pinays who are employed as temporary workers. This, I argue, works to the financial benefit of nation-states involved in the feminized exchange of workers as it consolidates the gender, race, and class hierarchies that make profiteering off cheap labour possible. Thus results a rationalization of exploitative working conditions and the entrenchment of these inequalities on
an international scale. This kind of analysis is essential since, through discourse disseminated in public texts such as newspapers, journalists critically participate in the social construction of gender and migration, shaping knowledge production and influencing political opinion. Concurrently, Bauder (2008) highlights the importance of discourse analysis in transnational migrant research, pointing to the ways that discursive processes within the media form a close relationship with the laws and policies of nation-states. Accordingly, I argue that discourse analysis holds decolonial promise. If language works to marginalize minority groups in a number of contexts, then the deconstruction of such texts holds the potential to rupture these scripts and lay bare the hegemony which informs them.

Fourth, after identifying hegemonic discourse, the next chapter describes counterhegemonic techniques that Pinays employ to resist the exploitation they encounter in transnational spaces (Chapter Five). The individual voices of the domestic workers I interviewed demonstrate understandings that constantly evolve according to the positionality of each woman within the global chain of care. Thus, the lived experiences of women who are positioned at varying points within the transnational chain of care allow us to understand the multifaceted ways that these women negotiate agency, power, and exploitation through the work they perform. Juxtaposing the individual voices of Pinay domestic workers alongside one another will allow for a conversation to occur that links microscale accounts to macroscale processes, indicating the intimate ways that the political and institutional are entwined in expressing agency. This will therefore provide a more nuanced understanding of the global chain of care, pointing to what Chela Sandoval (2001) and Chandra Mohanty (2003) call a ‘bottom-up analysis’ that situates Global South women as agents in the careful negotiation of power at a multiplicity of scales. Finally, this chapter describes how deleterious neoliberal reform is
effectively combated by migratory Pinays who engage in collective solidarity across borders. By understanding Pinays as agents of their own lives who consistently subvert exploitative practices, these women importantly illustrate the potential of social justice to alter systems that function on subjugation.

**Global Spaces, Intersecting Places**

This research project is interdisciplinary by design and draws from a wide range of theories and praxes that are underwritten by the intersectional analysis of gender, race, and class. I will first delve into a brief illustration of what intersectionality is and why it is important to my work. I will then explain my conceptualizations of gender, race, and class in order to establish them as relations that interlock in multiple and complicated ways. The intent in this section is to furnish an analysis that will illustrate lived experiences in an integrated, rather than fragmented, manner.

**Intersectionality**

The concept of intersectionality as a theoretical framework first manifested in the late 1970’s when a black feminist group called the Combahee River Collective issued a statement that acknowledged the multilayered nature of racialized women’s lives. In the 1977 statement, the members of the Combahee River Collective sought to underscore how “race, sex, and class are simultaneous factors in oppression” and that the convergence of these identities produce
differential spaces of power and privilege. A decade later in 1989, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw wrote an essay called “Mapping the Margins” where she proposed the term ‘intersectionality’ to describe the collusion of gender and race in black women’s lives that lead to experiences of oppression that are different than those of white women. In her work, Crenshaw argues that it is not enough to simply conceive of power through the single lens of gender, or of race; instead, Crenshaw advocates for intersectional thought in order to theorize about spaces of oppression that might otherwise be obscured or silenced in broad narratives. For example, in order to understand the ways that racialized women experience domestic violence and assault, Crenshaw asserts that the simultaneous marginalization of both gender and race must be considered. Sara Salem (2014) notes the importance of intersectional thought, writing that approaches that are “intersectional and unapologetically subaltern will allow [sic] us to approach the intersections of categories that emerge from the given context”. Salem asserts that if analysis is critically “defined by those who experience the realities of those intersections”, then the processes of decolonization may finally occur.

a. Gender

The term ‘gender’ that I use throughout this project is one that does not refer to the sexual organs or biology of individuals. Rather, by ‘gender’, I refer to how sex differences are made real or objectified as differences between men and women, where social constructions or expectations surrounding gender are assigned value (Ng, 1998). Throughout my work, I will specifically center on gender as a critical lens and key category of analysis for transnational and migration studies. In her sociohistorical essay, “Asian American History: Reflections on Imperialism, Immigration, and ‘The Body’”, researcher Catherine Choy (2000) asserts that “the
experiences of women [are] central to understanding contemporary forms of immigration and travel respectively” and that “Asian immigrant women’s work in the context of global economics and cultures” is particularly crucial given that “transmigrants deal with and confront a number of hegemonic contexts, both global and national” (p. 90). In this project, gender acts as a central analytical lens for understanding migration since women’s voices have historically been obfuscated from transnational studies that focus primarily on men (Parreñas, 2001). Gender is situated squarely within conflicting social hierarchies that stretch across national borders, and is constantly undergoing contestation and evolution at particular historical junctures and social contexts; these changes inform new epistemologies that struggle against exploitative conditions. Ong (1995) points out that “hegemony is never complete and is always vulnerable to subversion by counterhegemonic tactics” that are organized around the rallying point of gender (p. 4). The mobilization of gender in nationalist discourses and politics as a means of social regulation is a phenomenon that is well documented by Ong (1995), Lister (1997), Yuval-Davis (1997), Pratt (2005), Razack (2008). I argue that nationalism, capitalism, and transnational practices of labour are all bound up in the social relations that surround gender meanings, and it is for these reasons that I center gender as a primary point of departure in analysis.

b. Race

Similarly, the concept of ‘race’ forms another analytical category which is useful to mobilize for the purposes of this thesis. When I refer to ‘race’, I am not indicating the phenotypical and physical differences between individuals, but rather the social distinctions that render these variations absolute and natural (Garner, 2010; Goldberg, 1993; Ng, 1998). Here, the term ‘race’ is imbued with social, rather than biological, meaning and is a category of
difference that is contextually read onto the bodies of others (Silverstein, 2005). In relation to race, according to David Goldberg (1993), ‘racialization’ (or race-making) involves the categorization and determination of groups into racialized form. This process imparts racial connotations at particular sociostructural and sociohistorical sites where none existed before. Goldberg asserts that through racialization, members of society are able to anchor themselves as social subjects and are able to gain a sense of belonging or unbelonging according to the groups to which they are perceived/perceive themselves to belong. The construction of race is particularly relevant to the issues of migration, labour and neoliberalism because race is “a salient factor in the way social resources are allocated and how groups are represented” (Garner, 2010, p. 3). Citing the writings of Miles (1987), Steve Garner (2010) writes that “racialization is closely bound up with labour markets; in particular with both internal and international migration of workers…characterizing modern capitalism” (p. 21). Certain racialized groups have less access to a suitable job market and are shunted into work which is deemed ‘appropriate’ or ‘natural’ for their perceived racial standing (Bakan & Stasiulis, 2005; Bonifacio, 2013; Garner, 2010; Povinelli, 2011; Purkayastha, 2012). This creates exclusionary-inclusionary boundaries which segregate people into difficult groups within nation-states, permitting some groups more access to legal and social resources than those who are lower in the racial hierarchy (Bonifacio, 2013; Garner, 2010). This form of exceptionalism, where certain bodies are excluded from a body politic over others, underpins many of the citizenship and border policies that are stratified along racial lines in Global North countries (Povinelli, 2011; Pratt, 2005; Razack, 2008). The intersection of race (where whiteness is considered to be superior) and gender (where men are considered superior) is an integral component of capitalism and neoliberalism. Hierarchal
gender and race stratifications mean that racialized female bodies, rather than white male bodies, are exploited more as the vessels for cheap labour (Harvey, 2003; Mohanty, 2003).\footnote{It is important to note that women are not monolithic, and different women will experience the privileges and oppressions associated with migration, labour and carework differently depending on the ways that race is read onto their bodies. Pinays are heterogeneous and often hail from many different regions in the Philippines, where many different languages are spoken. However despite this diversity, the perceived category of race, and its intersection with gender, can also be a site for reading into deep structures of violence and inequality. Shared experiences of oppression have often resulted in solidarity or resistance movements among those who seek to struggle for legal and labour rights within particular nation-states. Thus, the category of race as it is read on to the bodies of women from the Philippines is useful to consider as a mobilizing concept in Pinay decolonizing practices and migrant rights movements (Constable, 2007; Garner, 2010).}

c. Class

‘Class’ is not simply defined through economic relations and capital accumulation, but is used to refer to the relations that people create and set between themselves, using financial earnings as distinguishing factors. Fine and Saad-Filho (2010) explain that class, within Marxist theory, positions individuals in relation to one another against the backdrop of capitalist workings. Class, therefore, is not used to indicate people’s status in terms of occupation, salary, education. Instead for the purposes of my thesis, class is the social arrangement that forms the basis for systemic market transactions and exchanges (Ng, 1998).

Complicating this issue are current developments in the socio-economic relations, where class is contingent not only on economic relations between groups, but also in relation to racial logics in settler colonial spaces. Sedef Arat-Koc (2010) speaks of this new phenomenon as ‘cracks’ along the colour line, where class is constructed by its proximity to whiteness and specific racial hierarchies that are the foundations of settler colonial states and of capitalist modernity. Class has thus shifted from purely economic social relations, to those “conceived as being based in cultural characteristics and practices” (p. 151). This can be attributed to “non-
whites whitened by the classed colour of money”, which creates alienation between people of the same country and culture (p. 155). The result is that class becomes a transnational phenomenon that divides global communities not only along economic lines, but also along racial lines that conflate proximity to whiteness with social elitism. My thesis will examine this new evolution of status and class in the global labour diaspora and will question the ways that it impacts and intersects with the lives of Pinay domestic workers.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Magtanim ay di biro
Maghapong nakayuko
Di naman makatayo
Di naman makaupo
Kay pagkasawing palad
Ng inianak sa hirap
Ang bisig kung hindi iunat
Dikumita ng pilak

Planting is not to be taken lightly
Bent all day
You can’t stand still
You can’t sit down
What an unfortunate destiny
To be born in poverty
If I don’t work with my arms
I won’t earn any money

- Magtanim ay di biro (Planting is Not to be Taken Lightly), is a traditional Tagalog folk song that is sung by children in elementary schools in the Philippines. The song is notable for its stark portrayal of the difficult lives that rural farmers and their families lead.

The circumstances that have led to the accelerated outmigration of Filipinos from the Philippines are largely a global phenomenon that links the inequalities of different spaces together. In this chapter, I engage in a literature review that illuminates how current and past systems of power influence how Pinays migrate today. Globalization and neoliberal capitalism are both essential elements that currently affect Filipina (in Tagalog, Pinay) migration due to the ways the gender, race, and class differences are exploited under these systems. However, in order to understand how the current processes of globalization and neoliberalism have evolved in relation to Pinay domestic workers, historical analyses of colonization in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada must also be traced and reviewed. I also outline how current policies in the Philippine, Hong Kong, and Canadian governments influence the working conditions of domestic workers in these countries. The intent of this section is to broadly outline the current and historical moments that have shaped domestic work and Pinay migration today, squarely situating Filipina migrants within the complex systems of power through which they constantly negotiate.
Globalization, Neoliberalism, and Migration

A significant characteristic of the current world order involves economic, social, and political macroprocesses that pass through the borders of nation-states. These macroprocesses are known as globalization, and involve the fiction-free circulation of commodities, capital, corporations, communication, and consumers all over the world. Globalization is a significant phenomenon because it sets in motion capital, popular culture, ideologies, and people, closely linking the economic, political, and social processes of different places together (Zavella, 2011). This means that systems of power and domination that are structured through gender, race, and class are transnational, and increasingly span both national and international arenas (Purkayastha, 2012).

Along with globalization, capitalism (where private entities own and control worldwide trade and industry and workers participate in wage labour) is a central organizing principle in the lives of many transnational migrants who frequently criss-cross the globe. Today, the type of intensified capitalism that is increasingly adopted by countries via globalization is called neoliberalism. Arising most prominently after the Second World War (with the diminishment of Keynesian economics in the 1980s and the election of conservative leaders in both the United Kingdom and the United States), neoliberalism is characterized by a collection of policies that favour economic liberalization, free trade, deregulation, privatization, fiscal austerity, and reduced government spending. Under neoliberal reform, privately owned corporations interested in capital accumulation become increasingly powerful, while state intervention in matters of

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10 In this discussion, capitalism is not only an economic system, but also encompasses production and reproduction. What is mean by this is that capitalism is a mode by which people produce themselves under specific material conditions that extend beyond economy. The drive for capital accumulation globally structures the lives of people in unique ways, motivating and creating transnational spaces in the search for wealth, and thus, physical security. Ng (1998) notes that gender, race, and class feature prominently in this continuous process.
social assistance grows increasingly smaller. This means that within the neoliberal order, responsibilities for social assistance are not provided by the state and are instead downloaded onto the individual (Berlant, 2011; Povinelli, 2011). Due to the emphasis on private ownership, individual choice and personal merit are highlighted as a central aspect of neoliberal reform. However this means that neoliberalism is, as Ong (2006) states, counterproductive to supporting collective society as it marks a return to a ‘primitive’ form of survival that is competitive and possessive, with only capital accumulation as an end goal. This means that competition and individual gain take precedence over collective social wellbeing.

The problem with neoliberal reform is its refusal to recognize that certain structural barriers exist within society that prevent all subjects from gaining equality, relative to others. As Giroux (2005) astutely points out, due to the fact that neoliberal policies emphasize individual responsibility for success, this conveniently obfuscates issues of equality, racial justice, and systemic oppression. This is particularly critical since, under this, systems of domination that exploit differences between people are rendered invisible. This means that, under neoliberal reform, social inequalities are ignored rather than addressed.

Kristen Maher (2004) underscores that gender inequality cannot be uncoupled from the development of a neoliberal climate. Due to the fact that neoliberal policies do not take into account gender oppression, structural barriers (such as the idea that certain genders are suitable to perform certain types of work) that hinder women from fully participating in the public workforce remain unchallenged. Indeed, due to divisions of labour that classify caregiving roles as more suitable for women, when neoliberal policies are adopted that privatize carework, women often become the economic shock absorbers for their families and society.
Similarly, issues of race are also impossible to extricate from the adoption of neoliberal policies. For example, the Global North’s exclusion of immigrants from poorer Global South nation-states while welcoming more wealthy Global North immigrants with open arms (as in the example of Canada’s now defunct Immigrant Investor Program\textsuperscript{11}) is a process that continuously divides immigrants along racial lines. This is further illustrated by Roberts and Mahtani (2010) when they describe the implicit entanglement of race relations within neoliberal logic - they state that “neoliberalism (its underlying philosophy) is fundamentally raced and actively produces racialized bodies” in Canada through the racialized representation of immigration and its relationship to policy reforms (p. 248). Thus, even though neoliberal policy emphasizes the freedom and power of individuals to succeed economically and socially, the obfuscation of race relations within this order allows oppression to continue unchallenged.

Neoliberalism and migration are inextricably intertwined within the world economy. Exclusionary immigration practices are compounded by global neoliberal reform and deleteriously affect the lives of gendered, raced, and classed migrants. Bauder (2008) argues that “migration and immigration are important elements in this discourse of neoliberalism” due to the essential link between the movement of bodies and the world economy (p. 57). Given this, it is impossible to dissociate neoliberalism from the inequality and exploitation experienced by migrants from the Global South who move to the Global North. Indeed, migration is an essential element of neoliberal privatization since immigration serves to stabilize economies by attracting workers from different nation-states and shoring up shortages in the global labour market.

\textsuperscript{11} The Canadian Immigrant Investor Program, retracted in 2014, granted permanent residence to wealthy foreigners who were able to invest a minimum of $800,000 CAD into the economy in the form of an interest-free loan. McMartin (2014) noted that the implementation of this program stratified potential immigrants to Canada along financial and racial lines.
Neoliberalism has a deleterious effect on gendered, racialized and poorer migrants. The phenomenon of denying certain populations citizenship rights and construing them as different, inferior and therefore less valued, is known as ‘exceptionalism’. Ong (2006) describes exceptionalism as the situation where particular people “who are deemed too complacent or lacking in neoliberal potential may be treated as less-worthy subjects” (p. 16). Continuing from other works (Povinelli, 2011; Pratt, 2005; Razack, 2008; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005), neoliberal exceptionalism is rooted within the idea that particular individuals are worth more than others, based on their marketable skills. The resulting suggestion from this is that some subjects’ lives are worth more than others, and are therefore considered more deserving of human rights claims, state protection, and citizenship. Stasiulis and Bakan (2005) write about exceptionalism, citing that within the current neoliberal context, the “inherent inequality of capitalism” has resulted in polarizing situations of inclusion and exclusion for certain groups of people (p. 16). What this means is that due to neoliberal capitalism, exceptionalism is a central concept in transnational labour migration because of the ways in which particular immigration policies (de)select certain bodies for citizenship rights. The criteria for determining which bodies are deemed worthy for citizenship are often stratified along gendered, racial, and classed lines. This is problematic because neoliberalism invisibilizes these inequalities, thereby establishing an economic order that does not acknowledge social oppression as an obstacle to success.

Neoliberal capitalism not only invisibilizes social inequalities, but normalizes their presence within society. For example, Sherene Razack (2008) maintains that exceptionalist policies are determined through certain methods of ‘race thinking’, where “the denial of a common bond of humanity between people of European descent and those who are not, remains a defining feature of the world order” (p. 6). According to Razack, due to the division of
citizenship rights into a ‘colour-lined’ hierarchy, the abandonment of populations and the withholding of rights from certain groups is largely a racial project. She adds that under neoliberal reform, race thinking becomes embedded in law so that the suspension of rights and the naturalization of racism appears to not be violent, but normal and acceptable. This is reflected in, for example, the legacy of ethnocentric immigration policies of settler states (such as Canada and the United States), that have “required that particular identities of nationality, religion, race, and ethnicity be recognized, while others be subordinated or excluded” (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005, p. 18).

The adoption of neoliberal policies at the global scale is acutely illustrated through the imposition of projects centered on poverty reduction strategy papers\(^\text{12}\) that are inflicted on countries by supranational institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and World Trade Organizations (WTO). Development loans granted to Global South countries who are in need of economic aid are given by these international organizations under strict conditions – these conditions often require developing countries to adopt neoliberal policies that promote privatization, and lead to the dismantlement of provisions that protect local workers (such as trade and labour unions). These adjustments allow wealthy, often Global North, nations to easily access resources from Global South countries, resulting in their extraction with little regard for local economies. As in the case with the Philippines, resources that are easily extracted from Global South countries often take the form of people, as workers who cannot afford to sustain themselves in their own local economies migrate overseas in search of work.

The abundance of cheap, flexible labour that is provided after the implementation of structural adjustment policies is quickly disseminated all over the globe, with richer Global North countries

\(^{12}\) Poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) have taken the place of structural adjustment programs (SAPs), and are now the main method by which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank determine whether or not a country is eligible for debt relief.
absorbing labourers into sectors that experience shortages. Frequently, these labourers are shunted into low-paying, deskill
ded jobs that are couched under worker programs, rendering the citizenship status of recent migrants as precarious and temporary (Lindio-McGovern 2011; Stasliulis & Bakan, 2005).

Migrant workers who toil overseas are also beneficial to Global South countries whose economies were affected by the imposition of structural adjustments programs (SAPs). Within the Philippines, the remittances of workers who send money back home to support their families are essential for propping up the national economy. As a result of the mounting national debt, coupled with colonial legacies that resulted in the imposition of SAPs and poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), the government of the Philippines has become so reliant on the dollar remittances of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) that labour export is now a fixture of development and economic planning (Bonifacio, 2013). As early as 1992, one out of every five Filipinos directly depended on the earnings of a migrant worker, and this number has only increased within recent years (Constable, 2007). Indeed, remittances buttress OFW families, communities, the government of the Philippines, and provide support for healthcare and education in a country that – due to adopted neoliberal policies - is heavily privatized, with little social support or recourse for the poor, sick, injured, or disabled (Bonifacio, 2013).

**International Divisions of Labour and the Global Chain of Care**

As globalization has resulted in the melding of separate national economies into a singular international market, labour inequalities in different areas have become connected. This means that gender, race, and class inequalities in labour-sending countries become interwoven
with the gender, race, and class inequalities in labour-receiving countries (Parreñas, 2001).

Thus, systems of domination become entrenched, producing injustices that are borne overwhelmingly by poor Global South women. These processes all contribute to the creation of the international division of labour.

Many Filipinos who migrate to foreign countries as a part of the transnational workforce are female. Evidence of this is cited within a document prepared by the Philippine Commission on Women, in the 2013 report “Statistics on Filipino Women and Men’s Overseas Employment”. This report notes that the number of Filipina overseas workers is increasing exponentially. While the number of male OFWs increased by 1.95% from 2011-2012 (from 1,126,000 in 2011 to 1,148,000 in 2012) female OFWs increased by 3.9% in the same time period (1,032,000 in 2011 to 1,072,000 in 2012). This feminization of labour is not a trend that is unique only to the Philippines, but is a worldwide pattern that grows increasingly complex. Chandra Mohanty (2003) notes that “an international division of labor is central to the establishment, consolidation, and maintenance of the current world order”, and as such the world labour market is growing increasingly problematic due to “naturalized assumptions about work” and the racialized nature of the female Global South body (p. 141). Rhacel Parreñas (2001) notes in her book Servants of Globalization that labour, both productive and reproductive, is globally divided according to gender lines, where reproductive labour is relegated more often to the responsibility of women. Kristen Maher (2004) corroborates this point, maintaining that most reproductive labour tasks presently, and historically, have been relegated to women through the performance of “full-time, unpaid work” (p. 132). This gendered division of labour, where women perform the majority of the work associated with reproduction and socialization, closely ties gender inequalities within

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13 ‘Reproductive labour’ refers to the labour needed to reproduce and sustain a labour force. Activities that are characterized as reproductive labour include: elder care, childcare, chores, the production of social bonds. This is sometimes also referred to as ‘social reproduction’.
labour-sending countries to gender inequalities within labour-receiving countries. This also means that within transnational labour trajectories, every stage and step of each woman’s journey is infused with overarching gender inequalities that rely on the gendered division of labour to buttress the global economy.

Similarly, Chandra Mohanty (2003) and Stasiulis and Bakan (2005) have also written about an international pool of labour that is increasingly stratified according to the categorical notions of race. Mohanty notes that with the internationalization of labour and the increased naturalization of capitalist values and privatization, “a color line that is global – not contained anymore within the geography of the United States” has resulted in racial divisions of workers (p. 192). Stasiulis and Bakan expand on this point, positing that this global colour line intersects most crucially with gender, especially in consideration of Global South women and the types of work they are expected to perform in Global North countries. Due to global inequalities, where poorer countries are affected by the imposition of poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) that deepen poverty and debt, domestic and reproductive labour needs in Global North countries are often filled by migrant labour from Global South countries (Bonifacio, 2013; Parreñas, 2005; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005). Often, since domestic and reproductive work are globally gendered, it is often Global South women who form the majority of flexibilized workers in labour-sending and labour-receiving countries (Mohanty, 2003; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005).

The gendered racialization of the international labour force is central to neoliberal systems of capital accumulation which rely on the naturalization of specific types of work. For example, world factories in Malaysia have employed specifically “oriental women” on the notion that these labourers “have naturally nimble fingers” and are also “naturally more docile and willing to accept tough work” as they are “naturally more suited to tedious, repetitious,
monotonous work” (Elson & Pearson, 1984, p. 23). This reliance on essentialized understandings of identity is also reproduced within areas of domestic labour, where racist scripts presume that “migrant women of colour, are inherently suitable to perform domestic service” (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005, p. 74). These kinds of assumed naturalizations are then used as justifications to legitimate lower wages for services that are considered ‘unskilled’ as this type of labour is presumed to be merely ‘women’s work’, or ‘brown women’s work’ (Bonifacio, 2013; Mohanty, 2003). Maher (2004) comments that certain labour sectors - such as carework, reproductive labour, and domestic work - are “the lowest status and lowest paid” (p. 141).

Maher also notes that often the work in these sectors “is almost exclusively performed for migrant women from less developed states” and thereby often associated with racializing, and stereotypical scripts that posit poorer women of colour to be more passive and respectful of authority (p. 141). The intersection of gender and race in these constructions of migrant women’s position within the labour market have overarching consequences as this provides additional justification for exploitation within these jobs. In these instances, abuse is legitimated via the perceived ‘inferiority’ of the worker and is often consolidated by the precarious (or non-) citizenship of the migrant (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997). Foucault (1988) argued that modern nation-states utilize race as a tool of social stratification. Racial distinction allows those positioned as ‘inferior’ to be subject to the violence of sovereign power and to be ‘used’ by the prevailing citizens of said countries. Pratt (2012) links these racializing scripts to modern-day

14 Not all Global South women fall within the same racial scripts within labour-receiving countries. Maher (2004) importantly acknowledges that Caribbean workers in Canada during the 1980s were perceived as more suitable for domestic work, until several workers began to organize to advocate for labour rights. Subsequently, higher numbers of Filipina caregivers were recruited from the Philippines as they were considered more ‘passive’. Interestingly, this situation mirrors a series of events in Hong Kong, where in the late 1990s, Filipina domestic workers were considered ‘docile’ and ‘ideal’; however, during the 2000s, Filipina workers started participating in worker organizations that demanded better working conditions and wages (Constable, 2007). Subsequently, the number of Indonesian workers recruited to Hong Kong has been rapidly increasing as Indonesian women are considered to be more ‘submissive’ and ‘receptive’ than Filipinas, who are considered to be more ‘disruptive’.
indentured labour by referencing the instance of Filipina migrant workers in Canada; she posits that “Filipino women are sacrificed for the vitality of the Canadian population” and this is evident by the racialization and subsequent exploitation of these workers under the sanction of Canadian law (p. 3).

The additional intersection of class with these global gendered and racialized scripts provides an additional layer of complexity to the international division of labour. Currently, global neoliberal policies and reforms have resulted in ‘trickle down’ economic effects that absolve state responsibility for providing social services, carework, and domestic labour (Maher, 2004; Mohanty, 2003). The increasing dependence of family earnings on two incomes means that, in countries such as the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada where neoliberal reforms have been adopted, the labour force participation of women has been steadily increasing (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005). Lack of sufficient childcare and eldercare, and the prevalence of neoliberal policies that download the responsibility for social assistance onto individuals, result in an increased demand for affordable and flexible care arrangements (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005). Due to the fact that childcare remains ‘women’s work’, reproductive concerns are increasingly borne via the privatized services of migrant, or poorer women, who take up the domestic work of more class-privileged women who are able to afford to hire extra help within the home. While previous studies (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997; Lindio-McGovern, 2011; Maher, 2004; Parreñas, 2001; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005) have remarked on the tendency of class-privileged Global North women to hire domestic workers from the Global South, class-privileged families within Global South countries (such as the Philippines) also hire poorer workers (often from rural regions) as

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15 In relation to discussions of migration and class differences, ‘migrant women’ refers to women who migrate domestically (from rural to urban areas of the Philippines), as well as internationally (from the Philippines to countries abroad).

16 In this instance, ‘class privilege’ refers to the material benefits of capital accumulation within a given society – the greater the capital accumulation, the greater the class privilege.
domestic workers within their own households. Maher (2004) comments that the history of domestic work has long been a tale of privileged women gaining class status by employing poorer women to perform household duties. This means that the ability of class-privileged individuals to hire class-disadvantaged women from poorer backgrounds in both labour-sending and labour-receiving countries creates a classed international division of labour that intersects with, and maintains, gendered and racialized scripts.

The consolidation of gender, race, and class inequalities in the labour market at an international scale is a phenomenon that has created a global chain of care. The global chain of care is created when responsibilities for social reproduction are “passed down a female chain which is least compensated at the bottom” (Maher, 2004, p. 141). In consideration of Filipina (or, in Tagalog, Pinay) caregivers, Parreñas (2001) refers to this system as an “international transfer of caretaking”, comprised of three tiers of transference among women in sending and receiving countries of migration (p. 62). In this network, class-privileged women in wealthy nation-states employ the low-wage services of migrant Pinays who have left their families in the Philippines. Migrant Pinay domestic workers then subsequently purchase the labour of poorer women in the Philippines to care for their families while they are abroad. Sometimes, in the Philippines, female family members, such as nanays (mothers), or titas (aunts) assume unpaid responsibility for the social reproduction of OFWs who are working abroad. Thus, the social reproduction of wealthier class and ethnically dominant families is shored up by the work of successively poorer women whose own social reproduction suffers as a result of uneven capitalist development and insufficient financial compensation. This international relegation of

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17 Sedef Arat-Koc (2010) notes the interesting conflation of race (as whiteness) with class privilege in the new intensified economy of global capitalism and how this contributes to the formation of new racial logics in developing countries.
reproductive care to successively poorer women is critical as it broadly links global neoliberal reforms to the perpetuation of gender, race, and class inequities.

**Legacies of Colonization, Slave Logics, and Indentured Mobility**

Racialized women experience the treacherous intersections of gender and race, especially within contexts that are informed by legacies of colonial relationships and colonial violence. Saskia Sassan (1998) writes that migration patterns reflect postcolonial linkages between nation-states. This assertion is particularly relevant to this study since ongoing colonial practices are constitutive of the structures and subjectivities that shape the global processes of labour (Razack et al., 2010). While it is certainly critical to examine the contemporary systems of imperialism that underwrite much international labour migration, in her study of the Global South and transnational activism, Chandra Mohanty (2003) notes that we cannot understand contemporary dislocation, oppression, and resistance of women without first examining particular colonial histories. As the current feminization and racialization of the global labour force is a project that operates on the necessary subjugation of Global South women, we cannot disentangle current migration and labour flows (within and from) the Philippines from longer histories of white supremacy, imperialism, and colonialism. It is especially critical to examine legacies of colonialism and its entanglement with gender due to the fact that “colonialism has always operated through gender” (Razack et al., 2010, p. 2). What this means is that colonizers view the subjugation of women as critical to the success of the economic, cultural, and political project of hegemony.
In addition to gender subordination, colonial relationships are also buttressed through white supremacy. White supremacy operates through systems of racial hierarchy, where people of colour are perceived to be ‘naturally inferior’ to white bodies. Through the logic of white supremacy, “blackness becomes equated with slaveability”, and the installation of patriarchal and misogynistic values is paramount to the forced subjugation of a people (Smith, 2008, p. 67). Akyeampong (2013) notes that transatlantic slavery, and the forced movement of African people into indentured labour, are both violent colonial processes that underscore the movement of people in today’s capitalist world. Akyeampong writes that the unfree trade of Black slaves across a checkerboard of nations produced free labour power for capitalist-run plantations; this therefore “offered a foundation for transnationalism”, where the justification of racial displacement was logicized through the pillar of white supremacy and labour shortages, resulting in colonialism (p. 169). In examining the tenets of transnationalism that inform current flows of labour, we cannot divorce the idea of migration from the legacy of the forced movement of African peoples in the slave trade.

Pinay women’s unique experiences of mobility within international labour migration trajectories are nested within longer histories of colonialism, stretching back hundreds of years. Mirroring the situation of North American Indigenous peoples who were colonized by the English and French at approximately the same time, several sources (Bonifacio, 2013; David, 2013; de Jesús, 2005; Lindio-McGovern, 1997; Parreñas, 2001) put forth Western colonialism as the origin of patriarchal and white supremacist ideologies in the Philippines. Given that the Philippines was brutally colonized by first Spain (1521-1898), and then the United States (1898-1946) over several hundred years, Lindio-McGovern (1997) also contends “the roots of ‘capitalist globalization’ in the Philippine neo-liberal experience” arose from those first colonial
relationships (p. 106). McGovern moreover maintains that “the present articulation of gender and class has roots in the colonial and neocolonial history of the Philippines” as “Spanish colonialism brought about the breakdown of communalism, exacerbated gender inequality, disintegrated the subsistence economy, and took away from Filipinos control of their own labor and resources” (p. 25-26, p. 125). These processes exacerbated gender inequality by instituting capitalism and patriarchy within Philippine society, inculcating the values of the colonizers into the social structure of Filipino community.

According to Parreñas (2001), colonial relationships established during previous years are maintained even today. Parreñas asserts that “the export of care is a legacy of colonialism, as it maintains an infrastructure of unequal dependency between the Philippines and richer nations in the global economy” (p. 24). Isis Duarte (1989) argues that the very nature of domestic work that operates on the import of temporary migrant workers is colonial in nature, given that:

The very presence of a household worker discourages the redistribution of household responsibilities and tasks within the family. By establishing ‘a new chain of hierarchal subordination…in the family: husband/wife/domestic worker,’ paid domestic service thus reaffirms a gendered division of labour, as well as introducing global/racial/ethnic/class hierarchies into the heart of the family. (as cited in Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997, p. 12-13)

Here, these relationships which rely on the subordination of women of colour at an intimate and private level are clearly reflective of the same gender (patriarchal), racial (white supremacist), and class (middle-class and elite) stratifications upon which settler colonial states are formed.

Lindio-McGovern (2011) asserts that the international circuits of Pinay women are intrinsic to neoliberalism. She maintains that “social reproduction that takes place largely in the home [is] linked to productive labor and is necessary for the maintenance of capitalism” (p. 28). When Pinay domestic workers and caregivers take up the social reproduction of wealthier Global
North families, the wage earners of these families are free to accumulate capital which does not trickle down to cheaply hired employees. Thus, the economies of labour-receiving nations are propped up by the unfree/precarious labour performed by domestic workers. Hence, these macrostructural processes of capitalism and migration closely link how we think about the movement of Pinay domestic workers within the contexts of colonialism.

Parreñas (2011) clarifies the nature of Pinay migration and domestic work by defining it as one of ‘indentured mobility’, where the agency of Pinay migrants is recognized without dismissing the severe structural constraints and economic coercion that restrict their freedom and bodily autonomy. This ‘middle ground’ which occupies a space between human trafficking and autonomous labour migration is one that is caught up in capitalism as “the financial gains afforded by labor migration come at the expense of their [Filipinas’] freedom” (p. 7). Thus, a small measure of neoliberal ‘choice’ is situated within the unfree labour of Pinay domestic workers. As we have already seen, the collusion of Pinays’ indentured mobility, informed by colonial processes, is one that is reminiscent of longer histories of racial displacement. The global labour trajectories of Filipina domestic workers is thus a process that is deeply troubling as it emerges out of, and perpetuates, colonial violence while operating under the guise of free ‘choice’.

A History: The Philippines and Migrant Labour

The Philippines is now the top labor-exporting country in the world, with approximately 12,500,000 people (12% of the entire Philippine population) currently abroad. The circumstances which led to this situation have been in development for several centuries, and
involve a plethora of contributing factors, such as: colonization, the Spanish settlement, agrarian reforms during the regime of President Ferdinand Marcos, American and Philippine governmental policies, and the implementation of structural adjustment programs by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

With the colonization of the Philippines by Spanish explorers beginning in the year 1521, the development of export labour resulted in a major change in the Philippine economy (Lindio-McGovern, 1997). Reflected in David Harvey’s (2003) economic theory of accumulation by dispossession, where capital accumulation is gained through expanded reproduction and a violent process of land dispossession, Spanish landlords appropriated lands formerly occupied by Filipino communities, and began sourcing the country for cash crops to send overseas. As a result of this, the Philippines experienced an economic shift wherein Filipino resources were exposed to the capitalist world market - this dismantled subsistence agriculture (Lindio-McGovern, 1997). Consequently, export agriculture widened the gap between rich landowners and poor workers, which exacerbated gender and class issues as poor women took on the burden of both productive and reproductive work inside and outside the home (Lindio-McGovern, 1997).

During the colonization of the Philippines, mass privatization and titling by the Spanish government resulted in the legal seizure of Filipino ancestral property when the Spanish first arrived. The registration of such property was only placed in the name of the male head of house, thus depriving Filipina women of direct ownership (Lindio-McGovern, 1997). Even today, the colonization of the Philippines by the Spanish and the appropriation of large swaths of land have produced a legacy wherein less than 5 percent of all landed families own more than 83

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18 David Harvey’s (2003) complete text analyzing capitalist theories of accumulation may be found in his article, “The New Imperialism: Accumulation by Dispossession”.  

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percent of all agricultural lands (Putzel, 1992). These landed families comprise a small elite social class (who do not directly till the land) who wield considerable political power within the current Philippine government (Bonifacio, 2013). Over the last few decades, rural Filipino farmers have staged consistent protests – most notably at the Chino Roces (Mendiola) Bridge in Manila - demanding agrarian reform from the Philippine government, pointing to the economic stranglehold that landed elites exercise. In 1988, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) was passed, which promised to distribute land to farmers. However, as of 2009, a backlog of over 1.2 million hectares has resulted in much of this program never coming to fruition (Bonifacio, 2013).

The next phase of colonization occurred in the late nineteenth century. During the occupation of the Philippines by the United States beginning in 1896 (during the Spanish-American War), the Philippine economy was further opened to world markets as the U.S. began sourcing raw resources from Filipino lands. The entry of American manufactured goods “undermined rural industries controlled by Filipinos”, which resulted in the displacement of labour, unemployment, and poverty (Lindio-McGovern, 1997, p. 31). As such, many workers lost their means of income, and were forced to find jobs within the agricultural or tenancy sectors. This situation disproportionately affected women, as the number of female labourers rose more than 400% from the years 1903 to 1939. Since there was little investment in a manufacturing sector which could absorb excess unemployment in other areas, the flooding of the labour market meant a lowering of wages (Lindio-McGovern, 1997; Lindio-McGovern, 2012). This situation may be articulated by Harvey’s (2003) theory of overaccumulation, when a

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19 In *Filipino Peasant Women*, Ligaya Lindio-McGovern (1997) gives a nuanced account of the American colonization of the Philippines, the economic effects which resulted from this occupation, and the global consequences which ensued thereafter, leading to the present market conditions currently experienced by the Philippines.
“surplus of labor and capital lie idle with no profits in sight” - this results in the “release of assets at a low cost”, which thereby devalues labour, and leads to the crippling of the economic agency of a workforce (p. 15). Thus, through overaccumulation as propagated by preexisting conditions brought on by the Spanish and American governments, by the mid-twentieth century a large workforce of cheap Filipino labourers (especially female labourers who were already employed as domestic workers in the Philippines) had already started to mobilize in search of other means of income (Lindio-McGovern, 1997).

The late 1960s, the 1970s, and the early 1980s was a period of great change for the Philippines as this was the era which set the precedent for the mass mobilization of Filipino labour from rural to urban spaces, and then internationally. The 1970s was a time of global economic inflation, bolstered by two major oil shocks, which drove the price of petroleum up and resulted in trade deficits for countries that did not produce oil (Naya, 1989). The Philippines suffered accordingly, and in the 1980s, loans made to the Philippines by the IMF and the World Bank resulted in conditional restructuring, which required the reduction of protective tariffs and trade restrictions, as well as “price decontrol, import liberalization, labor control, promotion of export-oriented development, promotion of foreign investment, and a privatization scheme” (Lindio-McGovern, 1997, p. 35). These conditions resulted in further unemployment and depreciation in the value of labour as foreign goods flooded the Philippine market, and private overseas investors increasingly appropriated public resources. Further, bilateral agreements that preconditioned the Philippines to patronize products manufactured by loaning countries further stagnated the Philippine economy and lowered the local competitive prices for goods and services (Parreñas, 2005). This lowered the price of labour in the Philippines, causing citizens to begin to look for a competitive wage in international markets in order to offset spiraling poverty.
As a result of loans made to the Philippines by the IMF, the Philippine government embarked on an aggressive and unofficial labour export policy during the 1970s and 1980s in an effort to offset the strain of yearly debt payments (Lindio-McGovern, 2012).\(^\text{20}\) This led to an exponential increase in the number of Filipinos working as overseas employees and, as mentioned previously, has currently resulted in the highest national percentage of migrant workers than any other nation in the world.

The Philippines currently offers little to no political or legal protection for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). Parreñas (2001) has written about this, asserting that “the Philippine government is caught in a deleterious situation…they lack the economic prowess to protect their citizens” (p. 53). Due to the fact that OFWs contribute greatly to the gross national product, the Philippine government, rather than addressing the abuse of overseas workers as systemic issues, largely treats atrocities committed against domestic workers as individual crimes. Parreñas additionally notes that “the fate of Filipina domestic workers is for the most part dependent on the host society”, and that the Philippine government contributes much of its efforts to maintaining the outflow of bodies from the Philippines (p. 53). This causes increased vulnerability for Pinay domestic workers, who are unlikely to receive protection from both labour-sending and labour-receiving countries. The bodies of domestic workers thus become objects to be traded for economic stability in an era that is increasingly governed by neoliberal reform. This sets up a disturbing sliding scale: the more that neoliberalism is entrenched in the policies of nation-states, the more Pinay workers’ bodies become objectified to facilitate economic stability.

\(^\text{20}\) For a comprehensive historical account of the economic and political conditions surrounding the increased exportation of Filipino labour, please refer to *Filipino Peasant Women* (Lindio-McGovern, 1997), *Not One of the Family* (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997), *Negotiating Citizenship* (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005), and *Globalization, Labor Export, and Resistance* (Lindio-McGovern, 2011).
As a result of the large number of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), the Philippines received USD24,000,000,000 dollars in remittances in 2012, up 6.4% from the previous year; this amount is the third highest in the world, after India and China, whose total populations are more than ten times than that of the Philippines (Nicolas, 2013). The Philippines uses the money from these remittances to attempt to repay foreign debt owed to the IMF and World Bank. However, national debt is still increasing at an alarming rate. As of 2011, in the report “International Debt Statistics” compiled by the World Bank, the amount of foreign debt the Philippines accrued until that year was reported to be USD76,000,000,000 dollars, a significant increase from the USD64,000,000,000 dollars owed in 2009 (p. 244). The continued exportation of labour in response to Filipino debt has resulted in the increased feminization of labour as Filipinas, who have historical precedent working as domestics, increasingly turn to overseas domestic work in order to provide income for their families in a country where prolific unemployment and debt has become the norm.

A History: Domestic Workers Past and Present

I illustrate the history of domestic work in three specific countries (the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada) due to the particular migration trajectories described by the women interviewed for this project. I chart and discuss these trajectories in greater detail throughout the next chapter.

a. The Philippines and Maids
There is a historical precedent for the modern mobilization of gendered labour in the Philippines. The use of domestic workers has a long and deeply-rooted history, existing even before the islands’ occupation and colonization by Spanish conquistadors in the early sixteenth century (Scott, 1991). The indigenous peoples of the Philippines divided society into three classes of people: chiefs, free people, “and a considerable number of slaves” who worked both in the fields, and in houses as domestic servants (Hunt et al., 1954, p. 143). Early Filipino communities operated on a peonage system, where rendering labour service in payment for private debt was carried out as an acceptable practice (Lindio-McGovern, 1997). Under this system, the women and children were sometimes used as commodities for exchange in reparation for damages (Lindio-McGovern, 1997). After the Spanish explorers landed in the Philippines in 1521, the system of retaining domestic workers was left intact as Hunt et al. assert, “colonial powers found it more convenient to govern by…indirect rule” (p. 143). Following nearly four hundred years of Spanish rule, when the Americans established military rule in the Philippines in 1898, this system was maintained since “it was difficult to root out” (p. 144). By 1939, the number of domestic workers had swelled to 18% of the available female workforce (the second highest next to farm labour, which stood at 37%), and was a viable option for poor women who did not have the means or the education to find alternatives (Lindio-McGovern, 1997). Poorer rural women often worked in the homes of the wealthy and middle-class Filipino families who were able to hire maids and helpers for salaries that were incommensurate to the work provided. When complete independence was granted to the Philippines in 1946 with the signing of the Treaty of Manila, the Philippines still operated under a system which maintained the use of domestic workers. During this time, the influence of the American market meant that trade barriers were dropped in the Philippines; thus, the Philippine market was opened to international
competition, and the price of Filipino goods and labour lowered. This meant that the disparity between the rich and the poor widened and, with this, came an increase in the number of both male and female domestic servants (Lindio-McGovern, 1997). Through the low-wage work provided by already impoverished labourers, the social reproduction of the Filipino middle class and elite was effectively supported and upheld. This system continues today as several middle and upper class homes (5.8% of all households in the Philippines) actively employ domestic workers (International Labour Office, 2012; Lindio-McGovern, 1997). Today, domestic work is one of the most common available jobs for poor women from rural families who are not able to pursue higher education (Lindio-McGovern, 1997). Currently in the Philippines, domestic workers are referred to as ‘kasambahay’, ‘ya-yas’, ‘maids’, ‘helpers’, or ‘domestic workers’ and number anywhere from 600,000 to 2.5 million (Rappler, 2012).²¹

While for years there was no security for domestic workers under Philippine law, 2013 marked a time of radical change; in this year, the Act Instituting Policies for the Protection and Welfare of Domestic Workers (Republic Act 10361), also known as the 2013 Domestic Workers Act 1, was signed into law on January 18. For the first time, this new policy stipulates labour rights, benefits and protection to all domestic workers in the Philippines while outlawing abuse, debt bondage, and the worst forms of child labour. According to the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) assessment of the new policy, under this new act, domestic workers in the Philippines are guaranteed wages, hours and days of rest, social security, and public health insurance (2013).²² Domestic workers are now guaranteed coverage under the Social Security System (SSS), Employees’ Compensation Commission (ECC), Philippine Health Insurance

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²¹ According to the 2010 Labour Force Survey, there are approximately 1.8 million people employed by private households alone (Rappler, 2012).
²² For a detailed overview of the 2013 Domestic Workers Act, please refer to the official document “Republic Act No. 10361”, at http://www.gov.ph/2013/01/18/republic-act-no-10361/
Corporation (PHIC), and the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG Fund). All expenses for these provisions are borne by the employer if the employee makes less than P5,000 (CAD137.30) per month (minimum wage in the National Capital Region is set at P2,500 (CAD68.65) per month). Previous to this, there had been no public precedent for the protection of domestic workers in the Philippines. Until the enactment of 2013 Domestic Workers Act, the care of workers was largely the responsibility of private households, in which the range of treatment varied. However, even though the Domestic Workers Act has been implemented, this does not guarantee that the minimum wages and working conditions for domestic labourers are met. If an employer is found to be violating the regulations set in place by the government, he or she may be fined. Currently, the Philippine government does not heavily enforce the new laws put in place to protect domestic workers. If a helper wishes to file a complaint against her employer, she may either go to the police, or file a complaint with her local municipal (barangay) office, but this does not always guarantee results.

In the Philippines, domestic labour is an occupation that is largely filled by women. A profile done by the International Labour Office (2012) in Geneva clarifies that currently in the Philippines, domestic workers are mostly young, single women for whom “paid domestic work is an important source of paid employment”. Of the total number of domestic workers in the Philippines four-fifths are female, a third of whom live in an employer’s house. Here, the report clearly indicates a gendered division of labour, where Filipina women fill a large majority of the domestic help positions. Men, though a minority in the vast pool of labour involved in domestic help, make approximately 40% more than their female counterparts, and are considered to partake in tasks that are more ‘skilled’ than those undertaken by females. A result of this devalued female labour in the Philippines is that women “have been long ignored in labour
legislation and social policy”, and thereby have had little to no protection from exploitation or harsh working conditions until now.

b. **Hong Kong and Foreign Domestic Helpers (FDHs)**

Aside from some countries in the Middle East, Hong Kong remains one of the top destinations in the world for Pinay domestic workers. In 2010, Hong Kong was the number one nation-state in the world to employ foreign domestic helpers (FDHs)\(^\text{23}\), with 28,602 new workers hired (Bonifacio, 2013).

Cantonese-Chinese households have a long tradition of utilizing domestic workers, both male and female (Constable, 2007). The types of servants in Chinese communities were traditionally heterogeneous, and were drawn from a large variety of social groups for different purposes (Constable, 2007). Both free and unfree labour was practiced in many Cantonese families, with a variety of different positions occupied by men and women alike. While early Chinese society deemed daughters should be sheltered and protected, women who worked would do so for extended family or relatives (Constable, 2007).

During the early twentieth century, domestic work became more feminized as men became increasingly employed in the field of manual labour. After the Second World War during the 1950s, Hong Kong experienced rapid industrialization due to the inflow of capital and labour from China where the 1949 Chinese Communist Revolution was occurring (Ngo, 1999; Zhang, 2005). Near the end of the 1950s, Hong Kong had made the transition to a primarily manufacturing-based economy that employed large numbers of Chinese nationals, native Hong

\(^{23}\) Foreign domestic helper (FDH) is the official title used by the Hong Kong Labour Department to refer to individuals who engage in domestic work. The designated terminology which is used to refer to domestic workers changes according to country.
Kong residents, and foreigners (Zhang, 2005). From this, a rise in foreign investments, laissez-faire policies, along with an increasing number of refugees escaping to Hong Kong from China meant that the price of labour dropped. However, the booming manufacturing sector meant the ready absorption of unskilled workers into jobs that serviced a growing demand for exported goods (Constable, 2007). Women also began to enter the workforce in greater numbers during this time, as the need for labourers meant the hiring of females in manufacturing roles. Despite this evolution in the makeup of the workforce, the state made few social provisions for childcare and the withdrawal of women’s labour from the household (Hewison, 2006). From the 1970s to the 1990s, Hong Kong experienced great economic development which resulted in the growth of the service and construction sectors. As more women, especially from the middle-class, began their entrance into the workforce, the demand for domestic workers and nannies began to rise (Wing, 1993). In 1969, Hong Kong approved a policy that would permit expatriates to bring their domestic servants with them when relocating, and in 1973 a policy passed that allowed overseas migrant workers to enter the workforce as domestic labourers and helpers (Constable, 2007; Hewison, 2006). It was during this time that the Marcos regime in the Philippine had embarked on an aggressive campaign, promoting overseas labour in order to service debts accrued to Global North institutions. As a result, a burgeoning number of Pinay women began to migrate to Hong Kong for the purposes of domestic labour.

Between the years 1990 and 1994, the number of domestic workers in Hong Kong doubled and continued to increase until the early 2000s (Hewison, 2006). Sought after for their ability to speak English and their availability, Pinay women were by far the most numerous among all migrant workers during the 1980s and 1990s (Leahy, 1990). However, in the 1990s and early 2000s, a shift in the makeup of foreign domestics began to change the landscape of
labour in Hong Kong. During these years, the number of Indonesian foreign domestic workers began to increase at a greater rate than that of Filipina women. Constable (2007) notes that this shift was motivated by the fact that Pinay women were “considered far too savvy, assertive, and contentious”, due to the establishment of several organizations campaigning for Filipina workers’ rights (p. 38). Indonesian helpers, on the other hand, were considered “less politically organized, and their consulate strongly discouraged workers from filing complaints against their employers” (p. 40). According to the Hong Kong Immigration Department, as of 2013, there are 320,998 foreign domestic helpers (315,985 female, 5,003 male) in Hong Kong, of which approximately 51% are from the Philippines (160,589 female, 4,039 male, 164,889 total), 46% are from Indonesia (148,856 female, 178 male, 149,034 total), and the remaining 3% are from Thailand, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Myanmar (2014).

Currently, the Immigration and Labour Departments of the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region stipulate several criteria for both an employer and a prospective foreign domestic helper (FDH). The minimum allowable wage (MAW) in Hong Kong is presently HKD4,110 per month (CAD644.87). FDHs must enter a written contract with their employer, and usually enter a two year employment period. Employers are required to provide FDHs with accommodation and must be financially capable of supporting a domestic worker in their homes. Domestic workers are restricted to living only at the address of their employers (live-in caregivers), are not permitted to take up any other form of employment once they have entered Hong Kong, are not permitted to drive, may not become permanent residents of Hong Kong, and are required to perform any household duties that are asked of them. Given that

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24 In 2010, a ruling was passed by the Hong Kong lower court that that would have allowed foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to eventually apply for permanent residency; however, this was overturned on appeal in 2012, despite several suits filed by FDHs (Man, 2012).
much of the work carried out by FDHs occurs in the private spaces of the home, the abuses that some foreign domestics experience at the hands of their employers are under-reported, but have included beatings, rape, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, underpayment, isolation, starvation, and physical assault (Constable, 2007). For the past few decades, there have been a growing number of protests and criticisms directed at the status of foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong. The Asian Domestic Workers Union (ADWU), United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL), and the Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers (ATKI) are all active organizations in Hong Kong that advocate for FDH rights.

c. Canada and Caregivers

Like the Philippines, Canada also has a historical precedent for the gendered employment of domestic workers. In Canada, the current use of domestic workers is, according to Sedef Arat-Koc (1997), “linked to histories of racism and immigration” (pp. 55). Prior to the Second World War, due to “theories of eugenics [that] helped shape the project of nation-building in Canada”, race-specific ideals of immigration dictated in large part the flow of bodies into Canada (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997, p. 32). These ideals were predicated on a “racial/ethnic hierarchy immigration policy…that judged potential migrants according to their distance from, or proximity to, ‘white British’ ideals (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997, p. 32). As such, while Canada is historically documented to have participated in the importation of female domestic labourers, all foreign domestics experienced different degrees of vulnerability and coercion according to

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25 Article 3 of the Hong Kong Immigration Department’s “Frequently Asked Questions” page states that “since domestic duties are sundry in types, it is unrealistic to list all domestic duties in detail and exhaustively here or in the Contract, although the broad categories of domestic duties are listed in the Schedule of Accommodation and Domestic Duties attached to the Contract.” (2014).
racialized ideals of ‘appropriate’ Canadian identity (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997; Sedef Arat-Koc, 1997).

During the colonization of Canada by British and French nationals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, slavery did exist in Canada. During these years, Bakan and Stasiulis (1997) note that “the vast majority of female slaves were [black and] employed as domestic servants” (p. 57). In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, due to racialized notions of a “desirable” workforce, white immigrant women primarily from European countries were recruited as domestic workers in Canada. Indeed, in the “early twentieth century, British women constituted more than three-quarters of immigrant domestics coming to Canada” (Arat-Koc, 1997, p. 60).

While these labourers entered Canada under varying degrees of legal exposure which were complicated by intersections of class and race,26 they generally enjoyed better treatment than non-European workers, and could participate in a limited form of class mobility. In contrast to this, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the Canadian government began to use immigration to fill the need for domestic workers, “non-white domestic workers…[were] commonly ghettoized into domestic labour…and were only permitted by state authorities to enter Canada as a last resort” (Arat-Koc, 1997, p. 73).

Throughout much of the early to mid-twentieth century, the large majority of Global South women who entered Canada as domestic workers were recruited from the Caribbean (Arat-Koc, 1997). Imported from their respected countries “solely for the purpose of fulfilling a labour requirement”, these women were subjected to rigid legal restrictions which regulated the

26 In Canada, different groups of Caucasian immigrants (such as Irish, Slavic, etc.) were afforded differential treatment based on social and racial notions of inferiority, dictated by specific social and political movements of the time. In regards to female domestic workers, intersections of race, class, and nationality often resulted in complex biases which played out in immigration policies, and the dispersion of legal rights. For a detailed history of female domestic workers in Canada, please refer to Sedef Arat-Koc’s (1997) essay, “From ‘Mothers of the Nation’ to Migrant Workers”, and Patricia M. Daenzer’s (1997) paper, “An Affair between Nations”.

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reproductive, marital, and citizenship rights of each worker (Arat-Koc, 1997, p. 75). Makeda Silvera (1989) asserts in Silenced that Caribbean women were “brought to Canada to work virtually as legal slaves in the homes of the both wealthy and middle class”, 27 subverting the Global South notion of “Canada as the land of milk and honey” (p. 5). On the contrary, Silvera’s important work notes that Canada’s domestic worker policies have historically served to benefit certain sectors of society (namely affluent Canadians), while restricting and recolonizing Global South women. As noted by Arat-Koc (1997), in these instances “the Canadian government reasoned that [immigration] was ‘a favour’ to the countries of emigration”, establishing a precedent for what Sarita Srivastava (2005) refers to as a “historical construction of racial innocence”, in which historical Canadian “moral identity…focuse[d] on benevolence and innocence” that positioned Global South countries as inferior and obligated to express gratitude (Arat-Koc, 1997, p. 75; Srivastava, 2005, p. 3). This notion of ‘benevolence’ has persisted overtly in Canadian immigration policy, and has continued implicitly today.

1967 was an important year in the implementation of a new immigration policy in Canada, known as ‘the point system’. Under the point system, labour needs and economic prosperity became the explicit basis for the recruitment of immigrants to Canada (Arat-Koc, 1997). The point system further contributed to the unequal and gendered division of labour within Canada as, in a reflection of capitalist notions of ‘skill’ and ‘education’ which view domestic work as unskilled and naturally feminine, domestic workers entering Canada were awarded fewer points than other immigrants. Rewarding domestic workers with fewer points subsequently prevented these women from qualifying as landed immigrants, and thereby

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27 Silenced (1989) was one of the first works published in Canada that dealt with the topic of foreign domestic work in Canadian households. Makeda Silvera interviewed West Indian women about their experiences immigrating to Canada and paved the way for future studies about domestic workers by transcribing the powerful testimony of a previously invisible group.
prevented them from accessing the rights and freedoms afforded to other workers (Arat-Koc, 1997; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005). It was around this time that the number of Filipina domestic workers in Canada began increasing due to a compromise struck between the Canadian and Philippine governments, and the aggressive campaigns pushed by the Marcos regime in the Philippines; this occurred at a time when Canada found it increasingly challenging to attract women from other nations into filling domestic roles within Canadian households (Daenzer, 1997). Currently, Filipina women form the majority of domestic workers within Canada (approximately 61 to 75 percent of all foreign domestics in the 1990s) and, from 1992-2014, operated under a policy known as the Live-In Caregiver Program.²⁸

Canada’s Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) was implemented in 1992 as a reevaluation of the preceding 1981 Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM),²⁹ a move which several critics claim did nothing to address the harshest restrictions on the rights of foreign domestics (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997; Daenzer, 1997; Lindio-McGovern, 2012; Marincola, 2012; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005). Then, and today, domestic workers in Canada are no longer deemed ‘foreign domestics’, but are known as ‘caregivers’. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2014), the stipulations for potential migrants hoping to enter Canada as domestic workers under the Live-In Caregiver Program included: a positive Labour Market Opinion (LMO) from an employer in Canada, a written contract with a future employer, signed by the employer and the employee, successful completion of the equivalent of a Canadian secondary school education plus one year,

²⁸ For a detailed overview of policies preceding the Live-In Caregiver Program, please refer to Daiva Stasiulis and Abigail Bakan’s 2005 text Negotiating Citizenship, and Patricia M. Daenzer’s 1997 essay, “An Affair between Nations”.

²⁹ Under the Foreign Domestic Movement, domestic workers were not permitted to gain Canadian citizenship, and were forced into living in their employers’ homes. For further information on the 1981 Foreign Domestic Movement, please refer to the chapter “Structured Adjustment and Gendered Migration” in Negotiating Citizenship (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005).

³⁰ The criteria of the Canadian Live-In Caregiver Program may be found at http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/work/caregiver/index.asp.
at least one year of full-time paid work experience as a caregiver or in a related field or occupation (including six months with one employer) in the past three years, completion of a standardized English or French examination administered by the Canadian government, and a work permit.

In regards to this, Stasiulis & Bakan (2005) argue that these eligibility criteria precluded the ability of Global South women, especially Filipinas, to gain access to standard human rights as they argue that the stringent nature of the educative requirements successfully prevented women from poorer economic conditions to qualify as ‘suitable’ domestic workers. As well under the LCP, domestic workers were not afforded citizenship rights, but were initially designated as temporary residents who, after at least 2 years of full-time employment, could only then attempt to apply for permanent resident status. During their time of employment, under the LCP, these women were obligated to live within the residence of their employers, and often experienced “abusive and unsafe working conditions” due to their reluctance to report unfair treatment as a result of their precarious immigrant statuses (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005, p. 51).

A major issue was, and still is, that Citizenship and Immigration Canada has no jurisdiction in enforcing employer/employee contracts. This exposes domestic workers to even more vulnerability as this means there is no regulation of domestic labour standards between households. Indeed, few domestic workers “actually file a complaint because of fear of reprisals and even threats of deportation from their employer” (Cuenca, 1998, p. 83). This “lack of a uniform enforcement mechanism among employers”, coupled with immigration policies which regulate the citizenship rights of migrant labourers, contributes greatly to the gendered and racialized abuse of Filipina domestic workers (Cuenca, 1998, p. 83).
Despite the potential for abuse and exploitation, the fact that potential citizenship is, offered to Pinay domestic worker migrants makes Canada an attractive destination (Bonifacio, 2013, p. 46). This facilitates immigration and furthers the agenda of, as Mohanty (2003) states, “the gender and racial regimes of contemporary liberal capitalist states” who seek to utilize gendered immigrant labour as a form of cheap, and easily exploitable, labour (p. 64).

On November 30, 2014 a series of changes were made to the existing domestic worker policies in Canada. No longer called the Live-In Caregiver Program, it is now called the Canada Caregiver Program and has been tailored into two streams that will restrict the number of caregivers allowed entry to Canada each year. Under the new changes made, applicants must apply for immigration either as a caregiver for children, or a caregiver for those with medical needs. In contrast to 2006, when the number of caregivers entering Canada peaked at 9,078, now each caregiving stream will accept a capped maximum of 2,750 applications, for a total of 5,500 per year. One of the most significant changes is that the new program will deprive new immigrants of a guaranteed path to permanent residency. Canada will no longer entertain humanitarian and compassionate appeals for the dependents of caregivers (in addition, a caregiver may be deported if her dependents are declared inadmissible by Canada), and if a caregiver does not manage to gain permanent residency status after four years, she will be sent back to her country of origin. In addition, the live-in requirement has been repealed – caregivers may now choose to reside outside of their employers’ homes. Other additional changes that have been made include tighter restrictions on educational requirements (caregivers must have one year of post-secondary education in Canada, or the equivalent). Of great concern with the new regulations is that caregivers will be pushed into more precarious employment under rules that allow for continued exploitation and disenfranchisement (Black, 2014). Closely enforced by the
Department of Citizenship and Immigration in Canada (who administer fines or deportation orders if violations are detected), these changes made to Canada’s existing Live-In Caregiver Program will greatly affect domestic workers’ vulnerability and will further contribute to racial scripts that designate racialized Global South women as undeserving of secure citizenship (Pratt, 2005; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005).

Hence, current processes of globalization and the increased adoption of neoliberal reform are deleterious for Pinay migrants. Exceptionalist practices within transnational immigration mean that gender, race, and class differences are invisibilized, normalized, and continually exploited, to the detriment of poorer Global South women. Historically, the colonial legacies of the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada mean that current global relations are stratified according to a North/South labour divide. Thus, colonialism and gendered understandings of work in these three countries have historically contributed to how domestic work is structured today. Current neoliberal policies mean that these legacies of colonialism continue to inform and perpetuate inequalities for Pinays, who migrate from the Philippines as domestic workers out of necessity. This creates a global chain of care that links exploitation in labour-sending countries with exploitation in labour-receiving countries. Bonifacio (2013) writes that Filipina domestic workers generally first embark from the Philippines to either the Middle East or Hong Kong. Since many Pinay caregivers in Canada arrive from a country other than the Philippines, this means that Filipina domestic workers could migrate to and from two or three other countries before arriving in Canada. Given that the top destination for Pinay domestic workers from the Philippines is Hong Kong, it makes sense that a large number of caregivers in Canada would have arrived directly from Hong Kong. The movements of these women within these complex
systems of power thus forge transnational relations that result in the formation of migration trajectories from the Global South to the Global North.
Chapter 3: Transnational Migration Trajectories

Kay saklap naman ng kapalaran
Nilisan ka 'pagkat ika'y napilitan lang
Kaya ito laging kasama ko
Ang tamis ng pait ng ala-ala mo

How painful this fate
You were left behind because you were reluctant
That’s why this is always with me
Your bittersweet memory

Paalam sampaguita
Bakit ka lalayo pa
Maninirahan sa America
Di na tayo magkikita

Farewell sampaguita
Why do you have to go far
Going to live in America
We will never see each other again

- Paalam Sampaguita (Farewell Sampaguita), by the folk group Yano, is a Tagalog love song released in 1997 that addresses the difficult migration of Filipinos who move overseas search of better opportunities.

Many studies (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997; Bonifacio, 2013; Constable, 1997; Constable, 2007; de Jesús, 2005; Lindio-McGovern, 2011; Parreñas, 2001, 2005, 2011; Pratt, 2005) have described the conditions within the Philippines that make the transnational outflow of labour necessary in an increasingly globalized and capitalist environment. These macrostructural processes are facilitated through bilateral labour relations between labour-sending and labour-receiving nation-states. In this project, I also touch on the structural circumstances that result in the migration of Filipinas (in Tagalog, Pinays), drawing from the qualitative interviews I conducted in the Philippines and Canada. However in addition to looking at the international relationships which foster the indentured displacement women from the Philippines, my project will also closely focus on the domestic policies and conditions that result in chronic migration within the Philippines. By doing this, I will not only illustrate a more nuanced understanding of the global chain of care, but also the detrimental ways in which global processes of labour are directly related to the domestic dislocation of rural Filipino families.
Transnational Labour Trajectories – Domestic Labour: A Four-Pronged Approach

This section of my project is one that will utilize a multi-tiered lens of analysis in order to map out a topographical understanding of Filipina labour migration. While several works have traditionally examined the labour migration of Pinays in two primary sites of engagement (the labour-sending country and the labour-receiving country), my work engages with four scales of Filipina labour migration that stretches over multiple international spaces. The trajectory articulated in this project is one that is frequently traveled by many Pinays, and is particularly familiar to domestic workers who settle in Canada. Supplemented by the qualitative interviews I conducted, four places of engagement (rural labour-sending country, urban labour-sending country, intermediary labour-receiving country, destination labour-receiving country) are articulated in this work by examining spaces in three nation-states – the Philippines (as the labour-sending country), Hong Kong (as the intermediary country), and Canada (as the destination country). This multifaceted investigation of Pinay domestic labour migration nuances previous understandings of the global chain of care, pointing out several new interlocking planes of analysis where oppression, resistance, and subversion are practiced. Furthermore, by illustrating one of the many migration trajectories on which Pinays embark, I seek to underscore the inherent interconnectivity between the labour that is carried out across different times and spaces. In doing this, we will take into consideration the ways in which state-sanctioned neoliberal processes resonate across and through the global chain of care in detrimental ways. This articulation however, while seeking to undo and interrogate certain
constructions of migration, is undertaken with the understanding that my qualitative interviews are but a few of the many narratives that speak across the migrant, Filipina, and overseas labourer experiences.

**First-Tier: Domestic Philippine Migration (Rural to Urban)**

More than 70% of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are Pinays, of which more than half are contracted as domestic workers (Tujan, 2001). While these statistics are staggering in the sheer number of Pinays who migrate overseas for work, what is missing in this census is the invisible number of women who migrate for work within the Philippines. Mary Grace A. Tirona (2013), Undersecretary to the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, notes that there is currently an urbanizing trend illustrating the mass migration of rural Filipino families to urban areas. According to Tirona, a 2000 census of population and housing has revealed that 48% of Filipinos live in urban areas, compared to 37% over two decades ago. This rural-to-urban migration stream is, as Tirona comments, the main migration pattern in the country and is intimately connected to the international population of Filipinos who migrate transnationally - the very bottom of the global chain of labour is occupied by rural families from whose ranks wealthier and urban Filipino families draw to support their own labour needs (Lindio-McGovern, 1997).

Domestic migration in the Philippines is driven by a number of diverse factors, among which include a burgeoning labour force and the comparatively higher income of urban areas (Tirona, 2013). The larger domestic migration patterns from rural to urban areas as well as the income disparity between these spaces are closely tied to the phenomenon of migration for the purposes of domestic labour. As one woman explains:
I was born in Balete, Aklan. When I was in elementary school, I could only go twice a week because I needed to take care of my brothers and sisters while my parents were working in the rice fields; I had to help plant rice too. After I graduated from elementary school, I went to Manila as a domestic helper. It was okay for my parents because there were so many of us. Lots of my brothers and sisters separated to do other things, but only my elder sister and I came to Manila to work. (Ging)

According to Lindio-McGovern (1997), some poor rural women who do not have the opportunity to continue education at the post-secondary level, and who are not absorbed into agricultural labour or the manufacturing sector, turn to domestic work. This is illustrated most poignantly by two women’s experiences:

I decided to apply overseas instead of continuing university. Because it’s too hard, you know. And then there are financial issues. You know, my father was only a farmer and in the Philippines, farmers are very poor. (Monica)

I went to elementary school and then I stopped because of financial problems. It isn’t really that expensive to go to school, but my parents could still not afford for me to study like that. (Darna)

Bonifacio (2013) remarks that the processes of rural to urban migration are gendered since, “although women’s work helps sustain farming households, the physical labour required by agriculture is often better supplied by male siblings” (p. 36). As a result of this, daughters in poor families often migrate domestically from rural to urban areas as a survival strategy of the household. Once in areas of greater population density such as Manila, these women are often able to find gainful employment as maids or helpers due to the longstanding tradition of domestic service in Filipino families (Bonifacio, 2013). The importance of gender to performing domestic work in the Philippines is explained by one woman, wherein:

There are no men who are household help, only women usually. Men can become janitors or household boys, or gardeners, but that’s rare. Girls can go around the

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31 Some women may also turn to sex work in order to support themselves financially; however, this is considered a highly stigmatized line of work in the Philippines.
house much easier, but the boys cannot – boys are less trusted. So, it is easier for a woman from Visayas to get a job in Manila. It is harder for men. Usually men apply to become construction workers. So, it is better to be a woman if you want to come from the province to work in Manila. (Darna)

In addition to gender, domestic work in the Philippines is often divided along class lines.

Income distribution in the Philippines is largely unequal, with the richest 20% of the population receiving over 49.7% of the country’s total income in 2014. Due to the fact that income disparity rates are very high, Philippine society itself is stratified very distinctly by class, with income inequality resulting in distinct social grouping (Gerson, 1998). This class stratification is noted by Ging in that:

> We have a lot of people here in the Philippines. If you are rich then you stay here, if you are poor then you stay there - like separate classes in society. If you are a maid, people think you are poor and don’t want to help you. (Ging)

Due to the intersection of gender and class, it is thus often poorer women from rural areas who migrate to urban centers to work in middle and upper-class households. Indeed, today domestic work is generally “the most common occupation for poor and undereducated women from peasant families” and an astonishing 90% of the one million child domestics (less than 15 years of age) in the Philippines are girls (Lindio-McGovern, 1997, p. 33).

Certain regions in the Philippines experience a greater exodus of young female workers than other areas. Data supplied by the World Bank suggests that in the Philippines, the poor are disproportionately located in rural areas (Gerson, 1998). Hosoda (2007) has written that, beginning in the 1960s, Metro Manila has received a steady stream of migrants from outlying provinces that are not as industrially developed.\(^\text{32}\) For example, the Eastern Visayas region (see

\(^{32}\) Metro Manila is the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines and is the most populous region in the country. The larger city is comprised of 16 distinct smaller cities and 1 municipality. The population of Metro Manila is, as of 2010, is approximately 12 million people, with a further 13 million residing in outlying areas close to the capital’s metropolis (NCR Profile, 2015).
image), which is agricultural and largely industrially undeveloped, experiences a large annual departure of women to the urban capital of Manila (located in central Luzon province), as do the rural Ilocos regions (northern Luzon) and the agricultural Bicol regions (southern Luzon).

![Regions of the Philippines](http://www.geocurrents.info/uncategorized/philippines-uneven-economic-boom)


One woman describes that:

There are so many help from the Visayas in Manila; it’s because in the Visayas, it’s really hard, the life there. Especially for people like me. Before, when I was a child, I was working for the whole day, for 25 pesos. Now I think the salary is 80 pesos per day. It’s so low. So it’s really different when you work in Manila - you can have a higher salary. (Darna)

Gerson (1998) reports that rural areas are among the poorest in the Philippines, and often exhibit high income disparities in addition to a scarcity of resources. Hosoda (2007) notes that much of the migration from rural to urban areas in the Philippines is characterized by the high ratio of women from the ages 15-29 who flock to Manila from the countryside in search of job
opportunities. For instance, from the years 1986-1990, the ratio of women who left Eastern Visayas for the metropolis of Metro Manila stood at 55.7% of all domestic migrants from Eastern Visayas. Hosoda further comments that these young women rarely permanently return to their home provinces once they have established themselves in the urban centers of the Philippines; instead many will save the wages they earn in urban centers, sending their money to their families back in the provinces.

The flow of money from urban to rural households in the Philippines constitutes a lively domestic remittance industry. Since “local Filipinos are the largest funder of domestic remittances”, domestic remittances form a multi-million dollar industry in the Philippines (Sun Star, 2013). Mikka Perez, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a remittance service agency, commented on the strength of domestic money transference in the Philippines, asserting that there are “70 million unbanked/underbanked Filipinos residing in the Philippines–many of whom are domestic migrants”; these domestic migrants “migrated from the countryside to the big cities in search of jobs and income opportunities … [and] remit even larger amounts of money to the countryside” (Shu, 2014). This is evidenced by one woman who says that:

A lot of the maids in Manila come from the Visayas, and then they send money back to their families there. (Ging)

Even in some of the poorest and most isolated communities in the rural Philippines, remittance businesses such as Western Union, M Lhuillier, KwartaGram, LBC, MoneyGram, Palawan Pawnshop, and Pinoy Express are well-established centers that not only engage in money transference services, but also act as pawnshops and bill payment agencies. Most of the remittances sent domestically in the Philippines are from urban to rural areas. For example in

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33 ‘Local Filipinos’ are Filipinos who live in the Philippines.
34 Larger amounts of money than the migrants originally took to the cities from the provinces.
2012, Western Union’s top domestic remittance-sending areas were Quezon City, Manila, Makati, Caloocan, Paranaque, Pasig, Mandaluyong, Taguig, Pasay and Baguio – all densely populated regions that (with the exception of Baguio) belong to the National Capital Region of the Philippines (Sun Star, 2012). Women who migrate to urban centers and remit money back to their families can be assured of higher wages as domestic workers in larger cities than in the provinces.35

Hence, this first tier of migration forms the foundation that renders larger cycles of international migration possible. Rural Pinay women buttress the labour needs of an urban and largely more affluent population who are in search of cheaper domestic services. Once employed, these rural women are able to remit money domestically back to the provinces in support of the family members who remain. Domestic migration in the Philippines is gendered and class stratified as poorer rural women (55.7% of all domestic migrants) migrate from outlying Philippine provinces to urban areas where the demand for domestic service (and other jobs such as hostesses and entertainers36) is higher.

Second Tier: International Philippine Migration (Urban to International)

Closely related and supported by the internal migration of rural Filipinas to urban centers in search of work, the international departure of Filipinos for overseas destinations is also a gendered, classed, and raced phenomenon that is markedly tied to the global demands for labour.

35 Minimum wage rates differ by sector and region in the Philippines. For example, The Department of Labor and Employment lists the minimum daily wage for retail/service work in the Eastern Visayas at P229.00 (CAD6.26), whereas the minimum daily wage for retail/service work in the National Capital Region is P429.00 (CAD11.73) (Department of Labour and Employment, 2013).

36 For more about migrant Pinay hostesses and entertainers in Japan, see Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration, and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo by Rhacel Salazar Parreñas (2011).
According to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), the global industry which employs the most overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) is the service industry, with a total of 201,512 new workers deployed in 2011. Female OFWs are concentrated in fields, such as the service industry, that reflect host societies’ gender and race expectations. The extension of these gendered notions of care means that, even today, women overwhelmingly occupy the positions of domestic workers and caregivers in different countries worldwide (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005).

As previously outlined, the creation of a migration state in the Philippines has far-reaching historical roots that interact with current systems of colonialism and the global push for development. This has meant that the Philippines have become a global source of cheap labour that is drawn upon internationally. Colonial legacies of the past few centuries, as well as neocolonial relationships that have carried over today, mean that many Global North countries look to extract labour from the Philippines in order to shore up their own industrial sectors. Rhacel Parreñas (2001; 2005) critically elaborates on this argument, illustrating how care inequities are a direct catalyst for the outward migration of Pinay women from the Philippines. In addition to a lack of resources in developing countries, which are compounded by the effects of structural adjustment programs, labour market demands in Global North countries result in a “care resource extraction” from the Philippines that systemically sees the exit of able-bodied women outside the country (Parreñas, 2005). The Philippines is heavily dependent on foreign markets to provide jobs for a country that is crippled by debt and engaged in unequal bilateral relationships. Parreñas notes that the “instabilities imposed by the political economy of

38 For example, domestic work in Canada has a historical precedent for long being characterized as “women’s work”, where family ideology and patriarchal notions of gender reflected legislation that negatively impacted the gendered division of household labour (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997).
globalization on Filipino households force a great number of families to send an able-bodied member outside of the country” and, as demonstrated by the large number of females exiting the Philippines to live as OFWs, this “able-bodied person” is most often a woman (Parreñas, 2005, p. 18).

Opening the Philippine economy to global competition has meant that the nation is placed in a position of unequal dependency on Global North countries in search of inexpensive human labour. However, this circumstance intersects with the fact that migrant labourers work overseas in order to send remittances back home, and provide their families with “basic care resources that have been depleted by debt servicing” (Parreñas, 2005, p. 18). Generally higher, and more stable, wages from abroad are able to furnish a better quality of life for the children and extended families of OFWs than if the OFWs had remained and worked in the Philippines. This reality is reflected in the quotidian life of many OFW families:

That part will never die; you always have to send money – remittance back to the Philippines. Most of the OFWs are working overseas – Filipino workers are the ones who bring lots of money to the Philippines because of our remittances. We are the ones who are sending money to our families. (Andrey)

Throughout the 1990s, the demand for domestic workers in East and Southeast Asia grew exponentially, and was met by a burgeoning number of mostly Pinay women who traveled to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia (Constable, 1997). Today Global North countries, such as Canada and the United States, “are favoured destinations for…immigrants”, followed by states in the West Asia/Middle East (especially Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar), and East/South Asia (especially Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore)” (Bonifacio, 2013, p. 39).

40 2,850,591 total overseas Filipinos (POEA, 2012).
41 1,232,715 total overseas Filipinos (POEA, 2012).
The international export of Filipinos to overseas destinations is a process that is heavily gendered, raced and classed. As illustrated before, the number of Filipina women who migrate for work internationally is much higher than that of men, especially in industries where gendered expectations relating to the international division of labour relegate carework to women. One report denotes that in 2012, out of 410,809 new migrants to overseas destinations 231,175 were female (approximately 56.3%), and of these more than half were employed by the domestic service sector (Battistella & Asis, 2013). Gendered divisions of work in destination countries greatly influence the kind of labour that Filipinos perform overseas.

Similarly, racial expectations also play a dominant role in determining which jobs are open to Filipinos, and which are more restricted. Stasiulis and Bakan (2005) point out that due to colonial legacies that relegated black women to performing domestic work internationally, many employers and employment agencies will ideologically stereotype the type of person who is deemed ‘appropriate’ for this type of labour. This stereotype involves a “fictive universality of the non-white, female ‘other’ whose biological and ‘natural’ make up ascribes her to be inherently appropriate for domestic service” (p. 77). Chandra Mohanty (2003) suggests that this type of stereotype is most often associated with racialized brown women, who are considered more ‘docile’ and ‘passive’ than women of other races. This means that in countries such as Canada and Hong Kong, stereotypes about domestic labour may fall along certain colour lines that contribute to racist and discriminatory practices. For example, in their studies of Hong Kong and Canadian hiring practices, Constable (2007) and Stasiulis and Bakan (2005) indicate that agencies exhibit differential hiring techniques based on the racial preferences of their clients. In Hong Kong, Constable reports some clients mentioning that the lighter brown skin of Pinay was more pleasing as “they [most Chinese] don’t like them with the skin too dark, [f]or it might
scare the children” (p. 39). By the late 1980s in Hong Kong, the role of domestic worker was racially associated with Pinay women to the extent that “the term banmui (‘Philippine girl’) was used interchangeably with ‘maid’ or ‘servant’” (Constable, 2007, p. 42). In Canada, Stasiulis and Bakan write that in the early 2000s, Pinay women were considered by some agencies to be more ‘soft’ and ‘giving’ than women from other Global South nations (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005). It is evident that these processes not only problematically essentialize the characters of female labourers, but also reinforce the notion that non-white migrant women are suitable only for work that is considered ‘unskilled’ and ‘caring’. Clearly, racial expectations harbouried by clients in labour-receiving countries determine, to a large extent, the increasing outmigration of women from the Philippines as domestic workers.

Class also plays a significant role in determining who is able to migrate out of the Philippines, and who cannot. Different host countries have diverse educational requirements for incoming domestic workers. The Immigration Department of the Government of Hong Kong does not specify a minimum educational proficiency for applicants, whereas Canada requires all caregiver applicants to complete the equivalent of a Canadian high school diploma (which in the Philippines means the completion of high school, plus two years of college) as well as a minimum of twelve months full-time employment in a field related to domestic care.\(^{42}\) This means that only educated women who have been able to afford and access university courses and training are able to migrate to, and access, particular countries. As one woman relates:

> My auntie is only a high school graduate, so she wasn’t able to come to Canada to work. The Canadian embassy requires Filipino overseas workers to have 72 units from university to come. If you are a high school graduate, you cannot go to Canada. A lot of Filipinas go to Hong Kong instead. (Andrey)
Women who do not have the financial resources to access tertiary education are unable to migrate to countries such as Canada, while those who are more class privileged in the Philippines are able to migrate if they choose. Such class differences in the Philippines greatly affect the migration trajectories of Pinay women.

Transnational labour migration for the domestic service industry can be a multi-step process that may involve transference to many countries across a span of years. For some Pinay women, working as domestic labourers in intermediary countries helps them to gain experience for eventual transference to Global North destination countries. This particular stage in the labour trajectories of Pinay women is necessitated by the stricter requirements of many Global North countries such as Canada and the United States, the former of which demands a minimum of two years of college in the Philippines and one year experience in care services before applications to the country’s caregiving program will be considered. Working in intermediary countries allow Pinay domestic workers to gain experience in caregiving and household duties, which eventually permits interested labourers (who have the necessary educational requirements) to apply for caregiving positions in Canada and Europe:

I want to go to Canada or the U.S. because the salary is higher over there. I am going to start with an Asian family first though, so I have experience. I will apply to an agency in Hong Kong first, then after I will go to Canada or the U.S. (Darna)

One of the reasons that some educated Pinay domestic workers choose to apply to work in certain Global North countries is due to the ability to gain permanent residency and citizenship after a period of time. For example, unlike in Hong Kong where domestic workers are not permitted to apply for permanent residency, Canada offers a ‘carrot’ of eventual permanent residency and citizenship to domestic helpers who enter under the Live-In Caregiver Program
(Bakan & Stasiulis, 2005; Bonifacio, 2013). This demand for tertiary-level education by some countries means that women who are poorer, or who hail from rural areas where higher education is not accessible, are not able to attain the credentials required by many Global North nation-states; if possible, these women usually migrate as domestic workers to countries in the Middle East and East/South Asia, where educational requirements are lower. Hence, transnational migration is stratified according to education - some educated Pinay women choose to migrate to a country that does offer permanent residency once they have fulfilled minimum work experience requirements in an intermediary country. This is not an option for poorer rural women who are not as educated.

Third Tier: Intermediary Labour-Receiving Country - Neoliberal Labour Import: Hong Kong

There are several notable characteristics about the way that foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) are brought to work in Hong Kong. Following the worldwide adoption of neoliberal policies, inadequate and expensive health and childcare services in Hong Kong mean that the responsibility for social reproduction is downloaded onto individual Hong Kong citizens. As discussed previously, the entrance of women into the workforce in Hong Kong has meant that many households pull in a double income and, as such, cheaply hire FDHs to perform household activities.

Hong Kong’s Labour and Immigration Departments offer a plethora of resources available for potential employers who would like to hire foreign domestic helpers. Detailed documents such as the “Guidebook for the Employment of Domestic Helpers from Abroad”
(issued by the Immigration Department), “Practical Guide for Employment of Foreign Domestic Helpers” (issued by the Labour Department) and sample contracts (provided by the Immigration Department) all instruct a potential employer on the processes of hiring a foreign domestic worker. Potential employers must be financially able to support a FDH, and must earn no less than HKD15,000 (CAD2,319.11) per month. A potential employer must also pay a FDH a salary that is no less than the minimum allowable wage (presently HKD4,110 per month, which is CAD644.87) as announced by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), and should provide suitable food, accommodation, and medical insurance at no additional cost to the helper (a food allowance of HKD964.00 – CAD149.05 – per month may be provided in lieu of free food). If a helper’s earnings fall below HKD120,000 (CAD18,553.65) per year, the employer does not need to report the employee’s income to the Inland Revenue Agency for taxation. As well, an employer must provide free passage to and from the helper’s home country at the beginning and end of a work contract. In addition, a potential employer must be a resident of Hong Kong.

If an employer or agency does not adhere to the wages and working conditions set out by Hong Kong’s Labour and Immigration Departments, both parties may be fined or banned from employing domestic workers in the future. However, Constable (2007) notes that generally, there is little regulation by the government of domestic workers’ wages or working conditions. Due to the numerable households that employ domestic helpers, and the fact that most domestic work takes place in the private homes of Hong Kong residents, there is little government interference or investigation into how closely work standards are met. This creates an environment where domestic workers may be easily exploited by their employers or agencies.
The process of applying for a work visa in Hong Kong is different for domestic workers than it is for other potential migrants. According to the Immigration Department, when considering visa applications the government of Hong Kong differentiates between imported foreign workers and foreign domestic helpers, outlining separate processes and criteria for each. The visa application of imported foreign workers generally relies on the skill level of the potential worker, the nature of the job market in Hong Kong, and the ability of a company or employer to financially support an imported worker’s salary. Contrastingly, visa applications put forth by foreign domestic helpers rely on the ability of the employer to support a potential worker, and also hinge on other criteria such as an obligatory medical and pregnancy exam for the potential worker, and previous experience working as a domestic helper (the Labour Department denotes that two years is preferable, but not required).

The stipulation that foreign domestic helpers must undergo medical and pregnancy examinations denote invisiblized processes of surveillance that are underwritten by sexism and racism. To elaborate further, Constable (2007) writes that all foreign domestic helpers going to Hong Kong are required to submit to physical examinations and medical testing. During these tests, “a woman’s body is invaded. Specimens are taken to test for various forms of…diseases. She receives a pregnancy test…She is x-rayed, weighed, and measured…Medical information then becomes part of her application file” (p. 76). Conversations with two former FDHs reveals even more about this process:

I had to undergo medical tests in the Philippines – eyes, blood, psychology, and a pregnancy test the day after the flight. You are already in Hong Kong when they check because sometimes they don’t know. Also, they test your heart, and give you X-rays a month before. For the psychology test, you just draw something.

(Stephanie)

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43 See “Immigration Guidelines for Entry to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China” at http://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/visas/immigration-entry-guideline.html
If a maid gets pregnant, the contract must end and she has to go back home right away. Every six months you need to have medical tests – everything! Blood test, pregnancy test, medical exam - a lot of them. A lot of needles. If you are sick, then you have to go back home to the Philippines. (Ging)

As noted above, in order to gain a work visa for entry into Hong Kong, various physical and even mental examinations are required of potential domestic workers. Stringent regulations prevent pregnant, sick, or disabled women from entering Hong Kong as domestic helpers. As discussed previously, neoliberal narratives assume that any social investment that does not have a direct economic impact on the market is regarded as worthless. In her analysis of the criminalization of pregnancies among indigenous women by the American government, Smith (2005) notes that “the assumption behind these claims…is that lives are of value to the extent that they meet capitalist expectations of self-sufficiency and productivity” (p. 87). The regulation of domestic workers’ bodies and the prohibition of their pregnancies indicates a larger neoliberal script - the government of Hong Kong refuses to acknowledge the worth and value of Pinay women’s bodies unless they are directly involved in producing labour power that services the local population. If a woman becomes pregnant, she is unable to work to her full capacity – this is seen as a liability for many companies, corporations, and even governments, who have traditionally viewed pregnancy as “confusing and costly” – thus, a liability to profit or efficiency (Noguchi, 2014).

The intersection of race with gender in these situations also produces narratives about which women are deemed appropriate to procreate, according to the government. Racialized women have overwhelmingly been the subjects of fertility control in many settler colonial nations, due to the assumption that these women ‘produce social ills’ and are responsible for the

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44 Many other countries, such as Singapore and Canada, also require all potential domestic workers to undergo similar medical and pregnancy tests before they are permitted to enter the country.
current population boom in the world (Smith, 2005). As such, the current regulation of fertility and pregnancy by the Hong Kong government thus speaks to larger issues of human worth and value that are intimately tied to systems of racial supremacy. Due to the fact that Pinay domestic workers are heavily racialized, and are presumed to be inferior in some way, the regulation of domestic workers’ pregnancies (but not other migrant workers’ pregnancies\textsuperscript{45}) by the Hong Kong government clearly illustrates the neoliberal and racist notion that pregnant women of colour are a liability as they are unable to labour to their fullest extent, are therefore dangerous, and thus should be heavily policed based on these circumstances.

A number of Pinays who migrate as overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are oftentimes highly educated (Bonifacio, 2013; Constable, 2007; Parreñas, 2005; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005). Due to the economic situation in the Philippines, many professional and highly skilled women are unable to find steady or permanent jobs (Parreñas, 2001). These circumstances, coupled with the fact that tertiary-level education is often a requirement for entry into many Global North countries such as Canada and the United States, means that the level of education that many Pinay domestic workers have achieved in Hong Kong is very high, sometimes more than their employers, as evidenced by Stephanie’s statement:

I studied computer science in college. I have a Bachelor of Science, major in computer science. (Stephanie)

The visa application for domestic helpers in Hong Kong currently does not stipulate any minimum education requirements. This means that the level of education attained by FDHs working in Hong Kong is more diverse than in other countries, with some domestic workers

\textsuperscript{45} Migrant workers who do not have to submit to a pregnancy test in Hong Kong include those who migrate at the invitation of a corporation or company (professionals or entrepreneurs), a school (teachers and university students), or an entertainment agency (models and actors).
completing high school and others achieving a Master’s or doctorate. The high level of education attained by some Pinays is described by Andrey:

> I went to Cebu to get a Master’s degree. My auntie who worked as a helper in Hong Kong supported me so that I could go. I have a Master’s of Education, field of Filipino. I also have a degree in agriculture. I got my Master’s because there was a need for Filipino teachers in school. I went to school Monday to Friday, then Saturday and Sunday in another school, just to get that. (Andrey)

Education is an important aspect of labour import into Hong Kong as it can influence whether or not a potential employer is willing to hire. Constable (2007) writes that in Hong Kong, “many Chinese employers favor less-educated domestic workers because they ‘know their place’…From the standpoint of employers and employment agency staff, the ideal worker is not a ‘professional’ or the social equal” (p. 82). I argue that in addition to class distinctions, employers in Hong Kong are also selective about a potential employee’s education due to the possibility that a domestic worker may migrate elsewhere once she has gained experience. For example, in Canada a domestic worker must have prior experience working in the field of caregiving in addition to two years of college in the Philippines. Due to these restrictions, some Pinay women first migrate to Hong Kong in order to gain experience, and then migrate to Canada once they have gained the amount of experience necessitated by the Canadian government. As one woman notes, some employers become savvy to this particular migration trajectory, preferring to hire workers of lower education who will not depart once they have fulfilled two years of work:

> If the employers in Hong Kong know, they won’t hire a university graduate, because mostly the women who come here are university graduates, or college graduates. One friend of mine, her employer said that she didn’t want to get a girl, a domestic helper, from Luzon. Her employer said she wanted a nanny from Visayas; and she didn’t want to get a college or university graduate because she knew that they would leave to go to another country after Hong Kong. (Andrey)
A lot of university graduates go to Hong Kong first, and then they come to Canada. You can’t just go to Canada because it’s too hard, and it’s a long wait – a long process. It’s faster if you go first through Hong Kong. (Andreya)

I assert that it is this unique situation that further contributes to the characterization of Hong Kong as an intermediary country in Pinays’ migration trajectories. For women who do not have a university degree, remaining in Hong Kong or migrating to another country that does not have a minimum education requirement is possible.

Another factor which characterizes Hong Kong as an intermediary country within transnational migration is the fact that foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) are unable to gain permanent residency. As discussed previously, in 2010, a ruling was passed by the Hong Kong lower court that would have allowed FDHs to eventually apply for permanent residency. However, this was overturned on appeal in 2012, despite several suits filed by FDHs.

Compounding this, according to the Immigration Department in Hong Kong, an FDH (as a migrant worker) is not permitted to bring over her dependents unless she is a resident of Hong Kong. Given the fact that domestic workers are effectively barred from becoming residents, the possibility of one day bringing over family members from the Philippines to Hong Kong is unlikely. This means that for many Pinay women who have already attained a high level of education upon entry into Hong Kong, migrating to countries where eventual permanent residency is offered (such as Canada) is a more attractive option than staying in Hong Kong.

I decided that I am going to Canada – that is really my purpose. I need to first go to Hong Kong for a year’s experience, because Hong Kong is a really easy way to get into Canada. (Darna)

By becoming permanent residents, and then possibly citizens in Global North countries, some Pinay women are eventually able to bring over their families and dependents. As such, I assert
that an oft invisiblized trend for many class and education privileged Pinays is to migrate to countries such as Canada, using Hong Kong (or other countries such as Singapore) as an intermediary country in order to gain necessary experience requirements.

**Fourth Tier: Global North Final Destination - Neoliberal Labour Import: Canada**

The conditions in Canada that foster labour import from Global South countries are similar to those of Hong Kong. Special programs that are designed to compensate for labour shortages in Canada attract many people from the Philippines, who are contracted to work as temporary labourers (Bonifacio, 2013). Canada often relies on the importation of cheap domestic labour from the Philippines to take up the social reproduction of Canadian families who are unable to care for the very young or the aging due to the need to work outside the home (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005). The increasingly neoliberal environment of Canada means that cuts to health and education across all provinces have resulted in individual families shouldering the responsibility for child and elder care. Save for Québec (which introduced a universal child care program in 1997), most families are consigned to accepting expensive or “unlicensed and unmonitored care”, which places the burden (and great expense) of child minding on individual parents (Anderssen & Mackrael, 2013). A comparable situation emerges as the refusal of the government to subsidize elder care, along with the tendency of many Canadian children to live separate from their parents, means increasing financial and social responsibility for elder care is adopted by the individual. For example, Canada’s Department of Finance asserts that “faced with an aging population, the first imperative is to redouble efforts to boost productivity growth so that Canadian workers can produce more and better goods and services and be better paid”
What this indicates is that in order to care for an elderly population, the Canadian government desires economic growth that can stimulate income earners to spend their own money on resources such as private caregivers. As one woman relates:

That’s the thing now, the number of Canadians who are retired now; there’s just not enough homes – retirement homes – for them. And the best solution is to bring someone to look after them, you know? A lot of them don’t want to go to retirement homes, they want to stay in their house. (Andreya)

Both the critical shortage in child care, as well as a lack of resources in Canada to adapt to an aging population, has meant that the “decision among Canadian families to hire a live-in foreign domestic is a choice taken within a context of limited options” (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997, p. 41). Thus, Canada’s domestic neoliberal policies that privatize carework create an environment that necessitates importing cheap labour alternatives for two-income Canadian families who are unable to afford the more expensive caregiving services of Canadian citizens.46 Conditions of poverty, the aggressive overseas worker campaigns advocated by the Philippine government and the attractive temporary work-visa program offered in Canada all combine to produce the conditions necessary to create Pinays’ transnational migration trajectories that stretch to Canada.

In Canada, according to the Ontario Ministry of Labour, foreign domestic workers are paid minimum wage, which in Ontario is $11.00/hour (2014). All employers are also required by law to deduct Income Tax, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Employment Insurance (EI). As well, employers also deduct room and board from the total wages earned by domestic workers - up to $85.25 per week (2014). Employers must pay agency fees to recruit potential overseas domestic workers, as well as pay for the airfare of the employee to come to Canada to work.

46 As of 2014, the average cost of infant care per child, per month in major Canadian cities were as follows: $1,676/month in Toronto, $1,349/month in St. John’s, over $1,000/month in Vancouver and Mississauga (Nguyen, 2014).
Agencies are private organizations that regulate their own affairs, and each province implements slightly different policies to regulate domestic workers in each area. Thus, there may be discrepancies between how closely the Canadian government regulates employers in each province. The regulation of wages and working conditions for domestic workers in the private homes of Canadians are not uniformly or regularly enforced unless a specific complaint is made. If a domestic worker wishes to file a complaint, she may do so at an Employment Standards Office in Canada, but must do so no less than six days after her last day of employment. Waiting for a complaint to be processed may be lengthy, and may throw a domestic worker’s migrant status into question. As well, the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) notes that if a complaint is reported to the police, the officers there must report a domestic worker’s migrant status to immigration authorities.

There are several gatekeeping mechanisms that the Canadian government uses to regulate which Pinays are able to come to Canada as domestic workers. Before Pinays are permitted to receive a work visa, they must take an exam that proves their proficiency in either English or French – this exam is called the Canadian Language Benchmark (5 or 7). While there is no examination implemented by Hong Kong, other intermediary countries like Singapore and Canada screen potential candidates via standardized language tests. Ging illustrates the importance of language tests here:

You know what? In Singapore there is a test before you can get your working permit. You need to practice. You have to take an English test. (Ging)

In order to apply to become a caregiver, the Canadian government requires that applicants produce proof of English or French proficiency – as such, the government encourages applicants
to undertake language proficiency testing and provide the results as this is the best way to provide proof of language skills. In the Philippines, English has been the language of education and government since the American colonization in the late 1890s (Bonifacio, 2013). As such, the fact that most educated Pinay women are proficient in English is advantageous when applying for a Canadian work visa, and when sitting for any examinations required proving their fluency. However, the fact that Canada excludes potential migrants who are unable to speak English or French via these examinations indicates how only ‘appropriate’ or ‘desired’ migrants who fit a particular set of criteria are permitted to come to Canada as low-paid workers. This kind of gatekeeping thereby restricts the mobility of migrants who are less class privileged while facilitating the mobility of those who have had access to language resources or higher education.

As well, like Hong Kong, gendered and racialized notions of which bodies are appropriate to perform domestic service dictate who is hired. Agencies (who charge hefty fees for placement services) and clients alike screen potential employees and are selective in the particular type of caregiver recruited to work in middle-class or upper-income households (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005). Due to the international division of labour that delegates most social reproduction activities to women, the market in private care is not considered suitable for men (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005, p. 81). As such, one of the expectations ascribed to potential caregivers by Canadian agencies and employers is the fact that she must be female. In addition, assessing the quality of caregiving that a potential applicant may provide is often naturalized along racial lines. In Canada, due to the colonial legacy of employing poorer black women from the Caribbean to take up household activities in affluent families, notions of an ‘appropriate’ racialized body still carry over into hiring practices today (Bonifacio, 2013). The idea of an ideal ‘brown’ phenotype designated for docile work in low-paying and deskillled positions perpetuates
the hierarchy of races already established in Canada and reflects in the way that agencies and clients have commented on the ‘natural docility’ of South-East Asian women and their suitability for domestic labour (Bonifacio, 2013). Potential candidates who meet these gatekeepers’ expectations are more likely to find work in Canada – those who do not will likely face more obstacles and will face a lower probability that they will be hired.

Several notable theorists (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997; Bonifacio, 2013; Lindio-McGovern, 2005; Parreñas, 2001; Pratt, 2005; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005) have written on the compulsory live-in characteristic of many domestic worker contracts. In Canada, Pratt (2005) states that “the requirement to live in their [domestic workers’] employers’ homes creates the conditions of serfdom” (p. 2). Domestic workers in Canada are highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation as a result of the live-in requirement (which has been amended as of November 2014), and the ambiguity of a working contract that does not stipulate what ‘domestic work’ entails (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997). A lack of standardization within Canada’s caregiver program means that arbitrary and difficult duties may be assigned to domestics which, as noted here by one interviewee, increase the risk of abuse and injury:

There’s no fine line, really what your job description is. You’re a caregiver, they can make you do whatever they want – fix the roof or something. You don’t know… (Andrey)"

Due to the fact that domestic workers operate in the private spaces of the home, there is little regulation of working conditions and wages under Canadian law. As well, the necessity of gaining a favourable Labour Market Opinion (LMO) from an employer in order to apply for permanent residency, coupled with a precarious working visa, means that when abuse or exploitation does occur within private homes, many women are reticent to report their situation out of fear of being fired or deported (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997; Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005). In
addition to this, lack of privacy and constant surveillance by employers could inhibit workers from leading any sort of personal life of their own.47

Similar to Hong Kong, before Pinays employed as domestic workers can enter Canada as migrant workers, they must undergo a series of medical and pregnancy tests. In addition to the neoliberal scripts that refuse to value Pinay women’s bodies unless they are fit to labour, in Canada the regulation of domestics’ sexuality is also an important means by which foreign domestics are prevented from establishing their own families in their ‘host’ country” (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997, p.16). This springs from the longer colonial history of racialized black domestic workers, whose sexuality had been similarly controlled. Basing the ability of a woman to enter Canada upon the administration and results of medical tests has:

…also historically been an integral feature of Canadian immigration policy…the Caribbean Domestic Scheme of the mid-1950s to 1960s specified that only single women with no dependants were permitted to come to Canada as landed immigrants, on condition that they remain in live-in domestic service for at least one year.” (as cited in Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997, p. 16)

Currently, domestic workers in Canada are subjected to similar restrictions in the sense that they are not permitted to bring over their dependents or families while working as migrant workers – even after a domestic worker has successfully applied for permanent residency, under the current Canada Caregiver Program, she must apply separately again for each of her children and dependents in order to bring them over to Canada. More disturbingly, under the new Canada Caregiver Program, if a caregiver’s dependents are declared inadmissible by the Canadian government, the domestic worker may also be declared inadmissible and deported (Black, 2014). This points to the larger neoliberal project of Canada that refuses to accept bodies that draw on social services available to citizens and permanent residents. This effectively keeps a cheap pool

47 As of November 2014, the live-in requirement to the new Canada Caregiver Program has been rescinded.
of racialized labour available to shore up social needs for which the government refuses to take responsibility.

Unlike other migrant workers who come to Canada as skilled labourers, when domestic workers enter Canada as temporary migrants, most tertiary education credentials are rendered unacceptable or invalid by the Canadian government (Bonifacio, 2013, p. 23). Ironically, even though Canada stipulates that domestic workers must have a minimum of two years of post-secondary education in the Philippines in order to be considered for a work visa, most qualifications and degrees attained by domestic workers outside of Canada are refuted or ignored (Bonifacio, 2013). Thus, even though the majority of Pinays who enter Canada as domestic workers are highly educated (often with Bachelor’s or Master’s degrees), they are not permitted to draw upon these skills, or to practice in their chosen field, even when they have gained permanent residency, as evidenced by Andreya:

You need to accept that fact that you cannot work in your field – you cannot use the degree you got in the Philippines. Even if you are nurse already in the Philippines, you cannot work here as a nurse. (Andreya)

Most live-in caregivers here, they have a degree. They graduated as accountants, they graduated from computer science, they graduated from engineering, they graduated from nutritionist programs, and they are graduated as nurses, but they are caregivers here. (Andreya)

And then later on, all my education is just useless, you know. Not useless - it is still in my mind, it is still in my heart to teach, but I am far away already. (Andreya)

Many Pinay domestic workers are thereby deskilled even before they have entered Canada. Hence, gendered and racialized notions harboured by the Canadian state that posit caregiving as ‘unskilled’ labour effectively colonizes highly educated Pinay women into deskilled, low-paid jobs. Due to the fact that “other previous higher educational attainments tend to be ignored”
upon migrants’ entry to Canada, many Pinays find it difficult to move outside of domestic work once they have completed the criteria in order to apply for permanent residency (Bonifacio, 2013, p. 23). These circumstances correspond with Canada’s neoliberalism because this renders migrants individually responsible for paying for their own education in Canadian universities and schools (at international rates if the worker has not yet gained permanent residency). These circumstances also lock many women into vulnerable, low-paid and flexibilized work due to the fact that recertification, upgrading, or starting again in the Canadian education system is expensive, time-consuming, and simply not feasible for a majority of migrants who earn minimum wage or less.

Despite the vast number of requirements, criteria, and restrictions set out by the Canadian state, agencies, and families alike, Canada is often the final destination for many Pinays who have embarked on lengthy migration trajectories. In 2007, Filipinos became the number one population of immigrants and foreign workers in Canada (Bonifacio, 2013). While the Filipino labour diaspora is vast, the fact that Canada offers the eventual option of permanent residency (whereas Hong Kong and many countries in the Middle East do not) is an attractive option. For many, gaining permanent residency and citizenship provides an opportunity to secure the future of their families and dependents:

The reason I came to Canada is because it is a big opportunity – a big opportunity for me, my family, and my son. (Stephanie)

As well, Canada also furnishes the option for dual citizenship, meaning that immigrants are able to adopt Canadian citizenship while retaining residency status in their home countries. This is in contrast to Hong Kong, where only citizens by birth are able to attain dual citizenship.

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48 As of 2014, annual fees at Canadian universities are projected to rise 13% on average to $7,755, having almost tripled over the past 20 years (Babbage, 2014).
(naturalized citizens must give up their prior citizenship). The ability to gain dual citizenship in Canada is an attractive option for Pinay migrants who maintain strong family ties to the Philippines as they are able to purchase property in their home country and travel with ease between the two nation-states:

I might become a dual citizen. I know a lot of Filipinos still want to retire when they go; you know, they want to buy property back home. I think I maybe will go back and retire in the Philippines. (Andrey)

The ability to gain dual citizenship and keep status as a Filipino is appealing for many Pinays due to the fact that the Filipino labour diaspora has scattered families across several nation-states. Thus, Canada may be articulated as the final desired destination in enterprising Pinays’ transnational migration trajectories.

Transnational Migration Trajectories - A Lens of Subversion

While often portrayed as the result of oppressive and victimizing global processes that offer migrants little choice, the transnational journeys of Pinay domestic workers can also be, in fact, perceived simultaneously as methodologies of subversion. Instead of classifying the movements of Filipina women as the products of outside forces of domination, I propose that these women trace migration trajectories across the globe not only in response, but as a response to these systems of power. Understanding transnational movements as resistance strategies not only conceives Pinay women as agents of their own actualization, but it also illustrates migration circuits as carefully navigated negotiations of neoliberal environments. The resourcefulness that these women exhibit, and the way that they can harness oppressive scripts as mechanisms by
which to further their own agency is a significantly different articulation, to date, of migrant migration thus far. This next chapter will examine the global production of hegemonic scripts, and how they seek to work on the bodies of Pinay domestic workers.
Chapter 4: Hegemonic Discourse on Filipina Domestic Workers

*Hoy pare pakinggan nyo ko*  
Hey bro, all of you listen to me

*Eto nang tunay na filipino*  
Here comes the real Filipino

*Galing sa baryo Sapang Bato*  
Came from barrio Sapang Bato

*Pumunta ng LA nagtrabaho*  
Went to L.A. and worked

*Para makatulong sa nanay*  
In order to help my mother

*Dahil sa hirap ng buhay*  
Because life is so hard

*Pero masaya parin ang kulay*  
But disposition’s still bright

- Released in 2006 *Bebot* (Babe), by popular American hip hop group The Black Eyed Peas, is a song rapped entirely in Tagalog by Filipino-American performer apl.de.ap. The song is a tributary to apl.de.ap’s early childhood in the Philippines, and was released in the Philippines to great popularity.

Understanding allegiance and shared ideologies is central to how migration and difference are constituted across space. As methods of transportation become faster and more efficient, while communication and the dissemination of information occur instantaneously, the practice of many countries has currently turned more attentively towards crafting policies that tighten borders. A country, or nation-state, is a political unit that is bounded by borders drawn by international law that are recognized by the international community. The shared ideologies that exist between the citizens of a bounded nation-state feature greatly in determining who is able to traverse borders with ease or difficulty, and under what pretenses migrating bodies are deemed worthy of state citizenship and rights. The concept of nation is able to exist outside of, and without, a country (or state) as it may not have tangible characteristics. Benedict Anderson (1983) has written that the idea of nation grounds itself firmly in a territorial and social space that is often (though not always) stratified along the borders of countries that currently bisect the earth. Acknowledging that the idea of the nation has always had an immense influence on shaping the socio-political terrain of the modern world; Anderson goes on to clarify that nation is
not a fixed or static concept, but rather one that is a shifting ideology. Nation, according to Anderson, is “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (p. 15). Nation is imagined because most members of a nation will never meet or know most of their fellows, but will still adhere to the image of their communion; it is limited because even the largest of nations has finite boundaries, outside of which lie other nations; it is sovereign because all nations desire to operate freely; finally, a nation is imagined as a community because it is always understood as a deep, aligned comradeship (regardless of the inequalities which might occur within). Hence, it is within this definition that we may extrapolate and begin to understand the origins of modern xenophobia and exceptionalism, where certain bodies are constituted as ‘different’, ‘other’, and therefore undesirable.

Nationalism is a mechanism which involves the intersection of several identities. Tamar Mayer (2000) expands on this when she deepens and extends Anderson’s definition. Mayer elaborates that the concept of nationalism is “the ideology which members of a community, those who are of the same kind, share – through which they identify with the nation and express their national loyalty” (p. 1). Mayer continues that members of a nation may find unification through a series of ‘shared’ identities, among which may include: a) common origins b) common history c) shared destiny d) shared geographical space e) shared emblems and symbols. The purpose of a nationalistic ideology is, following Mayer, to serve as “emotional glue”, upon which repetitive exercises of solidarity and loyalty eventually become accepted as natural (p. 3). Mayer argues that the nation, or ideas of nationalism, are an exercise of hegemony and are inseparable from issues of gender and sexuality. Mayer maintains that nation, gender, and

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49 Rather than conceptualize the existence of “Nationalism-with-a-big-N”, Anderson specifies that ‘nationalism’ can be conceived as an analytical expression that is useful when understanding unifying qualities among communities (p. 15).

50 The fear of something that is unknown or different.
sexuality are all social constructs that are involved in the production of hegemony since the empowerment of one nation, gender, or sexuality always results in the disempowerment of the rest. In addition, Mayer relates that nationalism, illustrated as masculine and dominant, becomes the language that justifies sexual control and gender oppression (of women and queer individuals) within a nation-state. Invariably, Mayer comments that while men are able to claim the role of nation-builders, in reality it is actually women who are forced to accept the obligation to build and maintain nations. In addition to gender and sexuality, ideals about race and class similarly intersect in the production of nationhood, the sustainment of national identity, and the production of hegemonic social orders. The links between these identities in the construction of an imagined community mean that those who lie outside of a nation are understood as an ‘other’ as they do not share the commonness upon which a particular nation may be constituted.

Socially constructed ideals about gender, race, class, sexuality, and religion are key to creating a national consciousness that upholds an ‘ideal’ citizen (Mayer, 2000). In order to convey appropriate ideas that coalesce into a national consciousness, the creation or dismantlement of specific laws and policies and the dispersal of public information and media keep the concept of nationhood alive.

There are many ways that hegemony might function to benefit a ruling or privileged group within a nation-state. Antonio Gramsci’s (1971) Marxian-inspired writings on the function of hegemony within nation-states are particularly useful when considering the influential role media plays in disseminating specific narratives. According to Gramsci, society is divided into two major superstructural levels: political society (or “the State”) and civil society (or “the private”).51 Political society (or the ruling class) is distinguished from civil society as the dominating power, composed of people who “exploit their position to take for themselves a

large cut out of the national income” (p. 12-13). In other words, political society operates upon a particular division of labour that gives prestige to those who occupy influential, wealthy positions of power. This means that political society relies on and promotes unequal systems, such as neoliberal capitalism, to sustain its position of power. The political and civil societies operate within a framework wherein the dominant group (political society) exercises hegemony over the subaltern group (civil society). In this system, command is wielded by the State through juridical government. Gramsci theorizes that it is juridical proceedings or “the apparatus of state coercive power which ‘legally’ enforces discipline on those groups who do not ‘consent’ either actively or passively” (p. 12). Gramsci underscores the idea of ‘consent’ as a central concept to his understanding of hegemony – he asserts that all members of a society have agency, and that the construction of a hegemonic state ideology therefore relies on some form of limited ‘consent’ that is given by the subaltern group to the ruling class. Gramsci denotes that it is in civil society that the hegemonic struggle takes place, and it is thus in this class that resistance to a dominant ideology is primarily acted out.

Jackson (2015) argues that hegemonic ideologies are not arbitrary, but are rooted in collective material experiences, circumstances, and realities. In order for the effective enforcement of a dominant ideal, coercion must be accompanied by a significant amount of consent from civil society. For instance, Harvey (2005) gives the example of neoliberalism, wherein in order “for a thought to become dominant, a conceptual apparatus has to be advanced that appeals to our…values and desires…this conceptual apparatus becomes so embedded in common sense as to be taken for granted and not open to question” (p. 5). Thus, a certain modicum of consent is given by civil society to hegemonic ideologies. Jackson importantly notes that hegemonic ideology “is not entirely grounded in moments of inclusion”; rather, it

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52 Gramsci also refers to the subaltern also as “the great masses of the population” (p. 12).
invisiblizes uneven development and dissent, thus marginalizing difference of any kind (p. 8). Discrepancies which fall outside the hegemonic system are regulated by the judicial system, or are socially excluded.

Gramsci’s theorizations about hegemony are useful as they help illustrate a comprehensive model of power within society. However, the addition of feminist scholarship about difference and intersectionality greatly nuances Gramsci’s original theories. Putting Gramsci’s thoughts in conversation with critical feminist inquiry greatly enriches how agency is discerned within dominant systems because it allows for the understanding that difference is negotiated and resisted in a multiplicity of spaces. For example, using a feminist framework, we can delineate that according to Gramsci’s understanding of capitalist society, it is specific intersections of gender, race, and class that differ from dominant ideologies of society. Hence, the genders, races, and classes that do not correspond to hegemonic narratives are the ones that are obfuscated, judicially regulated, or excluded from and within nation-states. Thus, it is in this context that we can begin to unpack how migrants, especially racialized female migrants, are constructed according to the dominant ideologies of a particular nation-state.

In today’s current globalized environment, I correspond with Cox (1983) in proposing that the hegemony espoused by particular nation-states can translate into a transnational hegemony that stretches between countries. For example, there are certain national societies whose goals of global capitalism are similar to the goals of other nation states; these similar capitalist goals are globally reinforced by international economic and political interests that are embodied in transnational organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. This therefore creates a form of transnational capitalism that encompasses several nation-states and reinforces the inequalities that arise from such a social order. Transnational
hegemony is especially harmful if it buttresses systems of colonialism that disempower the Global South relative to the Global North (for example, in narratives that position the ‘West as best’).

Gramsci’s construction of hegemony importantly names the State as the disseminator of dominant ideologies. Media is a powerful tool of the State that relies on discourse in order to circulate particular narratives. Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) write that discourse “does not mirror reality, but constitutes it”, therefore constructing social orders which inform political action (p. 1122). Bauder (2008) underscores the importance of discourse, pointing to the ways that discursive processes within the media impact the laws and policies of nation-states. Media is a powerful mechanism that may be mobilized to influence audiences and shape their world-views. Ideal representations of gender, race, class, sexuality, and religion are often pictured within the media, constructing an appropriate imagining of social life that may be reflected in policies and law (Mayer, 2000). In the essence of Gramsci, when ideal representations are exploited by a dominant group to produce a specific national consciousness, they become hegemonic – these hegemonic ideals may be then used to legitimate the “boundary-staking functions of immigration laws”, as particular individuals who do not fit into notions of the appropriate body may be excluded from entering certain nation-states (Lister, 1997). For example, Sherene Razack (2008) asserts that large-scale incidents, such as the events that surrounded 9/11 in the United States, have resulted in the mass mobilization of nationalistic narratives in the media (such as the dangerous Muslim man and the civilized European). These narratives have drawn on xenophobic scripts that have justified tightening borders and the increased surveillance of perceived non-citizens (particularly Muslims) in America.
A Gramscian appreciation of the significance of media within particular nation-states is useful in illustrating dominant ideologies about migrant Filipina (in Tagalog, Pinay) domestic workers. Media in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada all participate in creating hegemonic narratives that dictate how national populations are expected to view these women. In this chapter, the juxtaposition of recent newspaper articles from each of the three nation-states will help us piece together these hegemonic scripts.

**The Philippines: Only OFWs are Heroic**

Press freedom in the Philippines has historically been fraught with conflict. While publicly and legally the government advocates for freedom of speech, consistent failure to investigate the harassment and deaths of several journalists over the years has created an environment that circumspectly encourages ideologies espoused by private business owners and powerful political parties (Freedom House, 2013).

*The Manila Bulletin* is the largest broadsheet newspaper by circulation in the Philippines, and is the second-oldest in the country; it is published daily in English and maintains the oldest news website in the country. Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are frequently the subject material of many articles in this journal, as are business articles that examine the health of the Philippine economy. Known for its pro-government stance, the paper is one that is well-suited to demonstrating dominant ideologies that are espoused by the Philippine government and wealthy private owners who are aligned with the current socio-political environment.

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53 Newspapers chosen for this analysis were sourced from the capital cities of each country – Manila (the Philippines), Hong Kong (Hong Kong), Toronto (Canada); they are among the largest and most widely circulated journals in the country.

54 The 1987 Philippine constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression.
It is rare that an article about domestic workers labouring in the Philippines is published in *The Manila Bulletin* – indeed, *kasambahay* in the Philippines are,\(^55\) to some extent, invisible within the social fabric of society despite the considerable number of women employed in this profession. Even when *kasambahay* are mentioned in news stories, it is usually brief, with little reference to socially entrenched ideologies surrounding these women. The few new stories from 2013-2014 that do mention *kasambahay* are usually in reference to the logistics of establishing sectors in the government to implement laws from the Domestic Workers Act. However, *kasambahay* are often directly written about in relation to household activities, especially in quotidian articles that focus on the function of domestic work in relation to middle-class or affluent families. In these types of articles, hegemonic ideologies about domestic workers in the Philippines are shown in greater depth and detail. On February 28, 2015 *The Manila Bulletin* published an advice column in which two writers, Suzi and Paolo, answer questions posed by parents about issues surrounding child-rearing. This article, titled “The Great Imitator”, is important because it illustrates quite clearly how *kasambahay* are casually viewed in society. As it is not considered socially acceptable to outright disparage specific workers in the Philippines, analysis of this text reveals the normalization of certain attitudes towards domestic workers that would not ordinarily be evident in official news stories. In the column Sandra Torres, a woman from Pasig City in Manila, asks the following questions:

> I have a five-year-old, Elise, who I leave with a *kasambahay*….I talk to her [*Elise*] in English…She answers in English mixed with Tagalog but because she is always with her yaya,\(^56\) she has started to develop her yaya’s provincial accent. I have nothing against people with accents but, of course, I wish she would be able to properly pronounce the English words. How can I make sure that she does? Will she eventually lose the accent? Do I ask her yaya not to talk to her or replace

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\(^{55}\) *Kasambahay* is the Tagalog term used to refer to domestic workers in the Philippines.

\(^{56}\) *Yaya* is a term used to refer to a woman who occupies the role of a nanny in a Philippine household.
the yaya? I don’t want to do that though because she has been with us for three years now. Help!

Here, there are several points worth noting about how kasambahay are portrayed in this column. First, a class hierarchy is established through narratives surrounding seemingly ‘proper’ and ‘improper’ accents. In the Philippines, class structure is historically rooted in colonial systems of power that favour certain sectors of the population over others (Bonifacio, 2013). Currently, there is a vast disparity between the rich and the poor, with those who enjoy greater capital accumulation in the small upper class, and those who do not have access to capital in the larger lower class. Class lines are also drawn in the Philippines according to space and place – rural areas are generally poorer, while urban areas are usually richer. Thus, class divisions are made between characteristics such as ethnolinguistic origin, which segment the Philippines into several ethnolinguistic regions. Following Bonifacio (2013), due to the fact that ethnolinguistic origins form an integral part of Filipino identity, certain class associations are made between people who hail from different geographical (and ethnolinguistic) regions in the Philippines. In the above paragraph, kasambahay – specifically kasambahay from the ‘provinces’ (rural areas) – are distinguished as subordinate as they pronounce English words differently than people living in the National Capital Region (NCR). Here, even though the author of the questions asserts that she has “nothing against people with accents”, it is clear that a “provincial accent” is portrayed as a pejorative characteristic as it is shown to be a potential reason for dismissal – it is portrayed as an undesirable liability in the context of child-rearing. This therefore positions women – usually poorer women - from rural areas of the Philippines as inferior to those who hail from Manila. The casual manner in which this class division is discussed in the above column indicates a hegemonic normalization of viewing kasambahay from the provinces as different or
inferior to kasambahay who originate from Manila. This points to deeply embedded societal scripts that illustrate how domestic workers are viewed in the Philippines.

Additionally, the commodification of kasambahay is illustrated in the above article when the author wonders whether or not she should order the domestic helper to not speak to her child, or whether she should replace the current yaya with an alternative. Here, the commodified body of the kasambahay is portrayed as an object that can be replaced when she is no longer useful. Indeed, the kasambahay about whom the author is seeking advice, is not even named in the above article, even though the author names both herself and her child. This further contributes to the objectification of the domestic helper described, as the writer refuses to name, and thus refuses to humanize, the kasambahay in question. In this instance, the class difference depicted is shown to legitimate the dehumanization of the kasambahay, therefore justifying the author’s desire to dismiss her. These scripts further contribute to hegemonic ideologies that position domestic workers as objects of labour and production. Since domestic workers are viewed as commodities that are easily exchanged or replaced if they are faulty or flawed, this hegemonic ideology that dehumanizes kasambahay domestically then absolves the Philippine government from concerning itself with the wellbeing of domestic workers in any space, nationally or internationally. This is reflected most notably in the unprotected migrant citizenry that most migrants from the Philippines must endure (Perez-Amurao, 2014).

In contrast to the relative invisibility of domestic kasambahay, articles depicting the lives of balikbayan (returnee) overseas Filipino workers are frequently published in news outlets across the Philippines. On January 27, 2014 The Manila Bulletin featured a news story entitled “Establishment of OFW Hospital Sought”, written by Ben Rosario. In this article, the author details the efforts of a lawmaker, Roy V. Seneres, to call for funds that would build a hospital for
overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their dependents. In the work, the use of positive and ameliorative rhetoric is frequently utilized in reference to migration and working overseas. This kind of narrative commences with the title of the piece - by stating that it is specifically an “OFW Hospital” that will be built, the title immediately singles out OFWs as a unique group deserving specialized and separate treatment from those who are not overseas workers. It is clear that building the proposed hospital is directly related to the work that the recipients carry out, suggesting that there is an inherent value attached to the labour that OFWs perform while they are abroad.

The first few lines of the article give factual information about the hospital proposal, while establishing the social and political value that is associated with OFW work. In the text, Rosario states that hospital that will be built will not only be for OFWs who desire medical attention, but also the dependents of OFWs who remain in the Philippines. Immediately, this information suggests that there is social value to OFW work that not only benefits workers who are overseas, but also their families who remain at home. Next, the author establishes the political importance associated with OFW work when he notes that OFW Family partylist Rep. Roy V. Seneres “called on his colleagues in the House of Representatives to support House Bill 3678 which provides for the establishment of an OFW hospital and an OFW ward in regional health centers operated by government” (para. 2). Here, the significance of OFW work is shown to be not only socially recognized, but also politically acknowledged; the creation of an official House Bill that advocates for the welfare of overseas migrants and their families indicates that the work that OFWs perform is politically valuable, and generously rewarded by the government. Indeed, in the next paragraph, the writer states that the suggested hospital will “help guarantee free health care services for OFWs and their dependents” (para. 3). This is
significant given that the medical system in the Philippines is very expensive and heavily privatized. Hence, the offer of subsidized medical services here shows that the work OFWs perform is not only financially beneficial to themselves, but to those who rely on this work to survive. This elevates overseas migrant workers above those who do not perform any labour abroad, positioning OFWs as positive role models who are able to financially and socially provide for their families.

The article continues to use ameliorative language to describe overseas migrants and the work they perform by quoting Roy V. Seneres. Seneres is established as a knowledgeable individual whose political character is beyond reproach as he is noted to be “a former ambassador and labor attaché assigned to various posts abroad” (para. 4). Despite the fact that it is not specified what kind of posts Seneres has held, or where he occupied these positions, the fact that the author of the article refers to the lawmaker’s overseas experience suggests that he is an appropriate figure to comment on the importance of OFW labour. Indeed, via Seneres, the author communicates the idea that OFWs are courageous as they “‘daringly ventured’’ outside the Philippines in order to improve the economic stability of the country (para. 5). Despite the fact that the author relates some of the difficulties associated with working abroad (such as “‘risks and hazard…in unfamiliar territories’’”), the mention of these problems are brief, and are further offset as they are juxtaposed alongside language that characterizes it (and the people who do this work) as valuable and brave (para. 6). Overseas Filipinos are written as having “‘contributed tremendously in improving the country’”, and are illustrated as therefore deserving of praise since they “‘have further strengthened the Philippine economy and [the Philippines’] economic growth’” (para. 6-7). Here, the author of the article not only attaches laudatory adjectives to describe overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), but also indicates that working
overseas is admirable because labourers are valued for their contributions to sustaining the economy of the Philippines. The author is careful to interweave the dependence of the Philippines with the work of Filipinos overseas, indicating that the valuable efforts of labourers abroad are one of the most important reasons that the Philippines is able to strengthen itself amidst other world powers. From this, we can extrapolate that the author sets up his article so that people in the Philippines should desire to go overseas to replicate the same prominence and value that OFWs and their families enjoy at home.

Moreover, in the piece, the words “heroes” and “modern-day heroes” are repeated several times as descriptors of OFWs abroad, to whom others back in the Philippines should express “gratitude”. This continues the rhetoric of admiration that is attached to working overseas, glamorizing a position that is construed to be more worthy than any other in the Philippines. Of particular note, the use of the word “hero” is key in determining what kinds of hegemonic ideologies the State is interested in upholding. It is interesting to note that domestic workers are not deemed ‘heroic’ until they work overseas – kasambahay, who work domestically in the Philippines, are not designated as sacrificial or heroic. It is only when the political economy of carework directly benefits the government that domestic workers are illustrated as heroic ‘martyrs’, to be publicly venerated. Government officials, popular media, and business owners frequently employ the terms “heroes”, “new heroes of the Philippines”, or “modern-day heroes” to refer to OFWs who work overseas, sending remittances back to the Philippines in order to support their families (abs-cbnNews, 2010; Bonifacio, 2013; Parreñas, 2001; Pinoy-OFW, 2014). Parreñas (2001) speaks of how the positive term “hero” is used to emphasize an “important role in the nation-building project of economic development in the Philippines” (p. 55). When OFWs send remittances back to their families, they also subsequently shore up the economy of the
Philippines by injecting foreign money into the local market (Bonifacio, 2013). As a result, the Philippine economy is stabilized, and foreign debt payments are made to supranational organizations such as the World Bank and IMF. The idea of the ‘modern-day hero’ is one that is frequently drawn upon by Philippine media, and is sustained not only in order to give OFWs a sense of importance and pride in the face of dislocated living, but it can also indirectly offset any deleterious reports of abuse against overseas workers (Parreñas, 2005). Indeed, the term Tagalog word *magtitiis* – sacrificial ‘suffering’ in English - is used frequently in songs, poems, and stories about and by overseas workers to describe their feelings about their migratory journeys.57 By constructing OFWs - and therefore Philippine women - as heroes of the country, sacrifice is normalized and folded into the concept of overseas work. In order to become a hero, an individual must sacrifice – this narrative also indirectly excuses the Philippine government from providing protection to its expatriates because, after all, individuals cannot become heroes unless they have sacrificed.

The Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country,58 and an indirect reference to religious duty in the article further contribute to a hegemonic narrative that paints overseas Filipinos as the recipients of a veneration that is usually reserved for religious icons. In the text, the author quotes Seneres saying that the proposal of an OFW hospital is a “‘solemn tribute to the heroes of our time’” (para. 4). Here, the notion of tribute indirectly references religious duty to make donations to church, and to give esteem to those who occupy positions in this order. I argue that by referencing a “tribute” that must be paid to OFWs, the author and Seneres reproduce a hegemonic ideology that enforces alignment with a powerful organization in the Philippines – the church. By referring to overseas workers within a suggested religious context,

57 One such songs includes, “Mahal, Magtitiis Ako” (“Love, I Suffer”), an OFW tribute song.
58 More than 86% of the population in the Philippines is reported to be Catholic (Miller, 2015). The Philippines is the only country in the world (besides the Vatican) where divorce is illegal.
this elevates the action of migrant labour to a state of exalted nobility – nothing is higher than sacrificing oneself as a martyr; this ties into hegemonic scripts of heroism that position OFWs as being rewarded for necessarily sacrificing themselves for their country. According to these scripts, overseas workers are portrayed to be more valuable religiously, socially, politically, and financially. This establishes a hierarchy that positions other workers who do not labour overseas as less worthy or deserving (such as kasambahay who work within the Philippines). Hence, international migration and overseas work is promoted by the Philippines through the dissemination of hegemonic ideologies that specifically construct transnational labour (in opposition to labour within the Philippines) as valued, heroic, religiously-sanctioned, and eventually rewarded through the government care of migrant workers and their families.

**Hong Kong: Silent in their Victimhood**

Press freedom in Hong Kong is legally protected. Journalists often engage in criticism of the governments in both China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). However, political and economic pressure has recently led to a lessening of journalistic liberty in Hong Kong (Freedom House, 2013). Freedom House, an American non-governmental organization that conducts research on political freedom and human rights, notes that self-censorship is frequently employed in order to facilitate an environment that is friendly towards capital growth and corporate interests. The 1997 transfer of Hong Kong’s sovereignty from the United Kingdom back to China designated a ‘one country, two systems’ arrangement, where Hong Kong was declared a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China, and guaranteed a high level of economic, juridical, cultural, and academic autonomy (McKirdy, 2014). Despite
this, in recent years the Hong Kong government has been increasingly perceived as an extension of the central government in China (Yung, 2014). Nevertheless, Hong Kong’s press is known for its lively debates and diversity of views about a wide variety of topics.

The *South China Morning Post* is an English-language broadsheet newspaper that was founded in 1903; it is one of the oldest English-language newspapers published in Hong Kong, has the highest number of paid subscribers in the region, and has the second-highest circulation (after the free English-language *The Standard*). Since the 1990s, the *South China Morning Post* has been labeled as an increasingly pro-administration newspaper that reflects the views of the government (Ortmann, 2010). Recently, within the past two years, the *South China Morning Post* has become extremely active in showcasing articles that critique the exploitative status of migrant domestic workers within the country. As such, this is a well-suited newspaper that illustrates the hegemonic ideologies of the state juxtaposed alongside civil critiques that attempt to speak back against such coercive regulations.

The *South China Morning Post* frequently publishes articles that discuss domestic workers and the current labour conditions of Hong Kong. On January 29, 2015 a news story by Danny Lee, entitled “Hong Kong Domestic Helpers Arrested in Crack-Down on ‘Live-Out’ Maids”, was released. At first sight, the reader is struck by a large colour photograph below the title:
The image is of a blue and white banner with the word ‘slavery’ in red, bold font. The article begins by relating that four foreign domestic workers, along with an employer (and, later, his wife), were arrested under suspicion of breaking immigration laws. Domestic helpers were taken into police custody due to the fact that they were suspected of living outside their employers’ homes – a crime in Hong Kong due to the stringent stipulation in workers’ contracts that they must abide by a live-in arrangement. The article quotes the unidentified employer (who, along with his wife, was released on bail) as well as a spokesman from the local HK Helpers Campaign (an organization formed by workers’ rights activists who seek to amplify the voices of domestic workers in Hong Kong), who both comment on the exploitative live-in stipulation that the standard Hong Kong employment contract requires of any foreign domestic helper. The article cites that a maximum fine of HKD150,000 (CAD23255.86) and up to 14 years in jail is the penalty for not abiding by the live-in rule; as well, domestic workers can be deported and blacklisted, while employers can be banned from hiring another helper in the future. Finally, the journalist closes the editorial by citing a comment from a spokesman from the HK Helpers
Campaign, who characterizes the live-in rule as “archaic”, and an “affront to dignity” (para. 17).

The journalist concludes, “[N]o Hong Kong resident should live in fear of police raids simply for wishing to lead an independent life” (para. 17).

This article layers common narratives of the Hong Kong government’s juridical severity of Pinay workers’ victimhood, and of principled male saviours. Immediately in the opening paragraphs of the editorial, the journalist uses language evocative of sudden aggression and force to communicate the action of government personnel: “at least 20 immigration officers” are said to have “descended” on Ma Wan village, “accusing” four foreign domestic helpers of “breaching” both legislation and their standard contracts (para. 3). Here, the use of the verbs “descend”, “accuse”, and “breach” all connote some form of assault that is clearly related to a seriously regarded transgression of the law. The juxtaposition of numerous immigration officers arresting a fairly small number of foreign workers illustrates that the juridical arm of the Hong Kong state is portrayed as a powerful entity with abundant and overbearing resources. Here, the strength of the government force communicates that foreign domestic workers are perceived as viable threats by the government of Hong Kong – threats that must be arrested, contained, and controlled at all costs. Thus, hegemonic narratives emerge that, according to the government, paint foreign domestic helpers as enemies of the government - as suspicious women who, along with anybody who helps them, must be carefully monitored and severely punished for any disobedience.

Although Pinay domestic workers are central to this article, one aspect worth noting is that they are invisibilized, existing only within a narrow narrative of victimhood, voicelessness, and criminalization. The victimhood of foreign domestic workers is first established through the introduction of, and focus on, several male would-be saviours. None of the workers in the article
are named, or interviewed – indeed, no domestic worker is interviewed within this editorial – and the only people who are given voices in the text are the male journalist, a male employer, and a spokesman for the HK Helpers Campaign. The male employer, who preferred not to be named, was arrested along with his wife and then released on bail. The journalist cites that the male employer was detained due to the fact that he “wanted to see fair working conditions for helpers” (para. 5). The employer later goes on to note that “his helper worked 11 hours per day and had two days off a week”, whereas some other helpers worked 18 hours per day with only one day off per week (para. 7). Here, the focus of the aforementioned arrest is on the male employer, who is noticeably given a voice. The juxtaposition of the employer’s seemingly good treatment of his helper alongside the harsher working conditions of other employers constructs him as a foil to both the threatening entity of the government, as well as the exploitative practices of other employers. In this instance, the foreign domestic workers who were arrested fade into the background, and the scope of the article narrows in to dwell on the seemingly heroic actions of the male employer who, although his wife was arrested as well, is illustrated as the potential protector and saviour of the much-maligned caregivers.

This theme involving male saviors is continued later in the text when a spokesman for the HK Helpers Campaign comments on the consequences of the live-in requirement in Hong Kong. The spokesman is quoted declaring that “no Hong Kong resident should live in fear… simply for wishing to lead an independent life” (para. 17). It is curious that the journalist would not have interviewed a current or former foreign domestic worker about the exploitative working conditions that she has faced living within the home of her employer. Instead, the spokesman is given the space to communicate what the live-in feature of the standard employment contract means for foreign domestics. In doing this, the spokesman is shown to speak for all foreign
domestic workers in Hong Kong, centering these women while simultaneously doing away with their voices, opinions, and points of view. Foreign domestic workers are again silenced, are separated from narratives that feature their lives, and are thus couched within narratives of victimhood as they are shown to need either male saviours who would protect them, or male advocates who would speak for them.

Foreign domestic helpers are read into narratives of victimhood in several other instances in this article. Throughout the editorial, several comments are made about the “physical and sexual abuse” to which domestic workers are subject, the unfair working conditions that they must endure, and the inability for helpers to socialize or take part in civic life when living within the homes of their employers (para. 10). In the article, the live-out stipulation “robs domestic workers of personal space, privacy and rest time”, and is reportedly an “affront to [their] dignity” (para. 16). Both the words “rob” and “affront”, as well as the constant references to abuse, all communicate a form of violation that is inscribed onto the bodies of domestic helpers. The consistent repetition of abuse and exploitation within this text, coupled with the silence and invisibility of the domestic workers who are arrested and never referred to again, writes these women into what Ethel Tungohan (2012) characterizes as a ‘tragic linearity’, or the total subjugation of Global South women in the domestic sphere. Foreign domestic helpers are consistently illustrated as suffering bodies whose existence in Hong Kong is embodied by either their invisible servitude, or their public criminalization and victimhood. Here, readers of this article are invited to understand foreign domestic helpers not as capable women, but as pitiable wretches who live in constant “fear of police and immigration raids” (para. 15). Even the aforementioned photo accompanying the editorial further contributes to hegemonic understandings of domestic workers as victims since the word ‘slavery’ communicates
powerlessness and suffering. Throughout the editorial, foreign domestic workers are never fully rendered human, but are written off as lamentable ‘others’ who have already been arrested, who have already been abused, and who have already been silenced. This article thus reproduces hegemonic understandings of foreign domestic workers as perpetual victims – helpless women who are not given a platform to speak, and who are in need of saving by individuals other than themselves.

Canada: We are Good, They are Not

Press freedom in Canada is reported by Freedom House to be very free. The Constitution Act of 1982 guarantees freedom of expression as well as freedom of the press, though the Canadian government is given prerogative to legally restrict free speech when it infringes on social harmony or results in discrimination (Freedom House, 2013). Hate speech laws in Canada include provisions in the Criminal Code that prevent discriminatory propaganda from being distributed or disseminated. Both print and broadcast media in Canada express a diverse range of views and are circulated in several languages.

The Globe and Mail is the largest-circulation national newspaper in Canada, and is the second-largest daily journal in the country (after The Toronto Star). Describing itself as offering “the most authoritative news in Canada”, The Globe and Mail is known for its conservative stance and is considered the voice of Canada’s financial elite and elected government employees – a “moderate conservative, business-oriented newspaper” that advocates for the Canadian administration (Caplan, 2014). Hence, this paper is one that is well-suited to demonstrating dominant ideologies that are espoused by the Canadian nation-state.
The Globe and Mail frequently publishes articles on both immigration as well as caregiving in Canada. On June 23, 2014, a news story by Bill Curry entitled, “Live-in Caregivers May be Next Target of Immigration Reform” was published. Accompanied by a colour photo of Canada’s Citizenship and Immigration Minister, Chris Alexander, the article begins by stating that the future of Canada’s live-in caregiver program is uncertain,^59^ as the current Conservative government promises changes. The journalist goes on to note that the Conservatives have opted to leave the program relatively unchanged for many years, despite “years of internal warnings from public servants that it has become a hidden family reunification program, particularly for Canada’s Filipino community” (para. 2). After this, the article mentions the intent of the Conservatives to eventually phase out the program, commenting on the political fallout that this might cause as Filipino communities occupy hotly contested ridings, and as Conservatives will head into an election year in 2015. The addition of higher fees for caregivers, and reductions in the number of months that temporary foreign workers can stay in Canada, are noted by the writer. A statement from Manuela Gruber Hersch, president of the Association of Caregiver & Nanny Agencies Canada is cited, where she asserts that arms-length agencies are one possible solution to the abuse experienced by women who come to Canada as caregivers. Finally, the article closes by mentioning the size of the Live-in Caregiver Program, noting that it peaked in 2007 (with 12,955 people entering Canada), but has only allowed 6,242 people to enter in 2012.

Here, juxtaposing a picture of the Citizenship and Immigration Minister alongside the article communicates authority and the close proximity of the Canadian government to the issue of the Live-in Caregiver Program. The title of the piece immediately sets the tone of the article.

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^59^ The Conservative eventually reformatted the Live-in Caregiver Program in November 2014; it is now called the Canada Caregiver Program.
when caregivers are illustrated as imminent “targets”. Rather than state that the Live-in Caregiver Program as the “target”, the author singles out and identifies caregivers in Canada as “targets”, indicating that they (the people) are the objects of a specific attack. The fact that caregivers are marked out as “targets” for “reform” suggests that there is something inherently wrong specifically with caregivers that must be corrected by the government.

The question as to why caregivers would be identified as the recipients of a corrective attack is answered below in the article. The author states in further elaboration that the caregiver program will remain untouched, “in spite of years of internal warnings from public servants that it has become a ‘hidden’ family reunification program, particularly for Canada’s Filipino community” (para. 2). Here, the journalist narrows his focus, identifying the Filipino community as the source of the issues with the Live-in Caregiver Program in Canada. In this article, family reunification is illustrated, in the case of the Filipino community, as an undesirable effect of the Live-in Caregiver Program’s policies. Furthermore, the use of the word “warning” in the above phrase is particularly noteworthy as it associates wrongdoing with Filipino communities – as if Filipinos are engaging in incorrect or illegal activities of which the government should be notified. Additionally, the use of the word “hidden” also associates Filipinos with subterfuge and suspicion, suggesting that caregivers within the Live-in Caregiver program exploit the government, and then later conceal their actions. This all contributes to painting a picture of caregivers, specifically Filipina caregivers, not only as people of questionable character, but as criminals who abuse the benevolent Canadian system in order to gain advantages over Canadians and other migrants. Indeed, Filipinos are construed several times throughout the article as exploitative opportunists who are the sources of trouble, corruption, and immoral activity. An instance of this occurs later in the article when the author writes that Filipinos in the Philippines
engage in “fraud”, which is an “ongoing problem” for the Canadian embassy in Manila. Here, the immorality of fraud, and the characterization of fraud as an “ongoing” issue firmly criminalizes Filipinos as dishonest immigrants who consistently cheat to take advantage of Canada’s caregiver program.

Rather than center Filipina caregivers, who would be the people most affected by any changes made to the immigration policies, the author of the article centers the Canadian government as the primary protagonist in the story. The author consistently illustrates Canada and its government as the ‘good’ foil to ‘bad’ Filipino immigrants, illustrating hegemonic ideologies about the apparent honesty and graciousness of the Canadian State. Canada is cited as a benevolent country due to the fact that “after 24 months of working in Canada, participants and their dependents can apply to become permanent residents” (para. 8). Here, permanent residency is illustrated as a desirable outcome for any migrant who comes to Canada, and the relatively short wait time (24 months) to apply for this status is indicated as a positive characteristic of Canadian policy. The author goes on to comment that “[n]o other aspect of the temporary foreign worker program carries that benefit for low-skill jobs” (para. 8). In this excerpt, Canada is implicitly positioned as a magnanimous benefactor who deigns to offer poor Filipinos work; temporary foreign workers are characterized as “low-skilled” and are thus construed to be uneducated compared to the rest of Canada. Canada is portrayed as a benevolent country in a position of relative power to the migrants who come seeking work due to the fact that the country offers permanent residency to workers who would not ordinarily have the opportunity to apply for such status. This article effectively obfuscates the various benefits that Canada derives from migrant domestic labour, thereby constructing the entrance of migrant workers as a favour to the Philippines. Canada’s apparent generosity contrasts sharply with earlier characterizations
of caregivers, specifically Filipina caregivers, as fraudulent, dishonest people who constitute a problem for the government. This creates a stark dichotomy within the article as Filipinos are rendered incorrigible ‘others’.

Hence, this article showcases hegemonic understandings of temporary migrants, specifically Filipino migrants who come to Canada through the Live-in Caregiver Program, as outsiders who are a threat to Canadian society, and who are not to be trusted. Issues with the Live-in Caregiver Program, such as the fact that “the program is open to abuse”, are only briefly mentioned and are conveniently dismissed almost immediately (para. 14). Instead of dwelling on the failure of the Canadian government to protect its workers, the author instead focuses on the proposal of “arms-length agencies” to rectify any issues between caregivers and their employers (para. 14). This summarily downplays the exploitative conditions that Filipina caregivers endure in Canada by suggesting an easy solution to the issue. Furthermore, the journalist does not interview any Filipina caregivers for his news story, but instead quotes Manuela Gruber Hersch, a white Austrian woman who came to Canada as a nanny in 1985. Like in the piece that appeared in the South China Morning Post Filipina caregivers, the main subjects of this article, are effectively silenced and obfuscated – characterized as low-skilled foreigners worthy of suspicion for their corruption, and then cast out as outsiders to stalwart Canadian citizens who are worthy of fair treatment.

**Hegemonic Discourse on Pinay Domestic Workers – Commodities, Heroes, Victims, and Criminals**
There are marked ways in which large-circulation English-language newspapers mobilize hegemonic discourse to describe Pinay domestic workers in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada. In the Philippines, *The Manila Bulletin* differentiates between domestic workers who work locally, and domestic workers who work abroad. Domestic workers who perform household chores within the Philippines, or *kasambahay*, are illustrated as commodities that are easily exchanged if their services affront an employer. This is contrasted quite sharply with ameliorative descriptions of domestic workers who toil overseas, naming them as hard-working heroes who accumulate enviable benefits in order to help their country. However in both cases, the Philippine government excuses itself from providing protective provisions to both local and overseas domestic workers. In Hong Kong, *The South China Morning Post* articulates a particular hegemonic discourse that silences and victimizes Pinay domestic workers, showcasing the vulnerability of their live-in situation without qualifying them as agents of their own lives. In Canada, *The Globe and Mail* characterizes Pinay domestic workers as belonging to an inherently criminal and underhanded community that works to exploit the apparent generosity of the Canadian government. In this article, the possibilities of abuse and exploitation of domestic workers are easily dismissed, and the voices of Pinay women are effectively silenced as the only migrant who is interviewed for the article is a white Austrian-born woman. By analyzing hegemonic discourses that are disseminated in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada, it is apparent that Pinay domestic workers are consistently disenfranchised in each country. Portrayed as either commodities for exchange, dutiful heroes, voiceless victims, or scheming criminals, Pinays who perform domestic work are never fully able to speak for themselves. From the hegemonic discourse identified and analyzed in this chapter, we can determine that Pinays are caught in a difficult double bind: they perform work that is necessary to support
society, but are simultaneously stigmatized, exploited, and underprotected for carrying out the labour upon which countries such as the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada rely. This is a dangerous situation because it reinforces the global intersection of gender, race, and class discrimination. Hence, what can be done to decenter these hegemonic scripts? The next chapter endeavors to interrupt these dominating discourses by featuring the voices of domestic workers and the ways in which they enact their own agency and resistance against exploitative practices.
Chapter 5: Transnational Counterhegemonic Techniques

*Mga babae, ito nga ba'y kapalaran? Bakit ba mayroong mga Gabriela, mga Teresa at Tandang Sora na di umasa sa luha't awa? Sila'y nagsipaghawak ng sandata, nakilaban, ang mithiin ay lumaya. Bakit ba mayroong mga Lisa, mga Liliosa at mga Lorena na di natakot makibaka, at ngayo'y marami ang kasama Mga babae, ang mithiin ay lumaya? Ang ating isip ay buksan at lipuna'y pagsaralan.*

Women, is this destiny? Why are there Gabrielas, Teresas, and Tandang Soras, who did not rely on tears and pity? They took arms and fought, they wanted freedom. Why are there Lisas, Liliosas, and Lorenas who weren’t afraid to join the fight, and now are with many women who want to be free? Let's open our minds and learn about everyone.

- *Babae* (Woman) is a Tagalog song composed by Mon Ayco, and sung in the 1990s by the feminist Filipina duo Inang Laya. The song uses prominent female figures from Filipino literature and history to challenge Filipinas stand up for their rights in a society that portrays them as weak.

Writing about the agency and power of Filipina (in Tagalog, *Pinay*) migrants can prove to be challenging given the disempowered ways that they have been portrayed in both the media and in academia. There are some authors (Manalansan, 2008; Tungohan, 2012) who have critiqued the ‘tragic linearity’ that is commonly associated with Global South women’s lives, where migrant women are perceived as horrifically oppressed by - and therefore compliant to – transnational systems of subjugation. Drawn from Global North narratives that posit the “total and universal subjugation of Third World women in the domestic sphere”, Pinay domestic workers are often seen as abjectly marginalized and invisibilized women who become sporadically visible during large court cases that often involve allegations of abuse and exploitation (Manalansan, 2008). As such, within Global North scholarship and media, there has been (and continues to be) a tendency to construe Pinay migrant workers as victims within larger systems of power. In these scripts, Pinay domestic workers are portrayed as docile bodies.
without any agency of their own – the objects of pity and suffering, rather than as active women in their own right.

Several scholarly journal articles, newspaper features, and books on migrant workers have very importantly highlighted the exploitative circumstances which shape these women’s lives (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997, 2005; Constable, 1997; Davidson, 2012; Parreñas, 2001, 2005). As such, the urgency of Pinay women’s deleterious situations should not be diminished. As I have previously outlined, the continued refusal of labour-sending countries, intermediary countries, and labour-receiving countries, to consolidate the basic rights of domestic workers means the continuation of gendered, raced, and classed systems of power that often result in violence towards these women. Some Pinay domestic labourers are victims of the intersection of these oppressions. However, understanding the deleterious structural constraints that restrict the autonomy of Pinays means that we cannot disregard their agency in these matters as well. Rhacel Parreñas (2011) asserts that the position of migrant Pinays is one caught between coercion and choice, where financial mobility is predicated on unfree labour. Pinay migrant workers are transnationally vulnerable to human rights violations throughout their journeys, but this does not mean that they are trafficked women who are helpless or passive victims by any means. In fact, many Pinays are cognizant of their own positionality within intersecting systems of power and are able to negotiate and navigate through neoliberal nations-states that rely on their gender, race, and class exploitation.

In the previous chapter, I employed a Gramscian analysis of specific newspaper articles in order to identify hegemonic scripts about domestic workers within the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada. I argue that these scripts, constructed and disseminated by major pro-administration media outlets (political society), comprise transnational hegemonic ideologies that
construe domestic workers (civil society) in ways that benefit the nation-states who are invested in maintaining these unequal relations of power. These ideologies are violent by the ways in which they seek to disempower Pinay domestic workers and excuse or obfuscate the physical, mental, and emotional abuse that many women do experience (while upholding gender, race, and class inequities).

In this chapter, I seek to interrupt scripts that illustrate Pinay domestic workers as causalities of eternal victimhood. To read Pinay women as static victims whose lives are defined by external influences reproduces transnational colonial logics by refusing to understand the ways that these women are engaged in the quotidian struggle against dominating structures. Situating Pinays as passive workers within the context of hegemonic settler colonialism is reductive as it obfuscates much of the important work these women are doing to subvert patriarchy, white supremacy, and transnational neoliberalism. Within these movements, due to the fact that Pinay domestic workers live at the critical intersection of gender, race, and class, their very lives as capable migrants are also resistances in themselves. Rather than falling back on colonial narratives that continually produce Pinay domestic workers in various states of abject victimhood, this project features their powerful voices as counterhegemonic theorists, as women who are more than capable of understanding and resisting neoliberal policies that seek to recolonize them as powerless victims throughout their global journeys.

Interestingly, the political economy of transnational migration, while extremely exploitative within and between capitalist nation-states, may also allow for methodologies of resistance to emerge. Movement across and through international borders is a process that is central to the agency of Pinay domestic workers. Angeles (2012) writes that transnational migration is a process involving various socio-political situations, wherein migrants’ identities
continually evolve. Angeles asserts that consistently moving through different spaces carries transformative potential as gender, race, and class relations may constantly be reworked and reconfigured. Transnational migration is critical to decentering globalized capitalism due to the fact that it defies one of the main tenets of this system – that labour remains local and immobile, while capital and the market is global (Angeles, 2012). In addition, transnational migration may be agentic due to the fact that migrants may be uniquely positioned to challenge unequal social structures in both their host countries as well as their countries of origin. Finally, transnational migration may allow migrants to speak back against marginalization due to interconnected communities that form within the global migrant diaspora that communicate resistance strategies and share relevant information (Angeles, 2012). While transnational migration may not always result in the destabilization of oppressive regimes, the opportunities that such hyper-mobility provides for Pinays are nonetheless compelling for the potential of theorizing a multi-pronged methodology of global decolonization.

The ability to move across the globe may both transform and reinforce existing gender relations. As previously discussed, gender inequalities in destination Global North countries are intimately connected to gender inequalities in Global South labour-sending nation-states. For example, the gendered division of reproductive care in countries such as Canada is reinforced via the international deployment of feminized caregivers from countries in the Global South. Alongside these instances, where existing systems are supported through the international movement of labourers, transnational migration may also feature as a potentially powerful transformative platform for gender relations. While traditionally androcentric and viewed exclusively through the movements of male entrepreneurs and wage earners, the current

\[60\] Instead of an environment where jobs flow to wherever labour is the cheapest, transnational workers consistently mobilize themselves out of these situations, rejecting work with minimal pay and/or appalling conditions (Braedley & Luxton, 2010).
movement of bodies between various spaces points increasingly towards the experiences of women, rather than men (Pratt & Yeoh, 2003).

In the Philippines, the importance of a conventional family unit, wherein the father is the breadwinner in the public sphere and the mother is the nurturer within the household sphere, resonates quite strongly in Philippine society (Parreñas, 2005). Within the family, women are seen as the mothers of the future nation – the ones who will reproduce children; thus, women’s bodies are subject to regulation by their families (Parreñas, 2005). For some Pinay migrants, the act of traveling for the purposes of labour is an act that refutes regulation and asserts bodily autonomy and self-empowerment. For example, many of the women whose voices feature in this project stated that migrating in order to go to school or work was their choice:

I did not finish high school, so after two years of working in Manila, I went back to Aklan and found my grandmother – her relatives are rich. I asked her if I could work and go to high school. She said yes. So, then I could work, finish school, and also be self-supporting. (Ging)

For Ging, the poorer financial circumstances of her family in the province figure greatly in her decision to seek work outside her home. However, here Ging demonstrates that she engaged in domestic work as a method of self-determination – as a way to support herself independently while she finished her schooling. As well, in order to fund the initial costs of departure and placement fees prior to migration, some women even borrow money or take out bank loans:

Our neighbours, they were going abroad to Saudi Arabia; they stayed for a long time there. I thought to myself, “Oh, I want to try”. When I went to the agency, they asked me if I wanted to go to Taiwan. The placement fee was too expensive, so I took out a loan to pay slowly. (Monica)

Here, Monica’s decision to migrate overseas also demonstrates self-determination; taking out a loan in order to facilitate her journey shows resourcefulness, as well as careful consideration of
the potential future benefits that could offset present-day debt. As mentioned above, despite the fact that Pinays’ bodies are subject to regulation by society and their families, in the act of migration some Pinays even go against the wishes of their families to express their autonomy:

I left the Visayas when my sister asked my parents to have a vacation in Manila, so I went with them. Then my parents went back to the province again. They asked me to come back, but I asked my parents not to – I told them that I was going to stay [in Manila] to work. (Darna)

In the above example, Darna challenges the request of her parents – speaking back against traditional daughterly obedience in the Philippines - in order to stay in Manila and work independently. Hence while some scholars contend that migration (both domestic and transnational) does not destabilize gender inequalities, I argue that for some Pinays the expression of personal freedom is enacted via the very act of migrating itself. By migrating, some Pinays defy conventional gender relations, consistently expressing their own self-determination and bodily autonomy. This opposes hegemonic scripts of victimhood that portray Pinays as docile and obedient women who conform to traditional gender roles or who acquiesce to tyrannical institutions of authority.

There are many additional ways that Pinays employ migration in order to resist traditional gender roles. As discussed in Chapter Two, Bonifacio (2013) and Lindio-McGovern (1997) note that the colonization of the Philippines by the Spanish resulted in the inculcation of very specific and rigid gender roles. For men, this meant the occupation of the public sphere (involving political and business ventures); for women, this meant the “dictum that a woman’s place is in the home” (Bonifacio, 2013, p. 36). This dichotomy has persisted to this day and has led to the overrepresentation of men in politics, as well as in industries such as technology and entrepreneurship (Bonifacio, 2013). However contrary to surface appearances, the act of
engaging in domestic work may also be a way for Pinays to challenge this gender sphere division, broaching spaces outside of their own homes and challenging traditional notions of gender that discourage women from finding work outside a surveilled and regulated area.

Years went by, I was getting older and older. I went here [Manila] to work for myself. I used to ask, “I want to be in your house, I will be the one to do work here.” Step by step, I used to go to another place, another house. I found jobs. (Riza)

In addition to expressing self-determination, here Riza demonstrates courage and perseverance in an unfamiliar urban environment. Despite the fact that the very nature of domestic work is such that it relegates women to private spheres within the household, it is clear that for some, domestic work provides opportunities to remove oneself from both familiar places and family influence. Domestic work is therefore an avenue through which some Pinays may resist gender conventions that consign women to private spaces within their own homes.

The act of migrating also offers opportunity for Pinays to express their own self-determination, and to learn skills that help them speak back to authority. For example, learning additional languages can mean securing access to resources that are disseminated in a language that is different from the mother tongue of an individual. Due to the transnational migration of Pinays to countries across the globe, many women speak and understand more than two languages:

I am from Bohol. I did not speak Tagalog before I came to Manila. When I moved to Manila, I learned Tagalog. I was so confused at first – I wondered what my employers were asking me. But after three months, I learned Tagalog okay. It is easier speaking Tagalog in Manila. I speak three languages: Visayan, Tagalog, and English. (Anne)

Here, besides showing great mental acuity, Anne illustrates her own self-determination in learning an additional language that would help her to adjust to the demands of a new
environment. Access to different languages means access to greater resources, support networks, as well as socio-economic mobility. As such, many Pinays actively learn languages to defend themselves, converse with wider communities, and to speak out against exploitative or abusive situations. This means that many Pinays actively reject hegemonic narratives of voicelessness and silence.

Another way that Pinays resist gendered and racialized scripts is through the subversion of narratives that characterize migration as a masculine activity. Rather than being relegated to supporting roles or ‘dependants’ of male relatives, Pinay women who embark on transnational migration trajectories are the primary applicants and sponsors of their own spouses and families. For many of the women featured in this project who migrated to Canada as caregivers, their plans are to first obtain permanent residency, and then sponsor the migration of their children and parents. This thereby challenges conventional understandings of mobility that posit transnational migration as a male activity, while simultaneously defying hegemonic narratives in Global North destination countries that paint racialized Global South women as subordinate to, and reliant on, others.

Furthermore, the large number of Pinays who labour overseas and send money back to their families at home mean that oftentimes Pinays are the primary breadwinners in their households. In 2012, the Philippines received USD24,000,000,000 in remittances, up 6.4% from the previous year; after China and India this amount is the third highest globally (Nicolas, 2013). Given the fact that migration is growing increasingly feminized, much of the USD24,000,000,000 of remittances sent back to the Philippines are the result of Pinays working abroad. This means that some Pinays are able to gain economic power within their families, or even gain economic independence from their families if they choose to do so. Holding economic
power means that Pinays are able to struggle against conventional gender roles that dictate that the male or the husband is the primary earner in the family. Thus, migration can be a way that Pinays resist gendered and androcentric scripts, effectively claiming financial power through the work they perform abroad.

For Pinays from rural areas in the province, going to Manila to work may be difficult due to class inequalities and hegemonic narratives that position rural women as inferior to urban women.

Here [in Manila], if you are from the province, companies mostly will not hire you – they think it’s not good. They only want people who have a Manila education. (Judy)

Despite this, after migrating domestically from rural to urban spaces within the Philippines, some Pinay domestic workers are able to harness their proximity to schools and resources in order to further their own education. For example, one woman related that:

I went to elementary school in the province and then I stopped. My parents couldn’t afford to send me anymore. I went to Manila and started working as helper for my employer to send financial support to my parents. Then I started high school when I was 25, at night time. I graduated from high school in 2010. Now, I am planning to study more. I want to work as a chef. (Darna)

In this excerpt, migrating to Manila and working as a domestic helper is a counterhegemonic tactic that resists class inequities between rural and urban women. Even though Darna is from a rural farming area, she capitalizes on her unique position as an independent earner in order to continue studies that would not have been available for her if she had remained in her parent’s house. By doing this, Darna challenges class divisions in the Philippines that position rural women as undereducated and inferior to women from urban areas.
Class struggles play out across international spaces as well, especially within intermediary countries, such as Hong Kong, that host Pinays for only a few years before they move on. As highlighted previously in Chapter Three, some employers are savvy to the fact that many Pinays gain experience in Hong Kong in order to qualify for a Canadian or American work permit. Hence, some Hong Kong employers will not hire Pinays who are highly educated or who hail from specific urban areas in the Philippines, preferring instead to hire less-educated women from rural areas as a way to assure the domestic worker’s continued employment over several years. Hence, one of the counterhegemonic techniques that Pinays employ to combat these class politics is to conceal their previous education, and their future plans, when applying for a job in Hong Kong:

We do not inform our employers in Hong Kong that we will leave. If they knew, they wouldn’t hire us. (Andreya)

If employers in intermediary countries refuse to hire well-educated middle class Pinays from urban areas, this creates an oppositional class hierarchy wherein poorer rural women are perceived as more desirable workers due to their inability to possibly migrate again in the future. Constable (2007) has noted how certain employers and agencies demand specific characteristics of an employee in Hong Kong; how well a potential recruit fits these characteristics may determine whether her job application is successful or not. Knowing how and when to self-regulate or misrepresent in order to secure a position is resistance as it refutes discipline by authority. Thus when Pinay domestic workers misrepresent or hide their education in order to gain employment in intermediary countries, they resist authority as well as class narratives that could limit future mobility.
Misrepresentation is also used as a resistance strategy against class and racial inequalities when Pinays remove themselves from potentially dangerous or abusive circumstances. For example, when one woman was working in Kuwait during the Gulf War in the early 1990s:

> It was still war in Kuwait when I was there; so, I could not sleep because when they bombed...Oh my god, I wanted to go back home! I became very stressed – there were so many soldiers there because of the war. I asked my employers if I could go on vacation for one month. I went on vacation, back to the Philippines. I stayed - I never went back to Kuwait. (Monica)

In Kuwait, during this time, the passports of domestic workers were confiscated by their employers upon their arrival in the country. As well, in order to leave Kuwait, foreign migrant workers were required to secure an exit visa with the permission of their employers (Longva, 1999). This divided workers in the country along racial lines, buttressing the notion that racialized bodies who are minorities should be subject to the control of their employers (who belong to the dominant racial group). This also restricted the mobility of migrant workers and prevented them from traveling, allowing employers to severely limit the movements of their employees. In the above excerpt, misrepresentation is used to secure bodily safety and to escape a warzone. Instead of quitting her job and facing potential consequences, Monica asks for a vacation; in this manner, she is able to regain her passport, avoid any potential negative consequences or anger from her employers, and return to the safer spaces of the Philippines in order to find another contract. By leaving Kuwait and refusing to return, Monica thus resists racial inequalities that would seek to subject her to the authority of her Kuwaiti employer.

Misrepresentation is also used in order to subvert the authority of employers who would seek to surveil or limit the bodily autonomy of Pinay women:

> I needed to go to immigration to process my paperwork and for an interview, but my employer had put in a camera – they were so strict. They wanted me to stay at
home. I thought, “What am I going to do?” I needed to do so many things – get police clearance, medical tests…So during the time that I was supposed to go to the market, I walked fast and finished early. Then I used the extra time to go process some of my papers. Or another time, my employer left her earrings downtown and told me to get them - it was an opportunity for me to go to immigration. (Andreya)

In the above excerpt, Andreya uses misrepresentation to resist the controlling behaviour of her employers, refuting narratives that posit Pinay domestic workers as dutiful, docile, and obedient. Even though Andreya’s employers severely restrict her mobility, Andreya is able to resist and radically subvert the disciplinary tactics that attempt to control her movements. Here, Andreya rebuffs her employers’ efforts to victimize or bully her into doing what they want, opposing the notion that employers have the power to control the bodies, and autonomy, of their employees. In this example, a Pinay domestic worker flips the script, using the employers’ exploitation of her gendered, raced, and classed labour in order to facilitate transnational migration out of the country. Hence, Pinays use misrepresentation not only to escape dangerous situations, but also to express their own bodily autonomy, and to subvert exploitation that is premised on gender, racial, and class inequities.

One interesting inter-generational counterhegemonic technique employed by Pinays against gender and class inequalities is the sponsorship of poorer family members’ education or fees for future migration. This sponsorship of poorer or younger family members’ education through the migration of Pinays is what I refer to as chain education. 61 Chain education is made possible via the remittances of migratory domestic workers who send money back to the Philippines, as explained here:

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61 Unlike previous generations of Pinay migrants who were exclusively of middle class origin, contemporary migrants also hail from poorer rural backgrounds as well – this is due to chain education and Pinay women’s refusal of conditions that inhibit tertiary learning and mobility.
My auntie supported me, and she was a domestic worker in Hong Kong. I did not go to university until my auntie decided that she was going to be the one who was going to support my study. The first year of my education, my mom and dad paid, but later on they talked to me and they weren’t able to continue to finance my study. So my aunt decided to pay for the tuition fee. (Andreya)

Once a previous generation has sponsored the education of a younger relative, the younger relative then migrates overseas to work, subsequently sponsoring the education of succeeding generations via remittances sent back to the Philippines.

I sent one of my relatives to school when I was working in Hong Kong. She pursued HRM – hotel, restaurant, management. Last year I sent one brother and one sister to school. (Andreya)

In the words of Bonifacio (2013), “Filipinos believe that there is gold in education, that it acts as an equalizer among those of different social classes and status” (p. 28). The ability of Pinays to sponsor the education of family members still in the Philippines speaks to class inequalities due to the fact that poorer family members, through education, are able to resist the deleterious consequences of poverty and achieve class mobility by attending post-secondary institutions and achieving tertiary education. As well, Pinays who fund the education of relatives are viewed as the primary support of their families and, instead of depending on men to provide, male family members are dependent upon them, thus reversing traditional gender roles. Hence, Pinays use migration as a mechanism by which to resist the intersection of both gender and class inequities, and as a way to strengthen collectivist relations within their families or communities.

One of the most important ways that Pinay women resist hegemonic narratives is through expressions of their own positionality. Despite the neoliberal climate which may have partly motivated their migration, Pinay women see themselves as empowered women, not victims or abject beings. As such, Pinays consistently reproduce narratives that showcase consciousness of their own power, even within systems that are overwhelmingly stacked against them according to
their gender, their race, and their class. The narratives that the women relate are also often centered around the establishment of their relatives or families back in the Philippines:

You know, before we didn’t have a house in the Philippines. So when I was working in Singapore, I built a house, I bought a motorcycle for them, I bought a T.V., I gave everything for them. (Ging)

Here, Ging illustrates her own positionality as the primary provider for her family, conceptualizing her own empowerment via the role she played in improving the security and quality of life that her relatives enjoy. The important role that Pinay migrants fulfill both in their host countries and in their country of origin is similarly illustrated here:

When I worked in Hong Kong, our land was mortgaged. So I am the one who paid it off. I think that’s my remembrance while I worked in Hong Kong - I paid for my family’s land. Of course my brother shared, he paid also but not as much - I paid for almost all. (Stephanie)

In this instance, Stephanie relates how she translated her earnings into securing property for her family, purchasing land in a country where landowning is heavily privatized and monopolized by corporations or wealthy families. Due to the fact that neoliberal capitalism has historically relied on the theft of land, the privatization of public spaces, and the extraction of resources from such spaces in order to flourish, by acquiring land Stephanie’s family moves outside the neoliberal market as they are able to occupy a space that does not rely on the exploitation of their work by an outside party (Harvey, 2007). Cornell West reminds us that a powerful resistance technique in the face of neoliberalism is the reminder that “the land is the land, and not just a factor of production and source of profit”; Stephanie’s role in securing property for her family un hinges neoliberalism through the rejection of corporate privatization (as cited in Braedley & Luxton, 2010, p. 201). The prominent role that Pinay migrants play in relation to the well-being and
comfort of their families thus contributes to both self-awareness, and their family’s awareness, of Pinays’ own empowerment within transnational systems of power.

Knowing and understanding laws that govern domestic work are key to resistance in transnational spaces, especially in neoliberal countries where exploitation is used to create profit. Pinays’ comprehension and advocation for employment standards are a way that they resist this exploitation. For example, when asked about the benefits that an employer must provide to *kasambahay* in the Philippines, all the women knew that the employer must pay for SSS (Social Security System) coverage, Pag-IBIG Home Development Mutual Fund (allows members to take out a loan in order to purchase or repair a home), and PhilHealth (Philippine Health Insurance Corporation) coverage. One woman notes that “it used to be voluntary for the employer to give this, but now all employers have to pay” (Ging). While formal coverage by employment standards does not always result in effective protection, clarity regarding the basic rights of workers is the first step in subverting exploitative practices as they arise. Understanding worker rights is crucial to refusing susceptibility to unequal power relationships that unfairly privilege the employer over the employee. For instance in the event that an employer does violate the rights of a worker, that worker is able to comprehend the situation and respond in ways that challenge the legitimization of these actions:

One time in Hong Kong, I stayed in a condominium and on the 28th floor was a Filipina helper; she was also from Visayas. One day, she called up the police! Her employer fired her and then wouldn’t let her go inside to get her things. She called the police because the rules in Hong Kong say that if you’re going to fire your helper, you are breaking your contract, so you need to give notice. If you don’t give notice, you need to pay one month’s salary to the helper. And the police told the employer, “You need to pay her and let her back in to get her things”. (Stephanie)
Here, by understanding her employment rights in a transnational space, the helper described by Stephanie was able to subvert unequal power dynamics that would have exploited her labour for the benefit of the employer. Resistance to worker vulnerability may also involve understanding employment standards and then negotiating with employers in order to establish limitations. As previously noted in Chapter Three, the Canadian government does not specifically stipulate what kinds of duties domestic work entails. In addition, the segregation of private homes from public view and lack of standardization mean that domestic workers may be asked to perform duties that are not remotely related to caregiving. The precarious citizenship to which temporary migrants are subject means that some Pinays are reluctant to report their employers for fear of deportation. Even though power relations between employers and employees are very unequal, a domestic worker can sometimes resist workplace abuses if she knows her rights, and takes steps to assert them:

My employers did not want me to go out so much, so they said, “Before you leave, you should cut the grass.” It was a command. Later on, I said, “You know what? Cutting grass is not my responsibility. It’s hard being a caregiver.” After that, we talked out our contract. I said, “Here in my contract, is my responsibility. My eight hours, which is give and take.” (Andreya)

This example chronicles Andreya’s knowledge of her employment rights, and then her subsequent use of this knowledge to subvert the demands of her employer by setting limitations. Refusing to submit to the vagueness of ‘domestic work’, Andreya takes the initiative to assert her rights, rejecting narratives of victimhood that seek to define caregivers as docile workers. Thus, comprehension of employment standards and workers’ rights in transnational spaces challenges neoliberalism since Pinay domestic workers can sometimes harness their knowledge to reject exploitative practices and negotiate for better working conditions. One point to note, however, is
that this remains a precarious situation for Pinays since an employer can still threaten to fire a domestic worker if she does not acquiesce to demands made upon her.

One of the main tenets of hegemonic neoliberalism is the move away from a collective or community-based social model to one that is more individualistic (Braedley & Luxton, 2010). Neoliberal reform advocates for the privatization of public and social assets (such as health care and education), which means that access to these services becomes increasingly limited and dependant on the ability of an individual to pay for their use. Due to this, individuals end up shouldering more responsibility for their own welfare, working more to take care of their own individual needs, and competing with other members of society in order to secure access to these needed assets. In this way, individual profit becomes more important than equal access to property and services. A current example of this includes Canada’s privatization of university education (where corporations buy board seats on some of Canada’s biggest universities), causing university students to compete for a limited number of funding opportunities. One way in which individualistic social models may be combated is through what Cornell West describes as “claims of mutual care and mutual responsibility”; by this, West reminds us that mutual, and thus collective, practices are ways that society can work to reject competitive individualism (as cited in Connell, 2010). Caring for each other, and allowing equal access to all social services, reduces competition between individuals, and places emphasis not on accumulating wealth, but on community well-being. In this project, Pinay domestic workers express collectivism in a number of different ways, among which include solidarity between each other, and solidarity across the migrant worker community. For instance, due to the fact that the Philippines has sustained a continual, and unofficial, policy of out-migration since the 1970s, there are now several generations of Pinays who have been employed within the service industry across the
globe. Several women in this project note that older generations of Pinay migrants often help and instruct younger generations about working conditions, employment standards, and resistance methods when faced with abusive employers:

Before, we were in a condo and…there was Filipino woman living in the same building who got an operation. She kept working after, so the operation opened up – it got worse. The employer did not take care of her. After, the helpers, we were talking around the swimming pool. There was another Pinay there – smart! She knew everything because she had been there a long time. She talked to the woman when her employer was not there. She said that they needed to go to the police. And then they did and went to court. So the employer had to pay a lot of money. (Ging)

Here, inter-generational collective practices that are shared within the Pinay migrant worker community result in the resistance to, and the rejection of, abuse. In the aforementioned excerpt, despite the possible risks of intervening, Ging shows that emphasis is not focused on individual concerns, but is placed on the safety and comfort of a community member who is in need. In addition, Pinay domestic workers may also practice collective solidarity with other members of the migrant community who are not Filipina or from the Philippines. One example of this is illustrated by Ging, as she says that:

In Singapore, you have to take a test before you can get your working permit. You know what? The Indonesians don’t know English – they don’t even know how to answer ‘yes’ or ‘no, but Filipinas know English. So sometimes when we are taking the test together, we will whisper “Hey, this is the answer” – to help them. (Ging)

Engaging in collectivist work across difference is important in decentering individualistic narratives. In the above example, Ging shows how broad solidarity between women in the migrant worker community can seek to undermine regulatory mechanisms put in place by government institutions. This removes any sense of individual competition from the situation, and allows other migrant workers to succeed. Many Pinays are also very active in transnational
communities that provide networking and support for those disempowered by gender, race, and class inequalities. Thus, collectivist action between migrant workers is a foundation to larger macrostructural alliances that speak back to neoliberal nation-states.

Coalition-building between members of the migrant worker community also contributes to collectivist work in transnational spaces. Due to the fact that the Philippines has a longer history of out-migration, some intermediary and destination countries, such as Hong Kong, have strongly supported politically active organizations; these organizations are designed to aid Pinay domestic workers in issues of social justice. In addition to the large number of Filipinas employed within domestic work, in Asia there are also an increasing number of Indonesian women in this sector (Bonifacio, 2013; Constable, 2007). Indonesia has only embarked on an aggressive migrant export campaign within the last fifteen to twenty years (Constable, 2007). Despite this, the number of Indonesian domestic workers has exploded within the past few years, surging to almost match, and even exceed, the number of Pinays in some Asian countries. The number of organizations dedicated to supporting Indonesian domestic workers has increased significantly in the past few years to match the burgeoning number of migrants. While many of the Indonesian organizations are much younger than some of the groups consisting of Filipina members, sometimes both Pinay and Indonesian factions come together to support each other in struggling for issues of social justice both in Hong Kong and abroad:

Indonesian people, they have organizations, and Filipinos also have organizations and then sometimes they meet, they meet together and help each other.

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62 Such non-governmental organizations (NGOs) include United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL-HK), International Social Service, Hong Kong (ISS-HK), and Mission for Filipino Migrant Workers (MFMW).

63 In Hong Kong in 2006, there were a little over 240,000 domestic workers - 100,000 Indonesians, compared to 125,000 Pinays. In 2013, there were approximately 320,000 domestic workers in Hong Kong of which 50% were Pinay, followed by 47% Indonesian, and 3% Thai, Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, and Myanmese (Constable, 2007; South China Morning Post, 2013).

64 Such organizations include Coalition of Indonesian Migrant Workers’ Organisations (KOTKIHO), and the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (IMWU).
The combination of these groups produces coalitions that can be more effective in advocating for
domestic worker rights as transnational pressure may be exerted simultaneously on the Hong
Kong, Philippine, and Indonesian governments to respond to rights violations. Indonesian
organizations and activists in Hong Kong have often credited Pinays for helping them find
support and determine methodologies of protest and resistance in the past (Constable, 2007).
This legacy of solidarity work has led to increased cooperation between different migrant worker
factions, wherein activists groups have advocated for workers’ rights and called upon
governments to assume more responsibility for migrant well-being. This creates dialogue
between groups who occupy similar positions within oppressive frameworks, creating counter
narratives that resist hegemonic ideologies that demean and repress (Zavella, 2011). With their
transnational collaboration, the activists discussed here negotiate social differences in ways that
transcend national borders (Zavella, 2011). This works to undo individualism, showing that
coalitions across ethnic and linguistic differences may collectively unite the migrant domestic
worker community.

The nature of migration gives Pinays access to diverse spaces and places. Migratory
Pinays eventually have the ability to move easily between nation-states where they possess
permanent residency, or dual citizenship; this means that they are able to traverse these spaces
while retaining political and social power in each:

For citizenship, I will be Filipino and Canadian, and maybe my children too. It’s
easier if you have both. If you have the Canadian passport it is easy in
immigration. But having a Filipino passport means buying property in the
Philippines. (Andrey a)
In this example, Andreya relates how possessing dual citizenship in both the Philippines and Canada will allow her to retain agency in both nation-states. By remaining a citizen of the Philippines and opting to gain Canadian citizenry, Andreya will be able to move easily between nation-states where the Canadian passport is accepted, while being able to retain self-determination within the Philippines. Thus, Andreya gains agency within transnational spaces.

As well, Pinays who migrate also employ other transnational techniques that allow them to navigate through intersecting neoliberal oppressions that would ordinarily disempower them. For instance, decreased educational spending by the federal government in Canada since 2007 has resulted in students carrying an increased portion of the cost of education in provinces such as Ontario (Church, 2010). As government subsidies decrease, students are forced to pay higher tuition and are thus obliged to fund their university education. This indicates larger neoliberal trends in Canada, wherein the responsibility for education is taken up by individual members of society. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Pinays who come to Canada are divested of their tertiary education and are then shunted into low paying jobs. While the Canadian government does permit Pinays to enroll in post-secondary education in Canadian institutions once they are permanent residents, these women are often unable to move out of domestic work due to their reduced credentials once they enter Canada, and the reality of working at less than minimum wage while attempting to support families in the Philippines. For many Pinays who come to Canada as domestic workers, the ability to pay for post-secondary education for their children is a task that may not be attainable. However, as one woman related, the ability to access transnational spaces, and harness available resources in those spaces, allows for the subversion of neoliberal systems that disadvantage migrants:
Here [in Canada] it is expensive. When I am Canadian, maybe my kids, I will bring them back there, to the Philippines. And then they will go to school there because it is cheaper. And then, when they come back, they can just upgrade. Then, when they pass the exam, they can go and they can work. (Monica)

Here, Monica subverts neoliberal circumstances that rely on the exploitation of migrants – she refuses to submit to limitations that would potentially impoverish herself and her children, choosing instead to potentially utilize her transnationality in order to speak back against Global North efforts to recolonize her family. As this excerpt shows, despite intersecting gender, race, and class inequalities, Monica demonstrates that she is not a victim within these interlocking systems of power, nor will she let her children succumb to these narratives. Illustrating a nuanced understanding of global neoliberalism, Monica is able to develop techniques that decenter systems predicated on the exploitation of undervalued Global South women. Thus, Monica gives us great insight into ways that Pinays utilize their transnationality in developing global counterhegemonic strategies.

It is important to note that resistance strategies are often quite complex; challenging binaries that portray Pinays as either trafficked victims or free agents mean that there are some counterhegemonic techniques that could, at first glance, seem oppressive. For example, some Pinays and their families actively use misrepresentation as a survival strategy to escape the consequences of poverty, even using illicit measures to do so:

My daughter worked as a dancer in Japan, but before she left we fixed her passport in the DFA [Department of Foreign Affairs]. She could not go to Japan since she was too young – she was only 16 and you have to be 18 to go. So we made a fake birth certificate. I was so worried because it’s hard there…the yakuza…and some don’t come back anymore. But it helped the family for her to go to Japan and send back money. (Riza)
For some, the act of an underage woman temporarily migrating to Japan as a dancer under false pretenses would be considered a grossly illegal and dire situation. However for Riza, deciding to acquire a fraudulent birth certificate for her daughter was a conscious act of misrepresentation – one that led to future benefits that helped other family members. While Riza’s story is assuredly one that arose from the exploitation of bodies for consumption of gender, race, and class privileged individuals, the idea of migrating to help family and community is one that simultaneously works against neoliberal efforts to individualize and isolate. As Braedley and Luxton (2010) remind us, neoliberalism individualizes and isolates members of society in order to create an environment wholly dependent on competition. Despite this, Luxton (2010) writes that the “sense of being part of a system of social values and of obligations to others offers a potential antidote to the neoliberal vision of a fully marketized society of competing individuals” (p. 180). It is in such a way that Riza and her daughter, while still caught within systems that exploit certain bodies more than others, still manage to refute the main tenets of neoliberalism by rejecting individualistic values. The importance Riza places on family and collective well-being is an aspect of this seemingly entirely exploitative situation that still works to undo individualistic self-care.

Hence, here we can understand that the analysis of agency and freedom within neoliberal systems of power is not without tension and complexity. Counterhegemonic techniques of resistance are a part of many migrant Pinays’ quotidian lives and, as such, are nuanced to respond to particular situations of oppression. Even though global neoliberal policies make it so that out-migration from rural Philippine spaces seems to be one of the only options for Pinays, we have seen that the very act of migrating can be a methodology of resistance that struggles

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65 For more about migrant Pinay hostesses and entertainers in Japan, see Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration, and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo by Rhacel Salazar Parreñas (2011).
against hegemonic narratives of victimhood and disempowerment. Pinay women’s actions frequently interrupt unequal systems of economic power that function on the exploitation of gender, race, and class. Pinays not only subvert victimizing and silencing narratives employed by nation-states around the globe, but also form alliances with other communities who experience similar intersecting exploitations. Thus, we can understand migrant Pinays as theorists of transnational social justice. While Pinays’ movements across the globe may seem to acquiesce to exploitative practices, we have seen that their actions may, in fact, resist neoliberal reform in unexpected and unanticipated ways.
Conclusion

Filipinas are palaban – fighters. Yeah, we are fighters! If we know that we are right then we will fight for our right.

- Stephanie

The act of migration is one that is essential in understanding global social justice. For many women, migration is an empirically proven way to make gains in status, autonomy, and resources (Parreñas, 2011). As such, Filipina (in Tagalog, Pinay) women’s transnational journeys, though often the result of intersecting oppressive conditions, can be understood as empowering and liberating movements that resonate not only with themselves, but with the communities to which they belong. By migrating, many Pinays refuse the abject victimhood propagated by the intersection of global gender, race, and class oppressions, actively forging collective links that struggle against neoliberal competition and privatization.

Throughout this project, I have woven together several threads in order to showcase the complexity and fortitude of women who cannot be defined merely by the type of labour which they perform. I first engaged in a literature review that examined the historical and current processes of imperialism in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada in order to understand the migratory patterns of Pinays who engage in domestic work. My research revealed that migration is strongly shaped by economic relations between Global North and Global South countries, and that legacies of colonialism as well as unequal gender, race, and class relations continue to inform and perpetuate labour trajectories. Next, I engaged in an analysis of global capitalism, focusing on the ways that migration is influenced by neoliberal reform. From this, I found that neoliberal capitalism naturalizes the feminization and racialization of transnational workers (while simultaneously disenfranchising these migrants via their precarious and unprotected
citizenship), thus facilitating the availability of cheap Global South labour for the use of wealthier Global North countries. Then, I illustrated the nuances of the international division of reproductive labour, exploring how gender, race, and class intersect to produce conditions that result in the global chain of care. Here, my research showed that neoliberal reform perpetuates the global chain of care, in which responsibilities for social reproduction are passed down a female chain that is increasingly poorly (or often not at all) compensated at the bottom; it is often poorer racialized women from the Global South who adopt the social reproduction duties of wealthier families in both Global South and Global North countries. After this, I described domestic work in three nation-states: the Philippines (rural and urban spaces in the labour-sending country), Hong Kong (the intermediary country), and Canada (the final labour-receiving country). I drew from the qualitative interviews I conducted in order to illustrate processes of migration and exploitation in each space. In the Philippines, I found that domestic migration from rural to urban areas is gendered and class stratified, and buttresses larger cycles of international outmigration from the Philippines. As well, migration from the Philippines to international locations is also largely gendered and classed, and is informed by the gender and race expectations of Global North countries who hire Pinays as employees. In Hong Kong migration is stratified according to gender and race, and all Pinays who apply as domestic workers must undergo both medicalization and surveillance processes. Many Pinays who are able use Hong Kong as an intermediary stop before continuing to other Global North countries, such as Canada. In Canada, there is a high demand for caregivers for both children and an aging baby boomer population. Pinays who apply for work as domestic labourers are desklhed even before they enter Canada, and colonial legacies of gender and racial inequality mean that there are many gatekeeping mechanisms in place that regulate who is appropriate to perform ‘low-

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skilled’ caregiving activities (namely racialized women from the Global South). After this section, I used Gramsci as a critical lens in order to analyze the types of rhetoric utilized in newspaper articles from the year 2013-2014. Here, I engaged in a discourse analysis in order to identify hegemonic national narratives in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Canada. Finally, in the last section, I showed how the voices of Pinay migrants speak back against these hegemonic scripts in nuanced and empowered ways. I argued that the interwoven voices of the Pinay women, and the realities of their lived experiences at differing points within transnational trajectories, offer decolonizing and collective strategies that refuse victimization and consistently work against the gender, race, and class inequities that global capitalism exploits.

Centering the voices of migrant Pinays within the work they perform risks defining these women solely by their jobs. Mahtani and Roberts (2012) write that the dominant depiction of Pinays in transnational spaces is as domestic workers and caregivers. The characterization of Pinays as women who are defined by their low-paying, and often exploitative, work dismisses the political and social power that these women wield. As such, I urge us to think outside the prescriptive categorizations foisted onto migrating Pinays; these women are not simply domestic workers, they are theorists – theorists of social change and resistance to transnational exploitation. By sharing their stories with me and allowing others to understand their lives, these women encourage us to begin looking outwards from singular nation-states. Due to their experiences, we can understand that exploitation and oppression are shaped by global macrostructural forces. Hence, Pinays help us understand that accountability for migrant and worker rights is a global movement that is not bound to any one nation-state.

What this means for future research in this field is focusing more on how transnational activist networks dismantle oppression in multiple sites of engagement. For example, there are
already a few international organizations that are focused solely on the welfare of Pinays (both migrant and non-migrant) at home and abroad. Migrante International is a global alliance group that is based in the Philippines, but coordinates many branches and affiliate organizations around the world. Formed in 1996, the group focuses on the rights and welfare of overseas Filipino workers while working in solidarity with other transnational migrant associations. Similarly, Gabriela is a feminist organization based in the Philippines that advocates for Filipina women’s rights nationally and internationally. Gabriela is both a political party and a social justice organization - the Gabriela Women’s Party won two seats in the Philippine House of Representative in 2013. Formed from a network of grassroots initiatives, Gabriela focuses on representing “the broad masses of Filipino women and their families; dedicated to advancing the rights and promoting the well-being of women, especially of the more marginalized and under-represented” (“Gabriela: Our Declaration of Principles,” 2015). The work of these organizations is multi-pronged and involves protecting the rights and interests of immigrant Pinays in a variety of nation-states. What is critical about Migrante International and Gabriela is that both work to address oppressive conditions for women in labour-sending and labour receiving countries. Rather than just focus on a singular nation-state, these organizations operate from the standpoint that global accountability must feature prominently in any social justice activism that works to undo the deleterious effects of exploitation.

In a further investigation, I would ask how migrant women further contribute to the dismantlement of neoliberal initiatives in other communities. Migrant women from Global South countries often live at the intersection of gender, race, and class inequalities and are thus at the most disadvantaged when the privatization of public assets occur. What are some of the ways that migrant women engage politically and socially in order to combat the effects of
transnational capitalism? How does this decenter global white supremacy and offer decolonial opportunities to other groups? What I am attempting to illustrate through these questions is that migrant women can produce alternative spaces that help us understand the making and meaning of social justice.

Globally, female migrant experiences are intertwined, and the work of one organization that struggles against gender, race, and class inequalities fundamentally works to improve the lives of other women following the same paths. Hence, the importance of my research in this project is not limited to the particular women who shared their journeys in this text, nor is it specifically restricted to the agency of Pinays who migrate transnationally for labour. This project’s conclusions are vital because they can be broadly extended to include how migrant women from different groups engage in counterhegemonic techniques that attempt to combat global exploitation. Thus, we can understand that all migrant women, not just Pinay migrants, have the potential to be powerful. Even in situations where they are categorized as trafficked or abject persons, these women are not fragile victims of systemic oppression; their refusal to identify themselves as such points to the fact that they are transnational agents of change and subversion, and that they have the potential to transform the political and social terrain of migration and labour.
References


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Appendix A: Letter of Information for Participants

DATE:

LETTER OF INFORMATION

A Study about Domestic Work and the Transnational Relationships of Filipina Women

Investigators:

Principal Investigator: Joddi Alden  
Dr. Margaret Little  
Department of Gender Studies  
Department of Gender Studies  
Queen’s University  
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Canada: (613) 876-5032  
E-mail: 13ja6@queensu.ca  
E-mail: mjhl@queensu.ca

Purpose of the Study
I am doing research for my thesis on the topics of domestic work and transnational relationships between women in Canada and the Philippines. I am trying to understand the issues surrounding work, the creation of nation, gender, and migration. I will be looking at the experiences of Filipina women working in domestic jobs while having international relationships.

What will happen during the study?
You will be invited to an interview that will last between 1 and 2 hours. You will be asked to discuss your feelings about domestic work, migration, the Philippines, Canada, your family, earning wages, and your own identity. The audio of the interview will be recorded and written down. All of this will be done by me, the researcher. My supervisor will see the data that I collect but she will not know your identity. No one else will know your identity but me. This interview will be in person in a place that is comfortable and feels safe for you.

Are there any risks to doing study?
The risks involved in participating in this study are small. You may feel uncomfortable talking about the topic of domestic work or migration in general. You do not need to answer questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable and you can stop taking part at any time. There is a possibility that you could be identified due to the small number of participants I will interview, though I will take all the steps I can to negate this concern. As such, you can leave the study at any time without consequence. I describe below the steps I am taking to protect your privacy.
Are there any benefits to doing this study?
The research will benefit you by allowing you a space to talk about and think through your own views on these topics; it will not have any direct financial benefit. It also will also allow you to add a voice to these discussions that are taking place in and around Canada and the Philippines, but to do so without identifying yourself. I hope to learn more about what is actually happening in international relationships today, how it has changed with different politics, and why it has changed. I hope what is learned from the study will help us to better understand how women have international families while remaining independent and capable in a field of work that is internationally undervalued.

Payment or Reimbursement
In return for your involvement in this study you will be paid for a meal.

Who will know what I said or did in the study?
You are participating in this study privately. I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified on any of your interview material or audio recordings. No one but me knows whether you participated unless you choose to tell them.

The information/data you provide will be kept in a locked desk/cabinet where only I will have access to it. Information kept on a computer will be protected by a password and coded at all times. Your consent form will be kept in a separate cabinet, away from your interviews and other data. Once the study has been completed the recordings will be destroyed.

The final version of this study will be published in my thesis and may be presented in academic journals or at conferences. No information that should identify you, however, will be included in these papers.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?
It is your choice to be part of the study or not. If you decide to be part of the study, you can decide to stop, at any time, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the study. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no problems made for you, any data you have provided will be destroyed unless you ask otherwise. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study. Your decision to withdraw from the study will not affect your access to any services or result in punishment.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?
I expect to have this study completed by approximately September, 2015. You will be given a one page overview of my research findings as well as the option of getting a copy of my thesis.

Questions about the Study
Any questions about study participation may be directed to Joddi Alden at (0949) 4563365 or (613) 8765032, 13ja6@queensu.ca; or her Supervisor Margaret Little at (613) 533-6233, mjhl@queensu.ca.
Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6000 ext. 74025.

This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen’s policies.
Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being directed by Joddi Alden of Queen’s University. I have had the chance to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive more details I requested. I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time and that I do not have to answer any question I do not wish to answer. I have been given a copy of this form. I agree to participate in the study.

Should I have any questions, I understand that I can contact any of the following individuals:

Joddi Alden (0949) 4563365 or (613) 8765032, ja6@queensu.ca, Master’s Student, Department of Gender Studies, Queen’s University, or

Dr. Margaret Little (613) 533-6233, mjhl@queensu.ca, Professor, Department of Gender Studies, Queen’s University, or

Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6000 ext. 74025, chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

1. I agree that the interview can be audio/video recorded.
   ... Yes
   ... No

2. ...Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study’s results. Please send them to this email address _____________________________ or to this mailing address __________________________________________________________.
   .....No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study’s results.

3. I agree to be contacted about a follow-up interview, and understand that I can always refuse the request.
   ... Yes. How to contact me____________________________________________________
   ... No

4. I agree that my interview can be quoted
   ...Yes
   ...No

Signature: ______________________________________

Name of Participant (Printed) ___________________________________:
Appendix C: Telephone Script

“Hello (Insert Potential Participant’s Name), my name is Joddi Alden and I am a student at Queen’s University in Canada. I got your contact information from (Insert Name). The reason I’m calling is that I am researching Filipina women who work as maids/ya-yas in the Philippines. I am looking for women to interview and I wondered if you would be interested in hearing more about it.”

(IF NO): “Thank you, good-bye.”

(IF YES): “This study will look at international relationships that Filipina domestic workers in the Philippines and Canada countries have. I will ask you several questions in an interview setting about your life, your work as a maid/ya-ya, and your relationships with your overseas family members. Some of the questions I may ask about yourself and your employer might be uncomfortable for you to answer, in which case you can decide not to comment and pass to the next question. At any point during the interview you can let me know if you would like any information to be taken out, and you are free to withdraw at any time if you desire. Some sample questions I may ask include: Please describe your family/educational background; how did you find your current job; what is your relationship with your overseas family members like?”

“This study will take approximately 1-2 hours of your time, and we can meet at a time and in a place of your choosing and at your convenience. To thank you, I will provide for your travel to and from the meeting, and well as any food eaten during the interview.”

“I would like to tell you that this study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Board of Queen’s University. However, the final decision about participation is yours.”

“Would you be interested in participating?”

(IF NO): “Thank you, good-bye.”

(IF YES): “Thank you; we appreciate your interest in our research.”

“Where would you like to meet, and when is the best time for you?”

“Great! The day before your session, I will contact you by email or text you to confirm our meeting. However, in the meantime, if you know you cannot make it, please call me at (Philippines: (0917) 669-7508, Canada: (613) 876-5032) and leave a message if I am not available, or email me at 13ja6@queensu.ca. Also, would you like me to email you a copy of the information which I have just told you about the project?”

“I look forward to meeting you on (Insert Day and Time Again). Thank you!
Appendix D: Sample Interview Questions

Participants are not expected to answer all of these questions, rather they are meant to generate discussion around certain key areas of research and are as such deliberately open ended.

Due to the number of questions that will be asked, participants will be asked periodically if they are happy to continue; if not, then an alternate time to continue the interview will be arranged.

Give a little information about myself, such as class, race, region, connection to the Philippines, why I chose the topic.

Street Cred – Mention faults in the Philippines and Canada.

Context
1. I would first like some general personal information on you, to give me a better sense of who you are; could you tell me about yourself?
2. How long have you worked as a domestic worker/maid/ya-ya/help?
3. How did you get this job?
4. Could you tell me some more about your work and what it is like?

Experience/Working as a Domestic Labourer
5. How many employers have you had? (Reassure them that this is anonymous).
6. Can you describe your employer?
7. What makes a good/bad employer?
8. If comfortable, would you be able to share a good/bad experience you have had with your employer/employer’s family?
9. Have you heard of any employer treating his/her employee badly? What was done in that case?
10. Are there any support/social groups that you know of for women who are domestic workers?
11. How often do you meet with other domestic workers/ya-ya/maids?
12. Do you talk about your problems?
13. Do you get/give advice? What kind of advice?
14. Do other domestics/maids/ya-ya tell you about the laws?
15. Where do you go if you need help? How did you find that out?
16. What would you tell someone who is new at this job to watch out for/take advantage of?
17. Are you aware of any laws that help/protect domestic workers?
18. Do you feel that your job is important to your family, to other families?
19. What do other people think about your job?
20. Do you get praise or criticism from your family/media/community for doing this work?
21. Do you think this is important work to help other Filipinos?
22. Is it worth it?
23. What would you tell someone who wants to get into this work?
24. What would you tell someone who is new at this job to take advantage of/watch out for?
25. Would you recommend this job to others?
26. Do you think Canada/the Philippines values you enough for your work/sacrifices?
27. If you could do it all again, would you? Why or why not?

Nationhood
28. What does it mean to be Pinay/Canadian?
29. Do you think this is important work to help other Filipinos?
30. Do you feel that you are an important part of your country? Why or why not?
31. What do you think is the impression Westerners outside of the Philippines have of the Philippines/Filipinos?

Migration
32. Could you tell me a bit about your migration to Canada/experiences with migrating family members?
33. What do you think is the impression Westerners have of overseas Filipino workers and do you think it is accurate?
34. If you wanted to move outside of the Philippines, where would you like to go? Why?
35. Do you feel that gender is an advantage/disadvantage in migration? Why or why not?
36. Is it worth it?
37. Would you encourage others to migrate/go into domestic work? Why or why not?

Belonging
38. Where do you call home? Why?
39. Do you feel that Westerners think you/your job is expendable?
40. Do you have a community in the place you live now? If so, how did you first contact/encounter your community?
41. Describe your community. How does your community meet/keep in contact?
42. Describe how you feel living in Canada/the Philippines. Do you feel like you belong?
43. Would you identify yourself as an important part the place you are living/your community? Why or why not?
44. What are the benefits/downsides to having your community? Would you change anything?

The Market/Capital/Financial Situation
45. How much money do you make from your job? What are your expenses for yourself/your family/the government?
46. Do you send money back home? Do you receive money from a relative overseas?
47. Is money stressful/worrisome for you? Why or why not?
48. Do you have any sidelines? If so, what kind of sideline? Why do you have a sideline in addition to your job as a domestic worker/maid/ya-ya?
49. Do you feel like you are an important wage-earner in your family?
50. Do you feel that you are an important part of your country’s financial system?
51. Do you have any other sources of money besides the one from your main job?
52. Is access to foreign money important? Why?
53. Do you receive remittances from/send money to any relatives overseas? If so, why?
54. Is money the most important reason to migrate?
Transnational Relationships
55. Do you have any OFWs in your family? If so, could you describe them and their situation?
56. Could you describe your relationship with your overseas family members?
57. How often does your family member(s) return to the Philippines?
58. Do you take care of any of your family members’ children who are not your own? Why or why not?
59. Do you take care of any children whose parents are OFWs? Why or why not?
60. What is your relationship to the children?
61. Are you paid to take care of these children? If so, do you think this is a fair rate? Why or why not?
62. Are there other ways in which you feel you are compensated for taking care of your family members besides money?
63. How does having OFWs in your family help or not help you?
64. If you could change something about your relationships with family overseas, what would you change?
65. Do you think it is better for your family member (you) to work overseas or not?