

“I may be lost but I know how to find my way.”: The “Lived” Experiences of Filipina  
Caregivers in the Live-In Caregiver Program in Halifax

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## **Dedication**

To the mother I know and love; and  
to the mother I long to meet and know.

## **Abstract**

To date there has been no research completed on live-in caregivers, in particular women from the Philippines, who are in the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) in small urban centers in Canada. This research is attempting to fill this gap.

This research explores the 'lived' experiences of Filipinas who are recently, or currently in the LCP in Halifax Municipality, Nova Scotia. The data was collected through in-depth qualitative interviews with five Filipino women who have come to Canada as live-in caregivers. Given the overall low immigrant densities in the Atlantic region of Canada and the relatively small size of ethno-cultural communities, in combination with the isolating conditions of caregivers' work, Filipina live-in caregivers in Halifax are experiencing stressful working and living environments. Nevertheless, Filipina caregivers are negotiating their position between borders of citizen and non-citizen, worker and non-worker, maid and madam, caregiver and mother in hopes and future goals of becoming a permanent resident of Canada and reuniting with their family.

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## **Introduction**

This research is exploratory and aims at learning about and understanding the lived experiences of Filipina caregivers<sup>1</sup> sometimes referred to as domestic workers. These workers are part of the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) of Nova Scotia. Through qualitative interviews, I also explore their strategies of survival, individual and collective and the complexity of overcoming the systemic obstacles (ethnicity, race, gender and class-based) they encounter. In the course of this thesis the needs and the agency of the women is highlighted. My analysis of these interviews both draws upon existing feminist literature and identifies areas for further research and possible political action, that may bring about change to the living and working conditions for the women working under the LCP.

Existing feminist research in Canada has focused on the lived experiences of caregivers, or foreign domestic workers, in the federal program called the “Live-In Caregiver Program” (LCP). Most of the research has focused on domestic workers living and working in larger urban centres such as Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Edmonton. To date, there has not been research completed on the lived experiences of domestic workers/caregivers who live in a small, or medium size urban centres, such as Halifax. This is a gap that this study aims to address. The domestic workers/caregivers’ experiences in the LCP in Halifax could be different because of lower numbers of immigrants, lower levels of cultural and racial diversity and lower concentrations of ethnic groups.

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<sup>1</sup> The term domestic worker has an embedded stigma of lower status, therefore I am reluctant to use this term when discussing the experiences of caregivers, however, I use the term when referring to previous research that has used this term.

These lower numbers would translate into fewer informal networks and organized support services for domestic workers.

Within Canada and throughout the world, in the past and the present, patriarchal relationships and structures place women in the position of caregiver for no wages, or poor wages, and isolated working conditions. Research on the experiences of women working within the LCP in Nova Scotia is also important because as the Canadian population grows older, there is a coinciding erosion of the welfare state and its programs. This erosion of the welfare state in Canada has left women to carry the burden of care giving roles in their families (whether paid or unpaid), be it for their children or aging parents. This re-intensification of the sexual division of labour resonates a dominant patriarchal ideology in place, which has been challenged by feminists, activists and researchers.

In addition, this research must be framed within the context of globalization and addressing the unequal power between developed and developing countries must be considered. An understanding of both the receiving and sending countries' role in a global economy is equally important to appreciate the significance of the "relations of ruling"<sup>2</sup>(Smith, 1987:3). Thus, it is within this complex interrelationship between developed and developing countries, and in the global context of social, political and economic inequalities between developing and developed countries, that the LCP in Canada is situated.

Many women of developing countries (or Majority World, Two Thirds

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<sup>2</sup> "Relations of ruling"- is a concept that grasps power, organization, direction, and regulation as more pervasively structured than can be expressed in traditional concepts provided by the discourses of power. (Smith, 1987:3).

World, Third and Fourth World countries) have become commodified, globally. Domestic work is a highly gendered and racialized occupation, using women from developing countries (non-white, non European extraction mostly) as domestic workers in Canada. For the sending or home country the export of women as caregivers and domestic workers (along with mail order brides, entertainers and prostitutes) has increasingly become an important source of foreign exchange, of regular remittances to supplement household incomes and to support local development of their home country. In advanced capitalist societies (North, First World, Minority World, One Third World), where educated women enter the workforce, there is an increased reliance on the import of migrant women for domestic labour, who are called upon in order to resolve problems of reproductive labour shortage such as household maintenance, and care giving for the young, elderly and people with special needs.

The LCP is a federal program (Citizenship and Immigration Canada with Human Resource Development Commission, now Service Canada) that brings professional workers to Canada on a temporary basis for certain kinds of live-in work when there are not enough Canadians to fill the available positions. It is mandatory that the workers must live in the homes in which they work. The LCP exists only because there is a shortage of Canadians to fill the need for live-in care work. Employees hired under this program provide care for children, seniors or the disabled in a private household. The Canadian state plays a significant role in shaping the women's experiences because the women are denied legal citizenship and the rights attached to citizenship.

This thesis is divided into 9 chapters. In chapter 1, I begin with discussing

feminist standpoint theory which I used to conduct my research. Secondly, I examine existing feminist literature on migrant domestic workers within globalization, or the new economy, to contextualize my research. This chapter focuses on theories and concepts, such as feminization of survival, international division of labour, and global care chains, to understand the growing number of female migrant workers in economically disadvantaged countries seeking employment in economically advanced countries to support their families. Thirdly, I examine some existing feminist literature with a focus on the LCP in Canada which reveals the inequality and lack of citizenship rights, because of the racism, sexism, and class discrimination embedded in the policy. My research builds upon this literature in several ways; through using a feminist qualitative methodological approach, it seeks to understand domestic workers' experiences and how they negotiate their positions and utilize their agency to change their living and working conditions.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the methodology and approach to the research. I explain my position in the research, as second generation immigrant, labour activist and feminist researcher, and how I came to do this research. Next I discuss the feminist standpoint approach I take when doing the qualitative research. Lastly, I present the steps taken to design and complete this research project.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the racism and sexism embedded in Canada's domestic worker schemes and immigration policies historically. I examine, through the work of feminist scholars, the history of the domestic worker schemes within the framework of immigration policies, citizenship and nation-

building beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, rooted in imperialism and colonialism which in turn are both rooted in racism, sexism and classism. By understanding the past, one is able to connect the past to the present, and see the remnants of the past in the present. Interwoven in this history is the women's agency in changing the policy. Furthermore, I include a section on domestic workers in Nova Scotia, followed by a discussion of the current Live-In Caregiver policy and recent modifications in order to understand how the program has changed to benefit the state and the employer within globalization.

In Chapter 4, continuing on with situating the Filipinas within the context of globalization, I examine the "development of underdevelopment" in the Philippines to understand the influence of colonialism, capitalism and globalization on their "choice" to migrate to Canada and abroad.

In Chapters 5 - 8, I present my findings according to the common themes that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative open-ended interviews that I completed with the participants. The women's agency is interwoven through the analysis and chapters. I begin, in Chapter 5, by discussing the women's responses to the political, economic and social inequalities precipitating their migration, including the feminization of survival. In Chapter 6, I discuss the women's experiences and their understanding of these experiences in the workplace/home and their settlement in Canada. Chapter 7 is a discussion of the women's experiences within the transnational household and their challenges to the gender roles as wife and mother. Chapter 8 is a discussion of the women's experiences within the community and support network.

In the Conclusion I summarize the findings from this research and make

recommendations and suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter 1 Theoretical Framework**

My thesis demonstrates through a feminist and antiracist approach the "lived" experiences of Filipina caregivers in the LCP in Halifax, as active agents mediating their experiences. The literature review in this chapter and the chapters on the history of the domestic worker schemes in Canada and the chapter on the history of the "development of underdevelopment" in the Philippines provide a framework for understanding the complexity of the Filipinas' lived experiences and their agency.

I divide this chapter into four sections. First I discuss the overarching theories of feminist standpoint theory and women's socialization into caring roles. Then I examine the work of scholars who have written on domestic workers globally and the "feminization of survival", "global care chains" and the "international division of reproductive labour". I then move on to explore more specific feminist qualitative writing and research, focusing on Filipino women's experiences and discourses in the LCP in Canada. Throughout this critical review I demonstrate how a feminist understanding of the LCP has emerged by hearing the voices of the Filipina women and using a critical analysis to understand the long history of domestic worker schemes in Canada.

### *1.1 Feminist Standpoint Theory*

In the first section I discuss Smith's (1987) feminist standpoint theory and antiracist theory, which offer theoretical perspectives and methods for studying gender, race and class within the LCP. Drawing upon Dorothy Smith's concept

of the standpoint of women this research employs open ended interviews to investigate the women's stories of migration. Feminist standpoint theory attempts to work through the struggles of women to provide a less biased, less defensive, less distorted and most of all, a more accurate understanding of human relations. Standpoint feminists (Hartsock, 1983, Smith, 1987) argue that the theoretical perspective offered by them and the methods they use to analyze society are from the perspective of the subjugated gender. Feminist standpoint theory sees women as agents of knowledge and their experiences as resources for social analysis. It claims that it is women who should be able to reveal what women's experiences really are; therefore knowledge is grounded in experience. We can use the accounts of the less powerful to gain insights into how power operates and reveal differences between what is claimed to be true and what people actually experience.

Smith (1987) in *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* argues that sociology of women preserves the presence of subjects as knowers and actors. It does not transform subjects into objects of study or make use of conceptual devices for eliminating the active presence of subjects.

It is a method at the outset of inquiry, creates the space for an absent subject, and an absent experience that is to be filled with the presence and spoken experience of actual women speaking of, and in the actualities of their everyday worlds. (Smith, 1987:107).

Furthermore, women as the subjugated gender are examined within the "relations of ruling" of particular contexts. The concept of "relations of ruling" focuses our attention on forms of knowledge, organized social institutions and practices and questions agency, consciousness, and experiences (Mohanty,

1991:14). The concept of the "relations of ruling" also deters analysts of gender from positing the universal standpoint of women, in opposition to men, and allows the analyst to recognize that there are multiple standpoints located at the intersections of class, caste, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, dis(ability) which constitute the specific "relations of ruling" in particular times and places. There are, therefore, standpoints of women that are particular to the specific contexts and experiences. Patricia Hill Collins (1990) identified this construct as the "matrix of domination", which, she noted, contains few pure victims or oppressors and that "each individual derives varying amounts of penalty and privilege from the multiple systems of oppression which frame everyone's lives" (p. 229).

Subjects are constituted discursively, but there are conflicts among discursive systems, contradictions within any one of them, multiple meanings possible for the concepts they deploy. Subjects do have agency, they are not unified, autonomous individuals exercising free will, but rather subjects whose agency is created through situations and statuses conferred on them. Their agency is often empowering as the subjects are self-actualized, self-defined and self-determined (Hill-Collins, 1999: 158).

While women share certain experiences as women, because men in all cultures assign a certain otherness to them, women are different along lines of caste, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion (disability) and might find more similarities with men in their social contexts than with other women. Recognizing this aspect of difference, standpoint feminists do not propagate some kind of feminine essentialism, or universalism that assumes that all women share

common experiences.

In addition, feminist standpoint is not grappling with notions of "truth" but how our actual everyday worlds are organized and how they are shaped and determined by relations that extend beyond them (Smith, 1987:121). Subjects are often located in structures of dominance and subordination organized around gender, caste, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, (dis)ability having a social, political and ideological construction which has consequences for those who live them (Bordo,1999). Smith's theory enables one to study women's agency and experiences.

### *1.2 Theories of Globalization and Reproductive Labour*

I next discuss theories and concepts of women's migration in the context of economic globalization, followed by a discussion of feminist Canadian research on the experiences of domestic workers and caregivers in the LCP.

Sassen (2000) contributes to the theories on the position of women needing to survive in the global market. She identifies the growing number of women in cross-border circuits. These circuits are diverse but, she argues, there is one feature that they share, namely that "they are profit or revenue-making circuits developed on the back of the truly disadvantaged" (Sassen, 2000:503). As such, the cross-border circuits become a source of livelihood for people and accrual of foreign currency for countries. The cross-border circuits often involve illegal trafficking in people sometimes for the sex industry. Cross-border migration is both documented and not (Sassen, 2000). In Sassen's analysis of cross-border circuits the key actors are women in search of work, illegal

traffickers and legal contractors, and governments of home countries. She conceptualized these circuits as "counter-geographies of globalization", arguing they overlap with some of the major dynamics that compose globalization, but moving in different directions (Sassen, 2000:503).

Sassen (2000) also argues the growing number of women migrating coincides with economic globalization. She points to the impact on developing economies, like the Philippines of Structural Adjustment Programs, through which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other International Financial Institutions (IFI) force governments to open their economies to foreign firms, and eliminate their state subsidies in support of social development and human livelihood (Sassen, 2000: 505).

Sassen (2000) identifies four conditions that are results of economic globalization on developing countries and have contributed to the growing number of women from the developing countries in the cross-border circuits. All four conditions are linked to a rise in unemployment and debt: 1) shrinking number of opportunities for male employment; 2) shrinking opportunities for more traditional forms of profit making in these countries, as foreign firms takeover, pressuring to develop export industries and; 3) the fall in government revenues in many of these countries, partly linked to these conditions and to the burden of debt servicing; and 4) increased pressure, as a result, to raise the importance of finding alternative means for making a living, making a profit and securing government revenue (Sassen, 2000: 505). Therefore, the growing importance of profit making activities and activities for survival such as prostitution, labour migration, and illegal trafficking of women and children is emerging, as well as of

remittances sent by emigrants as an important source of revenues for governments. She identifies these circuits as the indicators of the "feminization of survival" (p. 506), because it is increasingly on the backs of women that these activities of making a living, earning a profit and securing government revenue are realized. She stresses the "feminization of survival" as households and whole communities are increasingly dependent on women for their survival, providing thus "a push factor" to migrate (Sassen, 2000:506).

Sassen (2002) also identified as "pull factors", the global cities in the North and some of the global economy's key functions and resources which demand professional workers. In the unequal capitalist global economy where rich countries are getting richer and poor countries poorer, women in the North's global cities are increasingly participating in the paid workforce, often as professionals. This increase of women in the North in professional jobs is generating a demand for low paid labour in the service industry, often done by low paid women and immigrants. Families in the developing countries need to survive; therefore women of the South are pushed into "survival circuits" and migrate for these low-paid jobs in the North. However, as Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2002) argue, globalization of domestic work cannot be viewed only as "an arrangement among women completely omitting the role of men" (p.9). As American women took on work outside the home, men did little to increase their participation in the work in the home (p. 9). The lack of men participating in domestic work is also a patriarchal social construction in most First and Third World countries. As Ehrenreich and Hochschild concludes, "the presence of immigrant nannies does not enable affluent women to enter the workforce; it

enables affluent men to continue avoiding the second shift” (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002: 9).

Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2002) argues that the push and pull factor distinction is not that simple. Ehrenreich and Hochschild agree poverty plays a role for pushing the women out; however, as they also identify often migrant women do not come from the poorest of classes of their society because there is a high cost to migrate. Also the transnational recruitment process, such as the Live-in Caregiver Program in Canada, has a preference for women who possess economic and cultural capital with high education, skill and working experience (Alegado cited in Lan, 2005). Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2002) also identify some of the non-economic factors that also influence women's decision to emigrate; for example, some migrant women are more likely to be adventurous, more resistant to social pressures, less likely to play the female gender role and stay at home and care for children or an elderly family member, and more prepared to disrupt the hegemonic gender role. Ehrenreich and Hochschild elaborates that migration may also be a response to a failed marriage and the need to provide for their children as a single parent. Parreñas (2002) identifies that in the Philippines migration is sometimes called a "Philippine divorce" (Parreñas in Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002: p. 11). Some possible reasons are that, as male unemployment runs high in some developing countries, the men become demoralized and cease contributing to the family, sometimes spending remittances on alcohol and gambling, making them undesirable as a partner (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002).

Parreñas (2000) theorizes the creation of an "international division of

reproductive labour" in the global economy, which is the labour needed to sustain the productive labour force. Parreñas, like other scholars, argues reproductive labour has been a commodity purchased by class-privileged women in developed countries to free themselves from reproductive labour. These social and economic relations maintain a racial division of labour but also a gender division of labour with a two-tier hierarchy among women (Parreñas, 2000: 561). Parreñas indicates that migration and entrance into domestic work of Filipino women constitutes an international division of reproductive labour which she names the international transfer of caretaking, referring to the three-tier transfer of reproductive labour among sending and receiving countries of migration. She highlights the fact that class privileged women of the developed country purchase the low-wage services of migrant Filipina migrant workers and simultaneously Filipina domestics purchase the even lower wage services of the poor women left behind in the Philippines to do reproductive labour (p. 561).

This is similar to Hochschild's (2000) global care chain concept defined as a series of personal links between people across the globe based on paid and unpaid work of caring (Hochschild, 2000:131). However as Yeates (2004) argues, global care chains do more than indicate the links between people, "global chain care elucidates the structures and processes that reflect and perpetuate the unequal distribution of resources" (Yeates, 2004: 373).

Lan (2003), articulates the complexity of migrant domestics, develop, the concept of the continuity of domestic labour to describe the affinity between unpaid household labour (madam) and waged domestic labour (maid), emphasizing that both are feminized work, in both the local and global labour

market, being attached with moral merits, yet undervalued in cash. Similar to global care chains theory, Lan theorizes that migrant domestic workers are situated in multiple, sometimes contradictory locations, caring for their employer's family and taking care of their own family simultaneously. Migrant women sell their domestic labour in the market but remain burdened with gendered responsibilities in their own families. While migrant women are caring for other families abroad, those who are mothers have to "neglect"<sup>3</sup> their own children and rely on their family members such as grandmothers, mothers, mother-in-laws, aunts, sisters to be the substitute (Lan, 2003).

Lan's use of the continuity between household labour and wage labour is an attempt to break down dichotomous categorization between maid and madam. For example some migrant women hire help to care for their families becoming "remote madams" (p.339) who hire local women to take care of their families. As Lan points out, these women become overseas maids and a remote madams (Lan, 2003).

Parreñas (2002) points to potential troubles of the remote madam. Both mothers and children suffer from family separation, emotional stress, guilt and remorse. Often migrant mothers provide emotional care and guidance from afar, often maintaining solid ties through open communication. However, even with continual contact, Parreñas found through her research that years of separation can still breed unfamiliarity among family members.

Parreñas (2002) identifies that there is a growing crisis of care both in the developed and developing countries with a demand for care in the developed

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<sup>3</sup> In the dominant, white and Western definition of "mothering".

countries and a decreased supply in the developing countries. Meanwhile, the dominant gender ideology in the Philippines holds that a woman's 'rightful place' is in the home while migrant mothers present a challenge to this view at the same time as they experience a feeling of anxiety and guilt for not fulfilling their role as stay at home mothers (Parreñas, 2002: 40). However, the migration of Filipinos from the Philippines has generated social change in the Philippines, by creating numerous female-headed households and transnational households. Parreñas highlights the contradiction that the gender ideology in the Philippines remains that women should be at home, while families and the Philippine government conveniently ignore the fact that they rely on these mothers' work abroad for their family's survival and remittances. Parreñas also remarks that the government officials and journalists claim migrating mothers have caused the Filipino family to deteriorate. Often the journalists report the children of migrant mother's as being "abandoned", (p.40) even though other family members are caring for their children. By blaming the working mothers, Parreñas argues, they ignore that the Philippine government relies on their remittances. She concludes that if the Philippines acknowledged this reality the country could work toward a more egalitarian gender ideology.

#### *1.4 Canadian Feminist Research and Writing on Domestic Workers in Canada*

Feminists have critiqued the economic and social policies that have situated Third world women in subordinate positions in Canada also recognizing the particular way women negotiate and challenge these "relations of ruling".

As more women are joining the paid labour force in Canada, and as a

result of economic globalization or corporate globalization, neo-liberal<sup>4</sup> policies which end governments' involvement in the economy, and promote more involvement from the private industry for profit, decrease support to workers in the workplace and spend less on public services.

Some of the key features of economic globalization often referred to as corporate globalization or neoliberalism identified in a report of the International Forum on Globalization by the Report Drafting Committee (2002) are:

- Promotion of hypergrowth and unrestricted exploitation of environmental resources
- Privatization and commodification of public services and of remaining aspects of the global and community concerns.
- Global cultural and economic homogenization and the intense promotion of consumerism.
- Integration and conversion of national economies, including some that were largely self-reliant, to environmentally and socially harmful export oriented production
- Corporate deregulation and unrestricted movement of capital across borders
- Dramatically increased corporate concentration
- Dismantling of public health, social and environmental programs already in place
- Replacement of traditional powers of democratic nation states and local communities by global corporate bureaucracies (Report Drafting Committee, Cavanagh, Co-chair, 2002:19)

Neoliberalism therefore, turns away from the possibility of a national childcare program and in the direction of privatization of health care, middle and upper class women have been pushed to hire live-in caregivers, which are constructed as flexible workers because of their vulnerability. This perpetuates the sexist division of labour by passing on the most devalued work in their lives to another woman, in this case migrant women, or women of colour (Romero 1992, p.131 cited in Cheng, 2003).

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<sup>4</sup> See page key features of economic globalization, also referred to as corporate globalization or neoliberalism.

Feminist scholars (e.g. Silvera, 2000; Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997; Arat-Koc, 1999; Daenzer, 1997, Cohen, 1999) have completed historical analyses of domestic worker schemes and determined how foreign domestic workers are excluded from Canadian immigration policies and controlled by the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP). The research and analysis has been completed through reports submitted by non-governmental organizations and the “lived” experiences and knowledge from activists, such as Pura Velasco, Miriam Elvir and community groups such as INTERCEDE, the BC Philippine Women’s Centre, The Association of the Defence of the Rights of Domestic Workers, PINAY, the Quebec Filipino Women’s Association. This will be discussed more fully in the chapter on the history of domestic workers schemes.

Bakan and Stasiulis (1997) and Arat-Koc (1999) argue that while citizenship rights have improved for women, the Canadian government’s policies related to foreign domestic workers have reduced citizenship rights of a significant number of Third World women of colour. Bakan and Stasiulis (1997) compared and contrasted the non citizenship, compulsory live-in, or indentured status of live-in caregivers with the liberalization of Canadian immigration policy, and the general advances made by workers within the welfare state since the 1970s.

Contemporary migration policies continue to become more restrictive in Canada and are legitimated by international law and the recognition of the primacy of national state sovereignty, the “right” of national states to select their members (Sharma, 2006:58). The ensuing migration restrictions have created a group of people who are governed through a different legal regime from the

governing citizens and permanent residents (Sharma, 2006). As Stasiulis and Bakan (2005) argue, there is an exclusionary hierarchical tendency that has deepened due to neo-liberal policies and corporate globalization driven by the interests of transnational actors. The exclusion and inequality in contemporary immigration policy are based on the value accorded to a certain “ideal type” of citizen. Thus preference is given in citizenship to subjects with a particular combination of race, gender, and class (p. 13).

Canada’s contemporary neo-liberal national immigration policies maximize the needs of the corporate sector. Business forms the major partner in immigration policy-making, and integration costs to the national state are minimized (Bakan and Stasiulis, 2005:13). The maintenance of the status and entitlements of First World citizens of a particular class are contingent on the imposition of diminished access to rights and of heightened expectation of obligations among poorer Third World migrants in receiving states. The construction of the foreign domestic workers is a replica of global relations between developed and underdeveloped states (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997). In addition, the neo-liberal downloading of public institutions such as hospitals and care facilities to the private sector has created more needs for care in the private sphere and home. The downloading to the private home reinforces the global citizen divide between citizen-employers of migrant caregivers and disenfranchised migrant households workers (Stasiulis and Bakan, 2005:14).

Arat-Koc (1999) and Silvera (2000) argue that the current domestic scheme, the LCP, fails to bring any radical improvement in status and conditions of foreign domestic workers in Canada because it has maintained two of the most

oppressive aspects of the policies: the temporary worker status and the mandatory live-in requirement. Bakan and Stasilius (2005) argue that the LCP actually institutionalizes the threat of abuse of workers because the domestic workers are a highly vulnerable pool of foreign workers with exceptionally restrictive conditions imposed on them by various federal government departments (p. 47).

The construction of non-citizen is central to maintaining unequal relations and the vulnerability of foreign domestic workers in Canada. Migrant domestic workers lack many citizenship rights, including the choice of employer and place to live; their employers in contrast enjoy all citizenship rights. Therefore, Bakan and Stasilius (2005) argue rather than the female employer and employee experiencing a commonality of oppression based on gender, the result is a division of interests, where class, racial and citizenship differences create an unequal relationship (p.62).

In addition, feminist literature argues the private household is transformed partially into a waged workplace with a class division, rather than just a social space. This transformation applies to the role of the mother, spouse and member of the family who is also transformed into a boss. As Bakan and Stasiulis state (1997), although the private home remains a private dwelling, it also becomes subsumed under public legislation. The household is partially and ambiguously under formal and informal regulations applicable to public business and work environments. In addition, the interests of the employee and the employer are delineated along class-differentiated lines. The domestic employee is also transformed in the process of her entry into Canada and into the

Canadian home as a place of work. Analysis of the unequal status of employee and employer, citizen and non citizen, and racial ethnic are all social relations that situate domestic workers as subordinate and vulnerable (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997:42). Similarly, Sharma (2002) argues the Canadian government is regulating a racialized and gendered labour market because the migrant worker is denied permanent residency, or citizenship status for a period of three years to prove they can fit and be good Canadians.

Several Canadian feminist scholars have completed empirically-based qualitative research on the lived experiences of live-in caregivers in Canada. Silvera (2000) and Arat-Koc (2001) expose the abuse and vulnerability experienced by live-in caregivers because of the unequal and subordinate role they are situated in and the relation of power and the subordination between employer and employee, citizen and non citizen, and racial ethnic differences. More specifically, Arat-Koc (2001) fills the gap in the current body of research and knowledge on abuse and violence against caregivers. Her in-depth research discusses the physical, sexual and economic abuse. Arat-Koc found the economic abuse to be most common. As she argues, the emotional abuse is highly prevalent among caregivers and has the most serious implication for the caregiver's well-being and health. Arat-Koc argues emotional abuse begins with the separation of Filipina women from their families and friends. She also compares the unequal treatment of two mothers - or: one from the Philippines and one from Canada. Through this comparison she reveals inequality as Canadian mothers have a responsibility to ensure their children are cared for, by sometimes hiring caregivers to care for their children. On the same hand Filipino

mothers/caregivers have little choice but to migrate as the gap between rich and poor countries increases (Hochschild, 2002). Hochschild (2002) discusses the injustice of emotional deprivation of Filipino children with the surfeit of affection of First World children. Love among other “resources” is unfairly distributed, extracted from one place and enjoyed somewhere else by another (Hochschild, 2002: 22).

As Arat-Koc (2001) argues the Canadian state plays an active part in state violence because the Canadian state shapes the domestics’ status and conditions of working and living in Canada (p.11). The conditions of domestic workers and caregivers differ from other workers because of the compulsory live-in requirement and the lack of a boundary between the workplace and personal, private life which leaves room for domination by the employer of all the domestic worker's spaces. In addition, the requirement to fulfill 24 months of full-time work within a 36 month period before applying for permanent status allows for the employer to have the power to control one's legal status and future in Canada (Arat-Koc, 2001:12).

Bakan and Stasiulis (1997), Daezner (1997), Fudge (1997) also reveal the women's agency in negotiating and challenging the social, economic and political relations through individual and collective struggles, in order to change their living and working conditions within the power structures. Through organizations such as INTERCEDE, or the Philippines Women’s Centre there has been an organized campaign to challenge the domestic worker schemes.

In this literature review I have discussed some of the key concepts and theories of women’s migration from Third World countries to First World

countries. Further, I have discussed the sexism, racism and classism embedded in the LCP and immigration policies that keep the caregivers in a vulnerable position. Finally, I have discussed the current Canadian feminist research on the living and working conditions for live-in caregivers in the LCP.

## **Chapter 2 Methodology**

I approach this research from a position of privilege and power as a white, English-speaking Canadian woman. I recognize my position of power had an impact on the Filipinas' self-presentation and responses to the interview questions and the stories they chose to share with me. My position also affected what I chose to write about and my analysis of the Filipinas stories. To alleviate the latter, I was reflective throughout the research process and I attempted to accurately describe, and understand (as I have no intention of explaining their lives) a portion<sup>5</sup> of the Filipina's lives, by situating the Filipina caregivers' voices to the centre of the analysis. I was also mindful of the caregivers' self-definitions, and self-evaluations of themselves and strived to avoid objectifying the women.

My passion for this research is deeply rooted in my personal history as a second generation immigrant. My birth mother is Hungarian and my adoptive mother is Ukrainian. I grew up in a working class family and "non traditional home" between 1950 – 1970. My adoptive mother worked outside the home, often as the sole provider, and my father was a stay-at-home father because of illness. As a child, I recall having difficulty understanding and accepting our non-traditional family home because it did not fit the "mythical family norms" of the 1950s and 1960s. In retrospect, I understand my mother's position, as she was considered an outsider, as a non-conforming woman, a "feminist", and a labour activist. I often witnessed her challenging and struggling to redefine her role as a woman in the home and workplace to survive. In addition, my father's difficulty

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<sup>5</sup> I use the word portion, as I do not claim to know about their entire lives, but the portion of their lives the participant chose to share with me.

with not fitting the hegemonic masculine role of a provider for his family in the 1950s caused grave consequences to his health and dying at the age of 50.

Also influential in choosing this research are my grandparents' stories about their decision to leave the Ukraine in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century between WWI and WWII for a better life. My grandfather came first as an indentured worker sponsored by the railroad, and, after a year's separation, my grandmother and their four year old daughter (my mother) arrived in Canada.

Finally, learning very little about my birth mother reinforced my passion for this research. I am an adopted child, whose birth mother arrived in Western Canada in 1957, likely a Hungarian refugee displaced after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. She was a single woman who became pregnant, spoke Hungarian only, and was a domestic worker.

My interest in this research comes from a history of immigration, migration, working class, feminism, and labour activism, and as a feminist, labour and social activist, I approach and insert myself into this research with a political and intellectual responsibility of understanding the interrelationships of difference. I seek to explore the Filipina caregivers' lived experiences working within the confines of the LCP in Halifax Municipality. In the longer term, I hope that by learning from their lived experiences and bringing them to the forefront for further examination, strategies will emerge to challenge the policy and procedures of the LCP and related programs.

I became familiar with the Live-In Caregiver Program when doing my undergraduate degree in Sociology, while taking a social policy course. We were required to analyze and write a paper on a current social policy. Makeda Silvera's

research – “Silenced” (1989) was my initial reading of the experiences of women in the LCP. When researching for my paper, I also contacted INTERCEDE and asked if I could join the women during the regularly Sunday meeting to learn more about their experiences. I was welcomed by Coco, one of the founding members of INTERCEDE. I arrived first to the meeting and when the caregivers/domestics arrived, I noticed upon arrival, each woman looked at me and sat at the opposite side of the room. Once the meeting began, Coco introduced me to the group and she gave me an opportunity to explain why I was at the meeting. My explanation of attempting to understand the inequalities and exploitation that they experience in the LCP seemed to ease the tension. The meeting progressed to discussing their rights as live-in caregivers in Toronto, Canada. After the meeting some of the women shared their experiences with me in an informal setting. Some of those personal stories of exploitation, and acts of resistance are embedded in my memory today.

My passion and interest in domestic workers and live-in caregivers in Halifax, stems from an interest in the displacement and diaspora of people (whether forced or chosen), their agency, integration, civil liberties and citizenship status. I am also compelled to complete this research because of the “invisibility” of these caregivers due to working in the “private domain” and the mandatory live-in requirement that reinforces their invisibility.

Beginning with individual lived experiences, or portions of them is the point of entry into the larger social and economic process, as Dorothy Smith argues (Smith, 1987:157). Therefore my approach will begin with the women’s lived experiences and understanding of their experiences in the larger structures and

institutions of capitalism, colonialism and globalization. I will attempt to disclose how power operates and constructs the social and cultural relations of ruling, coded as gender, race, class and sexuality (Bannerji, 2000: xxii).

I approached this research by exploring the women's responses and daily negotiations in a global economy and their understanding of their own experiences as knowledge. They are active agents that are constituted by, and reflexive of their social and cultural context (Deveaux, 1999:239). The Filipina caregivers are not passive victims uniformly but active agents mediating their experiences (Deveaux, 1999: 245). I will attempt to provide reliable evidence while maintaining the agency of the Filipina caregivers (Spalter-Roth and Hartmann, 1999:333).

I am also conscious and careful not to presume a homogenous cultural, ethnic identity of Filipina caregivers, but instead, I approach this research with one constant in mind, that the Filipina caregivers' experiences are those of Two Thirds<sup>6</sup> women working in a global market. At the same time, women of the One Third are entering the workforce relying on caregivers for cheap domestic labour for social reproduction that is household maintenance, the care of the young, elderly and people with special needs.

It is through a solidarity or comparative feminist model as Mohanty describes we can put into practice the idea of "common differences" as the basis for deeper solidarity across differences and unequal power relations (Mohanty, 2003:238).

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<sup>6</sup> One-Third/two thirds differentiation rather than First World/Third World, or North/South, local/global allows for teaching and learning about points of connection and distance among and between communities of women marginalized and privileged along number local and global dimensions. (Mohanty, 2003:59)

In addition, I have avoided a simplistic and dichotomous approach of the Filipina caregivers as victims or heroes in the global market, often they are both at the same time, or in contradiction of each other, often being on the “borderlands”<sup>7</sup> of a mestiza consciousness (Anzaldua, 1987: 3) or Bhabha’s (1990) notion of hybridized subjectivity in the third space; between two cultures; citizen and non citizen; between maid and madam; one of the family and worker/outsider, public and private, mother and caregiver, between married and single, between Catholic and non Catholic.

Contemporary global, social, political and economic events have led to displacements and the diasporas of many peoples (Khan, 2002). Beginning in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century the immigration pattern is being reconfigured by gender, race, ethnicity, citizenship rights and class as women from the Two Thirds world are migrating from their country. Often these women are professionals leaving families behind and arriving in countries of the One Third with temporary work visas. These women are the live-in caregivers, who are economically supporting their own families in the Philippines through remittances, and transnational caring of their families, while simultaneously caring for Canadian families, as Canadian women acquire careers and attempt to alleviate some of their stress because of household, childcare and family care responsibilities.

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<sup>7</sup> Gloria Anzaldua (1987) definition of borderlands, “ Borders are setup to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* form *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants”( p. 3).

### *2.1 Research Proposal and Ethical Approval Process*

In the pre-research process I submitted and presented a research proposal to Graduate Admissions and Program Committee (GAPC) for its approval. Another requirement was the approval of the MSVU University Ethics Review Board (UERB). I received approval of my submission of the *MSVU Ethics Review Application Form*, which included: a copy of the Invitation to Participate (Appendix A); a copy of Participant Criteria and Questions (Appendix B); a copy of the interview questions (Appendix C); a copy of the Background Information Sheet (Appendix D); and a copy of the Informed Consent Form (Appendix E). Every year subsequent to the initial ethics approval I submitted an annual report and ethics approval was renewed.

### *2.2 Recruitment*

The recruitment of participants was difficult as the live-in caregivers are “invisible” workers because their place of work is in the private home. Secondly, because of the Filipinas’ status as temporary foreign workers, they do not have access to immigrant settlement resources. The invisibility of the caregivers was also more prominent in Halifax than in many larger cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Edmonton in Canada and Hong Kong, Singapore and abroad, where there are large numbers of Filipina domestic workers and caregivers. In larger urban centres the caregivers are also visible in particular public places such as playgrounds in particular neighbourhoods during the week, and on Sundays when large numbers of Filipinas on their day off, usually on a Sunday, gather in central locations after attending church, such as central parks

and shopping centres to escape the confines of their employers' homes (Constable, 1997). In Halifax the Filipina caregivers appear to be invisible within the larger community of Halifax Municipality because of small numbers of Filipinas dispersed across the Halifax Municipality and Nova Scotia.

Therefore to find caregivers in Halifax Municipality, I enquired at local community organizations, nursing associations, immigrant settlement organizations, local caregiver agencies, and the universities. At the time all contacts indicated they did not know of any live-caregivers in the LCP and often I received a similar response, "There are probably very few live-in caregivers in HRM".

It was after much time and many attempts to find live-in caregivers; I abandoned this research to focus on the experiences of new immigrant women with "foreign" credentials in Halifax. However, I realized shortly after changing my research focus that my interest and passion was calling for a return to the experiences of live-in caregivers and I followed that calling and returned to my original research. After all, this research is linked to the latter as most of the live-in caregivers do have international credentials and are internationally educated as nurses, midwives, and physiotherapists to name a few.

Retrospectively, respectfully and without judgment, I believe that some of the contacts, for many different reasons were gatekeeping, however, I will not be analyzing the reasons in this paper. Finally, after revisiting my original research on the lived experiences of women in the LCP, I was able to make a connection with a Filipina live-in caregiver through the labour movement.

When beginning this research my goal was to recruit participants from no particular country of origin, who were, or have been live-in caregivers in the LCP within the last 10 years, in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). However, as the recruitment unfolded all the participants were from the Philippines. There are two likely reasons for this: 1) being that most women in the LCP are from the Philippines or/and 2) my recruitment was conducted by snowball technique and word of mouth therefore once I recruited one Filipina caregiver she connected me to other Filipina caregivers. The potential participant was asked questions to ensure they fit the criteria set out. (Appendix B - Criteria and Questions)

Lovelyn was the first live-in caregiver I interviewed for this research. After the interview she agreed to contact another caregiver to get approval to pass their name and contact information on to me. The snowball technique followed and I conducted in-depth interviews with five participants over the course of a year. Often the women had very small windows of availability to meet because of their hours of work. Therefore it took me a year to complete the interviews.

A total of five participants were interviewed: three women were mothers with children residing in the Philippines and two were single women. The women's range of age was from 25 years to 35 years of age. All women had post-secondary education in the Philippines. All women except one were in the LCP at the time of the interview. The exception was working in a nursing home at the time of the interview.

### *2.3 Interviews*

The interviews were conducted in a small classroom at Saint Mary's University (SMU) in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This room provided a private place where confidentiality was ensured and where we were not distracted or disturbed. I would usually pick the participant up either at their workplace/home, or meet them in a public place and then drive to SMU together. During these trips to SMU we had a chance to become familiar with each other. Often our conversations on the return trip from SMU continued with the women sharing their thoughts and experiences.

Before the interview each participant read and signed an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix E). The interview consisted of open ended and semi-structured, interview questions (see Appendix C). Each interview was audio-taped with the written consent of the participant. The purpose of the audio-tape has assisted in my ability to be reflexive in my analysis. The duration of the interviews ranged from 1.5 – 3 hours. One participant had two interview sessions, as she did not want to be audio-taped in the first session, therefore taking more time to document her narrative in writing. In the second interview with this participant, I asked why she did not want to be audio-taped and she thought her voice would sound “funny” on tape. I suggested that we do a test and record her speaking and replay and listen to her recorded voice, if she still felt uncomfortable we would continue with me recording her narratives by writing. She agreed to the test and after hearing herself on tape agreed to be audio-taped for the second session.

The interviews were conducted in English as all the participants spoke English fluently, although Tagalog was their first language<sup>8</sup>. Each participant chose a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality. Since there was a small group of Filipinas working as live-in caregivers in HRM, I was also very conscious of other identifying information not being revealed when quoting the interviewees' words.

#### *2.4 In-depth Interviews*

I composed open-ended, interview questions and used them as a guide for the in-depth interviews. The questions were broken into six categories which I expected to be important in analysis and in having comparable data: Leaving Your Home Country; Live-in Caregiver Program, Family, Work, Friends and Leisure; Support Within the Community. Again these were guidelines and because the interviews were semi-structured, the participants usually began sharing their lived experiences and answering most of these questions without being prompted or interrupted by questions from the interviewer. This method of indepth interviews provided rich and detailed in-depth oral narratives of their lived experiences.

#### *2.5 Analysis*

The Filipinas' lives and experiences are not homogeneous; their experiences illustrated a wide range of responses to sometimes similar situations. I have chosen recurring themes in the Filipina's narratives. However,

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<sup>8</sup> Initially there may have been some social distance between some of the Filipinas caregivers and myself partly due to a lack of shared language fluency and my unfamiliarity with their culture however after a short period of time I felt we were relaxed and comfortable with each other.

even though there are common themes, the diversity of class, region, age, marital status, results in different expressions of these common themes (Hill-Collins, 1999: 157).

After completing the interview I transcribed the tapes and also referred to notes I kept while interviewing the women. I chose to use a thematic approach to analysing and presenting the data to ensure confidentiality of the women. I read each interview transcription several times and began identifying some reoccurring themes which became my headings. I then read the interviews again and began inserting quotes from each participant under the theme headings. At some later point I found this somewhat difficult<sup>9</sup> as I found some quotes would fit into more than one heading. I pursued this method of analysis to the end, often juggling a quote from one theme to another.

In addition, sometimes I found the small population of Halifax Municipality became an issue when disseminating my findings. Because I was conscious of ensuring the participants' anonymity, I limited the amount of detail about the participants.

The similarities between the caregivers' experiences are their responses and actions to inequalities, and exploitation internationally, nationally and in the workplace.

The oral narratives allowed for an understanding of how social forces impact and shape women, and how women, in turn, respond, act and produce change in the larger social arena. In addition, not only do we get a better

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<sup>9</sup> I also felt this method somewhat fractured the women's stories. I learned from this experience that in the next research project I would summarize each participant's story followed by the analysis.

understanding from the lived experiences, but this method also allows for active participation in the process of empowerment, identity construction and activism.

The oral narratives chart the lived experiences of temporary foreign domestic workers as they ideally allowed and revealed the multi-layered texture, complexity, ambiguities and contradictions of the relations between the participants and their world. It is here managing these contradictions that one can open points of resistance (Pratt, 1999). The lived experiences are the starting point for the analysis as it begins with understanding the everyday local power relations.

### **Chapter 3 History of Domestic Worker Schemes in Canada**

Through feminist scholars' literature, I will examine the history of the domestic worker schemes within the framework of immigration policies, citizenship and nation building beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Cohen (1999) and many other scholars have identified how Canada's admission policies and citizenship have been constructed by three ethnic and national issues: 1) priority to British people; 2) the demands of the economy and the labour market; and 3) internal and international pressure (p. 139).

The history of immigration law is deeply rooted in social inequality and capitalism. While the colonization of Aboriginal people and policies made for appropriation of their land, racialized immigration policies helped to establish and reproduce the nation's population as white British character (Green 1995; Dyck 1991; Culhane 1998 cited in Thobani: 17, Arat-Koc, 1997, 1999, Cohen, 1999, Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997).

In addition before 1880 immigration policies did not refer to women. Near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, white women from the British Empire were encouraged to immigrate as domestic workers in attempts to maintain a British character. After failing to maintain a British character simply by excluding certain racialized groups from entry, "potential migrants were ranked into categories with 'preferred' immigrants being drawn from Great Britain, the United States, France and to a lesser extent from Northern and Western Europe" (Jakubowski, 1999:100). When these efforts failed to recruit enough people to settle in Canada's western provinces the preferential policies were extended to include other white immigrants such as Ukrainians, Italians, Poles and Hutterites.

In the 1880s, to fill the cheap, replaceable labour demand, the recruitment of “undesirables” began with the Chinese men to build the Canadian Pacific Railway (Henry,1995 cited in Jakubowski, 1999:100). The Canadian capitalist class benefitted from a reserve army of labour with a willingness to do undesirable work cheaply and the “opportunity to weaken the organizational efforts and bargaining position of the dominant workforce” (Bolaria and Li 1998: 34: Portes 1978 cited in Jukubowski 1999;101).

Although the term “race” did not emerge into immigration law until 1910 the government passed certain pieces of legislation that were discriminatory such as: Chinese Exclusion Act, the Gentlemen’s Agreement and the Continuous Journey Stipulation of 1908 (Jukubowski, 1999).

After the completion of the railroad, legislation was passed to discourage immigration from China, Japan and India by means of the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885, Gentlemen’s Agreement and the Continuous Journey Stipulation of 1908 (Henry et al. 1995 in Jakubowski, 1999).

In the Immigration Act of 1919 the government’s discriminatory policies were enshrined in law and the term “race” first emerged as a prohibitive/restrictive legal category in section 38(c) and in 1919 this section was amended to include “nationality” (Hawkins 1989 cited in Jukubowski, 1999:104). The creation of a list of preferred countries<sup>10</sup> of origin was established and rationalized as “suitable” based on climatic, industrial, social, educational, and labour compatibility. Those deemed undesirable were considered impossible to

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<sup>10</sup> United States, the British Isles, and certain Northern European Countries.

assimilate because of peculiar customs, habits, and modes of life.(Bolaria and Li 1988 cited in Jakubowski 1999).

Until the 1960s Canadian immigration policy continued to organize and rank people into categories as preferred races or desirables being white and non-preferred races or undesirables as being visibly different (Jakubowski, 1999).

Domestic workers were the largest category of paid female workers in Canada from 1871 – 1941 and immigrant women accounted for approximately one-third of these workers (Fudge, 1997:121). Similar to, and coinciding with the immigration policies of the time, the selection of domestics was based on the idea of desirable immigrants.

Throughout the history of domestic workers there have been a number of immigration schemes that were selective regarding the source countries for recruitment (Arat-Koc, 1999: 129). Cohen (1999), Arat-Koc (1999), Daezner (1997) argued that: “. . . the regression of citizenship and labour rights for foreign domestic labour rights coincides with changes in the racial composition of domestic workers” (p. 139).

Canadian feminist scholars such as Arat-Koc (1997), Daezner (1997), Calliste (1989), Fudge (1997), Cohen (1999), Iacovetta (1998) have completed a historical analysis of the immigration policies for domestic workers. Their analysis reveals the race, gender and class biases in societal judgements about the value of domestic work. Through their analysis Arat-Koc (1997), Cohen, (1999) and Daezner (1997) also clearly demonstrated that even though race has been eliminated as an explicit criterion from the current immigration policies, racism operates at a more structural level, through changes in the nature of

immigration programs that related to changes in the source countries for domestic workers.

Arat-Koc (1997) argues that from the mid-nineteenth century on, changes associated with urbanization, industrialization, and the growth of capitalism contributed to the development of generally subordinate class positions and unfavourable working conditions for domestic workers. The separation of the public and private spheres and the hierarchy associated with this separation coincided with the rapid development of domestic service as a women's ghetto creating a pool of vulnerable workers. Arat-Koc (1999) explains, "Throughout history, racialization and the consequent lack of alternative opportunities have historically created conditions of vulnerability for different groups of workers" (p. 128).

In the late nineteenth century there was a demand for domestic workers because of an increasing middle class and the creation of new labour options for Canadian-born working class women who refused to accept domestic work because of the poor working conditions (Arat-Koc, 128). In response to the demand for domestic workers, Canada made efforts to recruit immigrant women. Arat-Koc (1999) argues, "immigration began to be used systematically to recruit and control domestic workers" (p. 128).

In the early twentieth century Canada was a British colony. The "ideal" type of female foreign domestics were white and British and were seen as nation builders of Canada, often referred to as "mothers of the nation" (being the future mothers and wives in Canada) and guarantors of white racial domination (Arat-Koc 1997:65). The Canadian state, along with middle and upper class women

from the social reform movement, was actively involved in planning schemes for both the recruitment and settlement of British domestic workers. As Jackel (1982) indicated, it is important to mention that although the British domestic workers were from the “right” racial/ethnic stock who were expected to transmit the British culture and “civilization” to future Canadians, they were from the wrong class. (Arat-Koc, 1999). In attempts to resolve these concerns of the suitability of working class women, Canada and Britain began recruiting “distressed”<sup>11</sup> gentlewomen because they were seen as being the “right stock”. (Jackel 1982:xxi cited in Arat-Koc, 1999:130) In addition, homechildren<sup>12</sup> were accepted, but, again from a contradictory social location, mainly being from the “right” racial/ethnic stock but belonging to the wrong class (Arat-Koc, 1999:131).

Scandinavian women were second to the British as desirable domestic workers in the early part of the twentieth century. The Canadian government started a special scheme, creating special categories, and easier travel arrangements to bring Scandinavian women in to Canada as domestics. According to Lindstrom-Best, Finnish domestic workers were “proud maids” who organized labour locals and “immigrant homes” and started employment services for domestic workers (Lindstrom-Best 1986 in Arat-Koc, 1999:133).

Central and Eastern European immigrants were from the so called non-preferred sources, however Canada’s objective to populate Western Canada, secure the territory and develop the agrarian-based economy meant accepting

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<sup>11</sup> These were single women from middle-class backgrounds who had been impoverished by economic circumstances or death of a spouse. (Jackel 1982:xxi cited in Arat-Koc, 1999, p.130)

<sup>12</sup> Homechildren came to Canada between 1868 and 1925 – one third being orphans and the rest were unaccompanied by their parents. They came from urban working class Britain and had been removed from their families by philanthropic rescue homes and parish workhouse schools. (Parr, 1980 cited in Arat-Koc, 1999, p.131)

them into Canada (Barber cited in Arat-Koc, 1997: 68). At the same time, they were considered to be “peasant type” therefore suitable for the rural households (Arat-Koc, 1997:68). The daughters of Russian Mennonites who came as refugees were preferred for urban employment. The Mennonites also organized and established “Maedchenheime” or Girls’ Homes in several cities (Arat-Koc, 1997:68). The Maedcheheim offered temporary shelters for new arrivals and served as social centres. These centres had no connection to the employers and worked to protect the domestic workers (Barber 1987; cited in Arat-Koc,1997). During the Great Depression native-born women went back to domestic work as they lost their employment and Central and Eastern European domestics faced difficulties, finding only low paid work and bad working conditions (Barber, 1991).

After World War II, there was again a demand for domestics and the Canadian state became involved in recruiting women from foreign sources. An agreement to accept war-displaced persons (DP) into Canada was urged by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and by public criticism against Canadian reluctance to enter the refugee emigration scheme. This resulted in the 1947 Canada-European agreement to relieve Europe of persons economically and socially displaced by war (Daegner 1993, 1997). Refugee women from Eastern and Southern Europe arrived as “indentured workers” having to work in one-year contracts in specific occupations such as cleaners kitchen workers in hospitals, sanatoria, orphanages and mental institutions or private homes. (Barber 1991, Danys 1986 cited in Arat-Koc 1999) Arthur MacNamara, the deputy minister of labour who designed the DP program, made it policy that any DP who asked for a transfer to another employer would be given one (Danys 1986 cited in Arat-Koc

1999). Most DP domestics stayed with the same employers to make a good impression and also not to jeopardize the chances of the other DPs still in camps (Barber, 1991).

In 1951, despite the Canadian state's dominant racist views of Italians, pressure from business in the booming economy, created pressure to begin the Italian domestic scheme. Again these domestic workers were assigned to an employer in a one year contract. This scheme was short lived because of a negative evaluation of the domestics by both the employer and the state and lack of enthusiasm by the Italian women (Iacovetta, 1986).

In 1955, the Caribbean scheme began in response to internal and overseas pressures to soften the racist exclusionary aspects of Canadian immigration. Canadian officials believed this would improve trade and political relations in the Caribbean (Arat-Koc, 1999:140). A small number of black women from Jamaica and Barbados were put into positions of domestic work in Canada. However, they were denied mobility rights, experienced excessive monitoring, pregnancy tests and less remuneration than other domestics (Calliste 1989, Daezner, 1993, 1997, Stasiulis 1990). Unlike many prior schemes the Caribbean scheme also required the sending countries to bear the responsibilities and the costs of recruiting, training, medically testing and arranging for transportation of domestics in Canada (Arat-Koc, 1999). In addition, emphasis was placed on being single in order to ensure members of this group were only in Canada to fill a labour requirement. There was also to be no sponsorship of spouses and children (Arat-Koc, 1999).

The Greek domestic worker movement started in 1951, (though small numbers of Greek domestic workers started arriving since 1948) the domestic workers arrived in Canada and continued until 1975. The domestic workers arrived with assisted passage and landed immigrant status and were required to do domestic work for one year (Tastsoglou, 2009). In 1959 fifty Spanish women were placed but because of the Spanish authorities wanting their people to be placed in Catholic homes, this posed a problem, as most employers in English speaking Canada were Protestant (Barber, 1991).

Prior to the 1960s the Canadian immigration policy also indicated Asian (Filipino) citizens were an inadmissible class of immigrants. When the Philippines threatened reciprocal sanctions against the entry of Canadian and American business immigrants, Canada's immigration authorities removed Filipino citizens from the list of inadmissible aliens. The entry of Filipino women began at the same time that it became difficult to attract women from other nations. Canadian entrepreneurs were able to access the expansive Filipino market and also benefit from Filipino labour at devalued rates (Daezner, 1997). Although it is mentioned later, Placer Dome Mining Company is a good example of a Canadian company accessing and exploiting the Filipino market around the time of the removal of Filipino citizens from the list.

In the 1960s and 1970s many Filipino health professionals, teachers, and garment workers were recruited, with an estimated 70 percent being women (Velasco, 2002: 133).

The domestic scheme continued until 1967 when the "points system" became the basis of immigration policy (Arat-Koc, 1997:76). During the 1960s,

and keeping in mind building on labour needs, the immigration policy was “rationalized” to make labour needs the basis for recruitment of immigrants (Arat-Koc, 1997:77) The points system emphasized Canada’s need for highly educated and highly skilled immigrants. This policy was also declared to erase racism and sexism in the immigration policy however, domestic workers were unable to qualify under the point system because modern capitalist society approach domestic work as unskilled and “naturally” feminine kind of work (Arat-Koc, 1997:77 and Arat-Koc, 1999:142).

In 1968 without evidence of a decrease in demand for domestic workers immigration lowered the rating for some categories of domestic work within the occupational demand category of the points system (Daenzer, 1993: 57, 95, 113). Nursemaids and nannies from Britain continued to receive high points and women from predominately the Caribbean received lower points as domestics. In addition, lower points were assigned to domestic workers for occupational skills, occupational training, and experience compared to nannies and nursemaids (Daenzer, 1993: 76 and 116). Therefore, women from the Third World were unable to qualify as independent immigrants under the point system (Arat-Koc, 1999:142). Daenzer argues this difference in the value placed on domestics from Britain as compared to domestics from the Third World was racist (Daenzer, 1993: 76).

In 1973 a new policy called the Employment Authorization was introduced (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997). Under this policy, domestic workers were not allowed to apply for landed status. To ensure Canada had a supply of domestic workers, domestic workers were excluded from the skilled worker category and

the temporary programs were introduced ensuring an indentured status. Arat-Koc points out that this change to status as a temporary worker, by contrast to permanent resident or immigrant status, also came at a time when women from the Third World would be the major source of supply of foreign domestic workers. It was also the time when the demand for domestic workers began to increase due to the increasing participation of middle class women in the labour force and an inadequate child-care system (Arat-Koc, 1999:42). Arat-Koc argues,

The Canadian state's intervention to regulate the status and conditions of foreign domestic workers meant that conditions for domestic workers would, instead of improving deteriorate below conditions in the nineteenth century (Arat-Koc, 1999:143).

Throughout the history of domestic worker schemes, the Canadian government's objective was to create a captive and cheap labour force. The most repressive feature was the temporary visitor status that gave more control to the state and employers over the conditions under which women domestics of colour could live and work. Temporary work permits allowed a worker to stay in the country for a specified amount of time, with a specified employer doing a specific type of work and the worker would eventually have to return to their country of origin (Arat-Koc, 1999:144).

During the 1970s and 1980s Activist Fely Villasin and Ging Hernandez, and six foreign domestic workers, namely, Zeny Dumlao, Linda Lising, Coco Tarape-Diaz, Tessie Rayo, Lohrie Rosas and Ving Domingo, formed an ad hoc committee to become one of the first organized movements to fight for Landed Immigrant Status for Domestic Workers, inclusion in the Employment Standards Act and Ontario Human Rights Code, full coverage under the Workers'

Compensation Act, and the Right To Organize under the Labour Relations Act (OMNITV website). Their activism was instrumental in changing the temporary worker program in 1981 (Anthony Domingo of Fuse Productions, 2006).

In 1981, the Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) program made it possible for domestic workers who have worked in Canada for two continuous years to apply for landed immigrant status without having to leave the country (Arat-Koc, 1999: 144). Although it was not yet mandatory to live in, if a domestic worker insisted to live out she would lose her right to apply for landed immigrant status and she would not receive an extension on her employment authorization (Employment and Immigration 1996: 17-18 in Arat-Koc 1999: 146). A release letter from the domestic's employer was also a condition of changing jobs (Arat-Koc, 1999).

In addition, there was no guarantee of gaining landed immigrant status because of a number of other requirements imposed on domestics when applying for landed immigrant status such as: needing to take skills upgrading classes; demonstrating adaptation and integration into Canadian society through volunteer work; and proving financial management skills (Arat-Koc 1999: p 146). These requirements were often difficult for domestics to achieve because of the long hours of work with little time off for courses and volunteer work. In the 1980s and 1990s thousands of Filipino women entered Canada as domestic workers under the FDM program (Velasco, 2002: 133).

Finally in 1992 the FDM was replaced, with changes, by the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), which is in effect today. In 1992, the new LCP policy required that domestic workers coming to Canada on temporary work visas, have

the equivalent of Canadian secondary school, plus six months of full-time formal training in areas of childhood education, geriatric care and paediatric nursing (Canada Employment and Immigration Canada [CEIC], 1992).

The education requirements made it difficult for Third World women to apply, as in many countries basic schooling only goes to grade 10 or 11, and formal training in the areas of child, elderly and disabled care is typically only available in Western European countries (Macklin 1992, DeMara 1992, Domestic Cross Cultural News June 1992 cited in Arat-Koc 1999). These changes caused a decline in the number of domestic workers coming into Canada. Employers raised concerns about the decline and pressures from domestic workers organizations. In 1993, the Employment and Immigration Minister responded by amending the policy and allowing six months of formal training or one year's experience<sup>13</sup> in a care giving area.

In addition, when applying for landed immigrant status, the skills upgrading, volunteer work and a demonstration of financial management was removed from the LCP policy. However, as Stasiulis and Bakan (2005) argue, the 1992 policy became more restrictive; the upgrading requirements were eliminated in assessments for landed status for foreign domestics, who were then caregivers' and migrant caregivers needed a high school diploma, to enter Canada (Stasiulis and Bakan, 2005).

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<sup>13</sup> 1) You must have successfully completed the equivalent of Canadian high school education (secondary school). Because of the differences in school systems across Canada, it is not possible to give a precise number of years. In most provinces, it takes 12 years of schooling to obtain a Canadian high school diploma. The immigration officer assessing your application will let you know what is needed. 2) To claim work experience, you need to have worked for one year, including at least six months of continuous employment for the same employer in a field or occupation similar to what you will do as a live-in caregiver. This experience must have been within the three years immediately before the day on which you make an application for a work permit as a caregiver. ([www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/caregiver/apply-who.asp#training](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/caregiver/apply-who.asp#training), accessed May 4, 2008)

Finally the domestic worker no longer needed a release letter from their employer to change jobs', however, they needed to obtain a record of employment from their employer indicating how long they worked and the amount of money paid to them. Under the new rules the candidate had to work 24 months in a 36-month period to apply for landed immigrant status.

In 1993, a year after the replacement of the FDM, the New Democratic Party government in Ontario, compelled by demands of domestic workers and their allies<sup>14</sup>, included domestic workers in the Ontario Labour Relations Act (OLRA). This legislative change gave domestic workers the same collective bargaining rights as the majority of workers in Ontario although partial and ineffective for several reasons<sup>15</sup> (Fudge, 1997). Regardless of the ineffectiveness of this step, there was a recognition of domestic worker's value and also, . . . signalled the erosion of an explicit reliance on the ideology of privacy to deny domestic workers formal equal rights with other workers (Fudge, 1997: 132).

This change to OLRA was short lived. In 1995, the Conservative Party was elected and reversed the NDP's labour policies under the "Common Sense Revolution" platform (Fudge, 1997: 138).

In Nova Scotia, prior to World War II, domestic workers were recruited from the British immigration schemes, from white farmers' daughters, and from local delinquent or mentally disabled women and girls considered to need rehabilitation. In the postwar period, ex-service girls and young single women

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<sup>14</sup> Coalition called Women for Labour Tax Reform members were: INTERCEDE, Parkdale Community Legal Services Inc., the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, the Ontario Women's Action Centre, and the Coalition for Fair Wages and Working Conditions for Homeworkers. (Fudge, 1997)

<sup>15</sup> One reason for it being partial and ineffective was that another section of the OLRA indicated that there must be more than one employee in the workplace for collective bargaining to be viable; in most cases domestic workers worked alone (Fudge, 1997).

were not interested in domestic work, leaving the job to middle-aged women (Fingard & Guildford, 2005:193).

In the postwar period, African Nova Scotian women met the demand for the domestic workforce in Nova Scotia, with little competition from displaced, southern European and Third World women because the latter tended to pass by Nova Scotia (NSACSW Minutes, 17 Nov. 1978 quoted in Fingard and Guildford, 2005).

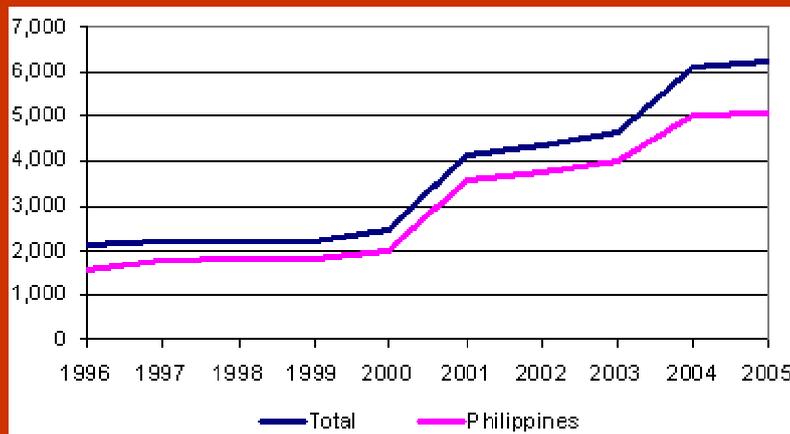
### *3.1 Current Live-In Caregiver Policy*

As Pratt (1999) argues, the jurisdictional division in the administration of the LCP is a “fragmented geography” that confuses the live-in caregivers’ rights as employees because the federal government has responsibility over the Live-in Caregiver Program, whereas the provincial government regulates the employment standards. For the federal government, live-in caregivers are defined as visa holders: for the provincial governments, they are employees (Pratt, 1999:222).

The current criteria for the LCP is as follows: (1) a temporary resident of Canada who has successfully completed the equivalent of Canadian secondary school; (2) a person who has six months of full-time training in a field or occupation related to that for which they are seeking a work permit;(3) a person who is able to speak, read and understand English or French at a level sufficient to communicate effectively in an unsupervised situation; (4) a person who signs an employment contract with the future employer (CIC, 2008).

According to the federal government's CIC website (2008), the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) brings workers to Canada for live-in care giving when there are not enough Canadians to fill the available positions. Workers hired under this program care for children, seniors or people with disabilities, without supervision, in a private household. Live-in caregivers may also apply for permanent residence in Canada after completing two years of live-in care giving employment within three years of their arrival in Canada. In 2005, Canada admitted 6,244 workers under this program, the highest level since 1991(CIC, 2006). The vast majority of these workers are women from the Philippines (77%)<sup>16</sup> (CIC, 2006). Other source countries have varied through time, with higher numbers coming from India, Singapore and Taiwan in recent years (CIC, 2006).

**Chart 8: Foreign Worker Flows, Live-in Caregiver Program, 1996–2005**



Source: CIC, *Facts and Figures 2005*.

<sup>16</sup> This number and percentage are different depending on who you speak to. According to Cecilia Diocson, of BC Philippine Women's Centre this percentage is higher.

CIC Canada identifies that the flow<sup>17</sup> of female foreign workers has increased steadily during the past decade, except in 2003, when a slight decrease was noted. In addition, “the stock<sup>18</sup> of foreign workers who came here as live-in caregivers has also increased steadily over the past several years” (CIC, Monitor, 2006).

In 2005, almost 10,000 foreign workers came into Alberta because of the economic boom. The top occupation of foreign workers in Alberta was 916 for babysitters, nannies and parent helpers (CIC, 2006). This indicates reproductive labour continues to be in high demand particularly in a booming economy, like Alberta.

Filipinos are the fourth largest immigrant group in Canada (CIC, 2006). They are also among the highest and most educated immigrant group in Canada. At the same time, they are among those at the bottom of the economic hierarchy. Most are women (around 65% of all Filipinos in Canada). Many of these women have come and continue to come under the Live-in-Caregiver Program (LCP) which suggests an increasing feminization of migration among Filipinos. The combined status, as a women, immigrant, and people of colour, has been a major factor in their consignment to occupationally segregated and low wage sectors of the economy. This in turn, has had a serious negative impact in their civic participation as a growing community in Canada.

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<sup>17</sup> The term “flow” as used by CIC refers to the number of new foreign workers entering in a year.

<sup>18</sup> The term “stock” is used by CIC refers to the number of foreign workers present at a specific time during the year.

There have been some small changes most recently. These small changes in the LCP policy have not improved the working conditions for the domestic worker, because of the temporary status with a lack of citizenship rights, the mandatory live-in requirement, and the one employer rule. However, these changes have continued to require a “highly skilled labour” force to enter Canada under the LCP, as many of the caregivers are arriving with international credentials as nurses, midwives, and physiotherapists to name a few. Therefore, a deskilling of women’s credentials occurs while restrictions on their mobility are in effect because of lack of citizenship rights. The Canadian employer is hiring an internationally trained nurse, midwife or physiotherapist and paying them minimum wage as an “indentured servant” with minimum labour rights.

Within the LCP is the requirement that caregivers in the LCP status, by law, must pay into the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Employment Insurance (EI) and income tax, even though they have no citizenship rights. While in some provinces the live-in caregiver is excluded from the provincial labour standards, in Nova Scotia they are included with minimum wage, hours of work, sick time and vacation time/pay. The right to overtime pay for live-in caregivers became unclear. According to the Nova Scotia Labour Code for overtime reads:

[Workers not covered by overtime rules] anyone employed in a private home by the householder to provide domestic service for a member of the employee’s immediate family or for 24 hours or less per week.  
(Nova Scotia Environment and Labour, 2008)

I decided to call Nova Scotia Environment and Labour to clarify this point on three different occasions I received three different answers over the course of

three months<sup>19</sup>. This inconsistency is disconcerting as it appears the provincial government's representatives do not know the laws. How would the employee, or employer know their rights?

Participants in the LCP may apply for permanent resident status in Canada after completing two years (24 months) of live-in care giving employment within three years (36 months) of arrival in Canada. This requirement however, has been difficult to complete in the time frame for many reasons.

The federal government prohibits educational training for those in the LCP. Live-in Caregivers on contract are not permitted to take formal certified educational courses due to their status unless they are successful in their application for a student authorization for part-time studies from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Brigham, 2002). Although applicants for the live-in caregiver program require a high school diploma most have a postsecondary education. The caregivers view the prohibition of educational as deskilling because it makes it difficult to recover a previous occupational identity or profession (Pratt, 1999).

For more than twenty years, many groups (INTERCEDE, Philippine Women's Centre of B.C, The Westcoast Domestic Workers Association, Kalayaan Centre, Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (CFAFIA)), activists and scholars in Canada have been producing reports and research on the plight, vulnerability and agency of the caregivers in the LCP. They have

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<sup>19</sup>There had been no policy changes over the three month period when I spoke to Nova Scotia Environment and Labour three times regarding the issue of overtime for live-in caregivers. The first time I was told live-in caregivers were not able to get overtime because they were living in the home. The second time, I called I was told by another agent, that they did not get overtime because they were professionals. I asked what made them professionals and she could not give me a solid answer. The third time I called I was told that they were to be paid overtime.

reported on issues of workplace abuse, violence, lack of citizenship rights, separation from children and family, bargaining rights, reunification of family to name a few. Most recently FAFIA has considered the LCP to be a violation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and that complaint was taken to the United Nations meeting body. CFAFIA has treated the complaints of the abusive LCP as one of the organizations priorities. Some groups have recommended that the program be scrapped to offer greater protection and equity by accepting caregivers as landed immigrants, and recognizing their credentials. For example: CFAFIA submitted three recommendations to the UN that the Government of Canada: 1) should grant the caregivers permanent residency upon their arrival into Canada; 2) should remove the live-in requirement for live-in caregivers; and 3) should take steps to insure the live-caregivers who obtain permanent residence can also obtain appropriate recognition for their foreign training (FAFIA, 2008).

In the past, the recommendations for fair working conditions, and permanent status, or citizenship have been ignored by the policy makers, in favour of changes to benefit the Canadian employer by maintaining and providing a cheap labour force. One example of these changes is that prior to January 2007 temporary workers had to renew their work permit yearly, while this is no longer the case.

As of January 3, 2007 the LCP policy changed regarding renewing work permits. The general policy is that live-in caregivers will be eligible for work permits for up to 3 years and 3 months if they remain with the same employer. (CIC, 2007)

Moreover, according to CIC, “improvements to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program” stated that they would “address challenges that Canadian employers face”. In a press release according to Glecly Duran, National Vice-Chairperson for Western Canada of SIKLAB-Canada, responded to the change:

These changes are clearly in response to employers’ complaints about the long processing timeframes they face in recruiting foreign workers”, . . . . Yet the government chooses to blatantly ignore the plight of live-in caregivers, the majority of whom are Filipino women. (SIKLAB Canada and NAPWC, 2007).

CICs indicated the three-year period corresponds to the amount of time currently allotted to a caregiver to complete the requirements of the LCP in order to apply for permanent residence, and the additional three months allow a transition period to apply for permanent residence. Duran’s response,

These changes do not fundamentally alter the LCP in ways that would uphold the human rights of these migrant workers” (SIKLAB Canada and NAPWC, 2007).

The explanation from advocacy groups to remove the criteria of working 24 months in 36 months before being able to apply for landed immigrant status is as follows:

Many live-in caregivers do not remain working for the same employer over this two to three year period for various legitimate reasons. For instance, due to the severe exploitation they face working under oppressive conditions living in their employers’ homes, they decide to leave their employers and look for better working conditions with another employer. (SIKLAB Canada and NAPWC, 2007).

However, an increasing number of Filipino domestic workers are arbitrarily and unjustly deported from Canada. For a variety of legitimate reasons

caregivers are unable to complete the 24 months within 36 months. As Duran indicates in the press release in 2007:

Many live-in caregivers do not remain working for the same employer over this two to three year period for various legitimate reasons. For instance, due to the severe exploitation they face working under oppressive conditions living in their employer's homes, they decide to leave their employers and look for better working conditions with another employer. (SIKLAB Canada and NAPWC, 2007)

They are forced to return to their home country, often bringing their Canadian-born.

The second change to the policy as of January 2007 was taking away rights,

Live-in caregivers who wish to bring their family member(s) with them while on a work permit will not be permitted to do so unless they satisfy an officer that they have sufficient funds to care for and support the family member(s) in Canada and the family member(s) are otherwise not inadmissible and they have permission to live in their employer's home. (CIC: Operational Bulletins 025 – January 3, 2007)

It will be difficult for most to have sufficient funds when working in the LCP because of poor wages. These changes also take place at a time when the Canadian government is internationally promoting Canada as a welcoming country because of its need for immigrants. In addition there has been research completed indicating the problems with separation and reunification of caregivers' and their children.

According to Tolley (2003), analysts predict that by 2020, one million Canadian jobs could go unfilled because of a declining birth rate and a rapidly

aging population that is depleting the size of Canada's workforce (Tolley, 2003:1).

It is estimated that 90,000 Filipino women have entered Canada as foreign domestic workers since the 1980s. They often settle in Canada with their families after many years of a temporary status. They have already contributed greatly to the Canadian economy through their reproductive labour and their importance is especially great, in light of the lack of a universal day care program accessible to all Canadian women and families and an aging population which needs care.

Meanwhile there continues to be a demand for caregivers as the neo-liberal state downloads public responsibility to the private industry. A review of the literature has shown the immigration laws, and the domestic schemes in the past and present, are racist, sexist and classist. They put women from developing countries in a position of non citizen status and devalued work, with low wages and exploitative working conditions for middle and upper class Canadian citizens. Rather than displaying the political will to improve the living and working conditions of Filipino professional women currently working as live-in caregivers, the Canadian government chooses to facilitate their exploitation and the privatization of health care through the policies. While Canada prides itself on the commitment of an additional \$50.5 million over two years to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, they fail to address the exploitation and unsafe working conditions of many professional women from the Philippines trapped and de-skilled under LCP.

As the Filipino Nurses Group in BC identified,

Twenty-four hour private home care can run up to \$500 a day a Filipino nurse working under the LCP is a package deal for families and elderly patients with chronic illnesses living at home. They provide help with activities of daily living including bathing, meal preparation, administering medications, cleaning, as well as accompanying their employers to medical appointments. As mentioned previously, the LCP is also a transfer of women's oppression from one group of women to another group of women.

(Filipino Nurses Support Group-BC, 2007)

On June 28, 2002 the new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) was implemented and the selection process for Skilled Workers Class was one of the main foci. The emphasis is on the Skilled Worker Class as "human capital" with attributes and flexible skills, rather than focusing on specific intended occupations as the previous selection policy. The new points system assesses education, language proficiency, employment experience, age, arranged employment, and adaptability, to a maximum of 100 points, applicants qualified must achieve 75 points or higher (Tolley, 2003).

In 2006 according to Service Canada, in Nova Scotia, "most caregivers are coming from the Philippines, although there is a small percentage from other countries such as the Middle East, Europe and South America" (Personal email Debbie McGuire, Service Canada, April 6, 2006).

Statistical information from Service Canada, indicated for Nova Scotia with a population 934,1000 in 2004, 44<sup>20</sup> applications were processed; 2005<sup>21</sup>, 69 applications were processed; 2006, 83 applications were processed and in 2007

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<sup>20</sup> Job location - 35 Halifax Metro, 9 Rural. Of the 44 caregivers, 27 were in child care; 12 were senior care; 5 were caring for a persons with disabilities.

<sup>21</sup> Job location – 56 Halifax Metro, 13 Rural. Of the 69 caregiver, 55 were in child care; 11 were in senior care; and 3 were caring for persons with disabilities.

almost triple from 2004, 116 applications were processed. The number of caregivers may be low compared to other provinces, however, the applications processed are increasing each year. There were approximately 315 live-in caregivers applications processed in Nova Scotia between 2004-2007 (Personal email, Debbie Poirier Service Canada, April 5, 2006 and Debbie McGuire, Service Canada, January 22, 2008).

#### **Chapter 4 The “Development of Underdevelopment” in the Philippines**

This chapter provides an overview of the “development of underdevelopment” in the Philippines coined by the dependency theorist Andre Gunder Frank (1966, 1969). Development of underdevelopment is a theory that explains the underdevelopment of third world countries not as a natural process but rather a historical condition of distorted, blocked and dependent development. Development of the North was at the cost of under development of the South. The Philippines began with a long history of colonization, modernization and then neo-liberalism and globalization.

To understand the Filipina’s positioning a need to consider the complex conditions within the Philippines that drives them to migrate is necessary (Pratt, 1999). The purpose of this chapter is to gain a better understanding of the history of migration movements and the interrelationship between the Philippines and developed countries in a globalized market.

The Philippines is the top labour exporter in the world with over 8 million overseas workers<sup>22</sup> in 194 countries who sent approximately \$8 billion US in remittances to the Philippines in 2004. Of the 8 million overseas workers, more than three million were temporary workers (POEA, 2008).

Stalker (2000) indicates that as more countries come under the dictates and influence of global institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organizations (WTO), countries of the Two Thirds World, like the Philippines, continue to experience economic crisis. The Philippines is indebted to Western commercial banks (Stalker, 2000). To

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<sup>22</sup> This is “stock” estimate that includes, temporary workers, permanent and irregular.

maximize repayment of outstanding loans and interest, the IMF pressured the Philippines into adopting “belt tightening” policies. Therefore cutbacks to social service budgets, wage restrictions, public service cutbacks and shrinking health and education expenditures occurred (Macklin, 1992).

Millions of people from the Two Thirds World have no alternative but to migrate to other countries for a better life for themselves and their children. Alongside the depression of the economy in the Philippines is the continuing need for human capital for cheap but educated and relatively skilled labour. The major factor pushing Filipinos to migrate abroad leaving families continues to be the social, political and economic crisis in the Philippines; a high percentage of people live in poverty and deprivation. However, as Sassen (1988) argued, international factors must be taken into account in the analysis of migration because if one just focuses on population growth, poverty and economic stagnation, migration will be seen as a domestic matter and a domestic problem having to do with the inadequacies of socio-economic conditions of policies in the country of origin.

The Philippines have a colonial history, being a colony of Spain for 300 years, then a colony of the United States from 1899 to 1946 and transformed into a colonial dependency of the United States, specializing in the production of agricultural commodities (Bello, Kinley & Elinson, 1982: 7). In 1906 the first contract workers, predominately male, from the Philippines went to Hawaii to fill a labour shortage to work in plantations.

After World War II there was a heavy task of rebuilding economies that had been shattered by war and a large debt as war damage grants were less

than what was needed for adequate reconstruction. The Philippines became politically independent but was deeply rooted in being a neo-colony of the United States and the U.S. military. The Philippine economic dependency continued after decolonization as the United States held 53 percent of foreign investments in 1983 (Carino, 1987). In response to capital scarcity and declining terms of trade the modernization paradigm was implemented. The modernization paradigm was a process of development of Third World countries which involved moving away from the traditional society, through a linear series of stages of growth based on the advanced industrialized societies of Europe, and North America. Countries of the South became suppliers of cheap labour and raw materials and recipients of finished products; however, this was an unequal exchange for their cheap labour and raw materials, a process that further entrenched their “underdevelopment”.

After political independence the Philippines structured its economy on capital intensive, large scale manufacturing for domestic consumption. The rise of nationalism, accompanied the protective tariffs were established to nurture domestic industries (Carino, 1987).

The 1960s saw the first wave of migration in response to a national economic strategy that failed to meet the growing demand placed on economic development (Eviota, 1992). The industrial growth could not absorb the expanding labour force and politicians could not agree on how to redirect the economy as there were two opposing groups, the Philippine nationalists and the supporters of foreign business interests.

The modernization paradigm of growth and dependency shaped national and local economic policies and politics and contributed to a substantial increase of indebtedness of the developing countries of the South. The second wave of migration in the 1970s (Tyner 1999) was linked to three events going on at the time. One conflict was between the power holding elites and the discontented landless peasants; the second was the dispute between the foreign investors and economic nationalists. Finally, in 1972 the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos and his opponents responded to the crisis by implementing martial law (Tyner, 1999).

Bello et al (1982) claims the World Bank sanctioned the imposition of martial law as an opportunity to change the Philippine trade and industrial policy to “export-orientated industrialization”. Martial law was a threat to the freedom of many Philippine nationals and therefore many fled in search of freedom. Eviota (1992) indicates an average of one out of six in the mid seventies who left were professional or technical workers while the remainder was in the textile, manufacturing, sales and clerical worker occupations.

The Philippines’ government attempted to stabilize the Philippine economy by expansion in agribusiness and in export industrialization. Agribusiness was capital intensive and required large tracts of land that added to the number of landless peasants, therefore, pushing migration from rural to urban areas. The Philippine industrialization could not absorb the increasing number of student and many professionals, therefore, as Gupta (cited in Tyner 1999) states, the educational system became a stepping stone for Philippine migration and continues to do so today.

In 1974 a third economic strategy was the emergence of the Labour Export Policy (LEP), first designed as a temporary economic measure to replenish the country's dwindling dollar reserves but is now in its 34<sup>rd</sup> year. The Philippines' government decided to take advantage of the changing global employment opportunities and supported a policy that institutionalized the export of people. Globally the Philippines attempted to strengthen ties with the changing world economy. Marcos used the international economy through foreign policy to contribute to domestic economic growth (Bello et.al, 1982). The labour export was to reduce unemployment and underemployment and to improve human capital as workers returned from abroad with skills (Bello, et.al 1982).

In 1978, a directive, mainly the Presidential Letter of Instruction 852, announced the government's new "corporate export strategy" and grant incentives to contractors participating in the scheme. In 1980, another law was issued requiring government to government arrangements for the recruitment of workers. In 1982, the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency was created which was granted comprehensive authority over migrant contract workers. This solution was meant to be a temporary answer to the country's poverty, unemployment and serious balance of payment problems, but the export of labour has become an institutionalized and pervasive aspect of the Philippine political economy (Velasco 2002).

While these structural changes were occurring in the Philippines, there were structural changes in other countries that led to migration. The oil embargo in the 1970s led to quadrupling of oil prices in Arab countries and massive

infrastructure projects caused labour shortages in highly gendered jobs in the construction and production sectors for the men while women were recruited into the clerical positions. Filipino women at this time also replaced the receiving country's (host) women in the area of paid domestic work, because the host country's women sought other sectors of the labour force, rejecting paid domestic work as an employment venue. In addition, in some social circles, having a domestic was a status symbol.

Tourism also became a developmental strategy in the 1970s, as it could boost foreign investment, provide needed employment opportunities and increase foreign remittances through money spent by tourists (Tyner, 1996a). "The Philippines began reconstructing its image around its most important asset – a cheerful, hospitable people." (Richter cited in Tyner, 1996a:8) Tyner (1996a) argues, these images racialized and sexualized the Filipino women and the entire country. As Tyner (1996a) highlights, a movement of protests from the Christian Temperance Union in Japan and the Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women based in the Philippines eventually caused a decline in sex tours in the Philippines. Rather than people coming to the Philippines, the migration industry emerged to facilitate the deployment of Filipino labour as artists and entertainers. Women were exported to other countries, but particularly Japan, to satisfy the growing demand in the sex trade (Tyner, 1996a). However sex tourism continues in the Philippines today along with a growing demand for mail order brides.

The third wave of migration began in the 1980s and continues into the new millennium (Eviota, 1992). With the economic downturn of the Middle East

in the mid 1980s and Asian financial crisis in the 1990s, many Filipino migrant men lost their positions in construction. Mostly, Filipina women were leaving their homeland and their families because of worsening economic and political crisis. Women were and are expected to make up an increasingly high percentage of the work force (Eviota, 1992). In the mid-eighties close to half of the overseas workers were women (POEA, Annual Report, 1987). Filipino women continue to migrate more than men.

In addition to a loss of employment for Filipino men abroad, an acute financial crisis struck in the early 80s and the balance of payment was estimated to be 1 billion US dollars. In response to the debt, Executive Order 857 was introduced in 1983 and institutionalized remittances as it was made mandatory for every Filipino contract worker abroad to remit regularly a portion of his/her foreign exchange to his/her beneficiary in the Philippines' banking system (CIIR, 1987). Non compliance would mean non-renewal of passports and blacklisting from the list of eligibles to work abroad (Tyner, 1999).

Many political economists theorize that as capitalism expanded into the global market, the labour pool became larger. In the accelerated pace of international capitalism, there is an unequal economic, political and social relationship between developed and underdeveloped countries. Within this unequal relationship there is also a division of labour, which is based on a socially constructed gender hierarchy. The gender hierarchy is created through a dominant patriarchal ideology, which positions women in subordinate roles. When women enter the economy, their work was valued in relation to their subordinate positions.

Tyner (1999) argued that these images and the social construction of gender roles inform policy formulation. Often these images are constructed intentionally or unintentionally to make racism, sexism, and poverty appear natural and an inevitable part of everyday life. The social construction of gender manifested within the entire migratory process and employment opportunities are determined by the characteristics of individuals such as gender, ethnicity, race and class standing. Some Filipinas have indicated that the appeal for nursing is framed in terms of innate essences of *Filipino* femininity, using words to describe themselves as caring, compassionate, humane, non assertive, but this attributes are often seen in Canada as being obedient. Filipinos find this advantageous in Canada as Filipinos have a reputation as being good healthcare providers because of these attributes. Therefore, their essentialized character is validated by the Canadian labour market. In addition there is often family pressure, and/or a duty to be a nursing professional often for economic motives opening the door to global work or migration and sending remittances home (Kelly and D'Addario 2004: 15- 17).

The receipt of workers' remittances is the most significant economic benefit for the Philippines. Therefore maximizing these receipts is an important focus of government policies (in the past and in the present) by increasing the number of workers abroad and enhancing the amount of remittances despite reports of Filipino migrant workers of the abuse they endure.

In 2006, a total of 3,577,292 documented Overseas Foreign Workers (OFW) worked in 197 countries globally (POEA, 2006). In 2006, the total volume of documented OFW processed contracts was 1,221,417, an increase of 1.4%

from the previous year (POEA, 2006). However total number of OFW deployed in 2006 were 1,062,567 (POEA, 2006). The total number of new hires for 2006 was 308,142 with 184,454 of them being women (POEA, 2006) The top occupation for 2006 was the Household and Related Worker with 89,861 being women and 1,590 men (POEA, 2006) The total amount of remittances for 2006 was 12,761,308 billion US dollars (POEA, 2006). The top three sources of OFW remittances for 2006 were the United States of America with 6,536,429 billion US dollars; Saudi Arabia with 1,117,915 billion US dollars; and Canada 590,627 million US dollars (POEA, 2006).

Arnold (1986) points out that the export of temporary labour is a highly competitive market. Therefore, the terms of the contract must be as attractive as possible to maximize the export of labour. The Philippines has increased the marketing of their country as a human resource centre and of the Filipino as a global worker to respond to this competitive market (Velasco 2002).

For example, in 2008, Dr. Dante Ang, Chairman for Commission of Filipinos Overseas (Office of the President of the Philippines) was in Canada to promote the export of their citizens to Canada.

As Kelly and D'Addario (2004), to supply labour that is in demand globally, an infrastructure exists in the Philippines where the institutional foundations for training exist. As various jurisdictions have sought to recruit nurses, there is a coinciding expansion of training infrastructure in the Philippines. For example, a wave of health care professionals were in demand in the 1960s and 1970s in both the US and the oil-rich economies of the Middle East. In response, nursing schools doubled in the Philippines. A second expansion has taken place since

2001, and most of the nurses trained are not destined to stay in the Philippines, as nurses in the Philippine government hospitals earn approximately \$650 US per month in Manilla and lower if working in a private hospital or in another province (Kelly and D'Addario, 2004:11), i.e. much lower than working overseas, causing global polarization.

Kelly and D'Addario (2004) also identified, from discussions with the administration of an educational institution that the courses promoted and prepared the student for the global market. English is the language of instruction, and the curriculum was patterned for U.S. and United Kingdom nursing practices. With over 354,000 nurses trained between 1970 and 2004, in 2002, 27,150 were employed as nurses in the Philippines. This also creates a brain drain and a crisis in the Philippines as the country faces a shortage of experienced personnel in local hospitals, and nursing schools have difficulty in retaining faculty (Kelly and D'Addario, 2004:14-15). However, alumni overseas are supporting the infrastructure by donating money to institutions in the Philippines (Kelly and D'Addario, 2004).

The Philippines continues to be rich in natural resources, and the economy is essentially agrarian and lacks basic industries. It does not have a national industry. It is a country where multinational companies from the U.S., Japan, Canada, and Europe are active in keeping the country at an infantile economic stage and a cheap source of raw materials. The Philippine laws have changed to accommodate foreign business interests (Velasco 2002).

Development projects by foreign corporations have displaced and destroyed communities in rural areas, agricultural and forestlands have been

converted to open pit mines, agri-business and industrial peace zones<sup>23</sup> (Velasco, 2002). To demonstrate how Canada is implicated, the Vancouver-based Placer Dome Mining Company displaced thousands of rural people in Marinduque when its mine tailings polluted and destroyed the sources of food and livelihood of the community. Gloria Arroyo's, the current President who was elected in 2001, ignored the pleas from the people for her to intervene in their case against Placer Dome. Even after Placer Dome was found guilty of polluting and killing the Boac River, she maintained her hands-off policy. Arroyo is a supporter of, and administrator of globalization with the Philippine government's economic policy that carries the full World Trade Organization (WTO) and General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) agenda (Velasco, 2002).

Velasco (2002) argues, the semi-feudal and semi-colonial political economy has made it impossible to provide meaningful employment and social services to the people in the Philippines. For example, according to the United Nations Development Report in 2005 the estimated earned annual income for women in the Philippines is \$3,383 US, while men's estimated earned annual income was almost double at \$6,375 US. People living below the poverty line between 1990 – 2004 was 36.8% of the population. The Philippines' GDP for 2006 was \$1,192 when the HDI is calculated the GDP is \$5,137 US. Fertility rates for 2000 – 2005 were 3.5 births per woman (United Nations Human Development Reports, 2008).

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<sup>23</sup> These areas are called industrial "peace " zones because union and strikes are not allowed (Velasco 2002).

The majority of Filipinos can no longer pay the price for basic goods as their currency is tied to the U.S. dollar and is devalued. They do not have access to Philippine government institutions such as schools, hospitals, and public utilities. For example: In 2002 –2005 public expenditure for education was 2.7% of the GDP and public spending for health was 1.4% of the GDP (United Nations Human Development Report, accessed on May 10, 2008).

According to Velasco, (2002) most public institutions have been privatized, the institutions that are publicly funded are run by corrupt bureaucrats, and politicians and patronage systems are rampant. The Philippines' solution since the 1970s until the present has been the marketing of Filipino workers globally.

For example, the POEA website reaches out globally, marketing the export of their people/workers. The use of language and terms commodifies the nurses using words such as: “the preferred choice”, “quality education”, and “the Filipino advantage”. In addition the sexist language with the use of masculine nouns ignores the many women who migrate overseas. Below is an excerpt from the website for a Filipino worker,

The Philippines is widely recognized as one of the top providers of workers of various professions and skills to labour-short economies all over the world. This is because the Filipino worker, who is known for his competence, adaptability and dedications to his job, has become the preferred choice of many host countries across the globe (POEA, 2008).

Or,

Resilient. Adaptable. English-proficient. Loyal. They are just among the reasons why Filipino Seafarers are preferred by the world's best fleet. (POEA, 2008)

The language also validates the stereotype of a Filipino.

Filipinas are forced to migrate to other countries like Canada where the social relations and processes racialize the “Filipina” caregiver and the migrant worker is commodified and socialized by creating a category of “non citizen”, outsider/insider, Arat-Koc explains,

One of the modern day discourses on race focuses on disparities in wages and standards of living between First and Third World countries. When the focus is on these disparities, emphasis shifts to the question of how much the immigrants want to be here rather than how much Canada needs them. In this discourse, immigration ceases to be viewed as a (much needed) labour recruitment mechanism and comes to be viewed as a system of “charity” from the First to the Third World (Arat-Koc 1999: 149).

## **Chapter 5 Factors Precipitating Women's Migration from the Philippines**

Canada was built on migratory movement of people, who often were driven by a desire for survival and the search for a better life for themselves and the next generation. Global social, political and economic inequalities between countries of economic North and economic South have placed women from the countries of the South like the Philippines in a position of work-seeking migrants to other countries often preferring the North.

In response to the political, economic and social inequalities, the Filipinas' I interviewed had left the Philippines in order and to make a better life for themselves and their families. Their plans for leaving the Philippines were often strategic plans involving research and networking. In addition, money and sometimes "luck" were needed to begin the migration process. The Filipinas experiences were diverse, complex and multi-layered, however there were common themes of agency, contradictions and identity negotiations throughout their stories of migration. As Berger (2004) argues, the women develop respect and empowerment for themselves not only in terms of their ability to become a major force in providing for their families but also in terms of their ability to cope successfully with the full range of migration and work related issues (Berger, 2004: 203). As Lovelyn, one of my interviewees, summarized her experience, "I may be lost but I know how to find my way!" (Interview with Lovelyn)

The decision to migrate, rather than immigrate, was made by most of the Filipinas after learning that it required large sums of money in order to successfully emigrate to another country including Canada. For example, to apply and be accepted as a landed immigrant in the skilled worker class in

Canada, the applicant must have a minimum of \$10,000 in his/her bank account. After submitting the application for permanent residency and with fees payable upon submission, one must wait for the possibility of being accepted. If accepted one must apply and pay a \$500 CDN processing fee and a \$490 CDN permanent residency fee (CIC, 2008). The monetary criteria requirement often excludes many people from the developing, or Third World countries. Other factors also apply as the applicant must have a minimum one year working in their profession or trade, and must score at least 67 points with a maximum of 100 based on six factors: Education, Official Language, Experience, Age, Arranged Employment in Canada, and Adaptability<sup>24</sup> (CIC, 2008)

Many Filipina professionals migrate and work as caregivers because of unemployment and poverty in the Philippines and lack of financial resources to become an immigrant in Canada (Constable, 1997:9).

Elisa, an educated and trained physiotherapist explained,

I tried applying as an immigrant to Canada but I'm not qualified because they require you to have two years experience of what you finish from your college and we can't do that and I heard they want like uhm a paid volunteer if you are going to present to them your experience but in the Philippines you are not paid and so I cannot apply for that. And I don't have money too, you have have \$10,000. Canadian and I don't have that. (Interview with Elise)

It is difficult for many Filipinos to fit the criteria and pay the fees to emigrate and therefore the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) is seen as a "temporary solution to coming to Canada", regardless of how the policy may exploit and restrict their mobility. According to the participants, there are many

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<sup>24</sup>NOTE: One receives 3-5 points if one's spouse or common law has a postsecondary education. Therefore an assumption is being made by Canadian Citizenship and Immigration that if one has a spouse one would adapt more easily).

fees (agency, travel, medical, application fees) required to migrate, the fees are less than immigration fees and sometimes the employer will pay some or all of the fees.

Globally all state policies related to domestic workers and caregivers exploit women, with some state policies being worse than others. Regardless of how coercive their choices, all the participants interviewed suggested that the Canadian policy was “liberal” with tolerable conditions when comparing it to domestic worker policies in other countries. The caregivers I interviewed saw the opportunity to apply for permanent status after two years of caregiving work as a positive reason for choosing to migrate to Canada.

### *5.1 Feminization of Survival*

The Filipina women identified that the need to migrate originated in the need for their family to survive. Sassen (2000) identified the need for women to migrate for their family’s survival as the “feminization of survival” (p. 506).

There is a lot of women in the Philippines going out because we women can find jobs, like domestic workers but the men it’s very difficult to get in, I mean work in other countries (Interview with Lovelyn).

Clearly, Lovelyn articulates that women are playing a significant role in the global economy, and family, households and communities are becoming more dependent on women for their economic survival.

The remittances sent home by the migrants and the organized export of workers benefit not only the families but are important sources of revenue for the

Philippine government in a global economy (Tyner,1999; Hochschild, 2002; Parreñas, 2000).

Kelly was a 22 year old, single mother from Manila who graduated with a Graduate Junior Secretarial diploma, and was working as an office manager for approximately \$530 CDN per month in the Philippines. Her daughter was three years old when Kelly departed for Canada. She has two sisters, both living and working in the Philippines; ones working and going to school to become a physiotherapist, and the other sister is a medical technologist. Kelly identified the risk in migrating for work, “If you go abroad, you are lucky<sup>25</sup> if you get a good employer”(Interview with Kelly). This idea seems to be at the back of migrants’ minds.

Kelly’s father had worked overseas in Saudi Arabia in the past, but there was some problems and his wife (Kelly’s mother) recommended that he should not return. Kelly’s brother had worked in Saudi Arabia in a factory, but he became fatally ill from the workplace conditions and returned home where he died.

Kelly explained to me that the family was going through a very difficult time and she emphasized her responsibility and pride in providing for her family but not without an emotional price to pay. As she explained,

All this is going on in the family and I insist I am going to go and make US dollars. My mother does not want me to go. When my brother is buried, I applied for a job in Manila in an office. It was a good paying job I always have a job and maintained the family

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<sup>25</sup> Although all the participants had planned their migration and future all either mentioned “luck”, fate or/and “in God’s hands” several times throughout their interviews when discussing their migration and work experience. Constable (1997) also mentioned this as practicing the Philippine trait of “hiya, tiis, and bahala na, p. 13) I argue as the women are on the borderlands and, as Barber(2000) argued sometimes the women are active agents negotiating their identities and situations while simultaneously, or at the same time being in passive compliance or “in God’s hands”.

income. I was the breadwinner. (Interview with Kelly)

I am shouldering the problems with family. My younger sister is going to school and working as a physical therapist and caring for my mom. (Interview with Kelly)

The influence of patriarchal family household ideology and Filipino cultural values is important. The role of women in this family is important to survival and highlights the interdependence. Family and kinship networks provide Filipinas and Filipinos an important security net and are the most highly valued segment in their lives. According to a study completed by Bulatao (1970) the interest of the individual must be sacrificed for the good of the family. In addition the social practice called *utang na loob*<sup>26</sup> is an important part of the foundation of the kinship system (Billones & Wilson, 1987). Hollnsteiner (1970) argues *utang na loob* plays a major role within the family-household unit, particularly between parent and child. Kelly's need to maintain the family income provides evidence of her responsibility to her family and being a good daughter and repayment of *utang* (a debt of gratitude).

## *5.2 Economic Constraints*

The economic hardship in the Philippines because of the “development of underdevelopment” have left little choice but for Filipino women to migrate to other countries.

Tammy was a registered nurse who had left the Philippines in 2001 to work in Canada. She was 31 years of age, married and had two girls that were 4

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<sup>26</sup> It is a social practice embedded in a moral and ethical principle which expects a favour to be returned (Almirol, 1985).

and 8 years of age when she left. Tammy had seven siblings living at the time of the interview. Her two sisters in the USA were working as professionals, three sisters and two brothers in the Philippines all “well engaged in business” (Interview with Tammy). When I asked her about her choice to leave the Philippines, her response referred to the circumstances, the need for survival and the economic, and social environment,

I don't have any choice. I stayed in the Philippines for so long without any work, or if you have work, it is not enough for your family. And when somebody wants to get you from the Philippines, you gotta take a chance (Interview with Tammy).

Tammy situates the economic problem and indicates there is “no choice”. In her role as mother Tammy feels the responsibility to her family and acts upon that responsibility taking risks to economical support her family. As Brigham (2002) argues the sexual division of labour persists in the Philippines and wives' decisions revolve around the household and childcare but they usually also have control of the family-household finances, however, if the household finances are non-existent or of a lower socio-economic bracket, the survival of the family becomes the responsibility of the women (p.52).

Although the decision to migrate was a difficult one, the women were self determined and empowered by being active agents in the decision making process. They adopted the stand that they had no choice because of the economics in the Philippines and migrating was their will to survive.

Tammy continues with her analysis of the Philippine Government and the economic and social environment:

The Philippine Government, I don't think we can still survive in the Philippines now. Every now and then the value of our money going down, I don't think the day will come, or it maybe, but it's not easy and it takes a lot of years. I don't think we can survive that now. There's a lot of corruption everywhere and in the government and I don't think we can survive. (Interview with Tammy)

Chin Chin, another of my participants was educated as a nurse but had not passed the exam in the Philippines. She was married with two children who were eight and three years of age at the time of her departure to Israel. The economic constraints made it difficult to survive in the Philippines and were a crucial factor being instrumental in Chin Chin's decision to migrate as she explained,

The reason why I left our country it's very hard. Life there is very hard even though you you both of my husband and I are working, it's not enough to raise the kids. You know, that is the reason why I decided because I am the, my husband and I I have a big chance to going abroad. So I decided to leave our country and luckily I am here in Canada. (Interview with Chin Chin)

Lovelyn, a single woman in her late 30s, had been in Canada for four months. She had a Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in management. She was from a family of eight all living in the Philippines. She left the Philippines in 1992 to do domestic work, sending monthly remittances home to her mother. She worked in Singapore and Hong Kong before coming to Canada in 2005. She began doing domestic work because she wanted to make money for a while and that meant leaving the Philippines.

I usually worked, I worked in Philippines but uh the salaries not even enough for me (sigh), for my expenses.  
(Interview with Lovelyn)

### *5.3 Negotiating Limited Options and Human Agency*

In response to the global inequality and state policies, the Filipina women leaving the Philippines articulated how they came to be in the current situation as active agents mediating their “choices” and experiences that are constituted by, and reflexive of their social and cultural context (Mohanty, 2003: 311 and Deveaux, 1999: 245).

Throughout the interviews the women articulated their limited options and how they made choices based on their needs, their families’ needs and their long-term goal. During the process of deciding to migrate, the women were networking in order to research the countries that needed domestics or caregivers, basing their decisions on networks, processing times, costs and finally regulations in the receiving country.

Coinciding with the economic constraints Tammy articulated many different times throughout the interview that she wanted more control over her life and her children’s future. Tammy’s wanting to gain control was a strategy of resistance, challenging the patriarchy relationship, a sometimes, abusive relationship and Catholicism. Although her husband was an international sailor working in tankers, who earned very good money, Tammy explained he was not focused, nor did he “have a plan”,

I’m thinking those things, I thought those things, I thought that this is not a good idea. I mean my kids are getting you know older, someday they are going to uh go to school, they’re going to get a high school and college and I think I can’t send them to college,

if I just rely on him financially. So I'm thinking that I have to do something because I've heard there is a lot of nurses needed from other countries, like the UK and US and Canada. So I'm thinking how can I do this. And he don't want me to go, no of course he is the man, he's the man of God (Interview with Tammy).

Kelly weighed her "options" for migration, although Kelly had relatives in Israel, Canada and the US, Israel was her first "choice" however it would cost her \$2000 US dollars. Japan and Hong Kong were her second and third choices but the language was a barrier. Another option was coming to the USA as a mail order bride. For Kelly to be considered for the LCP, Kelly needed to take the six-month Live-In Caregiver course because she did not have the education criteria,

Six months of full-time training or 12 months of experience in paid employment in a field or occupation related to the job you are seeking as a live-in caregiver. You may have gained your training or experience in early childhood education, geriatric care, pediatric nursing or first aid, to name just a few areas. You may have completed your training as part of your formal education. (CIC website)

Kelly decided to attend the six-month Live-In Caregiver Program (approximately \$250 CDN for the course) through the Canadian Embassy in Manila and then come to Canada, where an aunt resides.

In 2003, Kelly was hired through an agency to work in Canada as a live-in caregiver, caring for two children. The cost of all fees and expenses to find work in Canada including airfare, agency fee, embassy fees, and working visa was approximately \$2400 CDN. Although Kelly informed me she did not have this money, she borrowed the money, as many caregivers do, in order to migrate.

Lovelyn had been in Canada approximately four months caring for a child at the time of the interview. She had arrived after a two-year contract in Hong Kong. Lovelyn found her work in Canada through a Canadian agency recruiting

in Hong Kong. Lovelyn mentioned that it was much quicker to get employment in Canada from another country because in the Philippines there was a two-year backlog.

Lovelyn based her decision working in Canada on the fact that she could change her status from a temporary worker to a permanent resident in Canada.

Because of the opportunity that, uh, I can change my status as long as I can continue to work here for more than two years. I can write for landed status, That is my main reason (Interview with Lovelyn).

She further explained that she could work for many years as a domestic in Hong Kong and would never be able to work as a skilled worker unless a Philippine company sent her to Hong Kong, or she married a Chinese man. Lovelyn compared the two countries and explained,

They want to hold it, they want to own you. That's how I feel in Hong Kong. So, I mean I really cannot help myself comparing Canada and Hong Kong. I'm just new here too. It's really very nice. Even my family. I call them up and uh, they knew my situation, whatever I'm going under. I told them it's not easy to earn money, I'm really working for a living. I really have to use my force, my energy and uh but here, even my sister said, "you sound very happy" whenever you call (Interview with Lovelyn).

Chin Chin was also aware of the backlog in the Philippines, therefore, in 2003 Chin Chin left the Philippines for Israel, where she planned to work two years and then migrate to Canada from Israel. She explained that Israel was just a stepping stone to get to Canada, quicker because, if she applied from the Philippines to come to Canada, it would take up to two years to process, whereas if she went to another country first, it would only take three months for

processing. In addition, she would be making money in Israel while her application was being processed for Canada.

Since Chin Chin worked in Israel before working in Canada when discussing the LCP in Canada, she compared the two countries' policies,

You can work there [Israel] six years and you cannot get a VISA anymore, after 5 or 6 years after that you are PMT they call it PMT, without VISA like in Canada after two years when you are in LCP, you can file an immigrant VISA. And you have a lot of opportunity here (Interview with Chin Chin).

Yeah there is a lot of opportunity and you can work here [as a nurse] if you are a nurse. In Israel if you are a nurse, or a dentist or doctor, or a teacher, you are just a live-in caregiver (Interview with Chin Chin).

Networking is a crucial tool to migrating as Chin Chin explained to me. When she was in Israel for one year, a friend and caregiver living and working in Halifax contacted her to tell her about a job opportunity as a caregiver, caring for an elderly person. Chin Chin took the job opportunity and came to Canada in 2004. Chin Chin stressed her "luck" to be in Canada compared to being in Israel where they have very few rights and no opportunity to move out of care giving work to work in their professions, or become landed/permanent residents.

Elise was also a single woman, approximately thirty years of age, trained and educated as a physiotherapist, who arrived in Canada almost three years prior to the interview. Elise sends remittances home monthly for her parents and two brothers. She was working in the LCP, caring for a mature independent woman:

I have a plan actually, but not [for] Canada. I was planning[for] the States because I'm working as a physiotherapy and massage therapist I find and so what happened what I heard when to be a physiotherapist in the States you going to pay \$4000, \$3000 US

dollars [for fees for physiotherapist fees]and I don't have that, I don't have any family to borrow[from]. I always work as a volunteer, same job but uhm no payment (Interview with Elise).

Elise had explored a few opportunities to work abroad. One opportunity was working on a cruise ship to earn money, and then pay the fees to go to the United States as a physiotherapist.

However, while making plans Elise met her future Canadian employer while working as a massage therapist at a hotel spa in the Philippines. Elise was offered the position of live-in caregiver in Canada immediately, and although reluctant to do this kind of work she accepted the offer. Elise explained the process and paper work was completed quickly because her employer was in a high status position in Canada.

When Tammy left for Canada, she thought she was working within the LCP as a Personal Care Worker (PCW) in a nursing home. Shortly after arriving in Canada however, she realized that she was not in the LCP but on a temporary work visa only. This meant that after two years she could neither apply for permanent residency, nor landed status and nor could she bring her family here. Tammy continued to work as a PCW in the nursing home for one and half years. When her temporary work visa expired, Human Resources would not renew it with this employer. Therefore, Tammy's options were either to return to the Philippines or, to write her nursing exam and if she failed she would have to return to the Philippines. Tammy had not prepared for the exam and therefore did not want to take the nursing exam at that time.

Tammy explained that after living in Halifax for a year and a half, she knew she wanted to stay in Canada as she thought Halifax was a great place to raise her family. On the advice of friends, Tammy's solution was to apply for another employer and work under the LCP. Clearly, Tammy thought the LCP was a good alternative since she could not work as a registered nurse but could study on her own to become a nurse while working in the LCP as she explained,

And since, uhm uh working as a Live-in Caregiver is good for me as I can uh, I have a lot of time to study for my exam. I took the job and I work for a live-in caregiver for a year, for one year, just for one year (Interview with Tammy).

Tammy articulated her understanding of her limited options and she saw care giving work, even though it translated to deskilling, as her best option to stay in Canada and eventually get her nursing credentials and permanent residency. Tammy worked as LIC, caring for an elderly person until she passed her nursing exam and received her work permit to work as a nurse. This process was about year. Tammy explained her understanding to me regarding the nurse shortage in Canada but was frustrated because of the lengthy process and delay in getting her work permit to work as a nurse.

But since I'm not an immigrant I am not allowed to work in the hospital or nursing home unless someone sponsors me. And this nursing home I'm working in right now uh they really need nurses because everybody is short, every nursing home, hospital is short of nurses. They really need nurses so they sponsored me but it takes a long time to get the work permit from Immigration and Human resources getting the papers. So I don't have work for seven months (Interview with Tammy).

Tammy's experience highlights how she negotiates her status as a temporary worker with a lack of citizen or permanent residency rights to best fit her situation,

and future goals. When I interviewed Tammy she was working as a nurse in a nursing home.

The influence of religion and spirituality is embedded in Filipino culture. Throughout the interviews the use of “God” or “God’s will” was used to describe their strategy for coping, and to express gratefulness. The spirituality of the women was a source for coping during difficult times and good times while sometimes Catholicism simultaneously oppressed the women. For example, Tammy often spoke about disrupting the gender roles within her family because of being unhappy in the relationship with her husband before leaving the Philippines.

And he don’t want me to go, no of course he is the man,  
he’s the man of God (Interview with Tammy).

She also voiced her belief that she was committed forever, and divorce was not an option. As Tammy explained,

I don’t have any choice (laughing) It is in my culture, oh my  
God, Lori. We are devoted Catholics, sometimes . . .  
problematic (Interview with Tammy).

Although Tammy explains she did not have the option to divorce, or the lack of other options, Tammy found an alternative choice to migrate to get out of a bad relationship. However, this choice comes with the guilt of leaving her children behind. As Parreñas identified, migration may also be a practical response to a failed marriage sometimes called a “Philippine divorce” (Parreñas, cited in Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002:11).

## **Chapter 6 Economic Circumstances of Settlement/ Workplace Relations**

This chapter discusses the women's experiences and their understanding of these experiences in their settlement in Canada and their workplace experiences.

### *6.1 The Contradiction of the Negative Stigma and Valuable Work*

Three of the participants had a post secondary education in the health professions, two participants were educated as nurses, and one participant was a physiotherapist. One participant completed a commerce degree and one had completed a junior secretarial diploma. Before leaving the Philippines all the women realized and accepted the fact they would not be working in their profession and they would be working as a caregiver, work that was deskilling, devalued and possibly stigmatizing. Lovelyn explained how she had settled with the idea of being a caregiver and emphasized the value of her work as a caregiver,

Yeah, I work as a caregiver but, uh I got a degree too. I'm not that dumb, I'm not that dumb. If I, if I got, if I had chance to find other work I would do that. So, but I have to undergo this problem first (Interview with Lovelyn).

Lovelyn further explained her reasons for accepting her first job in Hong Kong,

So I said, even if this job, is not the way that I study, I'm not thinking I'm going to work as a domestic helper but this is the only way I can get out from the country. So I did it. And I learned a lot and I'm not ashamed of my work. It's a clean living and I love children and that's where I learned how to cook (Interview with Lovelyn).

Lovelyn compared her choices and concluded that it is not demeaning work and it is a viable livelihood considering her other options. Lovelyn used the term domestic when referring to work in Hong Kong. When referring to her work in Canada Lovelyn and the other women in this study seldom used the term domestic worker; instead they often used the term “caregiver”. One Filipina explained that a “domestic worker” referred to someone serving people rather than caring for people. The participants’ use of “caregiver” professionalizes their care giving work and reflects a strong sense of value and important work.

Elise, another of the participants, was never sure she wanted to do live-in caregiving work because of the stigma and deskilling. Elise explains,

Yes so I continue my work for the spa [in the Philippines] which actually I don't really want the job. Because sometime in the Philippines there is a pride sometime, if you finish physiotherapist and you don't want to end up as a massage therapist because there is always a stigma on that, you offered sex or something. Also a caregiver, I really don't like it too (Interview with Elise).

When Elise was told she passed the interview for live in caregiver work, she explained how she felt,

I'm not really happy but it's really like coming to me. So I'm fine, I'm really not that happy to find something like that. I'm worried 'cause going somewhere I'm not really sure and I don't really like the job because I don't really know what will come up (Interview with Elise).

## 6.2 *Employers*

Live-in caregivers' work is class-based, gendered, and racialized in Canada, where the word “nanny” often conjures up the assumption that the nanny is a woman and she is Filipino. Similarly, in the context of the LCP, “employer” conjures up assumptions of white, middle to upper class, English

speaking. I did not ask an interview question regarding the employer's ethnicity or race, yet three of the participants identified the employer's culture, ethnicity, or race, therefore I think it is important to discuss. As Tammy explained,

Oh yeah well, when it comes to employer, I find from what I have heard from my other Filipinos, uhm, most Canadian employers are much better . . . When it comes to other cultures, like the Asians [Chinese], I don't want to say it about Asians. But I I really don't like it, the way they treat us, they are taking advantage of us (Interview with Tammy).

Tammy continued this conversation by explaining her first experience in Halifax with her first employer who provided the women with the overcrowded living conditions, sharing a 5x5 room with three other Filipinas. The room had one bed, therefore two slept on the floor. Astonished Tammy explained,

They [employer] are in the same culture, they are also Filipinos (Interview with Tammy).

The participants' understanding of the difference in treatment was identified based on the employer's ethnicity but may be explained as a class difference embedded in the economic life and working relationship. The status of one's culture of origin within the context of Canada's mainstream society is stratified by gender and race/ethnicity (Berger, 2004:17). Often this stratification is internalized within groups and outside groups. In addition, class, being a dynamic social relation is embedded in and permeated the interaction within the employee- employer relationship and the hierarchal division of labour. Which are relations of domination and subordination: they are relations of power (Ng 1996: 85).

Similarly Himani Bannerji (2000) argued that such stratification could be explained as "multiculturalism from above or a ruling category for mediating and

augmenting the ruling relations of the Canadian society and state<sup>27</sup> (p. 13). Bannerji also argued multiculturalism from above is an ideological state apparatus relying on a hegemonic racist culture that segments the cultural, political and labour market into ethnic communities. This ideology results in fractured cultural communities, each with its ethnicized agents hooked into the ruling apparatus of the state and the social organization of classes. Thus, third world or non-white individuals living in Canada become organized into competitive entities with respect to each other in and outside their communities (Bannerji, 2000: 7). As Bannerji continues her argument, “having a concept of class helps us to see the network of social relations constituting an overall social organization which both implicates and cuts through racialization/ethnization and gender” (Bannerji, 2000: 7).

In the global economy, the stratified character within and outside ethnic and racial communities may also be extrapolated from both the employer’s and caregiver’s country of origin that is also class based and rooted in colonialism. In Tammy’s experience of the Canadian-Filipino employer and the overcrowded living conditions, the Canadian-Filipino employer understands the living and working conditions in the Philippines and is able to rationalize that these conditions are often better than the conditions in the Philippines. Coinciding with this, as found in this study, the Filipina employees often accepted these conditions because they choose not to exercise their rights as they don’t want to be labeled as a “bad employee” or as being ungrateful. Hondagneu-Sotelo

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<sup>27</sup> Multiculturalism from above – implemented by the state or the national elite.

found in her research in the United States the most brutal forms of exploitation was by co-ethnic employers (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007).

### *6.3 Nova Scotia Labour Standards*

I will begin by setting the framework that the live-in caregivers are working in, by discussing the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code and how it applies to the Filipina live-in caregivers. This will be followed by how the Filipinas negotiate their experiences and identity.

The Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code applies to live-in caregivers with possible exclusion of the overtime pay because of inconsistent information from the Nova Scotia Environment and Labour. The following labour standards are the minimum requirements and applied to live-in caregivers in 2004- 2005 when the interviews were conducted: the minimum wage was \$6.25 per hour; the vacation pay was 4%; employees are entitled to holiday and three unpaid sick days per year; and a rest period of at least 24 hours every 7 days.

According to CIC (2006), the employer must provide accommodation that should ensure privacy, such as a private room with a lock on the door; however, room and board is deducted from the caregiver's pay. The room and board amount is determined by the provinces' labour standards. According to the Nova Scotia labour standards, and like most provinces, live-in caregivers were required to pay board and lodging of \$59.80 per week in 2005 when the interviews were conducted.

Neither CIC nor HRDC monitor the working and living conditions in the home instead is a complaint driven system. Although all the caregivers are aware

of their labour rights, the LCP creates and maintains relationships of dependency for caregivers that prevent them from pursuing a complaint when labour standards are not followed (Arat-Koc, 2001:41). The underlying factors in the LCP that prevent caregivers from pursuing a complaint are: the fear of being deported; losing one's job; the need to get a good reference for the future; the stress of finding a new employer; and, finally, the fear that leaving will delay the date when she can apply for permanent residency (Brigham, 1995).

#### *6.4 Coercive Agreements*

The unequal relationship and coercive approach often begins before the caregiver is hired. Often the employer discussed a contract (work expectations and conditions) with the potential caregiver by phone while the caregiver was abroad. The Filipina caregiver is coerced into agreeing to these working conditions because of the inherent inequality of the employer-employee relationship in this context: they remain a potential employee whose goal is to leave the Philippines, Israel, or Hong Kong in hopes of better working conditions and wages in Canada. The employer is subtly wielding their power as a citizen of a so called developed country over the Filipina's status of citizen of developing world and both parties know if the Filipina disagrees to the working conditions she most likely will not be hired. These verbal agreements are not legally permissible, nor reflective of the written agreements/contracts signed when the caregiver arrives in Canada, but the verbal agreement is usually the agreement adhered to in Canada, as neither CIC nor HRDC are monitoring the workplace/home. Therefore, the power is in the employers' hands. For example

Chin Chin agreed on the phone while in Israel to 24 hour on call work<sup>28</sup>, while being paid for eight hours a day even though her signed contract with her employer read 48 hours of work per week.

No, they don't they don't follow all the rules of the LCP but before I left Israel, we already talked about it and we agreed that I would stay 24 hours but will only pay me 8 hours. And it's for me it's fine because if I will uh, find uhm my place, my apartment I will also pay it. But they just give me free board and lodging, that's why I agreed I can stay 24 hours, but they just only pay me 8 hours. only have 16 hours off a week (Interview with Chin Chin).

While the potential for abuse and exploitation of the caregiver begins with the first informal conversation, they are soon faced by the blurred line between work and home, worker and one of the family, private and public, because of the mandatory live-in requirement.

### *6.5 Elder Care and Childcare*

In the past, live-in caregivers cared for children. However more recently there has been an increase in caring for the elderly and people with disabilities. The increase in caring for the elderly persons and people with disabilities coincides with the cuts to public spending and a reduction of nursing home beds, a shift of care from institutions to the private home, privatizing long term care and relying on community-based care without providing financial resources. Therefore those elderly with more resources by virtue of class, and/or race will be better equipped to purchase private help (Aronson and Neysmith 2003: 101).

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<sup>28</sup> It is referred to as 24 hour on call as the caregiver cannot leave after 8 or 9 hours but must remain there for a 24 hour period often 5 or 6 days before being relieved.

At the time of the interviews four of the caregivers were caring for the elderly and the fifth was caring for a child. One of the four, Kelly, had previously cared for children before doing elder care.

Depending on the health of the elderly, the care of an elderly can be different than childcare. Often the relationship with an elder is more intimate because the caregiver spends more time with the person in isolation because often the elder lacks mobility, which keeps both the client and caregiver inside. The live-in requirement exploits the caregiver by trapping them in the home for several days with no relief.

Chin Chin, Tammy and Kelly were caring for elderly persons, who had dementia or Alzheimer's disease. The 24 hour on call care was necessary to ensure the client's health and safety because of the unpredictable behaviour of the client, trapping the caregiver in the home for several days with no relief. The employer either could not get a relief caregiver or saw no need for finding regular relief for the live-in caregiver. The caregiver suffers from sleep deprivation caused by the 24 hour on call and the exploitation of the caregiver jeopardizes both the caregiver and the client's health and safety.

As Chin Chin explained,

The LCP is a very hard job, but it depends on the job, because there is a lot of live-in that they took care of children. But me, I'm taking care of an old woman so, it's different because I stay for 24 hours, with an old woman, because sometimes she is waking up how many times in the evening. So if she's awake I'm also awake, that's my job and uh but if you are taking care of a child, it is only 8 – 5. Just only 8 hours, but me it's 24 hours so it's not that easy to take care of a person with dementia also (Interview with Chin Chin).

When caregivers are caring for elderly people often there is another person such as a relative, or friend responsible for the recruitment of the caregiver, the conditions of work and the contract. More frequently when caring for the elderly, there is an interruption of work due to the elders' need to go into a nursing home or they may pass away. The caregiver then needs to find another employer, experiencing more stress attempting to meet the requirement of 24 months of live-in care giving work in 36 months to apply for permanent residency.

#### *6.6 Economic Exploitation: Chin Chin and Tammy's Stories*

Economic exploitation is the most common form of exploitation within the LCP (Arat-Koc, 2001).

Chin Chin calculated her 16 hours off per week divided between four days,

Yeah, Monday and Wednesday is 5 hours. 12 –5. And my regular is Friday 4- 10, that is six hours. Yep and this coming Sunday, I only have 1 hour so it's 16 hours (Interview with Chin Chin).

She explained her reasons for agreeing to her work hours,

Yeah, yeah and also if I take my time off every Friday afternoon or Saturday morning I need to find a place, or an apartment to share with other Filipina and I will pay that, right. I'm gonna pay that so I told her daughter, to my employer, "I can stay but my board and lodging is free. So I cannot uh go out Friday afternoon or Saturday morning to find a place, and I will also pay that. I am the kind of person, I don't want to go everywhere or anywhere. Sixteen hours is enough for me. But sometimes when I want to have a 24 hours, off, I can ask her daughter, if I want to (Interview with Chin Chin).

If the employer paid the caregivers a fair wage for their valued work, credentials and actual hours worked, Chin Chin and other caregivers would be able to afford to live-out and pay for their own personal space, an apartment.

Some of the caregivers also mentioned the desire to reciprocate for the employer's assistance in getting them to Canada. Although this could be translated or interpreted as being submissive, this may be a cultural value of paying back the "otang na loob" (debt of gratitude) which adds to being exploited by the employer (Brighm, 1995, 2002). Each caregiver explained, there is an undetermined period of time when they feel they have paid the employer back. When the Filipina feels they have paid the employer back through long hours of work, and low wages the caregiver will begin to ask and attempt to negotiate their hours of work and wages, room and board, and vacation..

Tammy was caring for a 92 year old person who had the first stages of Alzheimer disease. She worked 24 hour on call and had 16 hours off a week divided between a few days, while being paid for 48 hours a week, at \$6.25 per hour with no overtime pay. Tammy explains her reason for accepting this,

Yeah, I chose that uhm I chose that because I'm thinking that I rather spend my time studying than going out because I'm that kind of person. I don't have a social life (laughing). I don't have social life. I do have a friend but I don't want to go out with them because I'm just wasting my time, I'd stay and study. Because my purpose in life and my goal is to get my [nursing] license and someday to get my family (Interview with Tammy).

However after a couple of months working, Tammy approached her employer,

Yeah, but after two months I talked to the daughter, I told them you told me I'm supposed to work only 8 hours and I've been here 24 hours and you know I'm working 13 hours, I'm hoping I can get that. I talked with them [employer] you know in a nice way, and they told me well she is easy to take care of because you know she is capable of walking you know. I told them (snicker) to tell you the truth, its easy for me to take care of a bed ridden person because all I need is to turn her every two hours. If a person is capable of doing things I have to move wherever she goes, I have to go there and in her case if she

is agitated, it's really stressful for me. The only thing I wanted to ask from you is to pay me, for the hours that I'm working. That's all. Because I guess that's my right. And they gave me that (Interview with Tammy).

Tammy was not paid holiday pay and she was paying room and board of \$150 per month rather than the stipulated \$200 per month. Her explanation of her compliance to lack of holidays,

The reason is because they told me, when they ask about the holidays, they told me that you know it's it's your uhm, uh I'm giving you the least pay uhm for your board and lodging, that's what they told me. I'm the kind of person that I don't want the stress. If you don't want to give me this, okay because I'm not staying here for that long. That's what I'm thinking (Interview with Tammy).

Although Tammy was aware of being exploited, Tammy's long-term goal of permanent residency and citizenship gave her the strength to tolerate the working conditions. Tammy continued to explain,

I'm just considering those things that the daughter is nice you know (Interview with Tammy).

Even though the employer may be "kind", these acts of kindness are subtle forms of coercion by the employer and similar to the materialist dynamic of the employer-live-in employee relationship (Rollins, 1985). The caregiver sees the kindness, love and trust of her client similar to a gift and she feels an obligation to reciprocate, therefore performing additional physical and emotional labour (Rollins 1985; Romero, 1992).

She [client] always says you know what I love you, nobody's telling Me [Tammy] that somebody loves me. She is very nice (Interview with Tammy).

The live-in care giving work also reinforces exploitation because of the asymmetrical power relations of simultaneous personal and work relationships.

To complicate the work relation, care giving work is shaped by intimacy, emotional labour and often the ideologies of the family, and the notion of a “labour of love”. (Stiell and England, 2008: 290)

### *6.7 Physical and Emotional Abuse: Kelly’s Story*

Kelly’s first employer in Canada was a single Mom with two children. Kelly identified herself as the “15<sup>th</sup> nanny in one year that was hired to care for the two children”. Kelly said the children misbehaved and were abusive toward her both physically and emotionally, Kelly explained,

In the first, second and third month I wanted to quit. The children were physically and mentally abusing me. I had bruises and bites from the children. I wore long sleeves all the time because of the bruises [from the children] on my arms. I didn’t tell anyone because I was afraid to lose my job. The mother had helped me to come [to Canada]. I feel I need to give credit to the employer and beyond. I am grateful for her assistance (Interview with Kelly).

Initially, Kelly did not share her experience with her employer as she felt inadequate and feared losing her job because she was unable to control or change the children’s behaviour. In addition, the need to reciprocate the “otang na loob” was expressed by Kelly.

In addition to the physical abuse by the children, Kelly had a contract but it was never followed, however, she never complained to the employer. Her hours of work were 9 hours a day, 5 days a week except when her employer went abroad for a month, and Kelly was the primary caregiver with a part time caregiver who came and relieved her.

I was the children’s mother and a part-timer was there to give me a break. The house was being renovated and I stood like second mother (Interview with Kelly).

Kelly's work included caring for the children, however, when the children were in school, Kelly helped with the house renovations, sanding, painting and doing light housekeeping.

Kelly explained that she had her own room without a lock on the door, therefore no privacy. The children would come in and raid her room. As Kelly explained, "Once is enough, twice is too much".

After 10 months working in the LCP, I called Human Resources Canada because of the abusive situation. I asked if I had a right to quit. They asked me if I talked to my employer. How many times? Any changes in behaviour? Human Resources said, "in your case you better leave". I asked if they were going to help me find another employer? They said "no", find your own employer. I said to myself, it's up to God, God help me (Interview with Kelly).

Kelly gave her employer a written notice of resignation a couple of times within a two month period. The employer ignored the notices by throwing them in the garbage. Finally,

In April 2004, I packed my bags and waited for my employer to come home. She must have known something was up because she came home very late that day. Something she never did. I wrote her a letter, "I came as a human, leave a human". I told "you helped me, I helped you beyond the contract (Interview with Kelly).

Kelly felt that "she had paid her employer back" by working for a year in an abusive situation. She regained her dignity and a desire for respect. Kelly's employer responded to Kelly's leaving by accusing her of stealing large sums of money from the house and threatening to sue her. Although the employer intimidated and threatened Kelly, she regained her dignity,

I told her if I had that money I'd be back in the Philippines. I opened up all my things to show her I did not steal anything

But she did not want to see (Interview with Kelly).

Without a clear plan of what Kelly's next step was going to be she replied, "I left the house with \$5 walking and praying" (Interview with Kelly).

As previously mentioned, for the LIC losing employment equals losing a place to live, therefore, the LCP often compels caregivers to stay in intolerable and abusive workplaces.

After six stressful months of being unemployed, Kelly found new live-in work that was also exploitative caring for an elderly person with Alzheimer's disease, five days a week, 24 hours on call. Kelly had signed the work contract in haste, without reading the details because of the urgency to find an employer. This employer did not pay her sick pay or holiday pay and instead of paying her the 4% vacation pay on her pay cheque, they advised her that after one year they will give her two weeks off. Kelly explained,

Actually its part of ..its sort of my fault. Yeah that's because I was okay trusting (Interview with Kelly).

The Nova Scotia labour standards gives the employer the power to determine how they pay the vacation pay but this was problematic for Kelly, as she preferred to receive the vacation pay of 4% on her regular pay cheque as most caregivers need the money for daily living and to send remittances home. Secondly, when her home is her workplace, where would she go when she has vacation time? Can she afford to go anywhere when she is being paid minimum wage and sending remittances home regularly?

### *6.8 Healthy Work and Living Experience: Lovelyn's Story*

Not all employer-employee working relations within the LCP are overtly exploitative and abusive. As suggested by Bradshaw-Camball, the employee-employer relations depends on the continuum of: 1) the employer's concern for fairness and equity, and 2) the caregiver's sense of worth (Stiell and England 2008: 291).

Lovelyn was positive about her employer and work contract. Both the employer's concern for fairness and equity and Lovelyn's sense of worth contributed to a positive, healthy work and living experience. Lovelyn had been a domestic and caregiver for almost 14 years and she discussed her past domestic and caregiving work with pride as a professional.

When Lovelyn arrived in Canada, she cared for a young child, working 5 days a week 40 hours a week. Lovelyn's positive work and living experience began when the employer suggested that Lovelyn have her own apartment for weekends. Lovelyn explains the employer's reasoning,

She said, "I want you to have your own privacy, your own freedom and there's no bus like uh going downtown from our place" and, like uh, she also told me uh that [her child] that I look after, even if it's my day off, he/she doesn't know it and he/she will go to my room. Come and play with me. So I mean we cannot stop the [child], he/she will get upset if I say no, so [employer] said you have to have your own free time, like you do at home (Interview with Lovelyn).

This demonstrates the employer's consideration for fairness by recognizing Lovelyn's need for her own free time and home. This also enables the employer and their family to have their own free time and privacy. Although Lovelyn was required to live in during the week she felt somewhat independent.

Included in the verbal agreement, Lovelyn did not pay room and board but she did have the expense of rent for the apartment. However, to subsidize her minimum wage because live-in caregiver's cannot work anywhere else because of the one employer rule, she shared an apartment with another Filipina and sometimes had weekenders<sup>29</sup>. Even though Lovelyn lived in during the week, the separation of work and home by living out on weekends provided freedom not only for herself but for other caregivers also.

Yeah so that's all and I mean they are really very very nice. I, I, I mean I keep thanking the Lord that he gave me a really very good employer (Interview with Lovelyn).

My work here is very light, it's very easy, it's just like uh half of what I'm doing in Hong Kong. Very easy, the work in Canada! I am so happy they are people who really don't treat us like we are from a long, long time ago, like we like slaves, like Hong Kong. Oh if you could just, if you are going to do survey in Hong Kong, you won't it won't even cross your mind the workers really experience these horrible, horrible things. Especially Indonesia they are really maltreated (Interview with Lovelyn).

Again Lovelyn compared her experiences in Hong Kong to her experiences in Canada, validating her choice to work in Canada. Lovelyn's responsibilities included caring for the needs of the child, preparing breakfast and lunches, and cleaning the home. Lovelyn continued,

But here in [Employer's] house I decide everything. Even the food that I'm going to cook. They will not ask me, they will not tell me you will cook this. It's what I decide (Interview with Lovelyn).

The opportunity to choose and have a sense of control over her own work day empowered Lovelyn, as it does most workers.

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<sup>29</sup> Weekenders are caregivers who stay the weekend and pay a fee.

As Lovelyn was treated fairly as a worker, she also discussed the relationship with her employer further,

[Employer]is very, very, very very very very good. She will always ask me like uh, and I can open up to her even like uh personal matters. I can talk to her, like uh if I'm not sure I have to ask her, if I'm really not sure. Can you tell me, can you give me advise? Can you suggest, what's that?  
(Interview with Lovelyn)

Lovelyn described her relationship with her employer as equitable, supportive, respectful, and a somewhat mutual friendship.

Sometimes she will pay me more and uh so. I mean my employer now she even gave me a bonus for uhh those last months. She told me for excellent work performance. Oh my gosh!! feel like I was given an award!  
(Interview with Lovelyn)

Along with bonuses Lovelyn received other gifts, large and small such as a paid trip to Toronto. As Lovelyn explained,

Oh my God, even if I go to my apartment she [employer] asked me, "take some tissues, whatever at home, you can bring whatever you want, you just stay there over the weekend. I'm not going to charge you any nickel and dime, whatever it is just take it." I'm just so embarrassed, "oh my God, I mean I'm old enough to take care of myself "and I so but uh, I would just say thank you because she would just ask you take whatever. And uh, I keep on saying thank you, thank you all time. How many thank yous I already said to her. She is really very good. Exact opposite of what was going on in Hong Kong (Interview with Lovelyn).

Lovelyn expressed her mixed feelings and the contradiction about her employer's "kindness". On the one hand, it felt like a symmetrical relationship while at the same time feeling of being treated like a child in an asymmetrical relationship. Although Lovelyn has been "given" some space and gifts, as Bakan and Stasilius have indicated, this permits the employers to exercise a degree of

control over the lives, personhood and autonomy of caregiver (Bakan and Stasilius 1997:15). In addition, a feeling of indebtedness and a need to reciprocate or *otang na loob* continued for Lovelyn.

Previous research by Rubin (2008) had indicated in North America when women went into paid work, the men in the families did little to increase their contribution to the work of the family. Domestic workers and caregivers have been the solution to the “double day” for middle and upper class women. Hochschild (1989) argued this allowed men to continue avoiding the second shift and the women continue to provide childcare, parent care and housework after work in addition to supervising the caregiver. As previous studies have indicated, women are more likely to hire domestic workers if there isn’t an equitable division of domestic work with their male partners (Hertz, 1986; Arat-Koc, 1992; Ng, 1993; Gregson and Lowe, 1994 cited in Steill and England). As Hochschild similarly indicated, “Two working mothers giving their all to work is a good idea gone haywire” (Hochschild, 2002: 37). Lovelyn explained,

Yes and whenever she [female employer] will arrive, she will ask what she can do to help. “Just sit down there and have your supper, that’s your help to me”. So, then she will get the child, she will be the one to look after the child. And uh we help each other to put the dishes in the dishwasher, and we just clean off the table and the counter, and just wash the pots (Interview with Lovelyn).

Lovelyn highlights both women in reproductive labour with no mention of assistance from the husband and father in this family. The male employer does not participate in the reproductive labour. This is also a good example of the concept of the “continuity of domestic labour” that Lan (2003) developed to describe the affinity between unpaid household labour and waged domestic

labour - both are feminized work attached with moral merits and yet undervalued in cash.

### *6.9 Servitude: Elise's Story*

Elise's employer was an active member of the community, employed in a high stress position and seldom home. She required no care other than a daily routine of exercise. When Elise first arrived she found this arrangement difficult as she found herself doing nothing for days on end. Elise explained,

But the hard part is that I'm too worried because although if I tell this story to my friend, they will say you are lucky. Because you are worried that one day, I was worried one day that [employer] might say that hey I'm paying you and what do you do? But whenever I ask her, she doesn't want me to do anything. I wanted to wash her this, wash her that. She doesn't want to and if I want to fix her papers, cause there is really a lot of papers at time, the house is really cause, she said oh no don't do that because I'll sort them out (Interview with Elise).

Elise continued,

Sometimes I wake up at 6:00 to take a bath, and be ready when [employer] needs me. But it so happens that [employer] is not ready [employer]she is still sleeping. So I ended up waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting so all over a year I am always waiting. and that's not good, it's much better to do something that you know rather than just waiting as you don't know what to do and then you're worried that [employer] is going to say, "what did you do? (Interview with Elise)

The problem of not having defined work hours or a job description confined Elise to the house and keeps her "waiting" to be helpful. Elise was available whenever her employer needed her, night or day, but Elise explains, "I prefer actually to have a specific time rather than her time" (Interview with Elise). She was concerned that one day her employer would come back to Elise and say,

I told you I need some exercise”, like it’s my fault but it’s not actually my fault, it was her fault. This is kind of stressful, that time I think I was the one experiencing it so that is why I was frustrated or something, miserable (Interview with Elise).

Yes, and she is just like that. She is really nice, she was really helpful but because she is just difficult sometimes, that is the only problem (Interview with Elise).

Elise discussed in detail her understanding of the unequal and subordinate role in the employee-employer relationship.

[Employer] is more articulate and than I. I don’t know if I can express what I’m really want to say to [employer]. And I may have complaints with [employer] but uhm of course also being careful not to hurt her. By saying something that may hurt her. That is the only problem. One time, I was telling her something, too honest and she was surprised smiling, she was saying, “Elise are you like that?” And I was really like that, I was saying, “Yes I was saying what was on my mind” (Interview with Elise).

Elise was expected to tolerate her employer’s negative moods, while Elise did not feel she could express her opinion or how she truly felt. According to Elise, Elise’s employer thought they got along fine. Elise explained to me why she and her employer appeared to get along well.

But I can’t tell her [employer] that I’m giving her more patience I want to because it would make me happy but I can’t. But I think you know employers and caregivers get along because of course the caregiver is more patience right there the ones who are going to back down, or something (Interview with Elise).

Clearly Elise experienced the unequal relationship of employer-employee; temporary status -citizenship but realized what she has to do to maintain a good relationship, no matter how difficult it may be.

But that is the point also that I’m not happy because I can’t express what I want to say (Interview with Elise).

Elise told her employer she was planning to stay a year,

My [employer] was planning, "Elise, go get a class so you will have friends I'll pay for that". Or like, "Elise I'm going to pay for if you want driving lessons". I was thinking I don't want to get all the privileges because if I'm not really going to stay. It's unfair to get all that if I decide to go away. I'm not really that bad to take, and take and suddenly leave. So be able for her to stop giving me that, I told her what I was planning. So she won't give me things, that's double gratitude, that's hard. I don't want, I'm not used to that.  
(Interview with Elise)

The double gratitude would also mean Elise would be further indebted (otang na loob) to her employer, entrapped in indentured servitude. Pride and self-sufficiency was at stake for Elise. To accept too much or accept what she is not "used to" would impact on Elise's sense of obligation and, in turn, her feelings of control over her labor.

Elise's employer travelled frequently. Sometimes Elise joined her but most often Elise stayed home. Elise explained,

Otherwise everyday with her is anxiety, makes you also so stressed. So that is why, maybe that's why I could, I did manage to live with her that long because of that she's always away (Interview with Elise).

At the time of interview Elise had just received her open work visa. She had been with her employer for almost three years, being paid the minimum wage according to the Nova Scotia Labour Standards. When Elise shared her news with her employer, Elise's employer offered to pay her a physiotherapist's hourly wage. This is a good example of the indentured status Elise was in for three years. Now that Elise has completed her three years of indentured service, her employer was prepared, willing and able to pay her according to her profession. Even though Elise was offered a wage according to her profession,

Elise did not want to continue working as a caregiver because she preferred to work in her profession.

The Filipina caregivers negotiated the contradictions and ambiguities associated with their workplace, which was their employers' home. However, the work relationship between employer and employee also coincided with social relations of difference and inequality, in this case difference of race, assumed class and status. The experience of one transforms the experience of others. As many scholars (Spelman, 1988; hooks, 1989, Hill-Collins, 1990 cited in Stiell and England) have theorized, "Gender, race/ethnicity, class form interlocking relational systems of oppression and privilege within which there are multiplicity of identities, which in turn gain meaning in relation to other identities"(p.289).

Within the unequal relationship of employer and employee, Canadian citizen and non Canadian citizen is the ideology embedded in the LCP and transmitted to the employer and often internalized by the Filipina caregiver. This is seen by the Canadian employer as a class and race difference, therefore employers often see themselves as assisting the Filipinas by hiring them. Rather than recognizing that caregivers and domestics are needed to do the valuable reproductive labour and relieve the women of the receiving country of their gendered role of caregiver, the employer (usually a woman responsible for the working conditions etc) often maintains the ideology and practice of reproductive work as devalued, by treating Filipina caregivers in a subordinate gendered role.

## **Chapter 7 Transnational Households and Gender Relations**

One difference between male migration and female migration is that while men are seen as fulfilling their familial obligations as breadwinners for the family, women are not only on an immigration journey but also on a more radical gender-transformative odyssey. As Tammy explained,

When he arrived from work, I told him that it doesn't matter if you allow me to go or not, because you cannot control me anymore. You don't have any plan. My kids are getting, you know older, I want to prepare their future. I want them to finish college like us, nine in the family. We are all finished, we are all professionals, and I want my kids to be like that. You don't have any plan, so I wanted to do it my own way. And uh, it doesn't matter if you allow me or not. So the only thing I want you to do for now since I uh since I started the, you are going to have to learn to be the father and the mother because I'm doing that since we got married, we, I'm doing that. I'm the father and the mother (Interview with Tammy).

For Tammy the formation of transnational households empowers her by actively altering her gender role and attempting to alter her husband's gender role (Sassen; 2000: 509). In Tammy's phone calls to her husband she advised him of his responsibility in his new role,

I told him that the focus, the attention to our kids making sure that their uh uh taking the right nutritious foods, their studying, their studying uhmm teach them what to do the proper way you know, you know what you have to do I told him that. He told me no, I can't (Interview with Tammy).

Tammy initiated a separation of space and time from her communities of origin, homes, children and husband. As Lan (2003) found, "women moving across borders and traditional gender roles results in drastic changes in the couple relations" (Lan, 2003: 337). Tammy's husband did not accept the role and

responsibility as caregiver. Instead, two days after Tammy migrated he took their children to his mother. Tammy disagreed and was unhappy about this new arrangement and in regular conversations attempted to encourage her husband to care for their children. However, her husband said he could not care for their children and suggested that he would go back to work on the ships. Tammy's husband regained his masculine role that he was losing and escaped the domestic role and the pressure from his wife (Lan, 2003:338).

Not only was Tammy attempting to change her gender role, she was also consciously attempting to teach her young daughters through their separation,

If I can only tell them, if I could only open their mind that women are not supposed to rely on other people, I mean on men, they have to know that. I want them to grow and uhm learn, I want them to learn that you have to be independent, you have uh live by yourself. And if you need any help I'm just be here (Interview with Tammy).

There are unwritten rules that govern female behaviour that normalize certain gendered responsibilities, roles and behaviours. When Tammy got so little support from her family because she was "breaking all the rules", she began to alienate herself from her family. Tammy explained,

I visited them [her parents in the US] two years ago, but after that I don't know, I don't have time to go there. The reason why I don't want to go there is because that didn't get anywhere with them, I break all the rules (Interview with Tammy).

Tammy must also cope with the stigma, guilt, and criticism from others, in particular her strong Catholic family. Although Tammy's relationship with her husband deteriorates after he gave the responsibility of childcare to his mother and blamed Tammy for everything, including false accusations of Tammy's

unfaithfulness, Tammy remained focused on planning for reuniting with her children in Canada, regardless of whether her husband joined her. However, when she shared her plans with her family, she received a strong message,

Well uh uhh immigration law, I cannot bring my kids without him unless he will sign a consent or a letter that he allows me to bring my kids here without him. Which is not possible, he won't do that. I told my mom and family what he told me. I've heard from my Mom that you won't be part of the family, if you divorce him (Interview with Tammy).

Tammy attempted to explain the situation to her parents, but Catholicism, tradition, culture, societal norms and values making their understanding impossible.

### *7.1 Transnational Mothering and Caring*

As Arat-Koc (2001) identified in her research, before migrating for work the Filipina women planned for their departure and confronted their concerns about who will take care of their children and ensure the children are healthy, safe, and happy; and questions whether her remittances will be enough for her children.

As Arat-Koc argues the Canadian society glorifies motherhood, strongly emphasizes parental responsibility, and criminalizes parent neglect, but the Canadian state neglects to acknowledge that most Filipina caregivers are mothers who have left their children and husbands behind to migrate (Arat-Koc 2001:25). The Canadian state's neglect of one group of women/mothers, that is Filipina mothers, and privileging another, that is Canadian mothers, exposes the racism and sexism in the Canadian state discourse (Bakan and Stasiulis 1997: 17). Since many women from the Philippines usually work in another country

before migrating to Canada, the women can be separated from their family sometimes for up to ten years.

Other research has indicated the family separation can leave emotional scars for a long time, as both mothers and children suffer (Ehrenreich 2002, Brigham 2002, Parreñas 2002). The Filipina mothers I interviewed shared their sadness and their experiences with depression because of the separation from their children. As Tammy indicated, the living conditions when she first arrived in Canada were not good but, “I didn’t care about those things [living and working conditions] because I’m too depressed and far away from my kids”, while another woman found herself crying all the time.

While the Filipina mothers are at a physical distance away from their children, they continue to provide emotional care to their children from abroad through regular phone calls and monetary care by sending regular remittances home for their children’s education and everyday expenses. Technology has made it easier and affordable to speak to their children three and four times a week. As one participant explained, she sends all her income home and keeps enough for her cell phone and phone card expenses.

When Tammy called home she consoled her children about their separation. Tammy expressed her deep concern for her children’s health and safety. In particular, Tammy was concerned about the emotional impact of the separation on her youngest child. She explained that she left her youngest child when her [daughter] was in her formative years, when attachment takes place,

What I’ve heard from uhh my sister-in-law in the Philippines that sometimes [daughter] she’s very, she’s staring blank by herself and she doesn’t talk. Depressed maybe (Interview with Tammy).

Tammy continued,

It's really hard for me, because as much as possible I want her [daughter] to avoid that but I don't think she can avoid that anymore. She's already there (Interview with Tammy).

In her regular conversations with her children Tammy reasons with her children, To make them realize these things are happening only temporarily and then someday they are going to be with me. (Pause) We still from my youngest daughter that there is something behind her that she didn't tell me. Which is really bothering me (Interview with Tammy).

Tammy experienced the contradiction that Filipinas need to migrate and are often expected to provide for their family, while simultaneously Tammy struggled with the cultural and gendered role of being a "good mother" although absent. In Tammy's regular conversations she emphasized the temporary situation, reinforced the idea to her children and was careful to characterize their situation not as abandonment but separation.

Tammy sent regular remittances home, but her husband continually informed her that it wasn't enough, as she explained her frustration and stress embedded in her responsibilities,

Every two weeks I'm sending five hundred dollars and he told me that it's not enough. I told him we only have two kids. We only have two kids my dear, and what are you doing with the money. I cannot send you that much, I mean more than that because there only pay this for me and I'm not, I have to take my exams, and I have to also pay some of my fees, in Toronto. I need to buy some of my books, I need to buy this, I need to buy that. I'm not spending money here to uh to go for a bar and drink. I don't have a social life, I try to avoid those things, just to lessen my expenses, at the same time to have a lot of time to study. I told him that what are you doing with the money? (Interview with Tammy)

After some time Tammy learned that her remittances were being used for her husband's extended family also. This angered Tammy, as the money was meant to provide for her children, but, not being near, Tammy lost a sense of control over her children's care.

Kelly, like many migrant women, is involved in what Hochschild (2000) called "global care chains"<sup>30</sup>. In Kelly's situation, her mother cared for her daughter in the Philippines while Kelly cared for children in Canada. Lan (2003) argued that taking care of the employer's family and taking care of their own family is an interdependent activity conducted in multiple locations, physically and emotionally. The interdependent activity is the need to care for someone else's child here, in Canada, so she can care for her own child there, in the Philippines (Hochschild, 2000 and Lan, 2003).

Kelly was earning approximately \$900 CDN in Canada per month and sending \$200 - \$300<sup>31</sup> home each month. Kelly reflects on the situation,

We are heroes, all Filipinos because we send lots of money home to our families. Even though we come because the pay is good, we are suffering from homesickness (Interview with Kelly).

After Kelly was away from her young daughter for some time Kelly explained that her daughter seemed disinterested in speaking to her on the phone and seemed quite content living with her grandmother. Kelly plans to get her permanent residency and reunite with her daughter here. However, Kelly's mother was beginning to make it difficult, as Kelly explained,

I am her Mother. There is another Filipina friend here who

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<sup>30</sup> Global chains – a system of personal links between people across the globe based on paid and/or unpaid work of caring.

<sup>31</sup> This would be converted into US dollars to send remittances home.

has been here for like. . she is a citizen. But she is trying to get her daughter because just like me she gave her temporarily to her Mom. But the mother is putting up a fight (Interview with Kelly).

Kelly's resolution to the problem was a compromise,

Okay she [daughter] can go back there at least she can come here and stay here for a year and if she gets homesick, I have money so she can go back there too (Interview with Kelly).

Chin Chin's husband was caring for their two children, and when he was working Chin Chin's mother cared for their children. Chin Chin's mother-in-law lives in Kingston, Ontario. Chin Chin's long-term plans were after two or three years in Canada her husband and children could join her here.

Chin Chin spoke to her children several times a week and had been sending approximately \$1000 CDN home monthly, looking forward to the day that she would be reunited with her family in Canada. Strategically, Chin Chin has applied for the nominee program as well as for permanent residency.

Lovelyn, a single woman, was responsible for sending remittances home to her mother. She shared her ideas of marriage and relationships with men and explained how the idea of marriage had changed since living and working in Canada. Lovelyn considered marriage to get out of Hong Kong, but now, because she has other options, she has reconsidered it and is contemplating finding someone she wishes to be with. She likes her independence and feels she does not need a man to provide for her instead. Similarly to what was found by Lan (2005:341), Lovelyn also questioned being in a relationship and having to negotiate her space and time (Lan, 2005: 341).

Kelly, another single participant shared her view of marriage stating, “People if they get married they kill each other inside” (Interview with Kelly).

Filipina live-in caregivers often transform and sustain gender roles simultaneously. They exemplify the gender role of caring while transforming it and becoming socially and economically independent, often becoming the “breadwinner” for their immediate family and sometimes their extended family. Intertwined with transforming their gender roles is the use of strategic essentialism of being a “good” caregiver and ensuring other Filipinas are also “good caregivers” to maintain a positive reputation and access the global economy for other Filipinas. Kelly discussed the monitoring of other caregivers’ behaviour to ensure maintenance of a good reputation.

Gender ideologies and practices change as part of the dialectical process of accommodation and resistance to the new culture milieu. However, there is a compromise in being separated from family and friends. In addition, while being independent and the “family” breadwinner, simultaneously the Filipina caregiver is contained, and monitored by her employer for the state. She is not free to work or live where she chooses within Canada.

## **Chapter 8 Support and Community**

This chapter explores the informal and formal support inside and outside the Filipino communities.

Although the Filipina caregivers have many strategies for coping with their living and working conditions in Canada, all of the Filipinas discussed fighting off depression. Kelly shared,

Depression, that is the number one problem it is the number one enemy. Depression is the number one enemy (Interview with Kelly).

Kelly's response to my question if she suffered from depression:

Yeah, depression is the number one enemy of a foreign worker, one person hit by depression, one person jump, suicide kill herself that is the last thing she can do. That's why it's good thing I have friends (Interview with Kelly).

No wonder there are some Filipinos that have gone crazy. Some have worked in Saudi Arabia, some in Lebanon, when they left their mind was straight, when they get home their mind is crazy (Interview with Kelly).

Another participant also discussed depression and strongly suggested live-in caregivers should have access to one-on-one professional help for depression. She did not think group meetings would be useful because of the mistrust and fear of participants keeping confidentiality among caregivers. Another participant thought the research interview questions were therapeutic and useful for her.

### *8.1 Formal Support and Community Organizations*

Over the years and in larger urban centres in Canada, support and political activist groups such as Intercede<sup>32</sup> in Toronto, have been formed by women, caregivers, domestic workers, migrant workers, temporary workers and newcomers. In addition, Filipino Support Workers Groups in Montreal and Toronto, and the Philippines Women Centre of BC<sup>33</sup> in Vancouver are centres for Filipina caregivers and domestic workers. These groups provide information, support, and conduct research projects (such as Arat-Koc, 2003, Silvera, 1983, 1989 and 2000) and solidarity to caregivers and domestics. Most of these groups are political and promote activism and empowerment by “. . . understanding the roots of their challenges as migrants, immigrants, women of colour and low-income earners, and to collectively assert their struggle for their rights and welfare” (Philippine Women Centre of B.C., 2008).

In Nova Scotia there are no organizations that focus on providing support, information and organizing for political action for domestic workers, caregivers, migrant workers and temporary workers. Currently, and in the past, if the caregiver encounters difficulties in her workplace, there is no formal support for her in Nova Scotia. Kelly sought support and advice after she endured 12 months of exploitation and abuse. Kelly met with Nova Scotia Human Rights, MISA, Nova Scotia Labour Board and Legal Aid, however, because of her status

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<sup>32</sup> INTERCEDE for the Rights of Domestic Workers, Caregivers and Newcomers is a non-profit community-based organization whose mandate is to support the integration, promote the rights and provide service needs of domestic workers, caregivers, temporary or migrant workers, their families and other newcomers. It was established in 1979 and incorporated in Ontario in 1984 when it opened a client-service office in Toronto ([http://www.intercedetoronto.org/about\\_us](http://www.intercedetoronto.org/about_us), accessed on April 20, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> The Philippine Women Centre of BC (PWC-BC) has been serving the Filipino community in British Columbia. PWC of BC was built on the experiences and needs of Filipino women, and continues to strengthen and support the community through educating, advocacy work and organizing Filipino women and the broader community.

as a temporary worker Kelly learned that the programs and services were not available to her. When Kelly attempted to access some of these services she was asked if she was an immigrant. Kelly's response described her feeling of being in-between spaces,

"I say no, I'm a lost ship actually. I'm a different worker" (Interview with Kelly).

Kelly's expression illuminates the intense feeling of being in the borderlands, floating around and not belonging, between her status as a temporary worker and a permanent resident, newcomer, or citizen.

After exhausting all her avenues Kelly went back to HRDC for support and assistance,

I was crying and talking to Human Resources and they said yeah you have a right to quit and oh if I'm going to quit are you going to help me find an employer? They said oh no, no you find one yourself. I thought we come to you because it says here you are going to help us find an employer<sup>34</sup> (Interview with Kelly).

## *8.2 Access to Financial Support through Employment Insurance(EI)*

All caregivers are required to pay Employment Insurance premiums on their regular pay, with an understanding that they can receive benefits if they are unemployed. Kelly was surprised to learn because she quit her job she may not receive benefits. However, Kelly had received advise from HRDC that she should quit her job because of the abuse she had experienced. When Kelly resigned from her abusive employment, she applied for E.I. benefits. Kelly discussed the difficulty and her frustration attempting to get E.I.,

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<sup>34</sup> Edited this quote to enhance readability.

They said I think you can get your E.I. approved with this one, yeah you're going to get the support (Interview with Kelly).

Yeah and he said he is going to uh help, and I was approved at E.I. and then suddenly it turns out [Kelly wasn't approved] (Interview with Kelly).

I am going crazy, oh we're paying for the E.I. what is the use of E.I. (Interview with Kelly).

Kelly's experience is common among Canadians who apply for E.I. when they quit their job, but with a temporary worker status, no citizen rights, and homelessness Kelly's stress is more acute,

I lived with different friends who also gave me food while looking for an employer. It took six months with no E.I. before I found work. A friend in the LCP caregiver helped me (Interview with Kelly).

After a period of almost six months of inconsistent information regarding receiving E.I. benefits, Kelly was approved to receive E.I.

### *8.3 Friendships and Informal Support*

These friendships created an informal support group for sharing advice and ideas that are beneficial for fending off depression, homesickness and alienation. Kelly's support group was a small informal group of friends and caregivers.

Chin Chin indicated there was little information given to the caregivers when they arrived in Canada. As Chin Chin explained,

[Tammy] told me that [Chin Chin] you are lucky because when I came here I'm just, I am alone, and nobody wants to help me (Interview with Chin Chin).

Again, Chin Chin's statement reinforced the need for a good network and informal support to assist in the transition to Canada.

#### *8.4 Religion and Community*

Catholicism is the dominant religion in the Philippines, inherited with Spanish colonization. Religious institutions are often a place to worship and centres for cultural and social activities. Just as religion is a key element in the lives of many people, including immigrants and newcomers, religion is a key element in the lives of Filipina migrants. In Canada, immigrants often find religion has provided the main avenue for structural relationships, not only giving individuals a relevant series of linkages to each other but also forming the primary basis for expressing and mobilizing their generalized “ethnic identity”. Therefore, it is common to engage in identity-formation through religious expression and ethnicity (Rayaprol, 1997).

Religion and ethnicity may not have an equal and uniform effect on identity-formation in Halifax because Catholicism has an overwhelming presence in Halifax for many ethnic groups, but the participants indicated they sometimes attended church usually with other caregivers. In addition, spirituality plays a strong role for the survival of Filipina caregivers as they experienced mistrust, alienation, homesickness, separation from their family, exploitation in the workplace, racism, classism and sexism.

The Philippine community in Halifax is divided into two associations. The Philippine Associations organize cultural and social events which some of the caregivers have participated in. There are small numbers in the Filipino community in Halifax and individual differences including class differences, or a perception of class differences and temporary status. Their understanding of status and class differences are explained by Lovelyn and Elise,

Usually [Filipinos] are very loving, warm and hospitable. We really embrace life as it goes. But here I don't know. I know one thing, your status. (Interview with Lovelyn)

As Elise explained and reinforced Lovelyn's feelings and idea,

In Halifax they always like think the others who are professional Filipinos consider them as domestics<sup>35</sup> (Interview with Elise).

Elise continued,

But now of course some of my friends said, now [professional Filipinos] are eating what they are saying because they know that some of their relatives who want to move here they need to go to caregiver [work] too although they are professionals<sup>36</sup> (Interview with Elise).

Chin Chin who worked 24 hour on call indicated, she is often too tired from working, "and I saw a lot of Filipinos but I'm not compatible" (Interview with Chin Chin). Chin Chin raised an important point that although one may be from the same country or the same ethnic background, one may not have the same social or political views or come from the same class.

The participants expressed a feeling of isolation within the caregiver's home that is compounded by a feeling of not belonging to the Filipino community. The caregivers interviewed explained that they did not feel like they were part of the Filipino community because the caregivers were often alienated by the middle class Filipino association members who immigrated as professionals and were settled years ago. Upon her arrival to Canada, Lovelyn was warned by a seasoned caregiver and friend,

One of my friends in Toronto told me she picked me up, she said 'I just want to let you know, so you won't be surprised some of the Filipinos here uh they don't acknowledge you,

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<sup>35</sup> Edited quote for a clear reading.

<sup>36</sup> Because of the immigration policy it is difficult to successfully gain access to Canada under the Skilled Worker class with the criteria for \$10,000.00.

they don't talk to you, they will just see you and move forward  
(Interview with Lovelyn).

Lovelyn realized she may experience the same response from other Filipinos in the Philippines however she elaborates,

Yeah, but back home you don't acknowledge me I got my family I got my own friends, I got everybody, I will not just focus on you. But we're here away from home and we are living in a foreign land so at least acknowledge me  
(Interview with Lovelyn).

The dislocation or relocation to Canada highlighted the contradiction Lovelyn felt. In the Filipino diaspora, Lovelyn believed they should have a sense of cultural cohesion and feel a sense of belonging to the Filipino community in Canada regardless of their status, or where you come from in the Philippines.

Lovelyn continued to discuss her experiences,

So I was uhhh I was thinking we are both Filipinos that, I'm new here, they have to guide me support me, I'm older than her, but it doesn't matter as long as here first, she knows the place everything. I did not get that. And uh, I was very very disappointed because I came from an association in Hong Kong where Filipinos are so warm, so uh supportive of you. Really even when you are stranger, you don't come from the same regions. You invite, "Okay you join us!" You can enjoy, you don't feel homesick or whatever. I don't feel any homesickness and I've been away from home for a long time. I still, I'm still looking for that one character of Filipinos that I have not found here  
(Interview with Lovelyn).

Lovelyn also identified that in Hong Kong Lovelyn experienced more exploitative working conditions but there was a stronger sense of solidarity among Filipinos. In Halifax, however, Lovelyn identified the working conditions as less exploitative and, less of a sense of solidarity among Filipinos.

In addition, there was a strong lack of trust inside and outside of the community created by a market of outing “illegal or undocumented workers” as Kelly explained,

I can't really rely on even a Filipino, I can't really rely on you say something in America. If you know that there is a Filipino working without papers or something there is big money there. Caught that Filipino, send them back and that person who said that [reported the undocumented worker] got big money (Interview with Kelly).

Kelly explained to avoid the problem,

I didn't have that experience here when I was going through my problem here, I kept to myself and went to Edmonton [where a relative lived and to find work] (Interview with Kelly).

Chin Chin's response when asking about a support group in Halifax,

Because sometimes there's some Filipinas when they finish or don't want the job they don't know where to go. And some Filipino's (pause) it's better to ask a real friend than to go to the Filipino community (Interview with Chin Chin).

### *8.5 Need for a Support Group*

Two questions I asked the participants 1) do they need a support group for domestic workers and caregivers in Halifax Municipality, 2) what types of information should be shared. All agreed that there should be support but were concerned about trust and confidentiality within the group. A couple of caregivers mentioned the need for personal counselling from a professional, to assist them when they were suffering from depression.

One participant mentioned that a general information package would be useful with information such as:

Location of library, computer use, where to purchase food, phone cards, how to ride the bus, bus fare, bus schedules, the churches and their locations, names of priests, know where to go if there are problems with their employer, a copy of the Nova Scotia Employment standards, with contact information, how and where to send remittances to the Philippines.

Clearly, through the Filipina's experiences of receiving misinformation, from the Nova Scotia Environment and Labour and Employment Insurance a support and political activist group that is interested in the rights of the caregiver is needed.

The Filipina caregivers' were often exploited and sometimes abused by their Canadian employer and the Canadian state, however, they were active agents negotiating their identities and experiences within the racist, classist and sexist policies and institutions locally and globally. Permanent residency, family reunification, educational opportunities, better paying jobs and good quality of life were the reasons all of the caregivers were sacrificing more than two years of their lives in servitude.

## **Chapter 9 Conclusion**

As a student, feminist, and labour activist, I became interested in the ‘lived’ experiences of temporary domestic workers in my undergraduate years in Toronto while completing a course on public policy. As a graduate student in Halifax, I began questioning whether live-in caregivers here would have similar experiences, because of the low numbers of ethnic groups, and few accessible local organizations to support and organize for change.

The first scholarly article I read about the experiences of live-in caregivers in Canada was Makeda Silvera’s, book Silenced. Since there has been little empirical research completed in Canada and there has been no research completed in Halifax, or smaller urban centres in Canada, on the lived experiences of live-in caregivers, I was compelled to do similar qualitative research, with the intention to fill the gap.

This study was exploratory and aimed on learning about the Filipina caregivers ‘lived’ experiences, their agency, and resistance in Halifax a small urban centre in Canada. In addition this study was to explore the need and interest in starting a political action and support group for foreign domestic workers/caregivers.

I began by framing my research within a historical, political and economic context. The purpose of discussing the history of the Philippines and the “development of underdevelopment” in combination with the history of the domestic worker schemes in Canada to identify the historical push and pull

factors and to identify the inequality within the powerful patriarchal social, political and economic institutions globally, nationally and locally. In addition by understanding the “development of underdevelopment” in the Philippines reveals that the underdevelopment was not a natural process and countries of the economic North, in many ways, are implicated and the social, economic and political beneficiaries of the processes of colonization, modernization and globalization in the Philippines. The history of the domestic worker schemes identifies the historical evidence of the racism and sexism embedded in the government policies.

This approach also links the historical, political and economic to the everyday lives of the women and how they respond to the relation of the ruling and the ruling apparatus (Smith, 1987: 108). By understanding the women’s positioning and experiences within the ‘relations of ruling’ and the long history of patriarchal and racist discriminatory policies and political, economic and social institutions that create and maintain unequal relations locally, nationally and globally one is better able to understand the women’s agency, resistance and their strategies for coping with inequality, depression and loneliness to make a better life for themselves and their families as women of colour from a developing country.

Previous research has informed us that the Canadian state plays a significant role in the Filipinas’ health, living, and working conditions because of lack of mobility rights due to the temporary status, the mandatory live-in

requirement, and one employer rule. The LCP is highly racialized and gendered and a deskilling of the Filipina because their credentials are not recognized in Canada.

In addition, as other research has found, the LCP benefits the Canadian employer but exploits Filipinas. This LCP arrangement also privileges the Canadian family and deprives the Filipino family in the Philippines. I did not ask the participants if the LCP should be abolished, however, if I suggested to the participants a recommendation to abolish the program, from the women's stories I collected, I think they would disagree because currently it is the only way to come to Canada. A few of the women interviewed worked in other countries, as domestics or live-in caregivers, and the women indicated they did not have the opportunity to apply for permanent residence in those countries. Even though many policy makers, gatekeepers and employers interpret the possibility of Filipinas gaining permanent residency as an act of kindness, Canada both benefits and contributes to the structural exploitation of Third World women as indentured workers without mobility rights (Bakan and Stasiulis 2005: 62).

The LCP is exploitive, oppressive and discriminatory because of the mandatory live-in requirement and caregivers' status as non-citizens with few rights. The Filipina caregiver's status as non-citizen maintains the mandatory live-in requirement and lack of mobility rights. The non citizen status is the factor that keeps them in mandatory live-in and the one employer rule. The mandatory live-in requirement, though treated by the women as a temporary situation, keeps

them in undefined work hours and exploitive working conditions for at least two years, but often longer.

The LCP is situated within neo-liberalism and erosion of the welfare state in Canada in combination with an aging population. While the Philippines is in social, economic and political turmoil the resolve since the 1970s has been the export of workers to resolve their economic problems caused by a history of dependency from colonization and modernization. There are social, political and economic inequalities between countries of the North and South with an international division of reproductive labour (Parreñas, 2000).

### *9.1 Matrix of Domination*

The matrix of domination is evident in this study. The women's narratives also reveal there is no universal standpoint for 'women' but rather multiple standpoints located at the intersections of gender, class, caste, race, ethnicity, religion and dis(ability) in particular times and places. The caregiver's employer (woman) has privilege and domination over the live-in caregiver because of her status as a Canadian citizen and employer. Class also plays a significant role in the matrix of domination as seen in this study relating to the relationship between the established Filipino-Canadian employer and the poor living conditions of the live-in caregiver.

In Canada and the Philippines women are positioned in reproductive labour and the devalued role of caregiver (paid and unpaid). The unequal

relationship between employer and employ begins with coercive work agreements agreed to before the Filipina is hired and abroad. The employer is subtly wielding their power as a citizen of a so called developed country over the Filipina's status of citizen of developing world and both parties know if the Filipina disagrees to the working conditions she most likely will not be hired. Reproductive labour has become a commodity and class privileged women from Canada have freed themselves of reproductive labor by purchasing low-wage services of women from developing countries like the Philippines.

After framing this study within a historical, political, economic and social context, I began within the framework of standpoint theory and methodology understanding that women are agents of knowledge and their knowledge is grounded in experience. I conducted qualitative open-ended interviews with five Filipina caregivers who were currently, or recently in the LCP. The women I interviewed shared rich, in-depth stories of their lived experiences including their strategies and articulated their understanding of their experiences.

The knowledge and choices of the Filipina caregivers are influenced by the relation of the ruling. Through the women's knowledge and experience and an examination within the relations of ruling insights were gained into the women's resistance and how power operates.

In the open ended interviews, they also shared their work relations, family relations and community experiences that followed after migrating to Canada. They communicated to me their long-term goals, feelings of depression, their

challenges and strategies to change work conditions, their gender roles, their feelings of disempowerment and their resistance and agency.

Similarly as Khan (2000) found in her study the women's narratives in this study indicate their daily negotiations within the restrictive gender, cultural and class rules and roles often challenging and resisting these roles. The women's narratives also indicate that these women are not passively receiving the dominant cultural and gender practices and ideologies but are actively engaging with their circumstances in complex and contradictory ways.

In response to the global inequality and patriarchal state policies (in the receiving and sending country), the Filipina women leaving the Philippines articulated how they came to be in the current situation as active agents mediating their "choices" and experiences that are constituted by, and reflexive of their social and cultural context (Mohanty, 2003: 311 and Deveaux, 1999: 245).

Although the decision to migrate was a difficult one, the women were self determined and empowered by being active agents in the decision making process. They adopted the stand that they had no choice because of the economics in the Philippines and migrating was their will to survive. The contradiction they experience, on the one hand is the need to economically provide for their family and on the other hand the need to be a "good mother" and care for their children. These contradictions come with the guilt and depression because they are not fulfilling their role as a mother and being separated from their families. Also there is evidence of resistance to the hegemonic gender roles

where the women were participating in challenging and changing the gender roles in the family by often leaving the husband behind to care for their children while they become the breadwinner.

Throughout the interviews the women articulated their limited options and how they made choices based on their needs, their families' needs and their long-term goal. During the process of deciding to migrate, the women were networking in order to research the countries that needed domestics or caregivers, basing their decisions on networks, processing times, costs and finally regulations in the receiving country.

By examining the current immigration policy and who gets into Canada as a permanent resident in the Skilled Worker Program, it became clear that the LCP was a way for Filipina professional women such as nurses and physiotherapist to begin the hopeful journey of becoming a landed immigrant. The LCP allows for some chance of movement and permanent residency. However the application process and the educational requirement for the LCP are expensive, therefore, directed towards a certain class of women who are educated professional women, which benefits the Canadian state gaining human capital and an educated pool of cheap labour. In addition, parents in the Philippine invest in their children's education to insure they will have opportunities abroad to maintain economic security for their family. However this investment leads to the daughter needing to repay her parents.

In addition, as Ehrenreich and Hochschild argued, the choice to migrate is complex, and the economic push and pull factors are one of the main reasons women migrate but often a multiplicity of reasons. Hochschild also stated it could be the women that migrate are likely more resistant to social pressures and less likely to play the female gender role and stay at home. Finally because of strong Catholic values migration is often called a "Philippine divorce" (p. 4).

Tammy, married with two children, indicated to me there were several reasons for her migration, one being the economic constraints, family responsibility and the unhappiness in her relationship. Once in Canada Tammy resists her parent's disapproval and risks losing her parents support when she shares her ideas of divorce.

## *9.2 Workplace Relations*

When considering the position the women were in within the relations of ruling, the mandatory live-in requirement was treated by the women I interviewed as a temporary situation. Instead the women focused on their long term goal of attaining landed status and reuniting with their families in Canada. In addition, a couple of the Filipinas interviewed thought the live-in arrangement advantageous, considering the combination of other poor conditions they were living with (minimum wage, non citizen; one employer rule, sending remittance home) and suggested that paying to live out would be unaffordable and unattainable for them.

This study also supports previous research on the exploitative working conditions of live-in caregivers. The difficult working conditions of no overtime pay, long hours and poor wages were from the policies and regulations of the mandatory live-in requirement and temporary work status. A fear of losing one's job, a place to live and being deported supports previous research completed on their reasons for complying with the exploitative working conditions.

The women were aware of their limited labour rights but often did not exercise or challenge their employer when being abused for fear of not being able to gain permanent residency. In addition, the cultural value of *utang na loob* also must be considered as the women identified initially putting up with the working conditions until they felt they had paid the employer back. After repayment of *utang* the women would then begin negotiating their working conditions as seen by Tammy, Chin Chin and Kelly negotiating their hours of work. They often weighed their limited options and sometimes challenged their employer. Kelly's experience in response to an abusive employer also highlights the embedded cultural value of *utang na loob*. She weighed her options after a year of working and repayment of *utang*, she regained her "dignity as a person" and terminated her employment even though she had no definite plan and no access to formal support.

In contrast to Kelly's experience, Lovelyn felt her relationship with her employer was fairly equitable. Their relationship began with Lovelyn's employer recommending that she had her own apartment to live in on weekends.

Lovelyn's own place on weekends empowered her and provided her with the freedom for herself and other caregivers.

Another example of agency was the women identifying themselves as caregivers rather than domestic workers. They indicated that they were caring for people that gave value to their work and important worth. Lovelyn indicated that care giving work also carried a stigma by others, however, she resisted this ideology and argued that she learned a lot and care giving is a clean living.

This study also found similar experiences of mothers caring for their children by sending regular remittances home and communicating to their children by phone two and three times a week, while simultaneously caring for a Canadian family. Lovelyn and Elise, the two single women in this study also explained their responsibility to sending remittances home to their parents and siblings.

### *9.3 Support and Community*

The women expressed feelings of a lack of support from the community in Halifax, because of their status as caregivers which is stigmatized in their community and the larger communities locally and globally. Instead, the Filipina women's support and advice was found within informal networks, however, they were cautious because of mistrust. The church was also mentioned as a place to gather and to meet new people and socialize.

The difference in this study compared to other studies completed in larger urban centres in Canada was there is a lack of domestic worker political action and support groups in Halifax Municipality. The lack of a formal support group or political action group was identified by Kelly who after she terminated her employment with her abusive employer found herself without a place to live and found no assistance when she sought advice from Nova Scotia Human Rights, MISA, Nova Scotia Labour Board and Legal Aid, because of her status as a temporary worker. Economic support was unavailable and Employment Insurance and the Nova Scotia Labour Board gave her inconsistent information about her situation which added to her existing stress.

#### *9.4 Recommendations*

Until there is recognition of the women's education and credentials, as well as their ability to gain entry into Canada as a permanent resident because of their credentials, I would caution against abolition of the LCP. Instead, I would advocate the need to continue to deconstruct and challenge the patriarchal ideology that reproductive work in the private sphere is of no value, as well as the need to reconstruct the value of women's work in the private home. Secondly the mandatory live-in requirement should be replaced by Filipina caregivers having the option to live-in or live-out.

I also support the Canadian FAFIA in their recommendations to the UN and the Government of Canada suggest the requirement or criteria for permanent

residency status change by placing health professions including live-in caregivers, nurses, physiotherapists, and midwives in the Skilled Worker Program. After all, the nursing educational institutions in the Philippines are often based on North American standards. However this alone does not alleviate the entire problem they face as there is a cost of \$10,000 to enter Canada in the Skilled Worker Program, therefore a change in broader economic requirements is also needed for women professionals who earn less than men.

As Pratt (1999) found in her research, “. . . the experience of coming to Canada as a nanny evidently narrows occupational opportunities long after the requirement of the program has been fulfilled” (p.216).

Since the Filipinas interviewed focused on permanent residency, working in their professions and re-uniting with their families, I would like to complete in the near future, follow-up research with the same participants to explore the realization of their strategies for integration into Canadian society as professionals and permanent residents.

Since this research was exploratory I had hoped it would indicate where further research and action was needed. Indeed, the Filipinas' lived experiences indicated that a foreign domestic political action group would be useful to gain access to employment information and advice, and where action could begin in Halifax Regional Municipality to change the living and working conditions for people working under the program. Keeping this in mind throughout my research, I hope I can work with the live-in caregivers to start such a group. Because of the

live-in caregivers dispersed throughout the province of Nova Scotia, sometimes in rural areas where they are isolated from others, I will suggest creating a website to better be able to reach out to all the live-in caregivers in Nova Scotia. In addition, the women indicated the importance of private professional counselling was needed to fend off depression. This is another area I will be exploring to determine what services are available to them.

## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### **An Invitation to participate in research on:**

#### **The Lived Experiences of Women who have worked Within the Live-In Caregiver Program in Halifax Municipality.**

I am currently recruiting participants for a study of women who are working as domestic workers or caregivers in the Live-In Caregiver Program in the Halifax Municipality or who have done so in the past.

The objective of the study is to explore and understand the lived experiences of women who were/are working as domestic/caregivers. To explore the participant's experiences I will conduct interviews by asking questions about their experiences working and living within the Live-In Caregiver program.

The participants may refuse to answer any questions that may make them feel uncomfortable, and they may also withdraw from this research at any time.

I will provide a summary of the information to the participants for their review and feedback.

This research is for the completion of the thesis requirement of a Master of Arts Joint Women's Studies Program at Mount Saint Vincent University and Saint Mary's University that is being supervised by Evangelia Tastsoglou, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Criminology, at Saint Mary's University  
(██████████)

This research has been approved for the Research Ethics Board of Mount Saint Vincent University. You may contact the Research Ethics Board by phone at (902)457-6350.

Anonymity will be respected. For more information call the researcher, Lori Root, at ██████████

## **Appendix B**

### **Participant Criteria and Questions**

#### Criteria

These are the criteria for choosing the 5 -10 participants for this research:

1. The participant must currently be in the Live-In Caregiver Program working as a domestic/caregiver in Halifax Municipality or;
2. The participant was in the Live-In Caregiver Program working as a domestic/caregiver in the past ten years in the Halifax Municipality.
3. The participant must be able to speak English.

#### Questions

1. Are you currently working as a domestic or caregiver within the Live-In Caregiver Program in Halifax Municipality?
2. Did you work as a domestic or caregiver within the Live-In Caregiver Program, in Halifax Municipality within the last ten years.
3. Do you speak English?

## **Appendix C**

### Interview Questions

Below are guidelines for the open-ended interview questions.

#### **About leaving your home country**

1. Please explain how you chose the Canada to live and work in as a domestic or caregiver?
2. Please tell me if Canada was your first choice to come and work as a domestic or caregiver? Please explain.
3. Please tell me did you choose Halifax, Nova Scotia to live and work? Please explain.
4. How long have you been in Canada?
5. Did you work in another country other than your home country before working in Canada? Please tell me about that experience.
  - a. If so, what country?
  - b. When did you leave your home country?
  - c. What type of work did you do in the other country?
  - d. Why did you leave that country?
  - e. Did you return to your country?
  - f. If so, for how long?
6. Is English your first language?
  - a. If not, what is your first language?
  - b. If not, did you take courses to learn English?
7. Did you complete training or education in a field or occupation related to care giving?

#### **About the Live-In Caregiver Program**

1. Please tell me how you learned about the Live-In Caregiver Program in Canada?

Below are guidelines for this question.

  - a. Who gave you information about the Live-In Caregiver Program?
  - b. Did you hear about the Live-In Caregiver program through an agent?
  - c. In your country?

- d. In another country? If so, what country?
2. Are you currently in the Live-In Caregiver program?
  - a. How long have you been in the program?
  - b. If you are no longer in the LCP when were in the LCP?
  - c. How long were in the LCP?
3. Please tell me about your experiences of working within the Live-In Caregiver Program?
  - a. In your opinion do think the program is good? Please explain.
  - b. What does it do (has it done) for you and your family?

### **Family**

Some of these questions in this section are also on the background sheet however the background sheet will be given to the participant after the interview. The first three questions are necessary to proceed to question #4 and 5 in the interview guidelines.

1. Do you have children?
  - a. If so, how many children do you have?
  - b. How old are your children?
2. Are you married?
3. Do you have a spouse/partner?
  - a. If so, is your spouse/partner in Halifax?
  - b. If you have a spouse/partner, and they are not in Halifax where are they?
4. Could you please tell me about your experiences of living in Canada?
5. What are your plans for the future?  
Below are guidelines for this question.
  - a. If you have children are you planning on reuniting with them in Canada?
  - b. Are you planning to apply for permanent status after your two years of working as a caregiver or domestic worker while in the LCP? Why?
  - c. Are you planning on returning to your home country?
6. If you are no longer working in the LCP, do you have permanent status?
7. If you have permanent status, could you tell me about your experiences applying for permanent status in Canada?
8. If you do not have permanent status can you tell me about your

experiences?

### **Work**

1. Please tell me about your work?  
Below are guidelines for this question.
  - a. What is a normal day of work for you?
  - b. How many hours per day do you work?
  - c. How many hours per week do you work?
  - d. What are you expected to do?
  
2. Did you sign a contract indicating hours of work and duties? Please tell me about your contract and work?  
Below are guidelines for this question.
  - a. Are you working the hours indicated on your contract?
  - b. Are you doing more duties than indicated on your contract or less?
  - c. Do you get time off work each week?
  
3. Do you pay room and board? Please tell me about your experiences paying room and board?  
Below are guidelines for this question.
  - a. If so, how much do you pay per week or month?
  - b. Do you buy your own groceries?
  - c. Do you eat with your employer?
  
4. Please tell me about your experiences living in the home you also work in?  
Below are guidelines for this question.
  - a. Do you feel that you have your own privacy?
  
5. Do you send remittances home?  
How often? How much?
  
6. Do you know about the Nova Scotia Employment Standards?
  
7. Please tell me about your relationship with your employer?

The section "Friends and Leisure" below is relevant to understanding if the participants have made connections with people outside their workplace.

### **Friends and Leisure**

1. Please tell me what you do on your day off?
  - a. Do you attend church? If so, which church do you attend?

2. Are you an active member of your community organization?
  - a) What community organization?
  - b) If you are member of a community organization, please tell me how you are involved?
  
3. Do you have friends or relatives in Canada?
  - a) Where are your friends and/or relatives living?
  - b) How often do you see your friends or relatives?

The section below “Support within the Community” is relevant to understanding if the participant feels there is a need or desire to start a domestic worker support group.

### **Support within the Community**

1. Please tell me if you feel there is support and advice for you within your community?
  - a) emotional; b) employment advice c) advice about your rights
  
2. Do you feel comfortable going to your community for advice?
  - a. Were they helpful?
  
3. Are you aware of the Domestic worker support group in Toronto or Vancouver?
  
4. Do you think Halifax needs a Domestic worker support group/organization?
  
5. Would you be interested in starting or participating in a Domestic Worker support group/organization?
  
6. If there were meetings once a month would you be interested in attending?

### **Final question:**

Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your experiences living in Canada within the Live-In Caregiver Program?

## Appendix D

### Background Information Sheet

You may have already answered some of these questions during the interview, but I would like to have confirmation of these points:

Chosen Pseudonym \_\_\_\_\_

1. Year of birth \_\_\_\_\_
2. How do you identify yourself in terms of ethno-cultural/religious background?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Where were you born?
4. Is this a rural area? \_\_\_\_\_ Small town? \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long have you been in Halifax?
6. When did you arrive in Canada?
7. Have you lived elsewhere (besides Halifax and your place of birth) and for how long?
8. Are you presently : a) married? \_\_\_\_\_ Since (year) \_\_\_\_\_  
b) divorced? \_\_\_\_\_ Since (year) \_\_\_\_\_  
c) separated? \_\_\_\_\_ Since (year) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are you currently in a relationship? \_\_\_\_\_ For how long? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Is your partner/husband with you in Halifax?
11. If you husband/partner is with you, is he/she currently employed?
12. Do you have children? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) If yes, how many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) How old are they? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Are your children in Halifax? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

14. If your children are not with you, where are your children? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Who is caring for your children?
16. What is the level of your education?
- a) High school or lower \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Vocational school \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) College/University \_\_\_\_\_
17. What type of employment did you do in you country of origin?
- \_\_\_\_\_
18. What type of employment did you do in the last country you emigrated/migrated from?
19. How did you hear about the Live-In Caregiver Program in Canada?
- a) A friend or relative \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) An agency \_\_\_\_\_  
(please give the name of Agency and location)
  - c) Advertisement \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E

### **Informed Consent Form**

Researcher: Lori Root  
Master of Arts – Joint Women’s Studies Program  
Mount Saint Vincent University and Saint Mary’s University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Supervisor: Dr. Evangelia Tastsoglou  
Lori Root: [REDACTED]

Research Title: **The Lived Experiences of Women Who have Worked within the Live-In Caregiver Program in Halifax Municipality**

**The purpose of the study:** The purpose of this research is to explore your experiences as a foreign domestic worker or caregiver in the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In an interview you will be asked about your experiences as a domestic worker or caregiver.

This research is for the completion of the thesis requirement of a Master of Arts Joint Women’s Studies Program at Mount Saint Vincent University and Saint Mary’s University that is being supervised by Evangelia Tastsoglou, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Criminology, at Saint Mary’s University.

It is my hope that the results of this research may be the foundation for starting a domestic worker and caregiver support group.

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I understand that this research will never expose my name.

I understand the interviews will be about two hours in length with the possibility of a second interview, if I agree. I understand I will also be able to listen to the audio taped interviews or read the transcripts, if I so choose.

I have the right to refuse to answer any questions during the interview and, at any time, I am free to withdraw my participation in this research without penalty. In addition, I have the right to ask questions related to this research, and the questions will be clearly answered by the researcher.

I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary, and I allow the interview to be tape recorded as long as these tapes and transcripts are stored in a secured location and will be destroyed within three years after the research is completed.

I understand that I may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board, c/o The Research and International Office, at (902)457-6350, if I have any questions about the conduct of the study.

I understand that I may contact the researcher, Lori Root at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] @ at any time if I have any questions related to this research.

I understand that I may contact the research supervisor, Evangelia Tastsoglou at [REDACTED]

I, \_\_\_\_\_, fully understand the above information and accordingly agree to participate in this research.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to have my interview audio-taped.

I, agree [ ] or do not agree [ ] that I may be contacted for a second interview.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please keep a copy of this consent form for your own records.**

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