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## Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value

Vicky Diaz (a pseudonym) is a 34-year-old mother-of-five. A college-educated former schoolteacher and travel agent in the Philippines, she migrated to the United States to work as a housekeeper and as nanny to the two-year-old son of a wealthy family in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles. She explained to the researcher Rhacel Parrenas:

Even until now my children are trying to convince me to go home. The children were not angry when I left because they were still very young when I left them. My husband could not get angry either because he knew that was the only way I could seriously help him raise our children, so that our children could be sent to school. I send them money every month.

In her forthcoming book *The Global Servants*, Rhacel Parrenas tells this disquieting story of the 'globalisation of mothering'. 'Vicky' is her name for the respondent whom she quotes here. Vicky's story as well as other case material in this chapter is drawn from Parrenas's University of California dissertation.

The Beverly Hills family pays Vicky \$400 a week and Vicky, in turn, pays her own family's live-in domestic worker back in the Philippines \$40 a week. But living in this 'global care chain' is not easy on Vicky and her family. As she told Parrenas:

Even though it's paid well, you are sinking in the amount of your work. Even while you are ironing the clothes, they can still call you to the kitchen to wash the plates. It was also very depressing. The only thing you can do is give all your love to the child [the two-year-old American child]. In my absence from my children, the most I could do with my situation is give all my love to that child.

### *Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value*

Paradoxically, Vicky got her job by telling her prospective employer that she had experience raising children. As she recounted: 'I found out about the job in a newspaper ad and I called them and they asked me to come in for an interview. I was accepted after that. They just asked me if I knew how to take care of a child and I told them that I did because I had five children of my own. But come to think of it, I was not the one watching after them because I had a maid to do that.'

Global capitalism affects whatever it touches, and it touches virtually everything including what I call global care chains – a series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring. Usually women make up these chains, though it's possible that some chains are made up of both women and men, or, in rare cases, made up of just men. Such care chains may be local, national, or global. Global chains – like Vicky Diaz's – usually start in a poor country and end in a rich one. But some such chains start in poor countries, and move from rural to urban areas within that same poor country. Or they start in one poor country and extend to another slightly less poor country and then link one place to another within the latter country. Chains also vary in the number of links – some have one, others two or three – and each link varies in its connective strength. One common form of such a chain is: (1) an older daughter from a poor family who cares for her siblings while (2) her mother works as a nanny caring for the children of a migrating nanny who, in turn, (3) cares for the child of a family in a rich country. Some care chains are based on the object of care (say, a child, or an elderly person for whom a carer feels responsible), others on the subjects of care (the carers themselves, as they too receive care). Each kind of chain expresses an invisible human ecology of care, one kind of care depending on another and so on. The head of the International Organisation for Migration estimates that, in 1994, 120 million people migrated – legally and illegally – from one country to another: 2 per cent of the world's population. According to Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, over the next twenty years this migration will continue to globalise and accelerate. An increasing proportion of those migrants, they say, will also be women. Already in 1996 over half of those who legally emigrated to the USA were women, and their median age was twenty-nine. It is hard to say how many of these women form links in a care chain. But most of Parrenas's young female care workers were young female legal immigrants too.

In this chapter, I would like to ask: how are we to understand the impact of globalisation on care? What do we know about it and how do we think and feel about it? If more global care chains form, will their



motivation and effect be marked by kindness or unkindness? Given the harshness of poverty itself, these are by no means simple questions. But we haven't fully addressed them, I believe, because for most of us the world is globalising faster than our minds or hearts are. We live global but feel local.

However long the chain is, wherever it begins and ends, many of us focusing at one link or another in the chain see the carer's love of a child as private, individual, uncircumscribed by context. As the employer above might think to herself, 'Mothers know how to love children.' Love always appears unique, and the love of a carer for the child in her care – like that of Vicky for the child she cares for – seems unique and individual. It has no other context than itself. From time to time, Vicky herself may feel keenly the link between her love for the children she is paid to care for and love of her own children whom she pays another to nurture. But her American employers are far more likely to see this love as natural, individual, contextless, private. 'Vicky is a loving person,' they might say, and 'Vicky loves Tommy.'

There are many good studies of globalisation that can help us overcome our localism. But they focus on people in the aggregate and don't shed a strong light on individual human relationships. Some scholars, however – especially those exploring globalisation and gender – have very much helped us see links between global trends and individual lives. Building on the pioneering work of Sylvia Chant, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Benetria Lourdes, Maria Mies, Saskia Sassan, Sau-ling Wong and, especially, Rhacel Parrenas, I propose to set down some thoughts on the globalisation of care. In doing so I am drawing on various areas of research that scarcely connect. Most writing on globalisation focuses on money, markets and labour flows, while giving scant attention to women, children and the care of one for the other. At the same time, research on women in the USA and Europe focuses on a detached, chainless, two-person picture of 'work-family balance' without considering the child-care worker and the emotional ecology of which these workers are a part. Meanwhile research on women and development traces crucial links from the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, through the strings tying Third World loans, to the scarcity of food for women and children. But this research, important as it is, does not trace the global links between the children of service-providers and those of service-recipients. The new work on care workers thus addresses a blind spot in our knowledge and to it I add a thought about the global pattern on displaced feeling. The

task, as I see it, is to draw threads from each area of research, with an eye to both the macro- and micro-side of the story.

The straight globalisation literature tends to focus on three issues – marketisation, mobility and distribution of resources. Each of these sheds light on Vicky Diaz's dilemma. Money provides a powerful incentive to work, and the yawning global wage gap provides a powerful incentive to move, as Vicky Diaz's story shows, from a place where one is paid relatively little even for professional work to a place where one is paid more. Before they migrated from the Philippines to the USA and Italy, the Filipina domestic workers in Parrenas's study had averaged \$176 a month – often as teachers, nurses and administrative and clerical workers. But by doing less skilled (though not easier) work as nannies and maids and care service workers, they can earn \$200 a month in Singapore, \$410 a month in Hong Kong, \$700 a month in Italy and \$1,400 a month in Los Angeles.

People like Vicky Diaz want not just better pay but also more security. Having access to a variety of jobs, and even a variety of national economies, can become an insurance against the very instabilities globalisation creates. Migration is a ticket to a better life but also an insurance policy against currency devaluations and business failures at home. As the migration expert Douglas Massey notes, the more globalisation, the more insecurity, and the more people try to insure against insecurity by migrating. In short, the more globalisation, the more globalisation.

And it should be said that while these care providers move to get better pay, they do not become money-making machines. One Filipina caretaker interviewed by Charlene Tung cared for an elderly Alzheimer's patient and had this to say: 'We [her friend and she] took care of him for so many years we cannot leave him at this time because we care for him very much. We don't stay for the pay. We could get more elsewhere. He's a very nice man.'

In response to the marketisation of care, then, many women migrate. But in what sense do they leave home? Studies suggest that migrants such as Vicky Diaz remain attached to the homes and people they leave. Vicky Diaz remained poised to return home, though she did not get back there for five years at a stretch. Indeed, most of the migrant workers Parrenas interviewed talked of going back but, in the end, it was their wages that went home while they themselves stayed on in the USA and Italy. Many of the migrants Parrenas interviewed seemed to develop a 'hypothetical self' – the idea of the person they would be if only they were back home. They spoke of the birthdays, the school



events they would attend, the comfort they would give if only they were there. Although families are separated, sometimes for decades at a time, they are not in the Western sense 'broken'. They become what Parrenas calls 'transnational families' for whom obligations do not end but bend.

Analysts of globalisation also focus on the maldistribution of resources between the First and Third Worlds. Globalisation has clearly lifted populations of some countries out of poverty – Malaysia, Korea and parts of China, for example – while it has also depressed economic conditions in others. According to a recent report published by the United Nations Development Programme, sixty countries are worse off in 1999 than they were in 1980 and inequities in wealth are likely to grow in the future (*The New York Times*, 13 July 1999). But we need to ask exactly what resources are being unequally distributed. The obvious answer is 'money', but is care or love also being inequitably redistributed around the globe? Marx's idea of 'surplus value' may help us form a picture of what's happening. For Marx, surplus value is simply the difference between the value a labourer adds to the thing he makes (say, a car, a pair of blue jeans) and the money he receives for his work. Factory owners and shareholders profit from the value a worker adds to a product; they do not share that skimmed-off 'surplus' value with the worker. In the material realm, we can say that one person gets money which another deserves.

Marx was talking about exploitation of workers in the public realm and he left human relations in the private realm out of the picture. But if we look at connections between events in the public realm (the love Vicky Diaz feels for the small boy in Beverly Hills she is paid to care for) and events in the private realm (her love for her five children back in the Philippines) the picture is far more complex than that which Marx discussed. For one thing, caring work touches on one's emotions. It is emotional labour, and often far more than that. For another thing, we are talking about the relation of children to their care-givers, which is partly visible, partly invisible. For, globalisation separates the worlds of the actors in this care chain. In contrast to a nineteenth-century industrialist and worker, the employer may have no clue about the world the nanny has left behind and the child there may know little about its mother's First World surrogate child. In contrast to the nineteenth-century industrialist and worker, also, given their options each party in a care chain would seem to be a voluntary participant, except, we might presume, for the children left behind. But the one thing both examples share in common is that the people lower down the class/race/nation chain do not share the 'profits'.

How are we to understand a 'transfer' of feeling between those cared for? Feeling is not a 'resource' that can be crassly taken from one person and given to another. But nor is it entirely unlike a resource either. According to Freud, displacement involves a redirecting of feeling: one doesn't give up a feeling but finds a new object onto which to project that feeling. For Freud, displacement was neither right nor wrong, but simply a process to which our feelings are subject. The most important displacement for Freud was of sexual feelings: the original object is the mother (for a boy) or the father (for a girl) and the later displacement is towards a sexually appropriate adult partner. While Freud applied the idea of displacement mainly to relations within the nuclear family, we can apply it to relations extending far outside it. In the words of Saul-ling Wong, nannies and au pairs often divert towards their young charges feelings that were originally directed towards their own young. As Wong puts it, 'Time and energy available for mothers are diverted from those who, by kinship or communal ties, are their more rightful recipients.'

Can attention, solicitude and love be 'displaced' from, say, Vicky Diaz's son Alfredo, back in the Philippines, onto, say, Tommy, the son of her employers in Los Angeles? And is the direction of displacement upwards in privilege and power? How is the emotional need of Vicky Diaz's five children back in the Philippines 'related to' that of the two-year-old child in Beverly Hills for whom Vicky is the nanny? Can we think of 'distribution' and emotional caring in the same breath? Are First World countries such as the United States importing maternal love as they have imported copper, zinc, gold and other ores from Third World countries in the past?

Within our own families we easily think of 'distribution' and 'care' in the same breath. A parent might love all the children equally or might favour one over another. But globalisation forces us to broaden our perspective on this question of 'distribution'. We are not accustomed to thinking in such widely ranging terms but, again, the Marxist idea of 'fetishisation' and 'de-fetishisation' is extremely useful here. To fetishise a thing – like an SUV – is to see the thing simply as that and to disregard who harvested the rubber (and at what rate of pay) that went into the tyres. Just as we can mentally isolate a thing from the human scene in which it was made, so too we can do this with a service – like that between Vicky Diaz and the two-year-old child for whom she cares. Seen as a thing in itself, Vicky's love for the Beverly Hills toddler is unique, individual, private. But elements in this emotion might be borrowed, so to speak, from somewhere and someone else. Is time spent



with the First World child in some sense 'taken from' a child further down the care chain? Is the Beverly Hills child getting 'surplus' love? The idea is unwelcome, both to Vicky Diaz who very much wants a First World job and to her well-meaning employers who very much need someone to give loving care to their child. Each person along the chain feels he or she is doing the right thing for good reasons.

How do nannies feel about their decision to come abroad to work? In Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila's 'I'm Here, But I'm There: The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood', the authors described how Latina nannies in Los Angeles saw their work (hard), and their employers (rich and egotistical). But about their own motherhood they seemed to feel two ways: on one hand, being a 'good mother' was earning money for the family, and they were used to a culture of shared mothering with kith and kin at home; at the same time, they felt that being a good mother required them to be with their children and not away from them. Being in a care chain, the authors conclude, is 'a brave odyssey . . . with deep costs'.

The person these Latina nannies most preferred as care for their children was their own mother. But she was not always available. In Parrenas's sample, one domestic worker relies on a paid domestic worker to care for her children in the Philippines as she takes care of the household work of a professional woman in Italy; another hires a domestic worker for the care of her elderly mother while she works in Los Angeles as a teacher (but previously as an elder-care worker); and another woman cleans houses of dual wage-earning families in Rome while she depends on her sisters-in-law for the care of her elderly mother.

Such chains often connect three sets of care-takers – one cares for the migrant's children back home, a second cares for the children of the woman who cares for the migrant's children, and a third, the migrating mother herself, cares for the children of professionals in the First World. Poorer women raise children for wealthier women while still poorer – or older or more rural – women raise their children.

Some migrant care workers care not just for one person all day long, but for many children, or many elderly and sick people. Given many clients, it might seem that an 'original' love would be harder to 'displace'. As Deborah Stone has observed, care in public settings is now subject to pressures to reduce costs, and to follow bureaucratic rules. For example, medical workers have to monitor and limit their time with clients and document specific medical problems for a patient while ignoring other perhaps pressing problems if these aren't listed as a

reason for needing home care. As Stone notes, 'the main strategy of keeping costs down in home health care is to limit care to medical needs and medically related tasks, and to eliminate any case that is merely social' (1999: p. 63).

But despite the prohibitions of a deadening bureaucracy, feelings of concern and love passed from carer to cared-for. Stone observed that one care worker dropped off milk to an elderly man on her way to work, though she wasn't paid to do so. Others kept in touch by telephone, visited and otherwise cared for clients above and beyond the call of duty. Since it wasn't in the rule book, they felt guilty and furtive for doing so. Given the growing power of the market-place and bureaucracy, carers are pressured to deliver care in a standardised time-limited way. It is often women of colour who are on the front lines of institutional care and who thus fight the system to stay human.

Paid care fits a racial pattern. In the American South, before and after the Civil War, African-American nannies cared for the children of their white masters while older siblings or kin took care of their own, as in a story told by Toni Morrison in her novel *The Bluest Eye* (1994). In the Southwest, Mexican-American nannies took care of children of their white employers. In the American West, Asian-American domestic workers have done the same. As mothering is passed down the race/class/nation hierarchy, each woman becomes a provider and hires a wife. But increasingly today, the pass-down of care crosses national borders. For example, Parrenas reported that Carmen Ronquillo had worked for \$750 a month as project manager of food services at Clark Airforce base in the Philippines when the base closed. She could find no job that paid nearly as much. So, although she'd criticised her sister for leaving her family to migrate abroad, Carmen too left her husband and two teenagers to take a job as a maid for an architect and single mother-of-two in Rome. As she explained to Parrenas:

When coming here, I mentally surrendered myself and forced my pride away from me to prepare myself. But I lost a lot of weight. I was not used to the work. You see, I had maids in the Philippines. I have a maid in the Philippines that has worked for me since my daughter was born twenty-four years ago. She is still with me. I paid her 300 pesos before and now I pay her 1,000 pesos. [Speaking of her job in Rome] I am a little bit luckier than others because I run the entire household. My employer is a divorced woman who is an architect. She does not have time to run her household so I do all the shopping. I am the one budgeting, I am the one cooking [laughs] and I am the one cleaning too. She has a 24- and 26-year-old . . . they still



live with her. I stay with her because I feel at home with her. She never commands. She never orders me to do this and to do that.

Transfer of care takes its toll both on the Filipina child and on the mother. 'When I saw my children, I thought, "Oh children do grow up even without their mother."' I left my youngest when she was only five years old. She was already nine when I saw her again but she still wanted for me to carry her [weeps]. That hurt me because it showed me that my children missed out on a lot.'

Sometimes the toll it takes on the domestic worker is overwhelming, and suggests that the nanny has not displaced her love onto an employer's child but simply continues to long intensely for her own child. As one woman told Parrenas:

The first two years I felt like I was going crazy. You have to believe me when I say that it was like I was having intense psychological problems. I would catch myself gazing at nothing, thinking about my child. Every moment, every second of the day, I felt like I was thinking about my baby. My youngest, you have to understand, I left when he was only two months old . . . You know, whenever I receive a letter from my children, I cannot sleep. I cry. It's good that my job is more demanding at night.

Given the depth of this unhappiness, one might imagine that care chains are a minimal part of the whole global show. But it seems that this is not the case, at least in the Philippines. Since the early 1990s, 55 per cent of migrants out of the Philippines have been women and, next to electronic manufacturing, their remittances make up the major source of foreign currency in the Philippines. Recent improvements in the economy have not reduced female emigration, which continues to increase. In addition, migrants are not drawn from the poorest class, but often include college-educated teachers, small businesswomen, secretaries: in Parrenas's study, over half of the nannies she interviewed had college degrees and most were married mothers in their thirties. In Parrenas's words, 'it is a transnational division of labour that is shaped simultaneously by the system of global capitalism, the patriarchal system of the sending country and the patriarchal system of the receiving country'.

Where are men in this picture? For the most part, men – and especially men at the top of the class ladder – leave child-rearing to women. Many of the husbands and fathers of Parrenas's domestic

workers had migrated to the Arabian Peninsula and other places in search of better wages, relieving other men of 'male work' while being replaced themselves at home. Others remained at home, responsible fathers caring or partly caring for their children. But other men were present in women's lives as the tyrannical or abandoning persons they needed to escape. Indeed, many of the women migrants Parrenas interviewed didn't just leave; they fled. As one migrant maid explained:

You have to understand that my problems were very heavy before I left the Philippines. My husband was abusive. I couldn't even think about my children, the only thing I could think about was the opportunity to escape my situation. If my husband was not going to kill me, I was probably going to kill him . . . He always beat me up and my parents wanted me to leave him for a long time. I left my children with my sister. I asked my husband for permission to leave the country and I told him that I was only going to be gone for two years. I was just telling him that so I could leave the country peacefully. In the plane . . . I felt like a bird whose cage had been locked for many years . . . I felt free . . . Deep inside, I felt homesick for my children but I also felt free for being able to escape the most dire problem that was slowly killing me.

Or again, a former public school teacher back in the Philippines confided: 'After three years of marriage, my husband left me for another woman. My husband supported us for just a little over a year. Then the support was stopped . . . The letters stopped. I have not seen him since.' In the absence of government aid, then, migration becomes a way of coping with abandonment.

Sometimes the husband of a female migrant worker is himself a migrant worker who takes turns with his wife migrating, but this isn't always enough to meet the needs of the children. One man worked in Saudi Arabia for ten years, coming home for a month each year. When he finally returned home for good, his wife set off to work as a maid in America while he took care of the children. As she explained to Parrenas:

My children were very sad when I left them. My husband told me that when they came back home from the airport, my children could not touch their food and they wanted to cry. My son, whenever he writes me, always draws the head of Fido the dog with tears on the eyes. Whenever he goes to Mass on Sundays, he tells me that he misses me more because he sees his



friends with their mothers. Then he comes home and cries. He says that he does not want his father to see him crying so he locks himself in his room.

*Over the Ocean*

Just as global capitalism helps create a Third World supply of mothering, so it creates a First World demand for it. At the First World end, there has been a huge rise in the number of women in paid work – from 15 per cent of mothers of children aged six and under in 1950, to 65 per cent today. Indeed, American women now make up 45 per cent of the American labour force, and three-quarters of mothers of children aged eighteen and under now work, as do 65 per cent of mothers of children of six and under. In addition, according to a recent report by the international labour organisation, the average number of hours of work have been rising in the United States.

Partly because a lot of American grandmothers and other female kin, who might otherwise have looked after a worker's children, now do paid work themselves, over the past thirty years a decreasing proportion of families have relied on relatives for their child-care, and more are looking for non-family care. Thus, at the First World end of care chains we find working parents who are grateful to find a good nanny or child-care provider and able to pay more than the nanny could earn in her native country.

In addition, many American families rely on out-of-home care for their elderly – a fact of which many nannies themselves paradoxically disapprove. As one of Parrenas's respondents, a Los Angeles elder-care worker, put it critically: 'Domestics here are able to make a living from the elderly that families abandon. When they are older, the families do not want to take care of them. Some put them in convalescence homes, some put them in retirement homes and some hire private domestic workers.' But at the same time, the elder-care chain, like the child-care chain, means that nannies cannot take care of their own ailing parents, and if their daughters also go abroad to work, they may do an 'elder-care' version of a child-care chain – caring for First World elderly persons while a paid worker cares for their aged mother back in the Philippines.

First World women who hire nannies are themselves caught in a male-career pattern that has proved surprisingly resistant to change. While Parrenas did not interview the Los Angeles employers of Filipina maids and nannies, my own research for *The Second Shift* and *The Time*

*Bind* sheds some light on the First World end of the chain. Women have joined the law, academia, medicine, business, but such professions are still organised for men with families who are free of family responsibilities. Most careers are based on a well-known pattern: doing professional work, competing with fellow professionals, getting credit for work, building a reputation, doing it while you are young, hoarding scarce time, and minimising family life by finding someone else to do it. In the past, the professional was a man and the 'someone else to do it' was a wife. The wife oversaw the family, which was itself a pre-industrial, flexible institution absorbing the human vicissitudes of birth, sickness, death, that the workplace discarded. Today, men take on much more of the child-care and housework at home, but they still base their identity on demanding careers in the light of which children are a beloved impediment. Hence, the resistance to sharing care at home, and the search for care further 'down' the global chain.

Among these First World mothers are those who give their emotional labour, in turn, to companies which hold themselves out to the worker as a 'family'. In my research on a multinational, Fortune 500 manufacturing company I call Amerco, I discovered a disproportionate number of women employed in the human side of the company: public relations, marketing, human resources. In all sectors of the company, women often helped others sort out problems – both personal and professional – at work. It was often the welcoming voice and 'soft touch' of women workers that made Amerco seem like a family to other workers. Among the ultimate beneficiaries of various care chains we thus find large, multinational companies with strong work cultures. At the end of some care chains are company managers.

*Three Perspectives on Care Chains*

Given Parrenas's portrait of this global care chain, and given the chain's growing scope, it is worth asking how we are to respond to it. It would be good to know more than we currently do about such care chains. Some children back in the Philippines amidst kin in their own community may be doing fine; we don't know. But once we know more, with what perspective are we to view it?

I can think of three ways to see care chains – through the eyes of the primordialist, the sunshine modernist and (my own) the critical modernist. To the primordialist, the right thing would be for each of us to take care of only our own family, our own community in our own



nation. If we all take care of our own primordial plots, a person with such a perspective would argue, everybody will be fine. The concept of displacement itself rests on the premise that some original first object of love gets first dibs and that second and third comers don't share that right. And for the primordialist, those first objects are members of one's most immediate family. In the end, the primordialist is an isolationist, a non-mixer, an anti-globalist. To such a person, the existence and the global nature of such care chains seem wrong. Because such care is usually done by women, primordialists often also believe that women should stay home to provide this primordial care.

For the sunshine modernist, on the other hand, care chains are an inevitable part of globalisation, which is itself uncritically accepted as good. Perhaps most sunshine modernists are uncritical of globalisation because they don't know about the relation between the care provided in the First World and that provided in the Third World; a minority knows but is not concerned. The idea of displacement is hard for them to catch onto, for the primary focus of the nanny's love depends on what seems right in a context of *laissez-faire* marketisation. If a supply of labour meets the demand for it, the sunshine modernist is satisfied. If the primordialist thinks such care chains are bad because they're global, the sunshine modernist thinks they're good because they're global. Either way, the issue of inequality of access to care disappears.

The critical modernist has a global sense of ethics. If she goes out to buy a pair of Nike shoes, she is concerned to learn how low the wage and how long the hours were for the Third World factory worker making them. She applies the same moral concern to care. So she cares about the welfare of the Filipino child back home. Thus, for the critical modernist, globalisation is a very mixed blessing. It brings with it new opportunities – and the nanny's access to good wages is an opportunity – but also new problems, including costs we have hardly begun to understand.

From the critical modernist perspective, globalisation may be increasing inequities not simply in access to money, important as that is, but in access to care. Though it is by no means always the case, the poor maid's child may be getting less motherly care than the First World child. We needn't lapse into primordialism to sense that something may be amiss in the picture Parrenas offers us and to search for some solutions.

Although I don't have a solution, I suggest that one approach is to try to reduce incentives to migrate by addressing the causes of the migrant's

economic desperation. Thus, the obvious goal is one of developing the Philippine economy. But even with such an obvious idea, we find the solution not so simple.

According to the migration specialist Douglas Massey, surprisingly underdevelopment isn't the cause of migration; development is. As Massey notes, 'international migration . . . does not stem from a lack of economic development, but from development itself'. As Massey's research shows, American policy towards Mexico has been to encourage the flow of capital, goods and information (through NAFTA) and to bar the flow of migrants (by reducing social services to illegal aliens and even legal resident aliens, and increasing border vigilance). But the more the economy of Mexico is stirred up, the more Mexicans want and need to migrate – not just to get higher wages, but to achieve greater security through alternative survival strategies. If members of a family are laid off at home, a migrant's monthly remittance can see them through, often by making a capital outlay in a small business, or paying for a child's education.

Also, the more development at home, the more opportunities to make a productive investment of capital back home, and the more need to diversify sources of income as a way of managing the greater risk associated with economic turmoil. Massey concludes, 'International migration . . . does not stem from a lack of economic development but from development itself . . . the higher the waves (of migration) in a person's community and the higher the percentage of women employed in local manufacturing, the greater the probability of leaving on a first undocumented trip to the US'. If development creates migration, and if, as critical modernists, we favour some form of development, we need to figure out more humane forms for the migration it is likely to cause.

Other solutions focus on other aspects of the care chain. In so far as part of the motive for female migration is to flee abusive husbands, part of the solution would be to create local refuges. Another might be to alter migration policies so as to encourage migrating nannies to bring their children with them. Alternatively, employers, or even government subsidies, could help them make regular visits home.

Another more underlying part of the solution would be to raise the value of caring work, such that whoever did it got more credit as well as money for it and care wasn't such a 'pass on' job. And now here's the rub. The value of the labour of raising a child – always low relative to the value of other kinds of labour – has, under the impact of globalisation, sunk lower still. Children matter to their parents



immeasurably, of course, but the labour of raising them does not earn much credit in the eyes of the world. When middle-class housewives raised children as an unpaid full-time role, the work was dignified by the aura of middle-classness: that was the one up-side to the otherwise confining middle-class nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American 'cult of true womanhood'. But when the unpaid work of raising a child became the paid work of child-care workers, the low market value of child-care work – less than that of dog-catchers or traffic meter collectors in the USA – not only reveals the abiding low value of caring work, but further lowers it.

The low value placed on caring work is not due to the absence of a need for it, or to the simplicity or ease of the work, but to the cultural politics underlying this global exchange. The declining value of child-care anywhere in the world can be compared with the declining value of basic food crops, relative to manufactured goods on the international market. Though clearly more necessary to life, crops such as wheat, rice, or cocoa fetch low and declining prices while the prices of manufactured goods (relative to primary goods) continue to soar on the world market. Just as the market price of primary produce keeps the Third World low in the community of nations, so the low market value of care keeps the status of the women who do it – and, by association, all women – low. A final basic solution would be to involve fathers in caring for their children. If fathers shared the care of children, world-wide, care would spread laterally instead of being passed down a social class ladder. There is a cultural embrace of this idea in the USA but a lag in implementation.

In sum, according to the International Labour Organisation, half of the world's women between fifteen and sixty-four are in paid work. Between 1960 and 1980, sixty-nine out of eighty-eight countries for which data are available showed a growing proportion of women in paid work. Since 1950, the rate of increase has skyrocketed in the USA and has been high in Scandinavia and the UK, and moderate in France and Germany. If we want developed societies with women doctors, political leaders, teachers, bus drivers and computer programmers, we will need qualified people to help care for their children. And there is no reason why every society should not enjoy such loving paid child-care. It may even be true that Vicky Diaz is the person to provide it. At the same time, critical modernists would be wise to extend their concern to the possible hidden losers in the care chain. For these days, the personal is global.

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### Acknowledgement

Thanks to Adam Hochschild for hearing out the ideas and to Tony Giddens for very helpful and incisive comments on this chapter.

## ROBERT KUTTNER

### The Role of Governments in the Global Economy

The world's top corporations are now engaged in a bout of unprecedented global merger, acquisition and concentration. They have become not only centres of concentrated economic and financial power; they have become bearers of the prevailing *laissez-faire*, globalist ideology. As their economic power grows, so does their political and intellectual reach, at the expense of nation-states that once balanced their private economic power with public purposes and national stabilisation policies. The very economic success of global corporations is taken as proof that their world-view has to be correct: that global *laissez-faire* is the optimal way to organise a modern economy.

Before examining that claim, it is worthwhile to consider the new context of corporate power. In the past, there were barriers of both law and custom against the current degree of corporate concentration. In the United States, the first period of intense industrial combination in the late nineteenth century gave rise to the world's toughest antitrust laws. Under the Sherman (1890) and Clayton (1914) Acts, and under state public utilities regulation, large monopoly corporations, such as the old AT&T, could operate only as strictly regulated monopolies. The theory was that these corporations were in industries with natural economies of scale, making competition inefficient and wasteful.

The regulatory regimes, therefore, protected such monopolies from competition, and they regulated rates and profit margins – but also prohibited the corporations from venturing off their own main lines of business. AT&T, for example, dominated the telephone business. Not only could no prospective competitor come in; AT&T could not use its economic power to venture out from its fortress, into other lines of business. While such public utilities in America were typically regulated private companies, in Europe they were often state enterprises. A side-