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Caring Work: Opening a Space of Possibility for Exploring Transnational Feminist Solidarity Between Privileged and Marginalized Women

Abstract

Neoliberalism, through its emphasis on personal responsibility and individual freedom in accelerating economic development globally, has only pushed women further into the margin of society. Structural adjustment programs (SAPs), which impose state budget cuts on healthcare and welfare programs, particularly have kept poor women and women of color in poverty and generally, have exploited women's labor. However, in this age of neoliberalism, women's solidarity becomes more significant. Because neoliberalism is founded on individualism, its downfall rests on alliance-building. Against this backdrop, I explore the possibility of fostering transnational feminist solidarity between privileged and marginalized women engaged in formal caring work. I have used narrative inquiry in conducting this study to find out whether the signifying practices of care may potentially organize women without ignoring their differences. I examine specifically the narratives of a Filipina caregiver and a Filipina care administrator in the Inland Empire. I argue that caring work opens a space of possibility for building transnational feminist alliances because it enables BeLonging, loving, and transformation.

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CARING WORK: OPENING A SPACE OF POSSIBILITY FOR EXPLORING
TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST SOLIDARITY BETWEEN PRIVILEGED AND
MARGINALIZED WOMEN

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of Arts and Humanities

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Beverly Romero Natividad

June 2011

Advisor: Dr. Bernadette Marie Calafell

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Neoliberalism, through its emphasis on personal responsibility and individual freedom in accelerating economic development globally, has only pushed women further into the margin of society. Structural adjustment programs (SAPs), which impose state budget cuts on healthcare and welfare programs, particularly have kept poor women and women of color in poverty and generally, have exploited women's labor. However, in this age of neoliberalism, women's solidarity becomes more significant. Because neoliberalism is founded on individualism, its downfall rests on alliance-building. Against this backdrop, I explore the possibility of fostering transnational feminist solidarity between privileged and marginalized women engaged in formal caring work. I have used narrative inquiry in conducting this study to find out whether the signifying practices of care may potentially organize women without ignoring their differences. I examine specifically the narratives of a Filipina caregiver and a Filipina care administrator in the Inland Empire. I argue that caring work opens a space of possibility for building transnational feminist alliances because it enables BeLonging, loving, and transformation.

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Chapter One: Introduction

“A transnational feminist practice depends on building feminist solidarities across the divisions of place, identity, class, work, belief, and so on. In these very fragmented times it is both very difficult to build these alliances and also never more important to do so. Global capitalism both destroys the possibilities and also offers up new ones.”

(Mohanty, 2002, p. 250)

Global capitalism, as Mohanty states, makes the transnational feminist practice of building solidarity almost impossible. Global capitalism basks in glory as it rides the wings of neoliberalism, the current economic system that has dominated the world since the 1970s. Neoliberal policies have weakened alliances and broadened unequal power relations within and between nation-states (Banerjee & Goldfield, 2007; Glenn, 2010; Goldfield, 2007; Harvey, 2005; Navarro, 2002a, 2002b; and Parreñas, 2008). Deregulation and privatization of labor has resulted in the breakdown of labor unions, high unemployment rate, and low-waged jobs. State budget cuts on healthcare and welfare programs have kept poor women and women of color in poverty and have further exploited women’s labor. However, in the current age of neoliberalism, women’s solidarity becomes more significant in creating change. Because neoliberalism is founded on individualism, its downfall rests on alliance-building. A broad-based movement, such as a women’s movement that advocates for “progressive labor, civil rights, and welfare rights”, offers a better chance of creating change (Abramowitz & Withorn, 1999, p. 173).

In the present study, I explore the possibility of building women's alliances for achieving a just, egalitarian, and democratic society amidst the challenge posed by neoliberalism. Furthermore, I expand on the transnational feminist project of building women's alliances by including privileged and marginalized women from the same ethnic community.

Social transformation constitutes the agenda of transnational feminists. It has been elusive, however, as transnational feminists face the challenge of forming political solidarity among women without ignoring their race and class differences. U.S. women of color and Third World feminists shun White Western feminists' promotion of solidarity through the notion of universal womanhood because such notion assumes that women across cultures experience oppression similarly and positions men as the cause of women's oppression (Mohanty, 2006). While universal womanhood intends to liberate women across cultures, it overlooks race, class, and nationality that intersect with women's experiences of oppression. Filipina overseas domestic workers, for example, experience exclusionary acts from their host country due to their race, low class status, and nationality (Cheng, 2006; Constable, 2008; Lindio-McGovern, 2003; Parreñas, 2008). Taiwan labels Filipinas foreign because they come from Southeast Asia and perceives them inferior because they "work in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations" (Cheng, 2006, p. 5). Likewise, Italy marks domestic workers as outsiders based on their ethnic difference (Lindio-McGovern, 2003). Italy's policies restrict non-European immigrants' and their families' employment to domestic service.

As an alternative to universal womanhood, transnational feminists argue that women must search for a common struggle in building women's alliances. hooks (1984)

suggests that women “must have a community of interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite” (p. 64) in order to experience solidarity. Mohanty (2006) particularly suggests that Third World women find solidarity based on their common struggles as workers under global capitalism. She argues that the idea of “working women” links the social and historical locations of women to a common struggle. For Mohanty, the construction of women as housewives rather than workers oppresses women and, at the same time, devalues women’s work. Women must think of themselves as workers because through this identity, they will find global capitalism as the common cause of their oppression.

In studying the global transfer of child care, Parreñas (2008) finds that neoliberalism oppresses both female employers and female employees who provide child care service. Neoliberalism supports women’s entry into the workforce because women’s labor keeps wages low. At the same time, state austerity measures that reduce public accountability for child care confine women in the domestic space. However, Parreñas argues that neoliberalism in this case does not serve as a common oppression for women across nations because its impact varies by location. Women in developed countries may transfer care responsibility by employing a domestic worker. As such, they are able to keep their jobs and still perform motherhood at the same time. On the other hand, women with children in developing countries who migrate to provide paid domestic service are able to care for their children only from a distance and through material supplement. Despite female employers and female domestic workers’ different experiences of

neoliberalism's impact, Parreñas argues that "a common opposition against global neoliberal policies still potentially unites these women across nations" (p. 61).

Building upon hooks (1984), Mohanty (2006), and Parreñas (2008), I explore the possibility of building women's alliances that include both privileged and marginalized women based on their common engagement in caring work. Caregiving opens up the possibility for a transnational feminist solidarity in the present era because neoliberal policies on the provision of care through welfare and healthcare programs directly affect women. Welfare programs, for example, require single mothers to work without providing childcare assistance (Abramowitz & Wither, 1999; Glenn, 2010; Klinkner, 1999). Privatization of healthcare forces frail older adults to receive care at home from skilled or unskilled, paid or unpaid caregivers (Glenn, n.d.; Glenn, 2010; and Uhlenberg & Cheuk, 2008). The majority of those who provide care are women (Glenn, n.d.; Glenn, 2010; and Uhlenberg & Cheuk, 2008). Women are expected to care for families because of their moral duty and status obligation institutionalized through marriage and the family (Glenn, 2010). However, I focus on formal caregiving to serve the purpose of my research. Specifically, I examine the narratives of a Filipina live-in elderly caregiver and a Filipina care administrator for children with disability.

I define formal caregiving in the present study as paid caring work that involves attending to the needs of children, the elderly, the sick, and the disabled (Misra & Merz, 2007, p. 2). It may include bathing and grooming care recipients, shopping, driving them to their doctor's appointment, and administering their medication. Although caring for vulnerable individuals is not included in the International Labor Organization's (ILO) list

of domestic work (Anderson, 2000), domestic work such as cooking, cleaning, and doing the laundry is among the duties of a caregiver (Misra & Merz, 2007). Like domestic work, caring also requires physical, mental, and emotional skills (Glenn, 2008).

Here, I refer to formal caregivers defined by Family Caregiver Alliance or FCA (n.d.) as paid care providers “associated with a service system” such as an employment agency or a care facility. They provide assistance to anybody, whether a child or an adult, who have limited or no ability to perform life-sustaining tasks due to illness or disability (FCA, n.d.). They are also called direct-care workers and may be categorized as Nursing Assistants or Nursing Aides, Home Health Care Aides, and Personal and Home Care Aides. The first two categories may require training and certificate (National Clearinghouse on the Direct Care Workforce, 2011). In this study, I interviewed a care worker who falls under the Personal and Home Care Aides category but who labels her position simply as caregiver. I also interviewed a care facility administrator who does not fall under any of these categories. However, her work is situated within formal caregiving in an institutional setting.

The present study examines the potential for alliance-building between privileged and marginalized women through the narratives of a female administrator for a facility for children with disability and a female live-in elderly caregiver. Both participants are Filipina who reside and work in Southern California. I have selected Filipinas as my research participants because they have been historically integrated into the American workforce through occupations that provide care (Rodriguez, 2010; Parreñas, 2008; Posadas & Guyotte, 2008; Tadiar, 2009; Tung, 2004). Since the U.S. colonization of the

Philippines began, the U.S. has been recruiting Filipina nursing graduates from the Philippines to work in public health. Certified Nursing Assistants and Registered Nurses in the U.S. are also categorized as caregivers (Tung, 2004).

The geographical location of my participants also contributes to their specific identity in the domestic service industry. According to Tung (2004), “Today, geography often determines which women of color are to be found within domestic work” (p. 199). Chicanas/Latinas dominate domestic work in the West and Southwest, West Caribbean women dominate child care and home care in the East, and Filipinas dominate elderly care in California.

I find formal caregiving in the context of neoliberalism a common struggle around which women from privileged and marginalized positions may build alliances for two related reasons. First, neoliberalism promotes economic development while it obstructs women’s economic mobility. Second, neoliberal policies on welfare and healthcare perpetuate women’s status obligation and racialized gendered servitude (Glenn, 2010). While these women have different positionalities at this time, neoliberal policies will collapse their positionalities into one in the long run. Long-term care facilities for children with disabilities as well as for fragile elderly adults depend on federal and/or state assistance. Scarcity of public funds might push these facilities into bankruptcy and force them to close down, leaving both care administrators and care laborers unemployed. These women may find employment at private homes. However, considering the value that the state saves from unpaid caregiving, formal caregiving at home is unlikely to gain continuous public assistance. According to FCA (n.d.), “the value of informal care that

women provide ranges from \$148 billion to \$188 billion annually.” In California, the market value amounts to \$45 billion. Chances are women who capitalize on caregiving skills may find themselves unemployed or in a low-wage occupation. Similarly, employed women are likely to give up their occupation or reduce their income or benefits if the need for care arises in their family. FCA argues, “as workforce participation increases, caregiving could pose even greater financial challenges for many women workers, due mostly to lost wages from reduced work hours, time out of the workforce, family leave or early retirement.” However, caregiving also has financial consequences to businesses. When women quit their jobs due to caregiving responsibilities, it costs businesses an estimated \$3.3 billion to replace them. Women’s absence due to caregiving responsibilities cost businesses approximately \$270 and partial absence, \$327 million. In this regard, the neoliberalization of care affects privileged and marginalized women.

Informed by transnational feminism, the present study requires a decolonizing research method. Transnational feminism seeks to challenge unequal power relations that are rooted in colonialism and enhanced by global capitalism. Hence, I have used narrative inquiry in conducting this study. Narrative inquiry has emerged as a critique of the traditional research method founded in colonialism. Traditional research method positions the researcher as the authority in knowledge production and human participants as objects of analysis rather than sources of knowledge. Thus, it creates a bifurcation between researchers and participants. The turn to narrative inquiry in humanities and social sciences reconstructs this relationship into co-producers or co-researchers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

Research on immigrant women of color employed as domestic workers in the U.S. shows that these women already practice solidarity and their practices constitute acts of resistance against oppression (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Parreñas, 2001). Latin American domestic workers in Los Angeles practice solidarity through the Domestic Workers' Association, an organization that functions as a forum for them to discuss issues, develop leadership skills, and resolve problems (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). A number of caregivers are members of the Service Employees International Union or SEIU (Goldfield, 2007). For Filipina domestic workers also in Los Angeles, solidarity functions as a social network. Social networks serve as sites for exchanging information particularly on job referrals and assisting financially newly-arrived immigrants among others (Parreñas, 2001).

Despite domestic workers' solidarity and resistance, they remain marginalized. Solidarity has only minimized their personal experiences of oppression. Furthermore, their solidarity is limited to marginalized women and, thus, pits them against privileged women. In order for change to occur, it must also come from those in power. Subordination of other groups occurs because of one group's domination. I argue that transnational feminists' quest for solidarity must also be extended to privileged women.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the present study is to explore how caring work might open up the possibility for privileged and marginalized women to work together in order to bring back public accountability and establish shared responsibility for caregiving as

well as bring recognition to the socio-economic value of women's labor. In this regard, I examine the narratives on caring work of Filipina care providers who are from different class backgrounds signified by their position in the organizational hierarchy of caring work. I ask how do their narratives communicate meanings about care? How can a caring practice enable privileged and marginalized women to work together in building alliances? How does a transnational feminist alliance with a commitment to care pose a challenge to neoliberalism? How can caring bring about social change and social justice?

I seek to explore the transnational feminist practice of building solidarity against neoliberalization through caregiving because it provides a site where transnational feminist solidarity may be realized. Caregiving typically involves women from the opposite sides of power. I draw my literature review from research on both domestic work and caring labor since both occupations are intertwined.

Research on domestic service shows that both employers and domestic workers are primarily women (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 1992). Although they share a common identity as women, their relationship is marred by race and class differences. Employers are typically white middle to upper class women in contrast to domestic helpers. Rollins, however, shows that racial proximity minimizes the exclusion and exploitation of domestic helpers. For example, employers would trust Irish helpers to look after their children while they would give women of color housekeeping tasks. These studies illustrate the complexity of fostering solidarity among women, which the notion of universal womanhood takes for granted. Gender oppression intersects with race and class oppression. In relation to these studies, women participate in subordinating their

fellow women. However, these studies also show that employers are capable of easing the burden of domestic work on their helpers. As marginalized women have the agency to resist domination, privileged women also have the agency to resist dominating other women.

My experience of growing up with a domestic helper in the Philippines also attests to the potential of privileged women to resist dominating marginalized women. When I and my two sisters were in grade school, my mother hired a single woman in her early 20s to help her do household tasks and, at the same time, care for us. Her name was Andrea, but we called her *Ate* (à-te) Andrea out of respect for her. In Tagalog, “Ate” is the general title used to refer to an older female. My mother was a privileged single parent. Her privilege came from having a college degree which enabled her to work as a grade school teacher in the Philippines. She also belonged to a middle class family to whom she could turn in times of financial crisis. Despite her positionality, I never saw my mother verbally or physically abuse Ate Andrea. We shared our space with Ate Andrea. She ate from the same table with us. She did not have her own room, but she slept in the same room with us. While my mom’s behavior towards Ate Andrea did not balance their power relation, it created mutual respect between them which is important in fostering solidarity and creating a just society.

In a study of female entrepreneurs’ leadership styles, Buttner (2008) has found that women use collaborative style and interpersonal skills rather than authority in working with their employees. They recognize their employees’ autonomy and take up tasks not connected to their employees’ job description. Without giving up their position

and power, women entrepreneurs are able to empower their employees. Buttner's study suggests that "mutual empowerment" depends on employers' willingness to help employees grow. If Filipina employers are willing, they may be allies to Filipina caregivers. As Carrillo Rowe (2008) states, who we love is political. We choose the people we love. We choose our allies. Women may choose to share power with each other or exercise power over one another.

Through this study, I also aim to create a dialogue in the Filipina/o academic community that will address the exploitation of domestic workers in the Philippines. The Philippine government hails overseas Filipina domestic workers as heroines because of their sacrifices and most importantly, their dollar remittances that help redeem the Philippines from economic turmoil. However, in the Philippines, domestic workers are hardly recognized for taking up the dirty work so that others may engage in more profitable endeavors. I recall a remark made by my cousin's wife about the plight of these women. She said, "*Ang sabi nga ni Mama, naiintindihan ko kung bakit may mga katulong na binubogbog. Matigas kasi ang ulo.*" (As my Mom said, I understand why some house maids get beaten up. They are stubborn). Research on Filipina domestic helpers concentrates on those who work abroad and, thus, renders those who work locally invisible (Constable, 2008; Lan, 2006; Lindio-McGovern, 2003; Lutz, 2002; Parreñas, 2001, 2005, 2008).

By seeking to foster an alliance between privileged and marginalized women, this study expands the transnational feminist practice of building solidarity that typically includes marginalized women only. Domestic service intersects gender with race and

class oppression. The entry of women in the workforce suggests that women have attained a certain degree of equality with men. However, gender equality has not minimized race and class inequalities. Women of color and immigrant women continue to comprise the population of domestic workers in the U.S.

Significance of the Study

Research on women's solidarity that uses transnational feminism as a theoretical framework tends to focus on alliances involving marginalized women only. While such research privileges women's voices that are often ignored in popular and academic discourse in the U.S., it limits the dialogue on solidarity to marginalized women. Also, it undermines upper class and white women's potential to be allies to poor women of color. Furthermore, it does not help bridge the race and class divisions that exist in the women's movement. Although I only include women who belong to the same ethnic group in this study, I expand transnational feminist research by placing women's voices with contrasting class positionality in conversation with each other.

Using transnational feminism as my theoretical framework, this study also complicates research on cultural identity in the Communication Studies discipline. According to Moon (1996), a feminist critical perspective "would allow intercultural communication scholars to employ more sophisticated and politicized analyses of cultural identity in general and to examine how these identities are constructed in communication, as well as how they affect communication" (p. 76). Transnational feminism has allowed me to examine women's identity beyond race, gender, and class. Immigrant women's and women of color's identities are also tied to nationality and citizenship as a result of

colonialism and global capitalism. Filipinas in the U.S., for example, are also labor migrants. They have been historically constructed as caregivers. The U.S. government recruited female nurses from the Philippines initially through the *pensionado* program and later on, the Exchange Visitors Program (EVP) (Rodriguez, 2010; Posadas & Guyotte, 2008).

On two separate occasions, the identity of Filipinas as nurses was marked on my body by white men. The reputation of Filipinas as the best caregivers was also expressed to me by a white female professor in an international conference. After I told her that I presented a paper on Filipina domestic workers, she mentioned that she tried to bring a woman from the Philippines to the U.S. to work as her caregiver. Her friend, who employed another Filipina caregiver, recommended the woman. However, her petition was denied. The professor did not hire someone else.

Situating this study in the Communication Studies discipline, I also contribute to transnational feminist scholarship and to critical studies on economic development and public policy. Communication Studies centralizes the role of communication in constructing power relations. Through the production, interpretation, and circulation of meanings, communication constructs identities and legitimates practices of domination. For example, the American Federal Labor Union's public proclamation of male as breadwinners and their wives as supplemental wage workers had an enduring impact on the status of women and the value of their labor (Glenn, 2010).

A culture and communication perspective on global capitalism avoids the pitfall of economic determinism. It makes possible to see the interlocking systems of gender,

race, and class oppression embedded in the neoliberal agenda. Most research on neoliberalism focuses only on class relations as one will see in the works of Konings (2010), Goldfield (2007), Grantham and Miller (2010) and Harvey (2005). In the present study, I connect the reconfiguration of class relations to the resurrection of white supremacy and male domination in the U.S. under neoliberalism. Although the popularity of neoliberalism surged under an American Republican president, the Democrats, which traditionally has marginalized groups at its base, also embraced neoliberalism to gain popularity among conservative whites (Abramowitz & Withorn, 1999; Glenn, n.d.; Klinkner, 1999; and Reed, 1999). The present study, of course, has significance to the Communication Studies discipline particularly in the areas of critical intercultural communication and organizational communication. It acknowledges that power relations between women exist within the same ethnic/racial group and thus, affirms the necessity of using an intersectional perspective on cultural identity research, including the identity of marginalized women. Collins' Black feminist thought has been critiqued by other feminists of color because it ignores the differences among Black women and denies the hierarchy existing in the Black community based on skin color and class. "To be critical of one's culture is not a betrayal of that culture" as Moraga (2000, p. 99) writes. Beyond critiquing, however, I look for a way to bring together privileged and marginalized women in addressing social injustice.

Through this study, I also bring attention to the ramifications of neoliberalism on women in the U.S. Research on neoliberalism typically focuses on developing countries because of structural adjustment programs (SAPs). SAPs are economic policies required

by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for developing countries prior to approval of their loans. These policies include “currency devaluation, managed balance of payments, reduction of government services through public spending cuts/budget deficit cuts, reducing tax on high earners, reducing inflation, wage suppression, privatization, lower tariffs on imports and tighter monetary policy, increased free trade, cuts in social spending, and business deregulation” (World Health Organization, n.d.). The restructuring of developing countries’ economy is supposed to bring economic recovery and assistance in global competition. Instead, it has pushed developing countries further into poverty with a massive amount of foreign debt. However, according to Navarro (2002a), greater inequalities as a result of neoliberalism occur within nation-states including an economic power such as the U.S. As a major proponent of neoliberalism, the U.S. implements the same policies for developing countries within its borders. It is important to look inside the U.S. because the women who are primarily targeted by neoliberal policies historically come from developing countries.

As I mentioned earlier, the present study places communication at the center of building power relations. Power relations are not limited to relationships between individuals. They also include nation-states. Communication has played a key role in the organization of nation-states under global capitalism, but is not directly acknowledged in research. Robinson (2004) argues that capitalism was the first social system able to organize societies under one system. He states that “globalization can essentially be seen as the near culmination of centuries-long process of the spread of capitalist production

around the world and its displacement of all pre-capitalist relation, bringing about a new form of connection between all human beings around the world” (Robinson, 2004, p. 6). Panitch and Gindin (2004), however, debunk Robinson’s argument as they claim that globalization emerged in conjunction with America’s vision to create an empire and therefore, the world’s superpower, since the reign of George Washington. Capitalism became the U.S. instrument in realizing its dream. Whether capitalism preceded globalization or vice versa is not the issue here, but rather, how capitalism spread and became a dominant ideology. Harvey (2005) identifies persuasion specifically as a means through which neoliberalism became popular and gained political consent. Aside from the mass media, the university also was utilized as a medium to promote neoliberal ideas. Proponents of neoliberalism were academics in the fields of economics, history, and philosophy. As communication plays a key role in promoting neoliberalism, it does so as well in building women’s alliances that seek to challenge neoliberalism.

Most importantly, the present study is significant to women in general and caregivers in particular in the U.S. because it seeks to end their exploitation as the nation’s solution to the crisis in elderly caregiving. Glenn (2010) and Johnson and Wiener (2006) claim that there is currently a crisis in elderly care in the U.S. The crisis is alarming that this topic has made it to a mainstream American television program. ABC 7’s *The World News with Dianne Sawyer* dedicated a segment of the program to elderly caregiving from January 31st to February 4th, 2011. For Glenn and *The World News*, the crisis is due to the unequal ratio between care recipients and caregivers. Medical advances have helped elderly Americans live longer, particularly those in their seventies,

eighties, and nineties, which increases the number of those who need care (Glenn, 2010). Census records project that the size of the population age 85 and older will soar to 20.9 million in 2050, up from 43 million in 2000 (Johnson & Wiener, 2006). In contrast, the number of caregivers is decreasing. A primary reason is the incorporation of women, who traditionally have been providing care, into the workforce (Glenn, 2010 and Johnson & Wiener, 2006). According to a study conducted by Johnson and Wiener in 2002, 68.9% of family and friend caregivers to non-institutionalized frail older adults are women while only 31.1% are men. Seventy-three percent of the female population with children under the age of 18 were employed by the year 2000 (Glenn, 2010).

Another cause of the crisis, which is not isolated from women's entry to the labor force, is the limited financial resources of care recipients. Most elderly frail adults do not have long-term care insurance coverage (Johnson & Wiener, 2006). Although Medicaid may help them pay for long-term care, they should have spent their resources on long-term care services first in order to be eligible for financial assistance. For those who qualify, "Medicaid covers nursing home care, home health services, and non-medical home-and-community based care designed to enable persons with disabilities to remain in the community" (Johnson & Wiener, 2006, pp. 10-11). However, the study shows that most elderly Americans outside of nursing homes do not receive Medicaid coverage. Due to their limited financial resources, elderly Americans depend on both paid and unpaid caregivers who primarily are women.

The crisis in elderly care indicates that not only care recipients are affected. It falls on the shoulders of women as well. While working women contribute to the family

income, they take sole responsibility in the non-material aspect of caring for the family (Glenn, 2008; Unlenberg & Cheuk, 2008). Glenn (2010) traces this phenomenon to women's institutionalized moral duty and status obligation, which I will discuss further in my literature review.

The neoliberalization of healthcare makes the crisis in elderly care worse for women. Women's care responsibility increases as the privatization of public services and state cuts on welfare have intensified home-based caregiving (Glenn, 2010). "Pressure to slash health-care costs by insurance companies and some government agencies has resulted in the shortening of costly hospital stays" (Glenn, 2010, p. 154). Hospitals release their patients quicker and in a shorter time. Furthermore, "politically organized disabled persons" (Glenn, 2010, p. 154) support the transfer of care from institutions to communities. An unpaid caregiver may transfer care responsibility to a paid caregiver. The care responsibility, however, remains on women's hands.

Elderly care is just one of the care responsibilities that the institution of marriage and family has conferred on women. Child care is another responsibility. Although a child will not be conceived without a father, the child becomes the responsibility primarily of the mother from the beginning of conception. Welfare programs such as the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) and the now abolished Mothers' Pensions, which aim to assist mothers meet the needs of their children, support the gender ideology embedded in caregiving (Abramowitz & Withorn, 1999; Glenn, 2010; Winkler, 2002).

Women across race, class, and nationality are exploited by care labor. Their exploitation is exacerbated by neoliberalism. Research on caregiving, however, focuses

more on unpaid caregivers because majority of caregiving occurs at home and are done by family and friends (Glenn, 2010; Johnson & Wither, 2006; Unlenberg & Cheuk, 2008). While such research is significant, it is not enough to address women's exploitation in caring work. It excludes the experiences of formal caregivers, who are likely to be immigrant women and women of color, and indirectly devalues their care labor. The present study includes the experiences of these marginalized women in academic research.

Context of the Study

My interest in transnational feminist solidarity began when I took a class titled *Voices of Women of Color*. In this class, I was introduced to Mohanty's (2002) book *Feminism Without Borders*. Mohanty's challenge for feminist scholars to move beyond discussing differences and instead, look for common struggles around which women may build solidarity for social justice inspired me to do the present study.

My interest in women's solidarity, however, did not occur just after reading Mohanty's book. It was a product of years of involvement in political activism as an undergraduate student in the Philippines. I joined a student organization in 1993 that incorporates Marxist philosophy. Through this organization, I was exposed intellectually and physically to social injustice as a result of unequal distribution of wealth and unfair division of labor both at the micro and macro level. I gained the perspective that social transformation is possible through a collective action from the working class. Collective action, which I define as the coming together of different communities with a shared agenda to initiate change, is not far from the transnational feminist practice of building

alliances. Both Marxism and transnational feminism locate the identity of the worker in the center of alliance-building and social transformation. Marxism, however, fixes this identity only on the white male body whereas transnational feminism intertwines the multiple positionalities of the working woman.

Consistent with transnational feminism, my class consciousness cannot be separated from my struggles as a dark-skinned Filipina with an American citizenship. Spanish, American, and Japanese colonization has imbued the Filipina/o culture with a mentality that idealizes the white skin tone. Every time I go back to the Philippines one of my aunts would ask me “*Bakit hindi ka pa rin pumuti?*” (How come your skin is still dark?). Her question may simply reflect her ignorance about the United States.

Filipina/os who have not been to the U.S. tend to assume that it has a cold climate all year round. Thus, Americans do not get exposed to the sun because they wear long-sleeved clothes all the time. This assumption still reflects a racist ideology and an essentialist one too. It fixes the white skin tone on U.S. American identities. My Aunt’s point was I have not improved. I may be an American citizen, but I still don’t look like an “American”.

Political activism in the Philippines in 1993 was not as militant as it was during President Ferdinand Marcos’ regime. A dictatorial government was no longer the common adversary. Protest actions centered against the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) because it was a threat not only to local industries, but to the people’s sense of nationalism. Activists argued that GATT would further bombard the Philippine market with imported commodities particularly from the U.S. at a cheaper price. Local industries were no match to those from developed countries due to scarcity of resources

for mass production of high quality goods to be sold in the local as well as the global market and the colonial mentality in the Filipina/o culture. Despite protests from various sectors, the Philippines, along with 117 countries, signed the Final Uruguay Round of GATT in 1994 (Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1994).

Through GATT, the U.S. was able to advance its neoliberal agenda globally. Neoliberalism, however, has started to dominate the world since the 1970s. It has diminished not only the state's control over trade. More importantly, it has limited the political power and economic mobility of the majority of the population. These limitations have implications on women and solidarity.

An overview of neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism promotes and encourages individual freedom through free trade and free market (Goldfield, 2007; Grantham & Miller, 2010; Harvey, 2005; and Konings, 2010). In this regard, it reduces state intervention in regulating the economy. It views the state as a hindrance to the pursuit of individual freedom. The notion of individual freedom holds the individual responsible and accountable for his or her success or failure, which is interpreted in terms of "entrepreneurial virtues or personal failings (such as not investing significantly enough in one's own human capital through education) rather than being attributed to any systemic property (such as the exclusions usually attributed to capitalism)" (Harvey, 2005, pp. 65-64).

According to Harvey (2005), neoliberalism was conceived by Mont Pelerin, a group of economists, historians, and philosophers in the U.S. academy before the 1970s. However, it was not popular at that time because the U.S. subscribed to Keynesian

economics. Named after theorist John Maynard Keynes, Keynesian economics gives the state a key role in achieving peace and economic stability and keeping a compromise between capital and labor. It became a prominent economic model in the U.S. in the 1930s “in response to the Great Depression” (pp. 20-21). During this period, labor unions had considerable influence on the state’s decision-making that was beneficial to the marginalized sector of the U.S. (Goldfield, 2007; Harvey, 2005).

The U.S. shifted to neoliberalism beginning with Paul Volcker in October 1979 (Harvey, 2005). Volcker, then Chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank under President Jimmy Carter, sought to reduce inflation rate at the cost of employment in contrast to Keynesianism, which favored full employment at all cost. President Ronald Reagan helped advance neoliberalism locally and globally (Goldfield, 2007; Harvey, 2005; Reed, 1999). The Reagan administration supported Volcker not only by reappointing him as chair of the Federal Reserve Bank, but also by supporting “deregulation, tax cuts, budget cuts, and attacks on trade union and professional power” (Harvey, 2005, p. 25). At the same time, the administration aggressively promoted neoliberalism as an antidote to threats to capitalism.

Under President Reagan, the IMF and World Bank established structural adjustment programs (SAP) (Harvey, 2005). As I explained earlier, SAPs are programs required for developing countries in order to get the IMF-World Bank approval of their loans. SAPs basically force developing countries to restructure their economy the neoliberal way. Prior to the establishment of SAPs, Harvey (2005) states that the U.S. was seriously considering withdrawing support for the IMF in order to protect the U.S.

financial sector. The IMF-World Bank encouraged developing countries to borrow heavily. However, the U.S. feared that these countries might default their payment in case interest rates go up and cause losses to New York Bankers. To resolve the anticipated problem, the Reagan administration set the U.S. Treasury up for partnership with the IMF through the implementation of neoliberal reforms. “In return for debt rescheduling, indebted countries were required to implement institutional reforms, such as cuts in welfare expenditures, more flexible labour market laws, and privatization” (Harvey, 2005, p. 29).

Although the U.S. is the primary proponent of neoliberalism, it has not remained faithful to the ideals of the free market. The U.S. government on several occasions had intervened in behalf of capitalism (Grantham & Miller, 2010; Koning, 2010). The most popular of such intervention was the Bush Administration’s \$700 billion bail-out plan for financial institutions (Harvey, 2005; Koning, 2010). A number of commentators interpreted this plan as a sign that neoliberalism has failed and the global economy is now reverting to embedded liberalism or Keynesianism. Koning (2010), however, cautions against such interpretation. He argues that the American state has always intervened throughout America’s history. The prominence of neoliberalism, for example, is a product of U.S. state intervention. The bail-out plan has revealed that neoliberalism is not only concerned with establishing a free market, but also with intensifying relations of power. Neoliberalism, according to Koning, has constructed further the limited power of the masses while it has increased the power of those who are already privileged.

Simply stated, neoliberalism has widened the gap between the rich and the poor (Grantham & Miller, 2010). Instead of alleviating poverty and equalizing class relations, neoliberalism concentrates wealth in the hands of the elite. The neoliberal principle of the free market only benefitted the upper class. Statistics show that from 1979 to 2009, “the highest paid 1% of the population in the U.S. doubled its share of national pretax income to 18%. Incomes of the top 1% increased 194%; the top 20%, 70%; and the bottom 20%, just 6.4%” (Grantham & Miller, 2010, p. 175). Wages increased just 10% while profits rose 60% between 2001 and 2005 (Grantham & Miller, 2010).

Neoliberalism’s pro-elite and pro-capital stance is also embedded in its notion of individual freedom. The individual may not choose to participate in a collective unit as “the neoliberal state is hostile to all forms of social solidarity that put restraints on capital accumulation” (Harvey, 2005, p. 75). Thus, it does everything in its power to break down labor unions (Goldfield, 2007). In the next section, I discuss the specific ways that the U.S.’ implementation of neoliberal policies worked to diminish the power of labor unions.

Individual freedom: A barrier to workers’ solidarity. Prior to the age of neoliberalism, labor unions held power quantitatively and qualitatively (Goldfield, 2007; Harvey, 2005; Luce, 2004). According to Goldfield (2007), labor unions during the 1930s and 1940s were “dynamic and militant” (p. 121). From 11.6 % workers organized in 1930, the number increased to 28.6 % in 1939. It went down by 1.7 % in 1940, but went up again by 2.5% in 1943. The number of organized workers further increased by 1945,

during which 14 million workers or 35.7% of the labor force were union members. In 1952, the number grew by .5% or 2 million.

The power of labor unions was not only in terms of numbers, but also in their accomplishments. Employers readily recognized unions whether certificated or not (Goldfield, 2007). Also, they rarely discharged employees during union organizing campaigns. “Workers won significant wage increases and few employers attempted to break the strikes or to hire replacement workers and when they did, they were often met by local general strikes” (Goldfield, 2007, p. 122).

After 1952, however, the number of labor union members started declining. It dropped dramatically in 1970. From 31.4%, it went down to 27.3. It has continuously declined since then. In 2006, only 12.6 were organized. At present, labor unions in the U.S. are the weakest all over the world (Goldfield, 2007). Union weakness has resulted in “increased rates of accidents, longer hours of work, greater work intensity, very little increases in real wages since the 1970s and the looming loss of pensions and medical benefits” (Goldfield, 2007, p. 126).

Banerjee and Goldfield (2007) and Goldfield (2007) attribute the weakness of labor unions to U.S. trade liberalization, privatization, and deregulation. According to Goldfield (2007), trade liberalization or the elimination of trade barriers allowed transnational corporations complete access to domestic markets. Labor-intensive industries from developed countries transferred to developing countries. Foremost of these was the textile industry, which used to be the largest employers of workers and largest industry in the U.S. High-tech production jobs began to leave by the late 1980s

and went to India, Mexico, and other developing countries. Service jobs such as processing of insurance claims and insurance centers also followed. Migration of jobs has undermined labor unions because manufacturing jobs are the stronghold of unions. “The threat of production shifts...reduces the bargaining leverage of unions” (Goldfield, 2007, p. 148) and union organizing power as a threat to production plants.

Privatization led to the outsourcing of public services to low-wage, non-unionized employers. Examples of these services were janitorial, garbage collection, and security. The autoparts industry also subcontracted much of its work overseas where wages are lower and laborers are non-unionized.

Deregulation of large industries that were highly unionized facilitated as well the weakening of labor unions. Among these were the trucking and warehouse industry. “Deregulation has allowed the emergence of small (and not so small) low-wage, unionized shippers” (Goldfield, 2007, p. 150). Another industry was the airline. Deregulation forced “traditional major airlines either out of business or into bankruptcy” (Goldfield, 2007, p. 151) because of competition from low-cost and relatively low-wage carriers such as Southwest. Furthermore, deregulation forced unionized members to take pay cuts as much as 30 to 40 per cent, give up some of their benefits, and accept union as well as workplace rights concessions.

The neoliberal state, according to Harvey (2005), intervenes in the event that social movements seek to oppose the neoliberal agenda, to the point of using “police power to suppress opposition” (p.7). President Reagan demonstrated the determination of the neoliberal state against all forms of solidarity. Reagan crushed even a middle class

union like the Professional Air Traffic Controllers' Organization (PATCO) and discharged its 11,000 members who went on strike in 1981 (Goldfield, 2007; Harvey, 2005). As a result, federal minimum wage levels declined by 30 per cent below the poverty level by 1990 (Harvey, 2005).

The neoliberal state's attack on labor unions in the U.S. continues up to the present. On February 16, 2011, Wisconsin public employees protested against Republican Governor Scott Walker's proposed plans to cut off public employees' take home pay by approximately seven percent to pay more for their health insurance. Governor Walker's proposed plans, furthermore, sought to limit public employees' collective bargaining rights (Davey & Greenhouse, 2011). The proposal sought to fill up Wisconsin's \$3.6 billion state budget deficit for the next two years. A similar bill that sought to limit collective bargaining rights was also proposed in the State of Ohio and in Indianapolis.

While neoliberalism demolished workers' alliances, it brought together and mobilized the elite to restore their power (Grantham & Miller, 2010; Harvey, 2005; Reed, 1999). In addition, it gave birth to a new elite class composed of corporate executives and board members as well as leaders in financial, legal, and technical sectors. Among them were Bill Gates, Rupert Murdoch, Enron CEOs, and the Walton Family (Harvey, 2005).

Aside from maintaining the power of the elite, the state used neoliberalism in order to perpetuate racial inequality and uphold gender norms that inferiorize women. Welfare and healthcare reforms intertwine the systems of race, gender, and class

oppression as they specifically target poor women and women of color. Republicans and Democrats alike have supported these reforms.

Care for women's health and welfare? Welfare and healthcare programs originally were created with good intentions, although such intentions perpetuated traditional notions of gender and sexuality. Civil rights activists and proponents and advocates of welfare programs aimed to help poor women with children fulfill their mothering responsibility (Abramowitz & Wither, 1999; Glenn, 2010; Klinkner, 1999). Proponents of Medicare aimed to give Americans universal access to healthcare (Oberlander, 2002). Once these programs were in place, their opponents in the federal and the state government initiated changes that made them difficult for recipients to avail.

Mothers' Pension was the earliest program for single mothers established during the Progressive Era (Glenn, 2010). It was intended to "allow poor women to raise their children at home rather than neglecting them or placing them in orphanages" (Glenn, 2010, p. 102). Lawmakers, however, altered the program. Mothers and children had to go through an examination to determine whether they were not fit to work. They would receive welfare only if proven that they were ineligible to work. In addition, program administrators imposed moral criteria and random racial exclusion. According to Glenn (2010), the program excluded unwed mothers and denied pensions routinely to widows and single mothers of African and Mexican descent.

President Franklin Roosevelt established the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), a program that guaranteed federal assistance to poor Americans (Abramowitz & Withorn, 1999; Glenn, 2010; Klinkner, 1999). AFDC also provided a

safety net for more single mothers and children as it was extended to poor African American mothers (Glenn, 2010). However, with the inclusion of African American mothers, the program came under attack. Single African American mothers became the face of welfare recipients although majority of AFDC recipients were white (Glenn, 2010). Criticism of the program intensified in the 1980s, during which the Republican-led U.S. government already subscribed to neoliberalism.

The election of a Democrat president augmented the oppression of Black women. Under President Bill Clinton's administration, the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 was passed (Abramowitz & Withorn, 1999; Glenn, 2010; Klinkner, 1999). This Act abolished AFDC and transferred the responsibility of providing welfare from the federal government to the state government (Glenn, 2010; Klinkner, 1999). Through this Act, race and class oppression merged with women's oppression. According to Klinkner (1999), the Legislation "ignored the history of abusive and racist welfare policies in many states" (p. 23). States are more likely to cut welfare in order to reduce caseloads and "demands on public funds" (Klinkner, 1999, p. 23).

The new welfare act fulfilled President Clinton's promise to end welfare (Abramowitz & Withorn, 1999; Klinkner, 1999). Instead of alleviating poverty, Clinton's administration abolished programs that aided poor families. Since the primary welfare recipients are Black families headed by women, the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 was a systematic means of disciplining and punishing women of color who are in the lower class (Abramowitz & Withorn, 1999). The Act satisfied both the Republicans and the Democrats who strongly supported eliminating welfare because they perceived that it has

created a culture of dependency and poverty among Black women. This notion has stereotyped Black welfare recipients as lazy, unfit mothers with low moral values and labeled single Black mothers as “welfare queens” (Abramowitz & Withorn, 1999; Collins, 2000; Glenn, 2010; Klinkner, 1999).

The Clinton administration soon abolished AFDC and replaced it with Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) (Glenn, 2010). TANF limited benefits to five years and established work requirements for recipients without providing necessary resources to help women transition to employment such as job training, transportation, and most importantly, child care (Abramowitz & Withorn, 1999; Glenn, 2010; Klinkner, 1999). Glenn (2010) argues:

TANF made explicit what have long been understated assumptions: that care labor is only properly carried out when it occurs within a self-sufficient male-headed household and that poor women of color’s unpaid caring for their families has little social value and does not deserve public support (p. 162).

Personal responsibility, Klinkner (1999) argues, is founded on a racist ideology because it ignores the historical moments that led to the marginalization of most Blacks and goes against Civil Rights. It attributes increasing gang violence, teen-age pregnancy, and unemployment in the Black community to Blacks themselves. Thus, instead of the State being responsible to resolve these problems as well, responsibility falls solely on the Black community.

The image of Black women as welfare queens perpetuates the superiority and perfection of Whites because it conceals the fact that poor White women are also on welfare. Glenn (2010) consistently emphasizes that majority of welfare recipients are

White women. I, myself, have come face-to-face with a White woman in Denver, Colorado who receives assistance from TANF. At the time I was writing this paper, I was a volunteer for a non-profit organization that provides temporary financial assistance to the needy. Part of our duties is to meet with the person requesting our assistance. Thus, I met Ana (not her real name), a White woman who has been receiving financial assistance from TANF. Although TANF requires recipients to work, Ana said she was exempted because of her bipolar condition. Ana also had been receiving assistance from a public housing program which paid part of her rent. The housing program, however, just ran out of funds. Ana was forced to look for employment despite her bipolar condition so that she could make ends meet. However, she was having a difficulty finding a job because she needed a babysitter for her 2-year old daughter. One of her friends volunteered to babysit, but only on her days off.

In contrast to welfare programs, the U.S. healthcare system benefits American taxpayers regardless of their income. Medicare, which is a universal insurance program, puts the privileged and the underprivileged in the same program in order to give the “politically more powerful classes a stake in maintaining the program” (Oberlander, 2002, p. 306). Welfare programs tend to result in inefficient administration and insufficient benefits because “the poor lacked political clout” (Oberlander, 2002, p. 306). However, neoliberalism also poses a threat to the universality of Medicare.

Proposal to reform Medicare that will eventually lead to its privatization once loomed (Oberlander, 2002). The government introduced the voucher system. Under this system, “Medicare beneficiaries would receive a fixed-dollar contribution from the

government to purchase health insurance” (Oberlander, 2002, p. 293). One of the goals of the system was to allow Medicare enrollees to choose the plans for themselves based on the cost of premium, type of coverage, and out-of-pocket expenses. However, the voucher system would limit the choices of low-income beneficiaries. Beneficiaries who select a plan with premiums above the fixed-dollar voucher will have to cover for the extra amount. Beneficiaries who select a plan with a premium less than the fixed-dollar voucher “could receive a cash rebate or premium give-back” (Oberlander, 2002, p. 296). Low-income beneficiaries, thus, would be forced to select low-cost health plans. They would also not be able to choose the physician they want, unless their plan could afford to do so. The voucher system reflected the “personal responsibility” that neoliberalism emphasizes. The individual would be responsible for making a decision on healthcare and accountable for the consequences of her decision.

Although proposal for the voucher system was rejected, the possibility of privatizing Medicare remains. Part C or Medicare Advantage “offers beneficiaries the option of receiving Medicare benefits through private health plans”, according to the California Health Advocates website. Medicare also faces the possibility of bankruptcy since its funds come from workers. Neoliberalism has increased unemployment rate and lowered wages because of increasing population of workers in the service sector (Navarro, 2002). As a result, tax contribution to Medicare has decreased. In addition, the population of frail older adults who are the primary beneficiaries of Medicare continues to increase. Without Medicare, low-income older adults who would need hospital care would likely receive care at home and pay for their medical expenses out of their pockets.

Incidentally, majority of care recipients are also women because they tend to live longer than men (FCA, n.d.).

Neoliberalism is supposed to aid the U.S. in recovering from the economic crisis of the 1970s after Keynesianism has failed to resolve the crisis. It has been the dominant economic system of the U.S., other developed countries, and most developing countries since then. Although neoliberalism bolsters American capitalism both locally and globally, it benefits only a small number of the American population. The failure of neoliberalism to improve the lives of most Americans seems to suggest that neoliberalism has reached its end (Grantham & Miller, 2010; Koning, 2010; Harvey, 2005). However, according to Konings (2010), it could only be that neoliberalism has reached its peak and at this time, a new economic policy is needed. Meanwhile, life must go on. If neoliberalism and the state are helpless in this time of crisis, who then must the nation depend on to sustain life?

Literature Review

Women literally sustain life on earth by giving birth and nourishing their offspring. Beyond maintaining the human life cycle, women contribute in keeping societies and nation-states alive. Pre-colonial societies depended on women's agricultural labor in order to guarantee the supply of food (Goodsell, 1934). Through reproductive labor, women also give life to nations drowning in debt (Rodriguez, 2010; Parreñas, 2008; Tadiar, 2008) and uphold the dignity of nations with an aging population and ailing economy. Despite the significance of women's reproductive labor to society, women's work is devalued. Furthermore, women are left on their own to fight against oppression

and rely on each other for support. In this section, I demonstrate how the gendered division of labor has perpetuated patriarchy and capitalism. Next, I discuss how the gendered division of labor has sustained unequal power relations locally and globally. Then, I show how women's solidarity looks like in action. Finally, I explore the possibility of fostering solidarity between privileged women and marginalized women through domestic service.

Perpetuating patriarchy and advancing American capitalism through the gendered division of labor. Research traces the construction of a gendered division of labor in the family to the early development of capitalism (Goodsell, 1934). The institutionalization of private property established the patriarchal system of kinship as the dominant system of family organization. Men relied on women's labor so that they could perform their chief function of guaranteeing the production and supply of food. The development of private property also turned women and their labor into commodities. According to Goodsell (1934), "wives come to be regarded as valuable assets, since they carry on crude agricultural work and perform all the productive household labor" (p. 10).

Prior to the eighteenth century, the U.S. was largely an agricultural economy (Glenn, 2010). Family members produced goods for their own consumption and maintained production for the succeeding generations as well. In other words, families depended on themselves for subsistence. A gendered division of labor already existed, but this division was fluid. Women were allowed to engage in entrepreneurship regardless of their marital status. However, married women's economic independence was restricted. Their labor and income were considered property of their husbands.

Nevertheless, “they could act as deputies to their husbands, carrying out all manner of transactions, etc.” (p. 13). Their labor, whether paid or unpaid, were perceived to have economic value.

In the late eighteenth century, the gendered division of labor became defined in conjunction with the development of Western political thought (Glenn, 2010). The public realm was constructed as a masculine space that served the interest of “the greater good” (p. 15) while the private realm was confined to women, children, and slaves and was associated with the mundane and self-interest. The Revolutionary Era elevated the status of the private realm by “depicting the home as the original seat of virtue” (p. 15). Motherhood was perceived important or having social relevance because it had the capacity to raise children to become good citizens and committed to self-control.

The market revolution that occurred in the late 18th century up to the early nineteenth century also redefined the notion of labor along gendered lines (Glenn, 2010). The market revolution moved away from the traditional household ways of manufacturing consumer goods, personal method of conducting business, and distributing goods in local markets to a national market that was impersonally governed by economic factors such as supply, demand, and price.

Simultaneously, the market revolution linked the gendered division of labor to race and class. According to Glenn (2010), businesses turned towards standardized, ready-made goods and cheap labor from racial minorities in order to maximize their profit. Working class white men felt threatened by the cheap labor of racial minorities. As a result, white men redeemed their superiority, but at the expense of women. White men

conferred on themselves the status obligation of being the family breadwinner. White men formed unions and demanded living wage that would support a man, his wife, and his children. They argued that such wage “was necessary for working men to maintain their standing as heads of households and to fulfill their obligation as family breadwinners” (Glenn, 2010, p. 17).

The notion of man as breadwinner consequently resulted in the construction of woman as housewife during the industrialization era. Since the label “breadwinner” became associated with wage labor, “housewife” then had signified unpaid labor. While women’s domestic labor was perceived to be contributing to the family economy during the agricultural period, its value started declining during the market revolution. Deeply-held notions about nation-building were tied to the constitution of marriage and family.

Working class leaders’ declaration of themselves as breadwinners simply echoed the Victorian formula that had long constituted the institution of modern marriage in the U.S. (May, 1980). Victorianism, which was propagated by native-born white middle class heterosexual Protestant American men, distinguished gender roles based on the belief that the key to progress was independence and self-denial. This belief translated to “economic self-mastery” for men and moral obligation for women (May, 1980). Economic self-mastery entails directing his own path or being his own boss as well as controlling his property and means of production. On the other hand, women’s moral obligation requires keeping the home free from sensual pleasures and ensuring that their husbands and sons were not morally going down. Victorians believed that a decline in men’s morality might lead the nation to “economic stagnation” (May, 1980, p. 18).

Victorianism not only constructed gender roles, but also marked the spaces to be occupied by gendered bodies. As women were expected to keep their family morally upright, they were also expected to be pure and to act decently. They were restricted from entering places frequented by men (May, 1980). While men's excessive sexual behavior had economic significance, women's excessive sexual behavior was deemed animalistic. Women who went against the Victorian norm were accused of being a whore (May, 1980).

The development of Western political thought, the market revolution, and Victorianism, in sum, contributed to the gendered division of labor in the U.S. The institution of marriage sealed this division. While the gendered division of labor marginalized white women as well, it had greater adverse effects on women of color and Third World women.

The construction of women as housewives has excluded women from the definition of worker because of women's position in contrast to men. Although housewives perform domestic work, society does not value their work. According to Mohanty (2006), "By definition, housewives cannot be workers or laborers; housewives make male breadwinners and consumers possible" (p. 150). Mohanty (2006) demonstrates the consequence of constructing women as housewives through Kapu female laborers' experience. Kapu women produce lace for corporations in India. Kapu women, however, consider lace-making even in an industrial setting a leisure activity because it is done while sitting down.

For Collins (2000), the consequence of the gendered division of labor manifests through the value that society places on women. Since housewives perform household chores without financial compensation, they have acquired a low status. Racial hierarchy, in addition, places women of color below white women. In contrast, the white man has “more status and human worth because they are employed in better-paid occupations” (p. 54).

Despite that women contribute to the growth of capitalism through reproductive labor, reproductive labor declines in value under global capitalism (Parreñas, 2001). Parreñas (2001) research on Filipina domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles reveals the three tiers produced by the “transnational transfer of care”. While female employers in the receiving country transfer their traditional feminine roles at home to a female domestic helper from a sending country, the female domestic helper in turn hires a female relative or another woman back home to care for her household. The female employer in the receiving country occupies a privilege position compared to the female migrant domestic helper who employs another domestic helper in the sending country. However, the migrant domestic worker’s class status is higher than the domestic helper she has hired. The former’s ability to migrate shows this discrepancy. As caregiving is transferred from the privileged to the underprivileged woman, its economic value decreases.

Traditionally, reproductive labor has been unpaid due to society’s perception that it is done by women out of love for their family and in the privacy of their home. Although it has helped sustain productive labor, it is not included in calculating the cost of production (Anderson, 2000). Productive labor, on the other hand, has always been

paid. It is a raw material that capitalists purchase in order to produce commodities. Consequently, labor turns into a commodity which is exchanged for money.

In contrast to wage work, reproductive labor is also non-industrial. Katzman (1978) came up with this conclusion based on his research on domestic service in the U.S. between 1870 and 1920. Non-industrial labor was partially paid in kind. Live-in domestic workers, for example, were granted free accommodations by their employers. Non-industrial labor, in addition, was done for an indefinite time. It also personalized the relationship between mistress and maid as well as collapsed time and space between workplace and home. Employers controlled the private life of domestic workers. For example, employers set guidelines for the domestic workers' visitor and inspected their belongings.

Anderson (2000) extends the definition of reproductive labor by citing Engels. According to Anderson, Engels interpreted Marx's notion of reproductive labor as necessary for human survival to include the reproduction of species. However, reproductive labor has remained devalued because it is done by women.

The definition of domestic service as reproductive labor conceals race and class ideologies because the gendered division of labor applies to women across cultures. Society places domestic work, whether paid or unpaid, on women's hands primarily because it has been traditionally associated with femininity. The International Labour Organization (ILO), according to Anderson (2000), describes a domestic helper's tasks as follows:

Domestic helpers and cleaners sweep, vacuum clean, wash and polish, take care of household linen, purchase household supplies, prepare food, serve meals and perform various other domestic duties. Tasks include –

- (a) sweeping, vacuum-cleaning, polishing and washing floors and furniture, or washing windows and other fixtures;
- (b) washing, ironing, and mending linen and other textiles;
- (c) washing dishes;
- (d) preparing, cooking and serving meals and refreshments;
- (e) purchasing food and performing various other related tasks;
- (f) performing related tasks;
- (g) supervising other workers. (p. 15)

These are the same tasks that a non-industrial working woman does or may do for her family regardless of race. However, the definition of domestic work from a white man's perspective betrays the difference in women's lived experience of domestic work. In a study that Anderson (2000) conducted, a migrant domestic helper's duties also include "cleaning their employer's workplace, chopping firewood and fetching water" (p. 15). Although female labor migrants in the U.S. consist of whites and non-whites, migrant domestic helpers are women of color primarily. Immigrant women of color have populated the domestic service sector in the U.S in the past and continue to do so now.

Glenn (2010) sums up the reasons women in general and women of color in particular take up the responsibility of doing domestic work. She argues that women have been coerced to provide domestic work because of status obligation. Society expects women to provide domestic work and care labor based simply on their familial role and gender. Women of color primarily provide domestic service because of racialized

gendered servitude which is “a labor system in which one party has the power to command the services of another” (Glenn, 2010, p. 7). Status obligation was institutionalized through marriage and the family while racialized gendered servitude occurred through colonization.

Employing women of color as domestic workers: A systematic racialization of the gendered division of labor. Domestic service in the U.S. occurred in three phases that began with the colonization period to the Civil War (Romero, 2006). “Household servants” during this phase initially were categorized by class as the term included indentured servants such as the poor, the homeless, and the criminals. However, servants became racially categorized when Black slaves were utilized as house servants. Since then, domestic work was regarded as “niggers’ work”.

Previously, according to Romero (2006), all Black slaves were made to labor in the field but white plantation owners who could afford numerous slaves divided the latter into field servants and household servants. Domestic labor, which was done in service of another family, also became associated with Black femininity as Black women were assigned to perform household tasks exclusively. While some slaves were treated as part of the family, others were abused.

Race, thus, displaced class as the structural inequality that constructed the master-servant relationship. This phenomenon continued to manifest through the distinction between “help” and domestics (Romero, 2006). It was common in white families to hire another family member, usually a young female, to assist the mistress in times of need. Thus, hired help served to create a community founded on mutual aid. The hired help

received compensation in both kind and cash. On the other hand, domestics were usually forced to perform domestic tasks because of the construction of their identity as slaves.

However, class hierarchy in the master-servant relationship intersected with race as Black slaves were deprived of opportunities for class mobility. They were denied access to public education and industrial labor even after the abolition of slavery. Black women who found jobs in the North as well as in the South still worked in the domestic service sector (Collins, 2000; Romero, 2006).

The U.S. expansion towards the Pacific also extended domestic service beyond its borders. The race, class, and gender inequalities embedded in domestic service were also reproduced in the colony. Rafael (2006) states that “domesticity as an idiom of colonial modernity assumes that the structures of public and private are mobile and indefinitely reproducible, capable of translation across cultural and bodily spaces” (p. 53). In colonizing the Philippines, the U.S. placed white women in the colony to prevent miscegenation. While white women supervised the household of colonial administrators, they also protected the purity and morality of the white race. The presence of white women in the Philippines hoped to prevent white men from having an affair with native women.

The presence of white women in the homes of colonial administrators was complemented with the absence of native women. According to Rafael (2006), domestic servants were Filipino and Chinese men. Whereas the employment of male domestic servants served to perpetuate white purity, it also reaffirmed white masculinity. White mistresses referred to their servants as “houseboy” or “boy” thereby infantilizing the

latter. Infantilization emasculates Filipino and Chinese men because patriarchy compares women to children.

Although domestic servants in the U.S. and its colony were both subordinated, the former suffered greater oppression. Compared to Black women, Filipino domestic servants were treated with benevolence. Rafael's (2006) analysis of white mistresses' journals produced during the colonial period reveals that white women looked upon their houseboys with affection. Benevolence or what Rafael terms as "white love" was part of the U.S. civilizing mission. However, white mistresses' affection for their houseboys did not extinguish their perception of Filipinos as baboons or wild men whom they should dealt with cautiously.

The emancipation of Blacks from slavery towards the end of the 19th century in the U.S. did not remove the social stigma placed on domestic service and the stereotyping of Black women as domestic servants. According to Collins (2000), the industrialization of the North opened up opportunities for Black men to work in factories and earn higher wages. For Black women, employment was restricted to domestic work. Likewise, Romero (2006) states that Black women were still deprived of the opportunity for class mobility. Black women were denied access to public education and entry to industrial labor.

The abolition of slavery, thus, did not end the racialization, class hierarchy, and gendering of domestic service and domestic helpers. Instead, it marked the beginning of contemporary domestic service in the U.S. Since World War I, immigrant women of color have comprised the majority of domestic helpers.

White feminists have argued that domestic work forms women's bond of sisterhood (Parreñas, 2008; Romero, 2006). From transnational feminists' perspective, however, domestic work is a bond of oppression for women of color and Third World women. Throughout the years of colonialism and now, global capitalism, women of color and Third World women have been doing domestic and caring work in behalf of privileged White women in the U.S. Furthermore, women of color and Third World women as global labor migrants render service to the U.S. in general by maintaining its status as a global superpower. At the same time, they help sending countries stay afloat in the global economy.

The Philippines, for example, has been depending on its women migrant workers' remittances to recover from economic crisis since President Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorial regime (Rodriguez, 2010; Parreñas, 2008; Tadiar, 2009). Tadiar argues that Marcos responded to economic inflation by selling its women and their labor to multinational capitalists and particularly, the U.S. However, according to Rodriguez (2010), Filipinas' incorporation into the global labor market started during the U.S. colonial rule. Benevolent assimilation included the "introduction of public health and therefore, the training of nurses in the Philippines" (p. 6). Through the collaboration between the U.S. and the Philippines, the Exchange Visitors Program (EVP) was established. It allowed Filipina nurses' entry to the U.S. despite the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, a law that declared Filipina/os national and therefore, restricted their entry to the U.S. Through the EVP, Filipina nurses served the needs of the U.S. as well as the Philippines. Filipina nurses satisfied the ailing American population's

need for care and strengthened the Philippines' foreign exchange reserves for debt repayment (Rodriguez, 2010). The Marcos government also capitalized on Filipina out-migration by directly training and recruiting them for overseas employment instead of simply relying on private recruiters.

Women's solidarity: A call for action and social justice for all. Research shows that the construction of women's identity as housewives and the devaluation of reproductive labor resulted from a collaboration between male domination and American capitalism. In this case, women's experiences of oppression are distinct and may not be resolved simply through their identification with the working class. Women must build an alliance against gender oppression. Furthermore, women's experiences of gender oppression are not similar across race, class, and citizenship. Immigrant women and women of color bear the consequences of the racialization of reproductive labor. A transnational feminist solidarity has the potential to create social and institutional changes that are just and inclusive.

Navarro (2002b) demonstrates the significance of alliance-building in creating and maintaining a welfare state. The labor movements in northern European countries, for example, helped in developing social democratic public policies. The labor unions and the social democratic parties paired to create policies that would protect citizens primarily. These policies aimed to provide material security throughout their lives. Thus, labor unions and social democratic parties gave importance to the high employment of both men and women and the role of the state in achieving this goal. Navarro states, "to that effect, the state had to provide a series of services to families (and particularly to

women) to enable women to enter paid employment” (p. 137). These social democratic policies were successful because a social pact was formed among trade union movements, employers’ association, and the government “with a commitment to full-employment and income policies” (p. 137).

Navarro (2002b) argues that changes within developed capitalist countries impact the welfare state and that these changes need to be considered by the government in reforming policies for global competitiveness. One of the changes he identified, which is relevant to my study, is the modernization of the family in terms of women’s participation in the labor force. Now, families have dual earners, making the male not the sole breadwinner anymore. There are several reasons for increase in women’s entry into the labor force and these are “a) the growing consciousness among women, inspired by the women’s liberation movement, of their need and desire for autonomy and self-realization...b) the decline of wages among men...and c) the growth in the services sector in the economy” (Navarro, 2002b, p. 123). Despite this change, the traditional gender role of women as homemakers and caregivers stays the same.

Similar to Navarro (2002b), Winkler (2002) shows the power of working class alliances in making institutional changes possible, particularly changes that would lead to a better life for marginalized women. In Sweden, for example, the working class was able to penetrate the legal system and gain political influence through the Social Democratic Workers Party, the political party associated with *landsorganisationen* or LO, “the blue-collar federation of Sweden” (p. 25). The labor union movement facilitated the development of the “People’s Home”, a concept that devolves care responsibility to

society. The People's Home was the country. The home, which was viewed as a space of solidarity and equality, characterized the new Sweden. The People's Home implies that "No one would be left out. Prosperity required equality, and equality meant solidarity. The more shoulders to carry the load, the lighter the burden" (Winkler, 2002, p. 29).

The U.S., however, had a different cultural atmosphere at the early stage of forming its welfare state compared to Sweden. It lacked this sense of equality through solidarity or "of society's duties to its members" (Winkler, 2002, p. 29). The reason lies on its emphasis on individualism and history of racism that go together. Individualism attributes success or failure solely to one's own doing, without taking account of institutional and social factors. Employment opportunities for women of color and immigrant women, for example, are still limited to the service sector despite the abolition of slavery and supposedly the end of colonialism. The notion of individualism includes White women as well. Global capitalism does not recognize women as individuals because their identity is tied to the male figure (Winkler, 2002).

Although neoliberalism has been systematically planted on U.S. soil to perpetuate racial and class inequalities, it can still be challenged through collective action. The living wage movement, for example, has pressured a few U.S. municipalities to come up with ordinances requiring employers who receive public funds "to pay their workers a higher minimum wage and in some cases, to provide basic employment benefits" (Luce, 2004, p. 289). Their success indicates a possibility for making changes in current U.S. labor market policy although these changes occurred at the municipality level only (Luce, 2004).

The movement was triggered by the increasing number of “working poor” and declining “ability or willingness of local, state, or national government to enact pro-laborer policy” (Luce, 2004, p. 290). The U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act provided a federal minimum-wage law in 1938. However, it did not automatically set the minimum wage to meet inflation. Congress must still approve the minimum wage. Due to the political power of labor unions, the federal minimum wage in the 1940s and 1950s increased regularly.

At the time the living wage movement occurred, according to Luce (2004), minimum wage was not sufficient for a full-time worker to meet the poverty line. Municipalities would not raise the minimum wage because they were wooing businesses. They were “creating an image of a city without business regulation or an expensive or troublesome workforce” (p. 291). As a result, municipalities resorted to “downsizing, contracting of public services to private corporations, and attacking public-sector unions” (p. 291).

The living wage movement had achieved significant changes in the lives of U.S. workers. It extended to city and county employees, as well as part-time employees who work for the government (Luce, 2004). The L.A. Alliance for a New Economy (LANE), which was part of the movement, “forged alliances with community, labour, and faith-based organizations” (Luce, 2004, p. 299). The alliance also culminated in the L.A. Living Wage Coalition. In 1997, the coalition set the minimum wage in L.A. to \$7.25 per hour plus benefits for service contract workers, city concessionaires, subcontractors, and subsidy recipients. In 1999, the movement covered 10,000 workers. Despite the living

wage movements' small impact, it showed that alliances are capable of posing a challenge to neoliberalism (Luce, 2004). The movement held the community responsible for workers as well as for the municipal government's use of city money.

If labor unions and other alliances were successful in challenging neoliberalism at the societal and institutional levels, why should a women's solidarity against neoliberalism be necessary? The answer lies not only in the historical, patriarchal and capitalist construction of women, but also in women's experiences of oppression within the global capitalist system that are remote from men's experiences.

Labor leaders in the 19th and 20th century supported the devaluation of women's labor (Glenn, 2010). American Federal Labor (AFL) president Samuel Gompers, for example, "fought to exclude women from skilled trades and supported lower wages for women on the grounds that they were only supplementing family income" (Glenn, 2010, p. 23). Labor unions in ethnic communities either excluded women or seldom acknowledged women's contribution due to their limited visibility (Fujita-Rony, 2003). Filipinas who were union members, for example, could not attend meetings because the gendered division of labor left them at home most of the time to do household chores and care for children. Nevertheless, their unpaid domestic labor was already a contribution to the labor union for it allowed male members to attend meetings and participate in activities.

A women's alliance addresses the concerns of both men and women. For example, Justice for Janitors (J4J) in L.A. incorporated women in the union's leadership (Crawford, 2011). As leaders, women linked social reproduction to production by

including family healthcare in workers' issues (Crawford, 2004). Men focused only on improving living wage due to the construction of their identity as breadwinners. Women janitors in J4J positioned women also as breadwinners even as they perform motherhood at the same time. Mothers traditionally care for children particularly when their children are sick. Women janitors, thus, saw healthcare as an important workers' issue.

J4J also fought against neoliberalism through non-violent and non-traditional tactics. They placed the provision of janitors' health and welfare responsibility to both building-owners and cleaning contractors. They protested on streets and held out leaflets for their campaign.

J4J also connected their issues to the community in order to gather support. Politicians, religious leaders, and other community organizations showed their support for J4J. While J4J showed the significance of unionism, Crawford (2004) argues that structural change is needed. "In Justice for Janitors, a conscious gendering of class resistance created a powerful unionism able to link social reproduction to production, but further challenges to unequal gendered relations will require more structural change" (p. 326). Nevertheless, she perceives community activism crucial in "creating the political will necessary for those broader changes" (p. 326).

Like the J4J women, the *cacerolazos* of Argentina brought issues confined to the private sphere into the public sphere as they showed their resistance against SAPs (Eltantawy, 2008). They also used non-violent tactics and their traditional gender role in their protests. Specifically, the *cacerolazos* banged their pots and pans in front of government offices. Their collective action resulted in the resignation of Argentina

Economic Minister Domingo Cavallo, who primarily implemented SAPs as required by the IMF-WB to grant loans to developing countries. President de la Rúa, who liberalized Argentina's economic policies, was also forced to resign. He was replaced by President Eduardo Duhalde, who brought state intervention back to Argentina.

Similar to Crawford, Eltantawy (2008) also concludes that the cacerolazos' protest actions were not enough. She suggests that a worldwide women's movement is needed "to persuade global powers to commit to addressing global capitalist injustices and to make women's issues a key part of public sphere deliberations" (p. 59).

White mistresses and domestic helpers: Their employer-employee relationship. Since caregiving also includes domestic work, I draw my literature on the relationship between employers and caregivers from research on mistress-domestic helper relationship. Research shows that elite white women have participated in maintaining the low status of women of color through domestic work. However, they are also capable of balancing the power relation between them and women domestic workers (Collins, 2006; Glenn, 2010; Parreñas, 2001; and Rollins, 1985).

Despite the abolition of slavery in the U.S., employers of domestic workers tried to retain the master-servant relationship (Collins, 2006). They required domestic helpers to practice deference to them through language and space. For example, domestic servants called their employers "ma'm" while employers referred to domestic helpers as their "girls". Employers confined domestic workers to one area of the house, usually the kitchen, and expected them to "make themselves invisible when in other areas of the

house” (Collins, 2000, p. 64). Some employers also imposed deference by requiring domestic workers to wear a uniform.

Through spatial deference, employers either integrate or segregate domestic workers (Parreñas, 2001). They tell domestic workers, for instance, when and where to eat. Aside from spatial deference, some employers require emotional deference which obliges domestic workers to smile all the time, regardless of events. Their smile would show they are happy and satisfied with their job.

Deference does not only perpetuate the master-servant relationship. For some employers, deference gives them a status symbol (Rollins, 1985). In addition, “the presence of deference-giving inferior woman enhances the employer’s self-esteem as an individual, neutralizes some of her resentment as a woman, and, where appropriate, strengthens her sense of self as a white person” (Rollins, 1985, p. 180). Furthermore, deference is a way for female employers to give themselves power as they and their domestic workers know that both of them are subordinate to the male employer (Rollins, 1985).

White mistresses in the Southwest continued the racialization of immigrant women of color and the feminization of work from the colonial period to the Civil War (Romero, 2006). They tried to fashion American women into the image of White American motherhood and womanhood. Similarly, elite women in the late nineteenth century initiated projects that would domesticate girls who do not conform to the white standards of femininity (Glenn, 2010). One of their projects involved the education of

Native American girls and immigrant mothers in the American way of doing household chores, cooking, and child-rearing.

White mistresses also directly participated in exploiting domestic workers. From the World War I to the World War II, white mistresses supported the immigration of Mexicans to the U.S. without documents so that they could hire Mexican women as domestic workers (Romero, 2006). They preferred Mexican women because the latter were easy to train and cost cheaper. In Romero's recent study on domestic workers, mistresses deliberately required domestic workers to perform demeaning tasks such as picking up clothes that were intentionally left on the floor.

Feminists and academics contributed as well to the oppression of domestic workers and women of color. According to Romero (2006), feminists in the 1960s and 1970s perceived domestic service as liberating because it was given economic worth through paid domestic labor. However, their notion of liberation for all women excluded women who were performing paid domestic labor. Feminists argued that women's common identity as housewife causes their oppression. Thus, in order to achieve liberation, feminists called on women to liberate themselves from the isolation and drudgery of housework. Romero (2006) argues that this notion of universal womanhood ignores the experiences of women of color who are domestic servants. While domestic workers release privileged women from housework by taking over their mistresses traditional responsibilities, they become further oppressed due to feminists' degradation of housework. Some feminist academics who employ domestic workers, for example, also participate in the oppression of domestic workers through their unwillingness to

share power with them (Romero, 2006). They insist on their position as above domestic helpers. In addition, they are unwilling to increase domestic helpers' upward mobility and make domestic work a dignified job.

Employers' perception that domestic work is women's work further degrades the domestic worker when it combines with racism and classism (Rollins, 1985). A number of employers who Rollins interviewed would not hire a man, a white woman, or a white upper class woman to provide domestic service because the identity of either of the three does not conform to the low status of domestic workers. Rollins states that "the employer benefits from the degradation because it underscores the power and advantage (easily interpreted as the rightness) of being white and middle class" (p. 184).

While the studies cited depict privileged women as exploitative, their studies also reveal that privileged women have a compassionate and caring attitude towards marginalized women. For example, elite women in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century "lobbied state and local officials to pass legislation to protect women's work" (Glenn, 2010, p. 43). Most employers valued domestic workers for the household help they provide as well as their companionship. They were aware that establishing a good work relationship with domestic helpers would result in the latter's loyalty (Rollins, 1985). Some employers exhibited nurturing and caring behavior towards their domestic workers by giving them gifts (Parreñas, 2001; Rollins, 1985). Gift-giving practices which Rollins (1985) call maternalism and Parreñas (2001), benevolent materialism, however, must be examined from a critical perspective. Rollins argues that while maternalism sounds positive, it perpetuates the superior-inferior superiority between employers and

domestic workers and replicates the payment-in-kind that white mistresses would give their Black slaves. Benevolent materialism also limits the bargaining power of domestics although Filipina domestic workers use it as a means to gain “tangible improvements and greater material benefits” (Parreñas, 2001, p. 188).

These studies suggest that privileged women are capable of utilizing their privilege in order to improve the relationship between women and to create institutional changes for the benefit of all women. While they were able to contribute in making domestic work bearable for domestic workers, they did not result in significant changes because their action failed to address the gender, race, and class ideologies that were embedded in the social construction of women and domestic work. Furthermore, these studies expose the flaws of Western feminism. Romero (1992) argues that domestic service brings attention to the failure of Western feminism to hold men and children responsible for domestic work as well as hold them accountable for gender inequality. Western feminism also failed “to establish collective solutions to the problem of household labor” such as providing healthcare and leave benefits. In this case, research on domestic work that seeks social justice for women across race and class difference necessitates an alternative theoretical feminist framework.

Having established the significance, purpose, and context of my research, I now turn to the organization of my dissertation. In chapter 2, I discuss transnational feminism as an alternative framework to theorizing women’s solidarity and therefore, its suitability in exploring the possibility of building alliances between women of color with different positionalities. Chapter 3 explores narrative inquiry as a necessary research methodology

that complements transnational feminism. In this chapter, I also describe my strategy for recruiting participants. I provide my analysis of the narratives I collected and weaved in Chapter 4 and my self-reflexivity as well as analysis of my experiences in recruiting Filipina participants in Chapter 5. My dissertation concludes with Chapter 6, which includes a summary of my research findings and directions for future research.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Domestic and caring work has provided an avenue for feminists, particularly women of color and Third World women, to come up with a theoretical framework that will address the multiple layers of oppression that women experience due to their race and class differences. Domestic and caring work has rendered visible women's differences and yet, Western feminism continues to adhere to the additive approach in liberating women from oppression and the notion of universal womanhood in forging a feminist alliance. The works of women of color and Third World women that critique Western feminism resulted in the development of transnational feminism and intersectionality. As this study seeks to promote social transformation and social justice through feminist solidarity, I adopt transnational feminism and intersectionality as my theoretical framework.

Merging Transnational Feminism with Intersectionality

Western feminism has earned the critique of women of color and Third World women for the following reasons: its additive approach to women's liberation, notion of universal womanhood as basis for women's solidarity, and representation of Third World women as victims (Collins, 2000; hooks, 1984; Mohanty, 2006). The additive approach centers on gender as the cause of women's oppression. White western feminists expect that elimination of gender inequality will eventually lead to elimination of other social inequalities which women of color and Third World women experience. Affiliated with

the additive approach is the notion of universal womanhood, which posits that women across cultures have similar experiences of oppression because of their femininity. This similarity, for white western feminists, unites women all over the world in their fight for gender equality. While universal womanhood implies that all women are agents of social change, Western feminism represents Third World women otherwise. Western feminism particularly constructs Third World women as victims in the academic discourse (Collins, 2000; Mohanty, 2006).

In contrast to Western feminism, transnational feminism recognizes that women's oppression is tied to other interlocking systems of oppression due to individuals' multiple positionalities. Thus, foregrounding gender equality in women's struggle against oppression will emancipate white upper class women only. Also, foregrounding gender equality validates male domination and positions men as women's enemy (hooks, 1984; Mohanty, 2006; Sharistanian, 1987). As such, it perpetuates patriarchal ideology and essentializes the differences between men and women.

Transnational feminism calls into question the notion of universal womanhood not only because it ignores the different identities that women embody, but also disregards the historical context of gender, race, and class oppression. Universal womanhood also seeks to unite women based on their common oppression. According to hooks (1984), sisterhood should not be based on "common oppression" because it perpetuates the notion and construction of women as victims as well as conceals the privilege of some women who also oppress other women. Hence, universal womanhood portrays men as the only obstacle to women's liberation. Instead of universal

womanhood, hooks (1984) proposes sisterhood which rests on bonding of women across their differences based on “shared strengths and resources” (p. 45). Mohanty (2006) builds upon hooks’ notion of sisterhood. However, she substitutes solidarity for sisterhood because the former implies political activism. Mohanty defines solidarity “in terms of mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities” (p. 7). Transnational feminism historically and culturally situates women’s issues and provides an alternative to universal womanhood through a vision of solidarity based not on a common oppression or gender identity, but on a common interest or struggle.

Although Western feminism examines as well Third World women’s experiences of representation, it results in the representation of Third World women as victims in the U.S. academic discourse. Such representation deprives Third World women of agency and creates the illusion that First World women are emancipated (Shome, 2006; Chowdhury, 2009). In addition, this illusion reproduces the myth of benevolence and civilizing mission that the U.S. used to justify colonization. First World women enter Third World women’s spaces in order to set them free from their oppressive culture. While transnational feminists deem it important to question the subordination of women outside the U.S., they argue that feminists must also call into question their privilege and acknowledge their participation in subordinating other women. Transnational feminism challenges the domination of Third World women while it recognizes their agency and acts of resistance.

Since this research explores the possibility of forging feminist solidarity between privileged and marginalized women in the Filipina community in the U.S., it must be informed by a theoretical framework that views Third World women from their perspective. According to Sharistanian (1987):

...to define women mainly in terms of their status relative to that of men is in effect to judge them externally and from a masculine point of view. When women are viewed from their own perspective, the value to them of female solidarity, quite aside from its usefulness as a tool to influence men, or even of sexual segregation may be revealed. (p. 5)

Sharistanian's argument points to the significance of using transnational feminism in a research that involves women. Transnational feminism brings attention to the ways women become complicit to the interlocking systems of oppression that cause injustice to other women. Transnational feminism historically and geographically situates women's experiences. Thus, it examines women from a specific location and not from a universal perspective.

While transnational feminism pays attention to women's particular location, it moves "toward comparing localized places and relations that were simultaneously affected by the same global processes" (Kim, 2007, p. 115). As former U.S. colonial subjects, Filipinas' experiences occur within a space that connects the U.S. and the Philippines. Filipinas' experiences of labor migration to the U.S. will not be fully understood without looking at the colonial past and the forces at work in the Philippines that push Filipinas to migrate overseas.

Using transnational feminism in this study, I invite feminists to recognize the contribution of Asian American women to transnational feminism. Thoma (2004) argues

that Asian American discourse written from a transnational perspective is regarded by feminist critics only as Asian American discourse because of their popular belief that Asian American women prioritize race and ethnic issues in their struggle against oppression. In her analysis of Comfort Women of World War II Conference, Thoma demonstrates that some Asian American discourse on women incorporates transnational feminism. She believes that transnational feminism is characterized by a multitude of women's voices and subjectivities. From this perspective, she argues that there is no single transnational feminism. She states that "transnational feminisms are recognizable by their coalitional, antinationalist, antiexploitative politics rather than by their association with a particular group of feminists defined by class, race, ethnicity, nationality, or some other monolithic category" (p. 151).

Towards a Feminist Solidarity: Reconceptualizing Women's Identity and Belonging

"Solidarity is not the same as support. To experience solidarity, we must have a community of interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite, to build sisterhood."

(hooks, 1984, p. 64)

The above quote mirrors current projects of transnational feminist solidarity. Thinking about a common interest, hooks (1984) suggests "ending economic exploitation" (p. 100) could be the basis of building a feminist movement that "would no longer address the class interest of a specific group" (p. 100). hooks, however, also argues that it would not help solve gender oppression. To end economic exploitation,

feminists must also critique capitalism. Some feminists are unwilling to do so because of their class privilege. Others become silent once they have gained upward economic mobility.

Nevertheless, hooks (1984) stresses economic exploitation of women as a basis for solidarity. Specifically, hooks roots women's oppression to the capitalist construction of women's work. She argues that rethinking women's work, whether paid or unpaid, would help shape the feminist movement. Because women's work is devalued, women are also exploited psychologically. Women, particularly those who provide paid domestic service, suffer from stigma.

Rethinking women's work, according to hooks (1984), entails valuing women's work. Society tends to view women's work as drudgery and a menial task. Women should take the lead in creating a positive perception of women's work by emphasizing the benefits that individuals and society gain because of domestic labor.

Mohanty (2006) expands on hooks' (1984) reconceptualization of women's work to look for women's common interest or goals that would forge feminist solidarity. She argues that the notion of work or labor in the capitalist system, which is based on economic exchange and on the distinction between reproductive versus productive labor, hinders women from seeing themselves as workers. The notion of work contradicts the construction of women as housewives. Although women may be in paid occupations that are not related to their traditional feminine role, their identity as workers is supplementary only to their identity as mothers and housewives. Thus, Mohanty calls for

transforming the identity of the housewife into the identity of “woman worker or working woman” (pp. 151-152).

The idea of working women links the social and historical location of women to a common struggle (Mohanty, 2006). It reconceptualizes the notion of universal womanhood, which roots women’s oppression to domestic work. For Mohanty, the construction of women as housewives and not domestic work per se subordinates and devalues women and women’s work.

Mohanty (2006) explores feminist solidarity within the transnational feminist framework because transnational feminism recognizes the class and race differences among women and the historical construction of their various identities. Transnational feminism also works against globalization and capitalism, which Mohanty perceives as the root cause of human oppression.

Following Mohanty (2006), Parreñas (2001) has taken up the challenge of finding a common difference to form transnational feminist alliances through her research on the employer-employee relationship of women in domestic service. Parreñas identifies neoliberal policies in the form of SAPs as women’s common burden of oppression. Neoliberal policies affect women in both developing and developed countries. Neoliberal policies allow women to enter the labor force and public space but take away public accountability of care. The oppression that women experience differs in the sense that women in poor countries are forced to migrate to a rich country while women in rich countries are forced to depend on migrant women for low-wage care work. Structural adjustment policies push governments to reduce public assistance and allocate funds for

paying debts to the IMF and the World Bank so that they may obtain more loans. In addition to neoliberal policies, gendered ideologies contribute to women's burden of oppression because care work is not transferred to men or men refuse to share in the domestic responsibility.

Overall, Parreñas (2001) argues that a struggle against neoliberal policies would unite women or create a basis for forming a transnational feminist alliance. The reduction of public assistance for families and, according to Parreñas:

the greater need for the labor of foreign domestic workers indicate that a movement against a neoliberal state regime would lead to greater recognition of the high worth of care and a reduced burden of the double responsibility facing women in the labor force. It would also mean a reduced need to devalue as low-paid the care work required in the family. (p. 56)

hooks (1984), Mohanty (2006), and Parreñas (2001) have identified a common struggle that would serve as a basis for a transnational feminist alliance. The challenge now is how feminists could enable women regardless of their positionalities to work together against neoliberalism and the devaluation of women's work. Would women who could afford to pay the price of neoliberal policies and gendered ideologies be willing to work with women who are not privileged to do so in fighting oppression? hooks states "sexism is perpetuated by institutional and social structures; by the individuals who dominate, exploit, or oppress" (p. 43). While the majority of these individuals are upper class white men, research on the relationship between white mistresses and women of color indicates that privileged women also participate in the domination, exploitation, or oppression of other women. Privileged women may not be willing to share their space with oppressed women. However, privileged women could reach out to oppressed

women in order to make their lives better. Reaching out signifies an act of making a connection with the other without necessarily leaving one's space. How is this possible? Is this even possible?

Collins (2000) states that individuals are caught in a matrix of domination in which they experience privilege and oppression simultaneously at times, but alternately at other times. These experiences occur relationally. African Americans, in Collins' example, experience discrimination in housing and employment as a collective. Social class differences, however, shape the degree of discrimination that they experience. Middle class African American women may be given preference over working class African American men. Collins argues that not all African Americans need to experience similar oppressions in order to form a coalition. Knowledge and consciousness of various experiences of oppression within the African American community could lead to a collective action that addresses multiple forms of oppression.

Crenshaw (1997) emphasizes as well the significance of recognizing intersectionality in addressing other systems of oppression that intersect with gender. In studying women of color who are victims of domestic violence, Crenshaw notes that support groups for battered women reproduce exclusionary practices because they focus only on assisting women with regards to gender violence. Some shelters, for example, decline to assist women who could not speak English. Also, African American communities at times consider concealing the issue of domestic violence against women in their community because of fear that this issue would further damage the image of Blacks in the U.S. Crenshaw argues that in these cases feminist and anti-racist practices

regard gender and race as mutually exclusive categories. Recognizing that these as well as other categories intersect in oppressing women would enable men and women within the same community regardless of race to form coalitions. Crenshaw argues that the group in which we find ourselves is already a coalition or a potential coalition. Whether such coalition is based on gender or race will not be problematic if it confronts as well internal marginalization or internal exclusion.

Similar to Collins (2000) and Crenshaw (1997), Cohen (2001) argues that coalition efforts must recognize that multiple systems of oppression work together and “use institutionalized categories and identities” (p. 43) to discipline bodies. Instead of building alliances based on a common identity, Cohen suggests organizing politically around experiences of marginalization brought forth by heterosexual normative ideology. Institutional practices that discriminate against gays and lesbians, for example, draw from the social construction of family. A family is defined as a social unit comprised of a male who takes the role of the breadwinner and head of the household, a female who performs domestic tasks as well as safeguards the morality of the family, and children who would be raised to uphold and reproduce familial values. Similar notions are applied to the African American community which resulted in the decline of public assistance to Black women and their children. Black women were perceived unworthy of receiving aid because they did not conform to the idealized image of women. Black women were stereotyped as promiscuous and thus incapable of raising children to high standards of morality. Identifying a common adversary and potential allies, according to Cohen, would be more effective in building coalitions across differences.

Inspired by Collins (2000) and Crenshaw (1997), I examined my own location within the matrix of domination and how I may use my position of privilege to build an alliance with or create a division between me and other Filipinas. I am a woman of color from a Third World country, yet I am privileged. My privilege stems from my status as a U.S. citizen and resident. Through my recent trip to Hong Kong, where a significant number of Filipinas work as domestic helpers, I experienced the privilege of being an American. Like other visitors entering Hong Kong, I had to go through the immigration check point. I got in line behind a Filipina who was waiting for her turn to be called by the immigration officer. After a few minutes, the immigration officer motioned for her to step forward. She handed him not just her passport, but other documents as well. The immigration officer looked at one of her documents first. I did not know how many documents she submitted but based on the amount of time he was spending on the first one, I realized I had to move to another line. I made sure that the line I got in did not have Filipinas or Filipinos ahead of me. When my turn came, I handed my blue passport with the United States seal to the immigration officer. He flipped it to the personal information page and then looked at me. He stamped one of the pages and gave me back my passport. I passed. Before I headed for the gate, I turned to see whether my *kababayan* was still at the checkpoint. She was.

My cousin instructed me to go to Gate A. Since I was not familiar with Hong Kong's international airport, I asked the male guard standing by the entry way where Gate A was. "Right here," he responded. He then asked me, "Are you here for business?" I answered, "No. I am visiting my cousin." He asked, "May I see your passport?" I

wanted to say that I would not have made it this far had the immigration officer at the checkpoint determined that I did not have a required document or my document was not valid. Instead, I simply took my passport out of my purse and handed it to him. “Okay,” he said as soon as he saw its cover.

Although my fellow Filipina’s and my experiences of exclusion were different, we were both subjected to a normative expectation about Filipinas crossing borders. My possession of a valid document from the high and mighty Uncle Sam does not exempt my body from being suspected of illegal trespassing. My brown complexion will always be associated with my Filipina identity which is associated with illegal immigration. Still, I remain privilege over Filipinas entering foreign territories. Despite our differences in positionality and geographical location, we may build an alliance that seeks to challenge “dominant power that normalizes, legitimizes, and privileges” (Cohen, 2001, p. 43).

Carrillo Rowe’s (2008) *BeLonging*, particularly, opens up the possibility for a feminist solidarity that includes both privileged and oppressed women. *BeLonging* is a state of desire or longing to be with the other. It is a choice. We choose our locations and our relations. *BeLonging* combines self-reflexivity not as an individual act, but in relation to the community one belongs to or that one yearns to belong. According to Carrillo Rowe, it is not enough to be self-reflexive about one’s privilege. One must do something with it.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Feminist scholarship “is best seen as a mode of intervention into particular hegemonic discourses (e.g., traditional anthropology, sociology, and literary criticism); it is a political praxis that counters and resists the totalizing imperative of age old ‘legitimate’ and ‘scientific’ bodies of knowledge” (Mohanty, 2006, p. 19). Thus, in conducting this study, I used a research methodology that draws from an indigenous tradition of producing knowledge. In this section, I discuss the significance of narrative inquiry as a research methodology for conducting my study. Next, I describe my participants, the challenges I encountered in recruiting my research participants, and my method for writing my participants’ narratives.

Narrative Inquiry as a Decolonizing Tool

Narrative inquiry is a methodology of doing and writing ethnographic research. However, it serves a more important function. It is a decolonizing tool. Traditional ethnography is founded on Othering, a colonial practice of gazing at colonial subjects and describing them in contrast to and from the perspective of white heterosexual male colonizers. Traditional ethnography, thus, creates unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched. It positions the researcher as knowledge producer and the researched as objects. Narrative inquiry, however, diverges from traditional ethnography wherein the researcher distances himself or herself from the participants and the research. Contemporary ethnography implicates the researcher in the research. The ethnographer

will sometimes find the other's story resonate with herself or himself. In excavating personal narratives, Krizek (2003) states, "there exists the potential for the researcher to recognize some aspect of her primary identities or a storyline from her life story in the personal narratives performed by others" (p.147).

Furthermore, narrative inquiry engages the researcher in self-reflexivity in order to call into question his or her biases in interpreting and representing the research participant's story. As Kramp (2000) has mentioned, the researcher becomes aware of his or her biases as the story is narrated. Through self-reflexivity the researcher also becomes a subject in the research as he or she brings attention to his or her authority in interpreting and representing the story for criticism. Thus, the researcher equalizes the research relationship with participants.

Self-reflexivity, moreover, brings the researcher in dialogue with the Self and the Other. A dialogue allows multiple perspectives to be heard. According to Calafell (2003), a dialogic approach to ethnography not only engages the researcher to be self-reflexive, but also denies authority to one voice. For example, Calafell implicates herself in her research to explore the tensions between Mexicana/os and Chicana/os in the U.S. She recalls how she got upset when a woman at Fiesta de los Pueblos in Chapel Hill started talking to her and her friend in Spanish. Her friend and interviewee, Mario, attributes these tensions to colonization. He says that he used to get upset too when people talk to him in Spanish because in his mind, it suggests that they perceive him as a wetback. He changed, however, after he heard his sister's reaction to a similar experience. In this

example, Calafell brings out her prejudice as well as intertwines her voice with Mario's. She also recognizes that Mario's response constitutes knowledge.

Contemporary ethnography intertwines with the field of Communication Studies as well. According to Conquergood (1992), contemporary ethnography brings together rhetoric and performance while performance merges rhetoric and ethnography. Ethnographic research comprises the written and spoken text of a performance. The text becomes performative because it exhibits the non-verbal components of storytelling and narrates the story through the body. Furthermore, performance builds a community as it critiques social injustices by engaging the audience in the researcher's bodily interpretation of the text.

Narrative inquiry is also performative. It may use poetic transcription. Poetic transcriptions, according to Madison (1993), do not only focus on the story being told or the narrator's words, but also on the way the story is told, the act of telling. In this way, "poetic transcription aims to capture the content of what is said and the form of how it is said in gesture, movement, vocal affect, and the symbolic surrounding reported and expressed" (p. 393).

Following Madison (1993), Calafell (2003) also used poetic transcription in writing her interviews and conversations with her Latina/o participants. She used poetic transcription not only to highlight "certain meaning and rhythms in language and the choice of words", but also to privilege "the importance of orality in historically marginalized cultures" (p. 21). Poetic transcription is rooted in the oral tradition of indigenous cultures in telling their history and passing on their cultural practices to the

younger generation. Similar to Madison and Calafell, I used poetic transcription in writing my participants' narratives as well. The Filipina/o indigenous culture has a tradition of telling history through oral communication and performance. However, Western colonization has influenced Filipina/o oral communication in terms of incorporating Spanish and English languages into their indigenous languages and dialects. Filipina/os who speak Tagalog, for example, could be heard using words that sound Spanish and mixing Tagalog with English. For example:

Speaker A: *Kumusta ka?* (How are you?)

Speaker B: *Okay lang.* (Just fine.)

In this regard, I wrote my participants' narratives in their spoken languages. I intertwined words spoken in Tagalog with words spoken in English. At times, I intertwined Tagalog words with their corresponding English translation placed in parentheses.

Narrative Inquiry as an Appropriate Method for Examining Marginalized Women's Issues

The narrative inquiry as a decolonizing tool is, therefore, a valuable method for studying marginalized women. Here, I refer to women of color, regardless of their sexuality and citizenship, as marginalized. Narrative inquiry fits into research that involves marginalized women because their history of oppression is rooted in colonialism. It advances the knowledge produced by women of color through their experiences but was devalued as a result of colonialism. Hence, narrative inquiry empowers women of color. To demonstrate the relevance of narrative inquiry in

examining women of color's lives, I begin by historically situating the subordination of their knowledge in the U.S. context.

Knowledge is power is the basic tenet of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000). Although Black feminist thought has emerged in the academy in the postcolonial period, Black women have perceived the dominating and liberating effects of knowledge since the colonial period. According to Collins, it was while enslaved that Black women gained this consciousness. Black feminist thought developed to resist the interlocking systems of race, gender, and class oppression that historically suppressed Black women's ideas and restricted them from engaging in intellectual work.

Collins (2000) states that the oppression of Black women and suppression of their ideas have occurred economically, politically, and ideologically. Black women's labor was exploited to serve the interest of U.S. capitalism. Confined to domestic service even after the abolition of slavery, Black women survived hardships. However, their survival had been "an all-consuming activity that most have had few opportunities to do intellectual work as it has been traditionally defined" (p.6). Black women worked the second shift. They served in another household during the day, and in their own when they came home. But even if they had time for intellectual work, they could not do so because literacy was denied them. They were also excluded from schools that could have provided them with better education. In addition, they suffered racial discrimination because of their negative stereotypical images that circulated since the slavery period. They have been perceived as incapable of doing intellectual work. Thus, most of them are

excluded from “positions of power as scholars, teachers, authors, poets, and critics” (p. 7). As a result, dominant institutions elevate the ideas and interest of white men.

Other women of color share Black women’s experiences of oppression although slightly different. Romero (1992) shows that the U.S. annexation of Mexico also obstructed Mexican women in the U.S. border from doing intellectual work. Mexican women, however, were given access to education. They had remained disenfranchised because their education merely prepared them for domestic work. Mexican women were restricted to vocational training and industrial education in domestic service because they were stereotyped as good “girls”, the term used by white mistresses to refer to house maids. Research also played a role in domesticating Mexican women. Romero writes that “schools were aided by social scientists and government bureaucrats in their crusade to maintain a Mexican servant class in the Southwest” (p. 85).

The denial of literacy to Black women during the slavery period resulted in the development of a Black epistemology. According to Collins (2000), domestic service positioned Black women as outsiders-within. Their close proximity to whites enabled them to gain consciousness of ideologies that construct identities and consequently, empowered them to “stress the sense of self-affirmation” (p. 13). This consciousness currently constitutes “Black women’s standpoint” (p. 14). Unable to access written texts, Black women relied on other ways of knowing available to them. They learned of each other’s experiences through the spoken text such as the recorded speeches of Sojourner Truth which, Collins says, reveals the contradictions in the definition of women during her time.

The suppression of Black and Mexican women's capabilities for intellectual work relates to the hegemonic and exclusionary practices that have dominated academic research for a long time. Traditionally, knowledge was produced from White men's perspectives. Knowledge production also privileged the positivist method in determining what counts as knowledge. The positivist method, based on science, tested the legitimacy of the findings claimed by the researcher. The narrative inquiry transformed research method in social sciences and the humanities by privileging women of color's ways of knowing. By doing so, narrative inquiry also empowered women. I will now give a brief overview of the narrative turn in social sciences and the humanities and discuss the challenges posed by narrative inquiry to traditional research and domination of women of color.

The narrative turn occurred to resist positivist assumptions that a valid research is objective and generalizable. According to Pinnegar and Dynes (2007), the narrative turn was first marked by "a reconceptualization of the status of the researched" (p. 11). In the 1960s, a few social scientists became disenchanted with the result of their research. They noted that their research did not have practical significance because it did not help solve human problems. They realized that social science research should move beyond describing human behavior towards finding the meaning or understanding experience. Thus, they turned to interpreting participants' response.

Pinnegar and Dynes (2007) explain that the narrative turn was accompanied by a shift away from numerical to linguistic data. This turn does not reject numbers in general. It recognizes, however, that quantifying experiences loses "the nuances of experience and

relationship in a particular setting that are of interest to those examining human experience” (p. 15). Numbers represent relationships in an equation through nouns and formulas, and yet, positivist research ignores its linguistic properties. They also impose meaning on the participants rather than allow participants to explain their numerical responses. In this regard, the authors claim, researchers questioned the trustworthiness and validity of numbers.

Social scientists also turned to narrative because they realized that human behavior cannot be generalized and that ways of knowing occur outside of scientific research (Pinnegar & Dynes, 2007). Generalization constructs a grand narrative that would be applicable to all individuals. Knowledge production is fluid and diverse.

Narrative inquiry challenges generalization by spotlighting personal narratives. Personal narratives displace the master narrative that keeps subordinated groups invisible. Anzaldúa (2002) writes, “when you create a personal narrative you also co-create the group/cultural story” (p. 560). But beyond that, it presents an alternative to hegemonic practices. As Anzaldúa states, “Again it’s not enough to denounce the culture’s account – you must provide new narratives embodying alternative new potentials” (p. 560). Black feminist thought is an example of an alternative narrative. It emerged to reconstruct the identities of Black women in the African American community and in the mainstream American culture in general.

Narrative inquiry challenges the authority of social science in determining what counts as knowledge by turning to the indigenous tradition of storytelling. According to Madison (1993), indigenous cultures retell their history through oral performance. Since

narratives whether written or spoken incorporates performance, narrative inquiry privileges indigenous cultures which colonialism has marginalized as well.

De Certeau (1984) argues that indigenous practices had valuable contributions to social science research. Indigenous practices enabled well-known social theorists to explain human behavior in contemporary society. He claims that analyzing the sacrificial practices of the Australian Arunta led Emil Durkheim to formulate “contemporary ethics and social theory (p. 64).” In addition, Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis was based on his analysis of indigenous practices of incest and castration among other concepts.

Narrative inquiry disrupts the unequal power relation produced in traditional research. Storytelling empowers the storyteller/participant. Madison (1993) writes that “in the story world, we are in control of who we are and of what happens to us” (p. 223). This statement does not mean that the narrative allows the storyteller to make up a story. It suggests that through the story, the storyteller “can reconstruct the event and claim dignity” (p. 224).

Johnson-Bailey (2000) states that narrative inquiry exposes and challenges the unequal power relation between the researcher and the researched also in terms of their “class, race, gender and sexual orientation” (p.126). In this regard, Johnson-Bailey contends that narrative inquiry is a suitable method for studying women in general and women of color in particular. She emphasizes though that narrative inquiry should be done with genuine concern for the women of color. Some feminist scholars might be motivated to use narrative inquiry because it adds a new dimension to social science

research and fills the gap in literature. In this case, feminists only contribute further to the exploitation and objectification of women of color.

Johnson-Bailey (2000) does not exempt women of color from the exploitation of participants that sometimes occur in doing research. Women of color unknowingly may engage in the objectification of the Other in their own racial group. She argues that the insider or outsider status of the researcher does not prevent the objectification of the other. While insiders of a disenfranchised group may find it easy to conduct research because they are able to identify with the Others' experience and obtain their trust, they are not completely removed from their privileged status as educated and middle or upper class individuals.

Conducting the Narrative Inquiry

The narrative inquiry is a qualitative research method aimed at understanding the lived experiences of individuals. This method gathers people's stories which comprise the research data, through interviews. The researcher then organizes these stories into a narrative to make them meaningful. In order to discuss narrative inquiry further, I will define what narrative is, explain how narrative inquiry is conducted, and explain how it falls in the realm of ethnography.

The narrative is literally defined as a story. In qualitative research, however, the narrative is distinct from the story. According to Berger and Quinney (2005), "in general, narrative is about stories and story structure" (p. 4). It presents a "coherent plot" (Berger & Quinney, 2005, p. 4) and usually has a beginning, middle, and end. In other words, the story provides the content of the narrative while the narrative structures the story. In

addition, sociologists Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain that narrative is the method while story is the phenomenon of the inquiry. Researchers use the narrative to re-tell people's lived experiences and personal stories.

Kramp (2000) also distinguishes between the narrative and the story in terms of their structure. According to her, the story is informal, conversational, and personal. In contrast, the narrative is formal, possessing certain elements such as characters, setting, action, plot, and point of view. She also explains that the narrative "is both a process, a narrator or participant telling or narrating, and a product, the story or narrative told" (p. 104). Her statement suggests that narrative is a means for gathering data and, at the same time, a form of making sense of the data that the researcher has gathered.

In conducting the narrative inquiry, Kramp (2000) posits that the researcher takes the role of the narrator who puts meaning into his or her story by telling it from his or her own perspective. The narrator also places the story in a particular context, which includes time and place. Kramp states that "a narrative connects events, actions, and experiences and moves them through time" (p. 110). In sum, the narrator interprets and represents the participants' experiences to share them with others.

While Kramp (2000) distinguishes the narrative/narrator from the story/storyteller, she also blurs this distinction. She writes, "The narrator or storyteller constructs a story by structuring and framing relationships" (p. 110). The blurring of these lines reflects the equality that narrative inquiry aims to establish between the researcher and the participant. Hole (2007) describes this method as collaborative. Using the narrative inquiry, Hole engaged her interviewees in co-constructing the research by

allowing them to decide which of their stories should be included in writing the research. Despite the importance of stories in narrative inquiry, Gubrium and Holstein (2008) urge researchers to be selective. They argue that not all experiences that have been reflected upon count as narratives. Narratives comprise “the interplay between experience, storying practices, descriptive resources, purposes at hand, audiences, and the environments that condition storytelling” (p. 250). Narratives are weaved not only from the storyteller’s experiences but other factors such as non-verbal signs, which also give meaning to the telling of experiences, the storyteller’s use of the senses to communicate bodily experiences of events as well as the ability of the researcher to convey such bodily experiences to the audience. Selecting experiences to be included in the narrative must also address the research purpose.

Chase (2008) defines the common terms researchers usually use in narrative inquiry other than narrative and story. She explains that the term narrative generally refers to an oral or written account that “may be elicited or heard during fieldwork, an interview of a naturally occurring conversation” (pp. 58-59). Specific terms across various disciplines include life history, personal narrative, oral history, testimonio, and performance narrative. Life history which some researchers interchange with life story may be an autobiography or biography from birth to present. Personal narrative, also sometimes used instead of life history, distinguishes the narrative from literary genre or folklore and may be based on or in the form of “diaries, journals, and letters as well as to autobiographical stories” (p. 59). In Communication Studies, personal narrative is often associated with autoethnography. Oral history focuses not on historical events but on the

meanings that witnesses placed on those events. Testimonio is a narrative of resistance against oppression often used by Latina/o or Chicana/o scholars. Performance narrative is a performance of an oral and written narrative in public. As a research method, the narrative inquiry engages procedures for gathering stories. I view these procedures as a reference rather than a prescription for doing research. Thus, these procedures are not fixed and sequential. Personally, knowing how other scholars conduct narrative inquiry helps me understand the function of narrative inquiry as a qualitative research method.

Although Chase (2008) defines each term, the narrative inquiry as a poststructural research method crosses over and intersects the boundaries that distinguish these terms from each other. Madison (1993), for example, describes the story of her interviewee, Mrs. Alma Klapper, as oral narratives from her life history. She also refers to her act of storytelling as a performance.

Kramp (2000) suggests ways to engage in a narrative inquiry. She recommends using phenomenological interview as a method for gathering stories. Phenomenological interview captures both the spoken words and the delivery of these words as part of storytelling. She also suggests bracketing the interview to bring “forward the researcher’s prejudices” (115). Biases, according to Kramp, are not completely destructive. In some cases, the researcher’s awareness of his or her biases might provide a useful insight or perspective of the stories being told as long as it does not overpower the storyteller’s perspective. Furthermore, she suggests that the researcher identify themes that come out from the interview and to look for nuances because experiences are embodied and specific to the narrator.

Like the traditional face-to-face interview, the narrative inquiry entails recording and transcribing the aural text. For Madison (1993), capturing the sound-rhythm, tone, volume- of the spoken text is important because it also shapes the text's meaning and has a cultural significance. Poetic transcription, thus, is significant in writing narratives. She writes that "sound, as well as the literal word, creates the experience of the oral narrative, and in any moment pure sound determines meaning" (p. 216). Sound is particularly significant in the verbal expression of African Americans. Rhythm constitutes their oral tradition.

Since the narrative inquiry involves face-to-face interaction, it allows the researcher to observe the behavior of the research participant in sharing his or her story as well as take into account the surrounding in which the interview takes place. In this way, narrative inquiry is ethnographic. Krizek (2003) defines ethnography as the "excavation of personal narratives" (p. 142). Excavation involves "eliciting, witnessing, collecting, and re-presenting" (p. 147).

Participants

My research participants were both Filipinas engaged in caring work. One was Vivian, an administrator of a care facility for children with disabilities in the Inland Empire. In this research, I referred to her only as Vivian because that was the name she wanted to identify herself. The other participant was *Tita C*, a live-in elderly caregiver in various private homes also in the Inland Empire. *Tita C* wanted to be identified as Caregiver 2 in this research. However, I felt that Caregiver 2 does not give her a human

face and thus, I renamed her *Tita C*. “Tita” is the Tagalog translation of Aunt. C stands for Caregiver.

Both women are mothers. Vivian is also a wife. Tita C did not reveal her marital status. While Vivian’s children are with her and her husband, Tita C’s children are in the Philippines. Vivian is in her 30s while Tita C is in her 60s. Tita C finds work through an agency that specializes in elderly care. Although she does not work permanently with one patient, she calls herself a live-in caregiver. She said her work involves staying with a patient at least one night. Thus, I expanded my criteria for selecting participants after five unproductive months. The expansion was justified not solely to meet my need for getting participants. The neoliberalization of care affects both the provision of child and elderly caregiving. Filipina live-in caregivers who work at private homes are also affected because their low-income clients depend on public assistance for long-term care.

Initially, I intended to interview Filipina owners or managers of a senior board-and-care home and their Filipina live-in caregivers. The University of Denver Institutional Review Board, however, required that they should not be working together because the caregivers’ various aspects of well-being might be put at risk. Thus, I looked for Filipina owners and live-in caregivers who did not work together.

Challenges of Recruiting Participants

I recruited my participants through referrals from my family and friends. Since most caregivers are immigrant women, it is possible that some of them are undocumented. Thus, they were reluctant to speak with a stranger who was requesting to interview them. Although care facility owners or managers must be documented per

healthcare requirements by the state and federal government, it is also possible that they hire undocumented immigrant women as caregivers. They too were reluctant to speak with me.

I asked my family first for assistance because of their direct contact with the Filipina/o community particularly in the Inland Empire. My older sister is president of the Filipino Ministry of a Catholic parish while my mother works for a Filipino restaurant. I approached them after receiving approval from IRB to conduct my research. I explained to them the purpose of my research, in case prospective participants ask them for details. However, I instructed them to encourage prospective participants to contact me for more details and questions or to get the prospective participants' contact information.

My older sister asked the members of the Filipina/o community at her parish, but none of them was willing to be interviewed or to refer anyone they know for the interview. My mom talked to a regular customer who she knew owns a senior board-and-care home. The Filipina customer neither said yes nor no. She did not want to leave her phone number with my mom. Although my mom gave her my email address and phone number, the Filipina customer did not contact me.

Then, I approached my friends in Southern California. I sent them a message through Facebook. Only one had connections to elderly care facility owners. Another one knew a caregiver. Both friends gave me the name of the contact person and contact numbers. At that time, my criteria were still limited to senior board-and-care home. Their contact persons did not meet my eligibility requirements. I also approached my cousin's wife in Los Angeles who is a registered nurse. She talked to her cousin first. Her cousin

agreed to be contacted. However, I could only leave a message. I left several messages, but I did not hear back from her.

Finally, I decided to hang out at the restaurant where my mom works. I hoped to find a participant on my own or meet someone who could refer me to a prospective participant. I met two Filipinas who tried to help me. Both of them are businesswomen. One is a Realtor and the other one owns a postal/shipping service business. The Realtor gave me her friend's phone number. Her friend is an elderly care owner and might refer me to other ones. I called her friend. But because it was around the holiday, she asked me to call some other time to schedule the interview. When I called again, she did not answer. I left her a message. She did not return my call. The postal/shipping service entrepreneur gave me the phone number of her caregiver friend. That was how I met *Tita C*.

I met Vivian at the restaurant while she was ordering food for her staff Christmas party. She mentioned that she might come back to order food for the 25th of December. I asked, "Oh you're working on Christmas Day?" She said "Yeah." Out of curiosity, I asked her where she works. She said she manages a care facility for children with disability. Then, our conversation touched on state budget cuts. Before she left, she said she could talk more about it if I wanted to know more. I talked to her about my research and asked if I could set up an interview with her. She gave me her phone number and told me to just call her for an appointment.

I conducted my interview with *Tita C* and Vivian separately. I interviewed *Tita C* at the Filipino restaurant where my mom works on December 2, 2010 at 3:00 p.m. *Tita C*

picked that date because it coincided with her day off. The two of us agreed to meet at the Filipino restaurant because it was convenient for both of us. I preferred to conduct the interview at Tita C's workplace and while she was on duty. However, her employer and her employment agency prohibit her from having guests at her employer's residence. On the other hand, I interviewed Vivian at her office in the care facility where she works. The interview took place during her work hours.

My interview with Tita C was structured compared with Vivian. Tita C and I relied on the questions I prepared (see Appendix A) in order to keep our conversation going. I did not intend to hold the interview that way, but I felt Tita C expected a question-and-answer structure. I noticed that she would stop each time she had answered a question. She would not make any side comments or ask me a question. Some of the questions I asked were: What made you take this job? Describe your daily work routine. If you don't mind me asking, how much do you get paid per hour or month? Do you receive benefits? If so, what are these benefits? Describe your relationship with your employer. I also prepared a set of questions for Vivian (see Appendix B). However, I did not use the questionnaire at all. Vivian was comfortable verbalizing her thoughts without a prompt from me. I managed to ask her the following: What is your title? Are all your caregivers female or identify as female? Is there an organization of care administrators?

I intended to interview three caregivers and three employers of caregivers. I assumed that finding them and getting their consent for the interview would be easy since, aside from being women, we all belong to the same ethnic community. My assumptions were challenged once my recruitment process began. In six months, I was

able to gain the consent for interview of two Filipinas only. Two other Filipinas who I personally approached to ask for an interview declined while another one who was recommended to me did not have the time to spend at least an hour for an interview. I discussed further the challenges that I faced in recruiting Filipina participants in chapter five.

Writing the Narrative

After the interviews, I transcribed Tita C's and Vivian's responses. Then, I selected the ones that communicate stories in relation to my research questions and turned them into narratives. I used poetic transcription in writing their narratives. Poetic transcription humanizes research participants because it captures the rhythm of their speech, tone of their voice, body movement, and emotions. I wrote their narratives in the language that they used to tell their stories. Vivian spoke in straight English while Tita C combined English and Tagalog. My transcription of Tita C's narratives reflected Tita C's linguistic shift. It reflected as well her being in-between two identities similar to Chicana feminists writing in their own voice (Anzaldúa, 2007; Moraga, 2000).

Chapter Four: Working Toward Beginnings of Transnational Feminisms

“So if we want to learn something from the moral experiences related to care in larger contexts, such as academic study or public debate, it would be better to approach these from the perspectives of the care-givers and care-receivers, and to try and create rhetorical and discursive space for moral narratives of care, which are marginalized in dominant discourses.”

(Sevenhuijsen, 1998, p. 24)

“Alam mo ba, marami na ‘kong nakikitang mga idea.

(You know what, I am gaining a lot of ideas).

Sabi ko, when I get old, this is what I’m gonna do.”

(Tita C, personal communication, December 2, 2010)

“I tell them, you need to learn work ethic, for one. And you need to be a self-starter. You can’t wait for somebody else to tell you what to do...If you see a need, then go do it.”

(Vivian, personal communication, January 4, 2011)

This chapter narrates the experiences of two Filipinas engaged in caring work. Just as Tita C gained ideas for her retirement based on her formal experiences of caring for the elderly, I too learned from her experiences with respect to caring as a political practice and caring as work that has social and economic value. I also learned from the knowledge that Vivian imparted on the possibility of building transnational feminist alliances between women of color with different positionalities. I learned that reaching

out to others in response to their needs is a personal initiative in the same way that one desires to belong. It is with great pleasure that I share their narratives and lessons that I excavated from them after a painful but rewarding process of locating and writing them. I have shared this process as well in the next chapter.

In writing this chapter, I heeded the voices that urged me to let these narratives stand on their own because I feared that my analysis might dominate my participants' voices. I also heeded the voices that encouraged me to interweave my voice into my participants' narratives in order to help illuminate their meanings. I relied on *pakapa-kapa*, a Filipino indigenous approach to research (Torres, 1982). Literally, this practice relies on the sense of touch or gut feeling. *Pakapa-kapa* means groping, searching, or exploring as means to accomplish a task and get out of a dim situation. The researcher goes into the field without knowing what to expect. The data gathered do not make sense at first. However, as the researcher goes over the data several times, she begins to recognize the meanings that these data signify. Eventually, "the uncertainty and ambiguity" (Torres, 1982, p. 171) of the data are diminished. The researcher, then, is able to identify which data to include and explore their meanings.

The Setting: Our Filipina/o Cultural Space and Vivian's Workplace

My interview with Tita C took place on December 2, 2010 at 3:00 p.m. Tita C picked the date of the interview while I set the time. She selected that date because it was her day off. My decision about the time of our interview was determined by our meeting place. We both agreed to hold the interview at the Filipino restaurant close to where she lives. Her workplace would have been the ideal location as far as I was concerned so that

I would get the opportunity to see and perhaps feel what it is like to care for a human being just like myself, but a stranger in many ways. However, I was restricted from entering that space. During our phone conversation, Tita C explained that she is not allowed to entertain guests at her client's house.

The Filipino restaurant, nevertheless, was significant to us because it marks our cultural space similar to the "Oriental stores" (Bonus, 2000). I am aware that the term Oriental might offend a number of individuals who are of Asian descent as this term has acquired a derogatory meaning historically. I used this term, however, in accordance to Bonus' research.

Oriental stores are social spaces that publicly display ethnic differences and allow the articulation of ethnicities (Bonus, 2000). Although the Filipino restaurant where my interview with Tita C occurred particularly targets Filipina/o and Filipina/o-identified customers, it is also frequented by other Asians as well as Blacks, Latina/os, and Whites. However, the artifacts inside the restaurant show the Filipina/ness of the place.

I had entered this space many times even before I started this research, but as a customer. I did not realize back then how the artifacts communicate the Filipina/o history and cultural identity. Some of the artifacts I saw on display were new, such as the three framed artworks, which showcase Filipina/o creativity, hanging on the dark yellow wall of the dining area. The frames are made from natural unpolished twigs. The first artwork was a jeepney, the main mode of public transportation in the Philippines. It is also a symbol of Filipino ingenuity and a relic of American colonialism. Jeepneys historically have been reconstructed from used thrown-out American military vehicles. The second

artwork was a man in a plain white shirt and red pants carrying a pole with a bundle of fish hanging from the end of the pole. The third was a *calesa* or horse-drawn carriage that reigned on the streets of the Philippines as a mode of public transportation during the Spanish colonial rule. The *balikbayan* boxes, “Star Kargo” and “Eastern Cargo” perched on the refrigerator were new items as well. Filipino/as in the U.S. use these boxes to ship all kinds of stuff to their family and relatives in the Philippines. Between these boxes was an old model of the television which has always been tuned in to The Filipino Channel, popularly known as TFC. This channel broadcasts local programs from the Philippines and Filipino programs here in the U.S. On the wall behind the counter hung a gray t-shirt with a print of the Philippine map and the sign “100% *Pinoy*”. *Pinoy* is a slang for Filipino. I heard several customers asked how much the shirt costs. The shirt, however, is not for sale. It comes free with the shipment of two regular Star Kargo boxes to the Philippines at the same time. While the restaurant represents capitalism, it is more than “a site for economic exchange” (Bonus, 2000, p. 60). It is a site for forming social relationships and political alliances based on a common ethnicity.

I arrived at the restaurant at 3:00 p. m. The place was empty. Based on my observation, customer traffic in this restaurant usually slows down at three. It was the perfect time to do my interview with Tita C. During the interview, however, a few customers stopped by. Our interview extended to two hours as we stopped each time a customer walked in. Tita C always reminded me to turn off my audio recorder whenever there was a customer and to turn it back on once the customer had left.

Her reminder also harkened to Cohen's (2001) critique of queer politics and Crenshaw's (1997) take on intersectionality. Despite the fact that the Filipino restaurant offers a space for organizing around political issues that concern Filipina/os in the U.S., it does not guarantee that every Filipina/o who enters this space is a potential ally. At the same time, a safe space must be critically examined because it is sometimes predisposed to reproducing dominant ideologies. The Filipino restaurant, while it functions as a site of resistance to domination, also reproduces the internal marginalization of Filipinas within the Filipina/o culture. This space silenced Tita C's voice in relation to the Filipinos who I talked to while hanging out. These men, from various age groups, told me about their unpleasant relationship with their Filipina spouses. In their stories, they implied that their spouses did not conform to the stereotypical image of Filipinas in both the Western and Eastern cultures as submissive and obedient. Some of these men are still in the relationship while others are already divorced. Although my conversations with these men were not related to my research purpose, they communicated spatial power. Specifically, they demonstrated who has the power to speak and what issues are important for discussion in the public sphere. These men voluntarily talked about their private lives in the presence of other strangers beside me, whereas Tita C was cautious of talking about her private life in public. These men initiated and directed the conversation towards their marital relationship, whereas Tita C left to my discretion the direction of our interview. The men's openness to talk and Tita C's cautiousness in telling her story seemed to disrupt the heteronormative construction of women as naggers and men as

emotionally withdrawn but from another perspective, these men had reclaimed the public space as a masculine territory.

I sat on the chair facing the glass door and the wall facing the parking lot. As I waited for Tita C, I fumbled for my voice recorder in my purse while I occasionally glanced at the door. I had never seen Tita C so I was not really sure how I would identify her. I assumed she would somehow resemble my mom – petite, short-haired, with light and slightly wrinkled skin. Should I approach each Filipina customer who I see possess the features that I just described? I was still reflecting on this question when I saw a copper compact car with the Toyota symbol park on a space in front of the restaurant. A woman got out of the car and walked towards the restaurant door. She came in. She was wearing a black and white floral top and black pants. She has black wavy hair with strands of gray hairs that is the same length as her chin. She clipped some of her hair on the right side. I gauged that she is taller than five feet. Except for her skin, she did not resemble my mom at all. She looked like she was in her sixties. But I had a feeling that she was Tita C.

She looked at me. I smiled and stood up. She smiled and approached my table. “*Kayo po ba si Tita C* (Are you Tita C)?” I asked. She said, “*Ya. Ikaw si Beverly* (Are you Beverly)?” I replied, “*Opo. Kumusta po* (Yes. How are you)?” She said, “*Mabuti naman* (I’m fine).” I motioned for her to have a seat.

I thanked her first for granting me an interview. Then I pulled four sheets of paper out of a manila envelope. They were my Informed Consent forms – two were written in Tagalog and two in English. I explained that per the University of Denver Institutional

Review Board policy, we have to go over the informed consent. I asked her whether she would prefer the Tagalog or English version. She said it did not matter to her. I picked the English version and gave her a copy. I asked her to follow along as I read out loud. Afterwards, I asked her if she had any questions. She smiled and shook her head. Then, I said, “*Kung okay po lahat sa inyo, paki-sign lang po ‘tong forms* (If everything is okay with you, please sign these forms).” She did.

Before we started the interview, I gave her a grocery gift card to compensate for the time she spent with me. She refused to take it. “No, it’s okay. *Kahit naman wala* (It’s not necessary),” she said. I insisted. I said it is stated in the informed consent. She finally accepted and thanked me. I placed my voice recorder on the table. “*I-check mo muna kung gumagana*. (Make sure first that it is working),” Tita C reminded me. I placed the recorder close to my lips and uttered, “Mike test.” And then we were set.

Vivian scheduled our interview for January 4, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. in her office at the care facility. Vivian’s facility was in a site familiar to me. However, it did not look like the one I still remember, although my memory of that site is now vague. Back then, there was only one facility on that site, the sister facility that Vivian referred to in her story. I worked for that sister facility as a Substitute Teacher’s Aide in 1999. The site now replicates a small residential community with a hospital. Street signs bear the name of each facility and point towards its location.

In contrast to Tita C, Vivian’s position as an administrator gave her the privilege to choose her workplace as the site of our research interview. Tita C’s workplace, which

is at the home of her employer, and Vivian's office in the care facility both have the characteristics of the socially-constructed private space. These workplaces provide a home to individuals living there and create familial relationships. Tita C, for instance, during the course of our interview described caring for her employer similar to the personal care that a daughter or son might give to an aging parent. Similarly, Vivian specifically said that in the care facility "We're like family." Domestic work is performed in both sites. Despite similar characteristics of their workplaces, Tita C's and Vivian's different locations in the power scale dictate their degree of control over their workplace. As a caregiver, Tita C could only use her employer's house for official work purposes whereas Vivian, as a representative of the care facility owners, could use her office to conduct business not directly related to her occupation without asking the owner's permission.

I pressed the doorbell when I reached Vivian's building. A Black woman wearing scrubs opened the door. I introduced myself and informed her that I have an appointment with Vivian. She let me in unaccompanied. I walked the short hallway that led to a space that functions as a living room and dining room. It had a sofa and a big round work table with three chairs. A decorated Christmas tree that reached almost up to the ceiling still stood by the wall. The wall was decorated with Santa's stockings. Each stocking had a name. I presumed each name represented a child who lives in that facility. A lady in white scrubs was sitting on the sofa. In front of her was a boy in a wheelchair. She was talking to him, but he was responding only with a smile. His face was tilted upwards.

Vivian came out of her office after a few minutes. She said “Hello” and summoned me into her office. We went through the Informed Consent routine before we began the interview.

The Narratives

Commonality, differences, and possibilities for BeLonging. “*Bakit po ninyo pinasok ‘tong ganitong klase ng trabaho?* (What made you take this kind of job?)” I asked each participant. And so their stories began.

Tita C

Gusto ko lang mag-serve sa mga elderly kasi, mayroon akong reason... namatay ‘yong Mommy ko sa Philippines. Nagkasakit siya. Tapos, I did not have the chance to take care of her... that’s why I dedicate my job as a caregiver, Na mag-alaga sa mga elderly.

(I just wanted to serve the elderly because, I had a reason... my Mommy passed away in the Philippines. She got sick. Then, I did not have the chance to take care of her... that’s why I dedicate my job as a caregiver, to care for the elderly.)

Kailan siya namatay? (When did she die?) If you don’t mind me asking.

1991

Nandito ako and Hindi pa ‘ko puwedeng umuwi.

(I was here and I couldn’t go back home.)

Kailan po kayo nag-start mag-work as a caregiver?
(When did you start working as a caregiver?)

1993

I was planning to take a CNA *ba.* But, *‘di ako magkar’ on ng chance. saka ‘yong time, ah,*

complicated *sa* schedule. Schedule *namin, paiba-iba so hanggang sabi ko,* Well, maybe, *talaga na lang*

hanggang mag-retire.
(I was actually planning to take a
CNA.
But, I couldn't get a chance.
And the time, ah

conflicted with my schedule.
Our schedule varies.
So until I said,
Well, maybe, really
I'll be here until I retire.)

Vivian

Oh, I've been here since ninety-five.
I actually started as a CNA-
Certified Nurse's Assistant.
And I worked myself up.
My current position now is uhm,
QMRP Administrator-
Qualified Mental Retardation Professional.
Basically, that's a fancy name for,
'cause I do [laughs] you know
Basically, it's like case worker,
Social worker.
Basically, what I do here is
I monitor, coordinate, and integrate
all treatment services for the kids.

My mom, being in the Philippines
being Filipino and stuff...
always wanted me to become a nurse.
So, and, when I was younger,
that was really,
I love caring for you know.
My mom always said that I always
brought strays home. Cats, dogs, you know.
And, uhm
I always wanted to care for them.
But when I was younger,
I did not see that as my calling.
I wanted to be, uhm, a Civil Engineer [laughs].
But then I tried it my Mom's way
And, you know
I liked it ever since.

Another thing was when I was in high school
We had, uhm, well I was in a private school

A Catholic, uhm, private school and [clears throat]
They had a program which was called Adopt-A-Friend program,
Where we went to senior citizens' home or convalescent home
Which was down the street from the school.
And we'd go there and spoke with the elderly and stuff like that
And uhm once a week after school, I would walk over there
And go visit and you know, so that's why I really enjoyed
You know just being with them.
'Cause you know the elderly all they want
Is someone to be there, to talk to,
To read a book or what not,
So, and that's what I did.

Tita C's and Vivian's narratives reveal their common experiences and interests in caring work. Their mothers influenced them both in different ways. Indirectly and non-verbally, the death of Tita C's mother created in her the desire to care for the elderly. Tita C tries to make up for the lost chance or opportunity to care for her mother by caring for the elderly. Vivian, on the other hand, was verbally encouraged by her mother to take a career that involves caring. Research on care typically turns to motherhood as the model for a caring relationship (see Parreñas, 2005; Stoltzfus, 2003; Winkler, 2002). Feminists have critiqued such model because it assumes that all women conform to heterosexual normativity and essentializes caring as a feminine trait, role, and virtue.

Tita C's and Vivian's narratives suggest that a discourse on care inevitably invokes the image of the mother because of the dominant role that the female parent plays in caring for the children. The question I asked which prompted their response did not intend to bring attention to motherhood or bring their mothers into the conversation, although I believe that motherhood may be used as a political tool to achieve social change. During the American postwar era, women reformers with children as well as women reformers who recognized that other women have motherhood responsibilities

brought to the public space what has long been held as a private issue: the marginalization of women as a result of a patriarchal capitalist construction of gender and labor (Stoltzfus, 2003). They demanded equal work opportunities for men and women, which included public support for child care so that white middle class women could participate equally in the U.S. labor force, and asserted women's rights to paid work. Their activism resulted in legislative provisions for publicly-funded childcare (Stoltzfus, 2003). Although the legislation did not end gender and class inequalities, it was a significant step towards easing domestic responsibilities on some women and increased entry of women into formal work. Collins (2000) argues that motherhood may be a lens through which Black women may empower themselves. Black men glorify Black mothers because of their capacity for self-sacrifice. Black women may take this image of Black mothers to redefine themselves as self-reliant and independent and thus, offer a counternarrative to their dominant image as welfare queens in the eyes of the White community and as martyrs according to the perception of the Black community. Caring is fixed onto the woman's body because it has been socially constructed as the moral duty and status obligation of women in the family (Glenn, 2010). Tita C and Vivian, however, provide an alternative to this dominant view. Caring is a commitment. Commitment is a personal choice. Caring and commitment, as components of love (hooks, 2000), may serve as a point of connection between women across differences. According to hooks, our choice to love moves us to overcome fear as well as alienation and separation. "The choice to love is a choice to connect-to find ourselves in the other" (p. 93). hooks echoes Carrillo Rowe's (2008) *BeLonging* or the desire of the Self to be with the Other. A

commitment to care is a commitment to love which makes coalition-building across differences possible.

Since Tita C's mother already passed away, Tita C was released from her obligation to care for a family member. Yet, she made the choice, although her choice remained constrained, to fulfill this obligation by dedicating her job to elderly care. Here, she also suggests that while caring is an obligation, it is a source of livelihood at the same time. On the other hand, for Vivian, caring is a trait inherent in her. She has shown compassion for other living creatures since she was a child. However, she suggests that caring is also a calling similar to civil engineering, an occupation that is traditionally associated with masculinity. Caring as a calling invites us to respond. Between caring and civil engineering, Vivian has chosen the former.

Tita C and Vivian suggest as well that their personal choice was tied to social factors. Their decision to commit themselves in caring work, first of all, was influenced by their mothers. Education also played a role in Vivian's life. Her Catholic education developed in her the capacity to be attentive to the needs of others. However, according to Chicana feminists, Catholicism as an instrument of Spanish colonial rule promoted self-sacrificing as the ideal standard of femininity (Calafell, 2007; Moraga, 1987). Self-sacrificing in this context has oppressed women. Nevertheless, attentiveness is a caring practice because it involves not just recognizing, but responding to others' needs (Mackay, 2002).

Self-sacrificing is not essentially oppressive and tied specifically to femininity. Voluntary sacrifice is necessary to create and sustain a community that is engaged in

loving practice (hooks, 2000). “Giving up something is one way we sustain a commitment to the collective well-being” (hooks, 2000, pp. 142-143). hooks refers to both men and women mutually sacrificing a part of themselves in order to strengthen their community. She also recognizes that while some women have the propensity to care and are interested in service, there are a number of women who are the opposite. Again, hooks (2000) complements Carrillo Rowe’s (2008) notion of BeLonging. She argues that a community built on love enables individuals to reach out to strangers and make a community regardless of their location. Although Tita C and Vivian share a common interest or goal, they have more differences based on their positionalities. Tita C occupies a marginalized position as an unlicensed care worker. Tita C does not possess the legitimate knowledge or expertise in caring symbolized by a certificate. In contrast, Vivian’s narrative indicates that having a certificate enabled her to advance her career and gain authority. The “Professional” in her title brings recognition to her “authoritative expertise” (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007, p. 150) in the care service industry, particularly in caring for children with disability. Vivian compares her position similar to a social worker, but her “fancy” title elevates her status.

Professionalism marks the division of labor between the worker and the manager. According to Cheney and Ashcraft (2007), “the notion of expertise rules out intuition, emotion, and individual idiosyncracies” (p. 161). Although Vivian is in the field of caring work, which involves emotional labor as well, Vivian primarily performs mental labor as a professional administrator. Monitoring, coordinating, and integrating involve analytical skills and require only light physical labor such as writing a recommendation or a report.

Tita C, on the other hand, performs manual labor. She describes her caregiving tasks as follows:

Araw-araw, first thing *d'yan* you know
mag-prepare ka ng meals –
breakfast, lunch, dinner.
And then, *ia-administer mo 'yong mga* medication.
And then, *bibigyan mo sila ng* personal care –
shower, bath, dress, everything.
And then, if there's a doctor's appointment,
dadalhin mo (you take them). *Ganon*. And anywhere they want to go.
Housekeeping, *alaga* (caring), driving.
Halos lahat (Almost everything).
It's like *parang nasa bahay ka na rin* (being home).

In this narrative, Tita C makes an important contribution to reconceptualizing women's work. She suggests that there is no difference between paid care work and the care work that a woman is obliged to perform within the family. Families are willing to pay a stranger to care for a family member and yet, do not give wage entitlement to female members of the family who provide caregiving.

Tita C's experience also demonstrates that professionalism comes with certain privileges. Being a live-in caregiver without a permanent home care, Tita C works on a per assignment basis which dictates her work location as well her schedule. Thus, she does not have a private or personal space in her workplace. In addition, she does not have control over her time. She continues:

Ang live-in ay
'yong twenty-four hour *na nagi-stay*.
Mga three to four days.
Kung kailangan ng assistance,
at all times.

May mga client na very loving.
Very open *sila*.

Lagi silang nago-offer.
Like, o, if you need anything,
Linens, towels, let us know.
And this is your room.
So, they make us feel at home.
May mga client naaaa
mainitin ang ulo (hot-tempered).
May mga client na dahil caregiver ka lang,
They look down on you.
Gusto, 'pag pumunta ka r'on,
you bring your own beddings, pillow
pillow cases, blankets
and bring your own food.
But the client should provide a room and food
for the caregivers.
The others, they don't
they don't ah, they don't
give you that privilege.
Basta bayaran ka nila (as long as they pay you),
and that's it.
That's why I have my beddings in my car
all the time [laughs].

Tita C's lack of ownership of work space and time extends even to her personal activities. I mentioned in the introduction of this chapter that Tita C could not schedule our interview at her workplace because she is not allowed to entertain guests. She could not also use her time at work for the interview. We had to conduct the interview on her day off and away from her workplace. De Certeau (1984) writes that "every story is a travel story – a spatial practice. For this reason, spatial practices concern everyday practices" (p. 115). Tita C's story travelled from her workplace to the Filipino restaurant. By telling her story in the Filipino restaurant, Tita C has transformed this place into her own space although for only two hours.

Unlike Tita C, Vivian has an office space. Her office technically belongs to the company that owns the facility. However, Vivian has the authority over that space. She

controls the entry of people into her office. As such, she was able to hold our interview in her office. She also has control over her time. She scheduled our interview within her work hours. The various sites where my interviews took place demonstrate what Alexander (2006) means by space and place as the main characters in ethnographic narratives because they “distinguish and dictate the doing” (p. 51). In this research, the participants’ workplaces distinguished the participants’ location in the power relationship. They also dictated where the interviews would be conducted.

Tita C, because of her subordinate position, is subject to surveillance and discipline from her care client, who is her employer as well.

May mga klase klase na mean.

It’s hard to deal with mean *na matanda*.

Lalo’ng matanda.

I’ve been through that,
‘*yong palalabasin ka ng bahay*, you
know.

Ayaw kang pagamitin ng telepono.

Or else, *tatawag sila ng pulis*
kapag gumamit ka ng telepono.

All that, you have to deal with that.

Kaya mga ibang caregiver nga,
nagtatago

dahil natatakot sa mga pasyente nila
‘pag mga mean.

N’ung una,
natatakot ako talaga.

Pero later on, masasanay ka.

(There are those who are mean.

It’s hard to deal with elderly people who
are mean.

I’ve been through that,
Like they will kick you out of the house;
do not want you to use the phone.

Or else, they will call the police
If you use the phone.

All that, you have to deal with that.

That’s why some caregivers
hide

because they are afraid of their patients,
if their patients are mean.

At first, I was really afraid.

But later on, you will get used to it.)

Aside from professionalism, citizenship status marks Tita C’s marginalized position and Vivian’s privilege. This status also authorizes others to abuse her, reify their power over her, and control her space in different ways. In the beginning of her story, Tita C reveals her identity as an immigrant. She could not go back home when her

mother passed away. Immigration policy requires newly-arrived immigrants who are not green card holders or citizens yet to remain in the U.S. for a certain period before they could go out of the country. Like a prisoner, she was held in detention. Tita C suggests that her freedom remains curtailed even after she had passed probation. Tita C did not have the option to give up work because she was supporting a family. She says,

Ah, may pinapadalhan ako sa Pilipinas.
(Ah, I remit a portion of my pay to the Philippines)

In that case, *'yong pinapadala n'yo natutugunan naman po 'yong pangangailangan*, like the basic needs, for example.
(Does the money you send satisfy their basic needs?)

Ya, 'yon lang naman.
Let's say \$300 a month.
Malaki na sa kanila.
So, okay na *'yon.*
Bahala na silang mag-budget d'on. (laughs)

This part of her narrative reveals the underlying reason she could not go to school to earn a certificate as a nurse's assistant. Tita C could not quit her job because doing so would stop her financial support to her family back in the Philippines. Compared to Tita C, Vivian's citizenship gave her access to economic resources as well as to social capital that she needed to get an education. Social capital refers to a support network such as people, communities, and institutions that would enable an individual to gain economic mobility and political power (Bourdieu, 2006). Vivian narrates,

I just went to RCC –
Regional Community College.
I got my general eds
and transferred to Cal State San Bernardino.
I got my bachelor's in Health Administration.

Back then I paid what –
Ten thousand.
But my parents put up some money in
and I got the rest through loan.

Vivian's social capital that allowed her to move up was comprised of her parents who partially financed her education, higher education institutions that accepted her application, and a financial institution that invested on her education.

From these narratives, I gained insights on the strategies that caregiving offers for building women's alliances across race and class. They demonstrate that a commitment to care may serve as a common ground for privileged and marginalized women to work together for achieving social justice. Caring, in this context, refers to reaching out to others who are not familiar to us and who do not belong to our individual community. We see their needs and respond to their needs. Caring, then, is an act of BeLonging. However, we must see the others' needs from their perspective and consider its cultural context. Otherwise, the Self reaching to the Other would replicate the liberated First World women and the Third World women as victims dichotomy.

A women's alliance without a purpose becomes a sisterhood (hooks, 1984 and Mohanty, 2006). What would an alliance between privileged and marginalized women accomplish? What does a woman with "strong power" (Oberlander, 2002) contribute to this kind of alliance? How would it empower marginalized women?

Vivian

I've seen things go up
But yet, like in the working force,
Like here in our company, we've been at a raise freeze
For three years.
And on top of that, uhm, myself

I took a ten percent cut.
Now my staff, since they don't make a lot of money,
We only took a two percent cut.
They only took a two percent cut. That's a lot.
If you add it through the year, the whole year
That's a big cut.
Especially, like I said, some of our CNAs
They're the lowest paid person here.
We pay our CNAs a little bit above minimum wage.
But considering like our janitor staff,
I know they're paid minimum wage, so take a two percent cut
And that's a lot for them.

Vivian's narrative indicates that even as a privileged woman, she has the capacity to empathize with subordinate others and do something to alleviate their oppression. Inflation affects her and her workers but as a privileged woman, she recognizes that inflation has severe repercussions on her workers. In coming up with a resolution to the budget crisis that their company is experiencing, Vivian has sought to minimize the loss on her workers. She has sacrificed part of her wage for the interest of her workers. It is important to note though that Vivian rose from the ranks of CNAs.

Similar to the rationale behind Medicare, placing privileged and marginalized women in an alliance would give the latter political clout. Those in power would work to protect the community in which they belong if their interest is at stake. I wondered aloud what would happen to their facility if the economic situation does not improve. Vivian responds,

It's uncertain and it's something that uhm,
That my husband and I had talked about.
The company might say,
"We're gonna depopulate _____"
And then, I won't have a job [laughs].
My plan is I'll probably find a part-, well

I still have my license as a nurse. I kept that up.
So I'll find a part-time job and then uhm,
I'm not an RN, but I have my LVN.
As an LVN, I can work as a nurse,
But I'll work part-time and go back to school for my RN.
But that's getting hard too because, uhm,
The school has raised their tuition also.

There's an organization out there that uhm
Basically it's a network that helps lobby stuff at the state.
Like, say,
if they're trying to put out a new regulation out there
that we think is unfair
for this type of homes,
they'll lobby to the state to get it thrown out or what not.
They also offer training, not really training but stuff that they've learned
like new regs coming out and they'll post the thing saying,
"hey, come to this class."
I participate in some of them.

Vivian has other options in case their facility closes down. She can work as a licensed vocational nurse, which is below the rank of a registered nurse, but still above a CNA. Because of her ability to navigate different identities, Vivian could embody different experiences of these identities as well or as an outsider-within, would become cognizant to the manifestations of domination and oppression in power relationships. In this regard, Vivian may develop empathy for low-waged women workers.

As Vivian contemplates on her options, she also supports politically organized efforts that would help keep their facility afloat. Her leadership position gives her access to information about these efforts and allows her to participate in them. Whereas Vivian has other options and the power to resist unfair regulations to gain job security, Tita C counters job uncertainty this way:

Some of the caregivers,
walang tiyaga.

Walang tiyaga.
Parang feeling nila,

nahirapan silang makipag-deal.
Stress *sila*.
Some caregivers don't have the
perseverance.

But if you're doing it because it's your
job,
you want to make money, you have to
sacrifice.
'*Di mo naman makukuha lahat, eh.*
Oo nga, suwelduhan ka.
Pero siyempre, magtitiis ka rin.
Mag-sacrifice ka, ganon.
Kaya 'yong iba,
hind nakakatagal. I don't know.
But for me, *nakakatagal naman ako.*
I don't know because I said to myself
nga, dahil hindi ko naalagaan ang
mother *ko, gan'on na lang.*

No perseverance.
They feel as if
it's hard to deal with clients. They get
stressed out.

(You can't have it all.
Yes, they pay you,
But of course, you have to suck it up.
You have to sacrifice.
That's why others could not last.
But for me, I could stand it.
Because I was not able to take care of
my mother.)

Rather than resist work conditions that add to her oppression, Tita C would persevere even more in doing her job and suffer in silence. Whether Tita C is Catholic or not, Spanish occupation of the Philippines has pacified Filipinas through Catholicism, which has taught them obedience and meekness. The Philippines' national hero Jose Rizal exposed the consequences of submissiveness on women through the character of Maria Clara in *Noli Me Tangere*, a novel he wrote during the Spanish colonial administration of the Philippines to critique Spanish friars, soldiers, and colonial rulers. Although some Filipinas have debunked the idealized image of women as submissive, with the former Philippine president Corazon Aquino as a well-known example, others continue to embody it.

Part of the reason Tita C would not resist her client's maltreatment of her is to keep her commitment to care for elderly. However, her narrative suggests as well that keeping her job matters to her because her work provides her with economic security.

A commitment to care: Politicizing the personal against the (neo)liberal individual. Caring as a social practice functions as a political tool (MacKay, 2002). It challenges the race, gender, and class ideologies that intersect in the neoliberal notion that welfare creates a culture of dependency. Furthermore, it exposes the exclusion of people with disability in the neoliberal construction of the person. Tita C's and Vivian's narratives provide an alternative thinking to such perspectives.

Vivian

What makes it hard to sometimes
with the family I work with or deal with or I've had experience with,
sometimes, their kids are here and it seems like, I-
I don't know they think their responsibility is...
that they're no longer responsible.
But they still are. These are their kids.
I call them. They sign the consent.
I call them to bring clothes and stuff like that.
And they would say, they would tell me
that they're bringing it. But you know.
some families bring it and some families don't bring it.

My staff here sometimes buys clothes for the kids.
Like this Christmas, what we did was we picked names.
Or my staff picked names and we bought presents for them.
The majority of my staff are female.
I have, uhm, three male staff. And they're Asian.
I don't think I'll find a male staff who is Caucasian [laughs].
I have two Indonesians and the other one, I think
is Chinese.
I don't think I'll find a Caucasian male who shows passion or you know.
Even as a CNA, I haven't come across it.
Maybe as a nurse, I would find that.

I don't know, I think, uhm...well with our type of culture
Whether male or female, I think we have
Our work ethic is different than the American work ethic
And with uhm, especially with the generation now,
They wanna be in uhm, a higher position
Versus the lower position, uhm, you know what I mean?
They wanna be seen better than other cultures.

Vivian suggests that the State and the American capitalist society also depend on formal caregivers to take the responsibility of attending to the needs of America's disabled children. Majority of Vivian's caregivers are female and those who are male belong to ethnic minority communities. Her narrative demonstrates that caring work is both gendered and racialized at the same time. The absence of a Caucasian male in low-waged caring work reveals the entanglement of whiteness with heteronormative masculinity and elitism. At the same time, it legitimizes the feminization of Asian men in the material reality since caring work has been socially constructed as women's work. Vivian rationalizes the absence of White men in low-waged caring work by drawing from a discourse of difference that produces and not just maintains occupational identity (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007). She differentiates the Asian culture from the "American" culture in terms of how these cultures perceive work. Here, Vivian applies the primitive-civilized dialectic (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007) to explain Americans' preference for a higher position. The primitive-civilized dialectic is not out of place in transnational feminist work because it also pays attention to the interlocking systems of oppression in the construction of work and identity and links their construction to colonial history. Vivian implies that if Americans would continue to occupy higher positions, they would be able to perpetuate the U.S. superiority. The intersection of whiteness with national

identity is also present in Vivian's explanation. The Americans are the Caucasian men who do not show or have passion for caring work.

Through this narrative, Vivian also contributes to transnational feminism's project of alliance-building. Work ethic may be a common ground for political organizing involving Asian women and including Asian men, as well as women and men from various ethnic communities. The white heteronormal masculine perception of work ethic legitimizes the gendered, racialized, and classed division of labor that spills over the boundaries of national identity, thereby assembling and excluding bodies on the other side of these lines. The American work ethic, using Vivian's words, limits employment opportunities, maintains the low status of work that marginalized bodies perform and thus also keeps their wages low, and denies citizenship and work benefits to specific workers. The impact of the American work ethic particularly points to the central issues that concern transnational feminism in critiquing the capitalist notion of labor and women's work. The same issues affect workers in general because they are lumped under a single identity.

Tita C

Well, *maraming mga nagsasabi na ang caregiver* is really a big help.
Lalo na sa mga relative.
(Particularly to relatives)
Lalo na sa mga anak,
(Particularly to children)
na mga busy rin sa trabaho.
(who are also busy at work)
Kaya they're very thankful for the caregivers.
They are there, us
na magtingin, mag-take care

(to look after, to take care of)
sa kanilang mga parents.
Kasi they don't have time.
Kaya they're very thankful for the caregivers
na although *binabayaran nila*,
(although they pay them)
it's worth it.

Hindi na sila masyadong
'yon ba'ng naiistorbo.
(They're not burdened anymore)
Hindi na sila kailangang
tawagin for the doctor's appointment,
to buy medicine, prescription,
all that.
So with caregivers, and with our company,
it's a big help.
Parang kami na halos ang gumagawa.
Parang binabayaran na lang kami to do the job.
(It's like we do almost everything.
They just pay us to do the job.)
So, *'yon ang maganda sa kanila na*
they're just happy about the caregivers.

We are thankful too
because you know
kahit walang room o ano,
(although they don't give us a room or what not)
as long *na binabayaran kami*,
(as long as they pay us)
that's the main goal [laughs].

Tita C's narrative indicates that individual freedom and personal responsibility require social support. In her example, children and relatives are grateful to caregivers who take the responsibility of caring for their aging parents. Because of caregivers, children and relatives are free to pursue their individual interests. While the elderly and their families depend on caregivers for assisted living, Tita C also suggests that

caregivers depend on them for their livelihood. Caregiving enables Tita C to live independently. She continues,

Ang sahod ko (My salary)
is like one hundred forty-five dollars
to one hundred sixty a day.
It depends *sa*,
it depends on the client's
health condition.
'Pag medyo mahirap alagaan (If the work is hard),
medyo mataas din ang bigay (the pay is slightly higher)
'Pag easy lang (If it's easy),
medyo mababa din (the pay is also slightly lower).

Well, so far, *kung nag-iisa ka lang*,
(If you live alone)
you know, okay *na 'yon*.
You can buy,
you can pay your rent, pay your bill.
Meron kang konting maitabi,
Sapat na 'yon.
(You can save a little bit,
Yes, it's sufficient.)

Caregiving reveals not just the interdependence of human beings, but also our interconnectedness. As a social practice, caring builds community. Vivian narrates,

See, in my type of facility right now, like I said,
we are one hundred percent Medical funded.
So, and the things we do here,
A lot of the kids that we are taking in are more severe.
Meaning, that they require a lot more medical attention
Versus just being stable.
Before, we used to just get stable kiddos that don't require oxygen,
That don't require you know, basically, there was g-tube feedings,
Through the gastric, and uhm, we gave them meds.
But now, we have more severe clients, where uhm, where you know
They're requiring continuous oxygen, therapy,
And they have to be on the monitor and, uhm, they're fed by pump.

Technically, I don't think we're, 'cause a lot of things are expensive.
So I don't think we get paid enough for what, you know, we do here.

Like the equipments, they're expensive.
A lot of our equipments, the facility actually purchased.
The rate that we get is not really enough
to cover all those stuff.

We have a family member here who is involved with uhm
with the Harley Davidson bikers.
So they do a lot of donations here.
Like Christmas time, we had a run
where they put the kids' names on the tree and
they bring individual presents.
Now, for the whole campus, they also had a run in November
where they do a lot of, uhm, money donations
and a lot of toys and clothes donations to the campus.
Mainly, it was for _____. But whatever they don't use there
they send over here.
So a lot of the stuff that we were able to do with our kiddos here
are because of donations.

Like one of our, ah, kids here, their family, uhm
where he works at, where the Dad works at,
some of those people that work there
actually donate money to United Way where [coughs]
once United Way collects all that money,
it gets sent to our facility [coughs].
So we get a lot of support and stuff like that.

The facility where Vivian works is owned by a private company that depends on the state, particularly on Medical funds, to make a profit. Thus, the state budget cuts on Medical obstruct the company from making a profit because aside from getting insufficient Medical funds, the company has to supplement the rest of the funding to stay in operation. Whereas neoliberal advocates attempt to withdraw public accountability for healthcare and welfare, Vivian's narrative shows that caring for children with disability actually garners public support and motivates individuals to share in the responsibility for caring even just at the economic level.

My interview with Vivian brought to my attention that not all persons can be responsible for their well-being and life. In this regard, the neoliberal notion of the person as a self-sufficient, autonomous individual dehumanizes those who do not have the capacity to sustain their lives and stand on their own physically and developmentally. It is symbolically and systematically annihilating individuals who do not have the capacity to contribute to the advancement of capitalism.

How does caring then relate to the transnational feminist project of solidarity? Caring provides a lens through which transnational feminist alliances might challenge neoliberalism. It contradicts the neoliberal notion of the individual as autonomous and thus, is capable of being responsible for her or his welfare. Caring work demonstrates the interdependence of individuals which enables them to achieve freedom. It also offers a space for privileged and marginalized women to engage in a dialogue on the ways privileged women participate in the oppression of other women but that they could work with marginalized women in fighting the interlocking systems of oppression without giving up their privilege. The patriarchal, racist, and capitalist construction of caring work situates women from different communities within the same private and marginalized space. However, the systems of oppression also intersect through the bodies of women, which tilt the balance of power in favor of upper class white women. Some privileged women exercise power over other women. As in Tita C's example, live-in caregivers for the elderly are likely to experience verbal and non-verbal abuse from employers who are typically female. Tita C also suggests that caregivers who experience abuse from their employers have the agency to leave the relationship but in her case, she

would often choose to stay. Her decision to stay sometimes transforms the relationship into one with mutual respect. Vivian, on the other hand, shows that privilege can be used to minimize marginalized women's experience of oppression. Through empathy, privileged women can give up their interest without giving up their power to respond to the needs of marginalized women. Tita C's and Vivian's commitment to care enables them to make a connection with others.

Reconceptualizing caring as work and women as workers: Lessons from a formal caregiver .

Do you perceive yourself as a worker?
'Cause it's a woman's job, *ang tingin ng mga tao*
hindi siya work.

(People don't see it as work.)

Kasi dahil babae ang gumagawa, it's natural na gawin ng babae.

(Because women traditionally perform caring work,
It's just natural for women to do that kind of work.)

So...

NO! I think we're a worker too.

It's not a big job, but it's work.

You have to work for it. To gain *na*
'yong mga pasyente mo eh magugustuhan ka.

(So that your patients would like you.)

It's not easy sometimes *lalo na kung mga* mean.

It's not easy to deal with them.

So, of course, worker *ka na rin.*

(You're a worker too.)

So, *itong bagong* company
namin,
kasi nag-merge sa bagong
company, *ang nakaganda rito*
meron na kaming workman's, in
case *ma-injure kami*
sa work namin. Kaya meron na
kaming...

(Our new company,
What's good about this new
company,
now, we have a workman's, in
case we get into
a work-related injury.
Now we have a...)

...workers' compensation?

Worker's compensation, ya.
See? *Kaya* workers *kami* [laughs]!
(We're workers too!)

Do you have benefits?
Health and dental insurance?
Retirement plans?

No.

*Kasi nga hindi naman regular
ang mga clients namin, eh.*
We are just a referral
from our company.

Because we don't have
regular clients.

Mohanty (2002) suggests reconstructing the identity of women from housewives to workers in order to find a common identity for solidarity and also to recognize the socio-economic value of women's work whether in the private or the public space. Tita C perceives her identity as a worker although her work is confined within the domestic space and traditionally performed by women. However, her consciousness of her worker identity does not lead her to recognize that she is entitled to benefits that other workers receive. She readily accepts that because she is not a regular employee and her work is contingent upon the needs of clients, she does not have the right to those benefits. But such is the case as well with permanent live-in caregivers for private homes. Formal caregivers do not receive entitlements and receive low wage because caring, which has been socially constructed as women's work, is devalued (Glenn, 2010). Tita C narrates,

Well, *sabi nila ang mga caregiver daw
ay masyadong mababang trabaho.*
(It's a lowly job)
But you know, I don't care.
It's a decent job, you know.

So, I mean, *merong* "Hmp,
ayoko ng ganyang trabaho."
Marumi daw. Kasi you have to do
everything.

(Some would say, “Hmp. I don’t want that kind of job.”)
(They say it’s dirty.)

You have to clean their butts, you know.
And *papaliguan mo*.
You have to do...
It’s like *nag-aalaga ka rin ng parents mo*.
‘Yon ang ayaw ng iba.
But I don’t care.
As long as I get paid...
I’m doing it to the Lord.
I’m happy.

(You have to give them a bath.)
(It’s like caring for your parents.
That’s what others dislike.)

Along with reconstructing women’s identity as workers, transnational feminist alliances must also reconceptualize caring as work. Perhaps we can learn from Tita C’s experience.

Ah, nung first-time na nag-apply ako,
ang experience ko
from private lang.
(Ah, when I applied for this job,
my previous experience
was only a private one.

Here in the U.S.
Then my friend, *ni-refer n’ya ko*
Sa company na ‘to.
So, n’ung naga-apply ako,
Nagkaroon ako ng two years
experience.
Which is, *napaganda naman*
‘yong aking first na trabaho
as a, you know,
first-timer.
So, *n’ung nag-apply ako,* you
know,
nag-trust na sila sa ‘kin.

Everytime *na kailangan nila ng*
caregiver for the clients,
tinatawagan nila ‘ko.

Here in the U.S.
Then my friend referred me
to this company.
So, when I was applying,
I already had two years of
experience.
It helped me perform well
for my first assignment.
So after I applied,
They already trusted me.
They trusted my ability,
the quality of my work.
Everytime they need a caregiver
for the clients,
they call me.)

So until now,
I’m still with the same company.

First, 'yong qualification
na hinahanap nila 'y (that they look for)
Kailangan may experience ka talaga.
 With or without certificate,
basta may experience ka.
 Or, like *mga* referral from other clients, *ganon.*
At saka, you're driving.
 This is very important.
Kasi ang caregiver
ang nagdadala ng patients (takes patients)
Sa mga doctor's appointment
 Or shopping.
 Or sometimes 'yong *mga* care client
 Like(s) to go out to eat.
 You need to have, you know,
 the driving skills.

Uhm, there are times *na*
humihingi ako ng dagdag 'pag
 one of my patients *ay nag-grabe*
ba
 'yong health condition.
 At first, *medyo madali lang.*
 But when she was getting worse,
 (Uhm, there are times when
 I would ask them to pay me
 higher
 So, *nagbigay naman sila.*
Nagbigay naman.
 They understand *na siyempre,*
iba 'yong presyo
ng before and later on.

if one of my patients' health
 condition gets worse.
 At first, the work was easy.
 But when she was getting worse,
medyo mahirap nang alagaan
 so *nag-demand ako ng*
 additional.
 the work became hard
 so I demanded for additional pay.
 They acceded.
 They did.
 They understand that of course,
 the cost of labor
 was not as the same as before
 since later on, the work got
 harder.)

“So, *may mga nakikita po ba kayong* similarities with your female employer,
maliban sa pagiging babae (Do you see any similarity with your female employer, aside
 from gender)?” I asked. Tita C looked at me with a frown. I groped for words in Tagalog
 that would help me explain the context of that question. In the interest of time, I blurted
 out the first thought that came to my mind, “Like *kung may mag-aalaga rin sa inyo*

(Like, if someone would take care of you)?” The question did not make sense to me, but

Tita C’s response provided my saving grace and the perfect closing for her narrative.

You mean, in my case, when the time comes [laughs]?

By this time, *meron na ‘kong...*

Alam mo ba, marami na ‘kong nakikitang mga idea.

(You know what, I have gained a lot of ideas.)

Sabi ko, when I get old, this is what I’m gonna do.

You know, if, if

kung ako talaga ‘ng aalagaan,

(If I would be cared for)

I don’t want to be a burden.

Pero I don’t know.

Kasi ang plano ko,

mag-retire sa Philippines.

Ayokong...sino ‘ng babayaran ko rito?

(I don’t want...who am I going to pay here?)

It’s expensive here.

But in the Philippines, *‘pag meron ka ‘ng pera*

(If you have money)

madaling kumuha roon ng mag-aalaga sa ‘yo

(It’s easy to find someone who will care for you).

‘Yon lang kung ang similarity ‘pag dating ng time ko,

I don’t know *kung ano ‘ng magiging health problem ko*

when the time comes. *Pero, ang mga idea ko lang,*

(My ideas)

Pakiusap ko sa mga anak ko, ‘pag ‘di n’yo ko kayang alagaan,

(I asked my children that if they could not take care of me),

magpa-alaga na lang ako sa mga kamag-anak, sa mga pamangkin.

(I’ll ask my relatives to care for me, my nephews and nieces)

Puwede kong bigyan-bigyan.

(I can just give them something)

Or ayoko namang mag-stay sa senior home, you know.

(I don’t want to stay at a senior home).

I don’t know. It’s hard to tell yet. It’s too early [laughs].

Her narrative communicates that she and her female employer share something in

common. Their identities are both tied to that of a worker. Workers, at some point in their

lives, will have to retire and dream of retiring comfortably. “At what age do you think

magre-retire kayo?” I asked.

'Pag hindi na 'ko makapag-trabaho siguro.
(When I could not work anymore maybe.)
Maybe. *Ano na 'ko ngayon, sixty.*
(How old am I now, sixty)
So, maybe I don't know.
Kasi may mga friends ako na seventy pero
nagta-trabaho pa.
(I have friends who still work at the age of seventy)
But I'll try to stop maybe seventy. So then,
I can still enjoy, take care of myself,
'di ko na masyadong papagurin katawan ko.
(I won't work my body too hard)
I've been working for like...
...years.

Discussion

Transnational feminism has moved beyond critiquing White Western feminists' notion of universal womanhood as a foundation for building women's alliances that seek to liberate all women from gender oppression. Current research that uses a transnational feminist framework has explored alternative ways to foster solidarity amidst differences through finding a common struggle, common adversary, common advocacy, and other points of commonality. Carrillo Rowe, however, argues that commonality does not have to be the only foundation on which women can build alliances across differences. Since identities are fluid, we can move in and out of different communities to form multiple alliances that would address women's issues not limited to gender. The desire to be with the other in times of need would enable women to deal with identity politics in transnational feminist alliance-building. Through transnational feminism, I have explored the possibility of alliance-building between women who belong in the same ethnic community but with different class positionalities marked by their occupational identities in the organization of caring work and the division of labor. Tita C's performance of and

Vivian's engagement in caring work point to caring as a political tool for organizing women against the interlocking systems of oppression. Caring motivates not only women, but other members of society as well to reach out to others who are in need despite their differences. As Vivian's narrative shows, caring brings people who are strangers to each other together. Caring creates a community which could be developed into a coalition.

Caring is not simply an act of kindness. It requires attentiveness to a need and responding to that need. More importantly, it requires a commitment. The process of building coalition takes time. U.S. first wave feminism began the work of attempting to organize women around a shared politics in the 19th century. We are now in the 21st century and U.S. feminists are still figuring out how to organize themselves. A commitment to solidarity, thus, is important to keep women's fighting spirits alive and continue to inspire feminist work on coalition-building aimed at achieving social transformation and social justice for all, particularly during these fragmented times.

Along with commitment, caring entails self-sacrifice to maintain alliances, but not in the context of an abusive relationship. By self-sacrificing, I am referring to giving up one's interest if it would be oppressive to others. Vivian, for example, took a large pay cut to reduce the impact of systemic poverty on the company's low-waged care workers. Self-sacrifice that does not conform to gender, race, and class ideologies can potentially subvert the dominant meaning imposed on it. Viewed through the lens of transnational feminism, self-sacrifice incorporates the voices of women who are from generally, but not essentially, collectivist cultures that value a harmonious relationship. However,

within transnational feminism, self-sacrifice rejects its colonial and patriarchal construction.

Caring as a practice may also provide transnational feminist alliances the tool to reconceptualize women's work as simply work and change society's perception towards women and women's work. Tita C's narrative illuminates the similarity of paid caring work with unpaid caring work. Both are performed in a private space. Caregivers, whether family members or hired workers, release other family members from domestic responsibilities and thus, allow them to perform productive labor as well as pursue individual freedom. If caring work is simply a woman's moral duty and obligation, why pay one and not the other? Capitalism devalues caring work because it is not directly tied to relations of production. Tita C's narrative shows that if no individual would be willing to perform caring responsibilities, who would supply labor to capitalism? Would capitalism flourish without workers?

Transnational feminist alliances built on caring poses a challenge to neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, replete with race, gender, and class ideologies, is basically concerned with unlimited accumulation of wealth for those who are already wealthy and those who can be incorporated into their ranks. It does so at the expense of poor women and women of color, whose capability to achieve individual freedom is constrained by structures that specifically marginalize them. It does so as well without consideration for persons who are incapable of being responsible for themselves due to disability. At the heart of neoliberalism in short, is greed. Greed creates a society without love and care. hooks (2000) writes "materialism creates a world of narcissism in which the focus of life

is solely on acquisition and consumption. A culture of narcissism is not a place where love can flourish...Greed and exploitation become the norm when an ethic of domination prevails” (p. 105). Transnational feminist alliances might not have an economic policy to replace neoliberalism but with a commitment to care, pre-empt society from reverting to Darwinism. Privileged women in these alliances can reach out to help alleviate poverty, sexism, and racism of marginalized women by using their privilege to influence public policy and change perceptions towards poor women and women of color at the personal as well as societal levels.

**Chapter Five: Researching Filipina Care Workers:
Transformation, Tensions, and Implications for
Transnational Feminist Solidarity**

Having read the literature on narrative inquiry, what it is and how it is done, I eagerly climbed down my ivory tower and confidently went out into the field. I was ready to fall into the welcoming arms of the community I intended to study and get my hands dirty. But the field I saw was not the one that I imagined. It was barricaded by barbed wires from which hung the signs “Private Property” and “No Trespassing.” This imagery describes my experience of doing fieldwork, particularly one that involves a community of women who have been historically marginalized in the American society as well as in the academy. In this chapter, I discuss the challenges that I encountered while doing fieldwork. Such discussion necessitates the researcher’s self-reflexivity to understand how and why challenges in doing fieldwork arise and use this knowledge to transform ourselves and our research methodology in Feminist and Communication Studies (Lengel, 1998). Thus, I critically examine my assumptions and intentions in conducting this research and towards the community from which I derived my participants. Next, I discuss the difficulties I experienced in recruiting participants and conducting the interviews in relation to my research assumptions. Last, I explore the implications of my fieldwork experience on the transnational feminist project of fostering solidarity.

A Critical Examination of My Research Assumptions and Intentions for Ethical Considerations

Contemporary ethnographic research compels researchers to engage in self-reflexivity as an attempt to purge ethnography of its colonizing tendencies (Calafell, 2003; Conquergood, 1992; Krizek, 2003; Madison, 2003, 2006, 2008). Self-reflexivity often times focuses on the power relation between the researcher and the researched and the ethical behavior of the researcher before, during, and after the fieldwork. One of the questions that ethnographic researchers engaged in self-reflexivity commonly ask is, “Whose interest does the research serve?” Following this question usually is a discussion on whether the researcher simply used the participants for the research purpose.

Although I conducted this research to seek social justice for marginalized communities, I also intended to use this research for self-serving reasons. This research comprised my dissertation, a major academic requirement to earn my doctorate degree. Furthermore, before I started recruiting research participants, I already thought of turning my dissertation into a book publication. In this case, did I exploit my participants?

I was not the only doctoral candidate who had this ultimate agenda for doing an ethnographic research. Warren (2003), in reflecting on ethical responsibility, also admitted to hoping to get good data that would be sufficient to write his dissertation. He wanted to write his dissertation in an interesting manner so that he could get it published. However, he argued that his ethical responsibility lay on doing what he thought “can change people’s understanding of race and whiteness” (p. 158). On my part, I was seeking alternative ways for women to build alliances across differences for the purpose

of creating social transformation and achieving social justice. By collecting narratives from an underrepresented community of marginalized women in academic research, I was attempting to provide a space for these women's voices to be heard in the public sphere (Delgado, 1998)

I entered my ethnographic site without any intention of becoming friends with my participants. It was not because of their non-academic status. Friendship, for me, takes time to develop. The possibility of developing friendship relies on constant communication which I knew I would not be able to offer my participants at the time I conducted my fieldwork. I informed my participants at the beginning of our initial meeting that I needed to interview them for my research and it was up to them to give their consent or refuse the interview. Prior to the interview, I went over the informed consent with them which asked their permission for a follow-up interview if necessary. It was clear to both me and my participants that our relationship would be confined within the interview period. My action would have been unethical if I established friendship with them before and during the interview, but lost my connection with them once the interview was over.

Declaring my research intention at the early formation of my research relationship with Tita C even empowered her. Towards the end of the interview, she stated "I hope I was able to answer all your questions." Instead of being a victim of exploitation, she became an active participant in the research. Her responses to my questions aimed to help me complete my research. As such, she participated in serving the purpose of this study whether consciously or unconsciously. The shift in the balance of power in her favor,

however, was only temporary. Researchers after all remain in control of the research. After the interview, I organized Tita C's stories into narratives and then selected the narratives to be included for my analysis.

The explicitness of my research intention also secured me an invitation from Vivian for a research interview. During our informal conversation, I mentioned that I was doing a research on neoliberalism and caregiving. Then, she said, "If you want to know more, just come talk to me." I asked her for her phone number. The rest was history.

Rather than my research intention, my research assumptions were problematic. As a member of the Filipino/a community in the U.S., I assumed I would get research participants in a snap. My physical features, although often mistakenly categorized as Native American, Mexican, Islander or African American by others, would immediately identify me as Filipina to the eyes of my kababayans. I was born and raised in the Philippines, which gives me a strong sense of familiarity with the country's political, economic, and cultural landscape. I speak Tagalog, the dominant language in the Filipina/o culture, and English, which allows me to communicate with Filipina/os who do not speak my language. I also have connections specifically to the community in my research location.

Bhopal (2000), a South Asian woman who conducted research on South Asian women in East London, attests that having shared identity or partial identification with her interviewees based on gender and ethnicity helped her gain their trust and enabled them to talk about their private lives. The women welcomed her to their homes where they conducted the interviews. The interviews took on "the character of an intimate

conversation” (Bhopal, 2000, p. 69). Likewise, in Sanders’ (2006) experience, her identity as a woman was enough to reduce the level of suspicion held by the female sex workers she interviewed towards her. She notes that female sex workers were more at ease talking about their private lives to a female researcher compared to a male researcher. Gonzales (1982) also identifies gender and ethnicity as among the qualities of interviewers that would help them gain significant information from research participants, particularly if the research involves Filipina/os. However, she argues that gender matters depending on the research topic. Ethnicity is not a barrier to a productive interview as long as the interviewer speaks the language of the community she is conducting a research on.

By relying on partial identification, however, I ignored the differences between me and the Filipinas I sought to study. Our differences are marked not just by other identities that we do not share, but by our varying immigration experiences. Although we remain at the margin, I somehow managed to put one foot in the door of the center. From the private space, I eventually worked my way to the public space. I started working in the U.S. as a babysitter for a Filipino couple who lived in the same apartment complex where I first stayed as a newly-arrived immigrant. I shared the unit with my two sisters who came here ahead of me and already had mainstream jobs. Our next-door neighbor, an elderly Filipina, recommended me to the couple. Aside from child caregiving, she suggested that I look for a job in elderly caregiving to gain work experience. She said that’s what most Filipinos who are starting a new life in the U.S. do. I could hardly believe what she said because first, my sisters did not go through that phase. Most of all, I

came here with American citizenship. I have been a U.S. citizen since birth although I was born outside the U.S. In my mind, caregiving is reserved for TNTs, a Filipino acronym for those *Tago-Nang-Tago* (in hiding). Besides, I have a bachelor's degree from a well-known state university in the Philippines which, incidentally, was the first school with a public education system founded by American colonial administrators in the Philippines to advance the U.S. civilizing mission and promote the American Dream. Even out of desperation, I refused to do that kind of work, wiping butts as Tita C described the work that caregiving involves. PT, in short, as some Filipino/as would satirically call it. *Punas Tae* (wiping off feces).

Tita C has been working in the private space for more than ten years. It is possible that other Filipina caregivers have remained in their job for a similar number of years or more, whereas I have already worked in various places where the presence of minorities was visible, but still dominated by whites. My U.S. citizenship, no doubt, allowed me to cross the boundaries of the private and public spaces, the margin and the center. I knew I had choices although later on, I found out that my choices were limited. Furthermore, as much as I would like to deny it, I admit that I had assimilated into the mainstream American culture. I learned to speak English with an American twang so that like my younger sister, I would earn praises from native-English speaking Americans. And I succeeded.

In conducting interviews of Filipina/os generally, having a “go between” to insiders or informants is necessary (Gonzales, 1982) to gain the participants' trust and reduce their inhibitions. Since Filipina caregivers are a hard-to-reach population, access

to them requires “assisted passage” (Sanders, 2006). An insider is necessary to “a world where individuals are understandably suspicious, untrusting, and weary of discussing information” (Sanders, 2006, p. 204). By relying on my go-betweens, however, I ignored the historical circumstances that placed and continue to place Filipina/os in the margin. Like other Asian Americans, Filipina/os in the U.S. are marked as forever foreigners because their bodies are always read in contrast to whites (Nakayama, 1994). Asian Americans and Asians with mixed white heritage are perceived only as Asians. Americanness is equated only with whiteness. The prevailing image of Asian Americans as forever foreigners dominates in popular culture as well as in discursive practice.

Filipina/os in the U.S. are marked as forever foreigners also due to their inability to acquire citizenship (Parreñas & Tam, 2008). Immigration laws that discriminate against them constantly come up. Before the infamous Arizona anti-immigration law HB 2162 was enacted in April 2010, covert anti-immigration laws in the U.S. were already in place. In 1946, the U.S. pretended to grant the Philippines its independence through the Tydings-McDuffie Act (Bonus, 2000; Posadas, 1999). This move simply served to block Filipina/os’ entry to the U.S. Although the Filipina/os were colonial subjects, they also had the status of U.S. nationals and thus, were free to enter and exit the U.S. as they wished. Filipinos migrated to the U.S. in order to work in Hawaii sugar plantations or in Alaska canneries. They were perceived as a threat by White Americans to the purity of the white race because they were socializing with White women unabashedly. Through the Tydings-McDuffie Act, the Filipina/os lost their status as U.S. nationals immediately and thus, were subject to immigration restrictions.

The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act mandates the deportation of U.S. legal permanent residents who have been charged with criminal offenses. Since the 9/11, a total number of 200 deportees have been escorted by Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) agents on commercial flights bound to their countries. While some were deported for overstaying, most were U.S. permanent legal residents with criminal records, primarily due to drug-related cases. In relation to this Act, 46 Filipinos were deported to the Philippines on a chartered flight on February 27, 2003 (Tabaranza, 2003).

The Absconder Apprehension Initiative was enacted in January 2002 in the State of Kentucky as part of the U.S. Department of Justice's response to the 9/11 events. As a result of this initiative, William Manalastas was taken in shackles from his daughter's home in Elizabethtown. Charged with "overstaying his visa and being from a country with alleged ties to Al Qaeda", Manalastas was detained for 110 days in various immigration detention centers before he was deported to the Philippines (Hurd, 2002).

As I read these reports, I wondered how immigration officials found out about the immigration status of these deportees and located them. While the reports gave detailed accounts of the actual arrest and the reasons behind the arrest, they omitted events that led immigration officials to the deportees' doorstep. Another news report I found, however, points to a possible explanation. Cherriebelle, a 5-month old pregnant Filipina married to Charles Hibbard, was successfully deported to the Philippines despite the lack of warrant against her. Her husband's cousin who posed as a U.S. Marshal made the arrest, fooled airport security with his fake credentials, and escorted her with handcuffs

“to the gate of a departing plane” (Fox5 San Diego, 2010). The perpetrator later was arrested and told authorities that Cherriebelle’s father-in-law called and informed him she was in the country staying illegally. This report suggests that Filipina/os are always subject to suspicion of being, if not harboring, undocumented immigrants. The threat of deportation always looms.

The presence of undocumented individuals in immigrant communities is a common knowledge in these communities. Moreman and Persona (2010), for example, were aware of the story of the undocumented student in the Latina/o community through their personal networks, although the undocumented student remains invisible and silent. Within the Filipina/o community, undocumented immigrants have been marked. While waiting for my mom at the restaurant, I helped her wipe the tables in the dining area. Just then, a middle-aged Filipina customer came in. She engaged me in a conversation about food. Afterwards, she asked, “Are you married?” I thought what does this have to do with food, but I simply replied, “No.” To my surprise, she suggested that I look for an American husband so that I will find better employment opportunities. In a separate but related event, my mom’s sister who recently came from the Philippines to visit our family asked my mom’s former co-worker at the restaurant whether he has papers. Knowing our aunt, we were sure that she asked the question just out of curiosity. However, it implies that stereotypes of Filipino/as as undocumented immigrants in the U.S. have crossed the Philippine borders.

Because of potential risks to their lives, marginalized communities are, thus, untrusting of people who have taken an interest in them. Bhopal’s (2000) success in

recruiting South Asian women for interview did not occur without difficulty. Her initial contact with a few women resulted in their recommendation of other women. While some recommended participants appreciated the attention that she gave them and consented to the interview, others declined because they regarded her as “a special investigator” or a “nosy girl” (p. 73). In recruiting my participants, I failed to consider the risks they might face due to personal, social, and institutional racial prejudice against immigrants and consequently, their level of suspicion towards an outsider.

I realized that I never thought of myself as an outsider during my recruitment process. Thus, I neglected to attend to the particularity of elderly care homes as an ethnographic field. According to Stein (2006), the field is a place and space defined by boundaries whether “literal, figurative, or metaphorical” (p. 61). Places have frontstage and backstage regions which the researcher should be aware of because they impact the researcher’s accessibility to communities. Elderly care homes are located in a private space and thus, in the backstage region. Compared to public settings, conducting research in private settings follows a stringent set of rules for entry such as seeking permission from an authority and gaining the trust of people concerned (Stein, 2006). If I were to interview the care home owner/manager at the care home, I will have to seek her permission. If I were to interview a caregiver in her workplace, she will have to seek permission from her employer who is either the client or the care home owner/manager. However, the Institutional Review Board’s approval of my application to use human subjects prohibits notifying the employer of the caregiver’s participation in the research because it might risk the caregiver’s physical, economic, and psychological well-being.

My research assumptions certainly needed to be critically examined for ethical considerations because they reproduced ideologies that transnational feminism opposes. They promoted Western feminism's universalist claim to womanhood. Since I and the women I sought to interview share a common identity, I assumed that we would immediately make a connection and build rapport. At the same time, my research assumptions defeated the purpose of contemporary ethnography, particularly narrative inquiry, which was to decolonize research methodology. They perpetuated the colonial relationship between the researcher and the researched through my homogenization of the Other. Against this backdrop, I discuss the ramifications they brought to my research.

Speaking of the Other: Problems with Access and Translation

From hanging out at the Filipino restaurant, I reconnected with a former acquaintance and met two other Filipinas who helped me make connections to the community of Filipina caregivers and Filipina owners/managers of care facilities who employ Filipina caregivers in the Inland Empire. I refer to these ladies as *Ate* Karina, *Ate* Carmen, and *Ate* Divina. Despite these connections, my entry to the front stage of the care homes remained restricted.

Ate Karina is an Assistant Professor in a health science field. I had met her before I moved to Colorado and she had known beforehand that I was pursuing a doctorate degree. I discussed my research with her without any difficulty because we share a common language. She was delighted to hear of my research and expressed her support. Her desire to help me get participants, however, was to speed up my completion of my research as well as my degree. After a series of chance meetings with *Ate* Karina, she

handed me her business card one day with the name and phone number of a Filipino caregiver written on its blank side. She said that her contact was expecting my call.

I met the Filipino caregiver that evening during the *Simbang Gabi* (Evening Mass) reception. *Simbang Gabi*, a Filipina/o cultural tradition, is a mass held for nine days until Christmas Eve. In the Philippines, all Catholic parishes celebrate it at dawn whereas here, it takes place at six or seven in the evening at a different parish each night. A reception follows afterwards. Ate Karen was also at the reception. As we talked, she directed my attention to a Filipino guy standing by a table near the reception hall entrance. “That’s _____” she said. “Go and talk to him”. So I approached him and introduced myself. I told him I appreciate his willingness to participate in my research. His face broke into a smile. However, I am seeking a female caregiver. His smile disappeared for a second and came back on again as he said, “Oh, my wife is a caregiver too.” Then, he turned his head towards a Filipina sitting by the table that comes between her and us. She was facing the Filipina sitting next to her. They were engaged in a conversation. “That’s my wife,” he said. “C’mon I’ll introduce you to him.” He started walking towards her while I followed along.

He introduced me as Ate Karina’s friend. He told her that I have something to ask her and then left the two of us. Since there was no chair available, I knelt down in front of her. I verified first whether she is a live-in caregiver for an elderly home and if the care home is owned or managed by a Filipina. She responded “Yes” to all my questions. Afterwards, I started explaining the reason I approached her. I had no problem telling her that I needed to interview her for my research. But as I came to the point of explaining

my research, I found myself in the same situation with Alexander (2006). I had to engage in “performative cultural semiosis” (p. 59), an act which I find similar to pakapa-kapa. Cultural semiosis involves finding appropriate signifiers (Alexander, 2006) far from the academic lingo but would still make my research sound significant to my listener. How do I translate “My research explores the possibility of a transnational feminist solidarity between Filipinas with different class positionalities” and “I am conducting this research to achieve social transformation and social justice for marginalized women”? If I say “I am conducting this research to improve your life” to simplify my research, how would that sound to her? Would not it sound like I am reproducing Third World women as victims and portraying myself as a First World woman? I had to come up with something to say in that moment. I ended up with “I would like to know whether Filipinas may work together to improve our lives and other women’s lives too.” She remained silent and so I continued persuading her to grant me an interview. I said we will do the interview at her workplace or anywhere on her day off. She finally broke her silence and my heart as well. “I can’t,” she said. “I have to keep an eye on our clients all the time because they have Alzheimer’s”. “How about on your day off?” I persisted. She just shook her head. “Well, maybe I can interview your boss,” I said. “There she is,” she said looking at the Filipina sitting across her. “I think that’s better,” she continued.

In my eagerness to ask her employer, I did not notice that I violated the protocol for gaining access to hard-to-reach populations. I should have asked a go-between, perhaps the Filipina caregiver I talked to earlier, to introduce me to her. I walked to the other side of the table. I caught her attention by saying “Excuse me.” I introduced myself

and went again through the painful process of explaining my research and its purpose. I told her that if she is willing to be interviewed, I will call her to set up a date and time to meet again. “Why don’t you just call me,” she said. I asked her for her phone number. Since I did not have a piece of paper for her to write down her name and number, I gave her a disposable table napkin and a pen. She wrote her contact information and handed me back the table napkin. I left the gathering full of hope and excitement.

I called her after three days. The phone rang and a female voice spoke. It was only a recording, however. It said “The number you dialed is not in service.” I looked at the numbers written on the disposable table napkin and then at the numbers displayed on the wide screen of my cell phone. They were exactly the same. I still thought maybe there was just a technology glitch. I dialed the numbers again for the second and third time. I got the same message each time. I stared at the table napkin. Memories of that evening flooded my mind. How could a fellow Filipina do this to me? How could she have not trusted me when, after our conversation, she saw me participate as a spectator to the children and adults line dancing to the tune of “Macarena”? I was clapping and screaming with laughter at the sight of my two-year old niece, dressed up in a floral Imelda-like gown and black leather boots, imitating the adults’ dance steps. How could she have deceived me at a night of celebration not only of our cultural tradition, but of our Catholic faith? She sat near the doors of the reception hall. As soon as one steps out of the hall, she or he faces the church right away. Perhaps, my performative cultural semiosis was unsuccessful. According to Alexander (2006), it puts at stake “cultural acceptance and the viability of research” (p. 59).

The Filipina who gave me a fake phone number put at stake the project of transnational feminist alliance-building. Caring enables women to reach out to each other, but trust establishes our connection. hooks (2000) states, “trust is the foundation of intimacy. When lies erode trust, genuine connection cannot take place” (p. 41). Lies create a barrier between people because they cause hurt and anger. Crenshaw (1997) and Cohen (2001) already forewarned me. Not everyone in our community is a potential ally nor can they afford to be.

This experience of recruiting participants was followed by another one. *Ate* Carmen, with whom I became friends later on, introduced me to a Filipino caregiver via the phone whom I will identify as Edgar. Edgar works at a senior board-and-care home in Orange County, which is an hour away from San Bernardino County without traffic. The facility is owned by a Filipina. He was very willing to be interviewed and said he would be off the next day. I told him though that I needed a female live-in caregiver. He said, “*Marami rito sa pinagtatrabahuhan ko* (There’s plenty of them here in my workplace).” I asked him if he could help me connect with them. At first, he told me to just drive to their homecare when he is on duty. Later on, he said it would be better if I meet him when he is off duty and he could formally introduce me to them. We scheduled our meeting on his next day off.

The day before I was supposed to drive to meet him, he called off our meeting. Through *Ate* Carmen, he informed me that their employer would have to schedule their days off so that I could interview the Filipina caregivers. Keeping IRB’s prohibition in mind, I thought the interview would still work because the employer would not know

who among her employees I would select to interview. Edgar would simply have to inform me of the schedule and I will let him know when I would meet at least two of the caregivers.

Edgar told me he would call me back. However, I did not hear from him again after two weeks already passed. I decided to call him. He said their employer had not made the schedule yet. She was out of town. I checked back with him after two weeks. Although their employer was already back, she still had not made the schedule. I called him until January 2011 and his response had not changed. When *Ate* Carmen asked me about the progress of my recruitment process, I told her the situation. Right in front of me, she called Edgar. His response was the same.

I decided to stop calling Edgar not because I doubted his statement. I believed that he was honest to me. I did not believe, however, that his employer had any intention of allowing my interview with her caregivers to take place. Although an outsider, I gained an insider's account to this private space. I admired and respected Edgar for honoring his fellow workers' private lives. Turning personal stories into research narratives has the potential to endanger participants because they get circulated (Hyden, 2008). The research goal, like in my case, is most likely to get these narratives published. By doing so, narratives might reach individuals who could harm participants particularly those who are vulnerable.

My experience with *Ate* Divina's informant took a slightly different route. *Ate* Divina gave me the contact information of her friend who operates a homecare business. She told me as well that her friend would refer me to other owners. When I called the

number she gave me, I reached the voicemail. I left a message and my contact information. I waited three days for *Ate Divina*'s friend to return my call. When I did not hear from her, I decided to call her back. She answered this time. I called to find out first whether she owns an elderly care facility and employs Filipina caregivers. She gave me affirmative answers. I was going to explain to her the reason for the interview but before I could do it, she asked, "*Gaano katagal 'yong interview? (How long is the interview?)*" I replied, "At least an hour, depending on your response." She said, "*Ay, ang tagal naman! Tawag ka uli after New Year. Busy kasi. (Oh, that's long! Call me back after New Year. I'm busy at this time.)*" An hour worth of interview was not even enough I thought. Instead of objecting, I complied but not with humility. Sanders' (2006) advice to novice researchers is to be humble. She defines humility as "not taking ourselves or our research so seriously that we forget that those we research have other, more important things going on in their lives" (p. 313). It was December 2010 and I expected to graduate in June 2011. At that point, I only had one interview for my dissertation. How could I not take my research seriously? I complied because I did not have a choice. I was a beggar and as a friend would often tell me, "Beggars cannot be choosy". I followed up with *Ate Divina*'s friend after New Year, but she did not respond. Learning from my previous experiences, I just let go and moved on.

I often hear performance scholars say that Performance Studies "puts bodies on the line." This phrase connotes placing the body at risk. It speaks of what Madison (2009) calls dangerous ethnography. The researcher's body becomes vulnerable to life and death as it "moves through the space and time of another" (p. 191) for the purpose of

obtaining knowledge and discovery. In conducting this fieldwork, I experienced death as I attempted to enter a space that was reserved to a select few members. The rejections numbed the thrilling sensation that my body felt at the beginning of my fieldwork. They took away my vision. My eyes were wide open, but I only saw darkness. I reached the end of the tunnel without seeing the light. But as I backed out of that forbidden space, I felt alive again. I realized that I did something right. I learned that their refusal to allow me entry to their space was a tactic. They put up their own border to guard against intruders. According to Madison (2009), dangerous ethnography is a labor of advocacy. Advocacy is an ethical responsibility of the researcher to respond to these tactics and assist the subaltern in their struggles. I stopped pursuing them like a paparazzi and by doing so, avoided exposing their bodies to the colonial gaze. That became my advocacy.

Reclaiming Power with and Power over Research Participants during the Interview

Recruiting a hard-to-reach population for research such as Filipina live-in caregivers and Filipina owners/managers of care facilities was physically, psychologically, and emotionally draining. Gaining their trust and participation, however, was rewarding. Although I only located two instead of six participants and spent only an hour with each of them during the interview, they and the stories they shared provided meaningful and valuable narratives for thinking about caregiving as a political tool for fostering transnational feminist solidarity. In addition, each interview provided me with insights on the power dynamics involved in a research relationship.

I have prepared a different set of questions for each interviewee before the interview took place. I intended to use these questions simply as a guide. However, in my

interview with Tita C, the questions unintentionally became my source of power over her most of the time. Tita C also participated in her coercion to this power. On the other hand, the act of questioning subverted my power to Tita C although without her knowledge.

Throughout the interview, I exerted power over Tita C. The question-answer structure of the interview demonstrates this power. To begin the interview, I asked the first question on my list. She gave a short and straightforward response. I moved on to the next question. She responded in the same manner. Because I was in control of the interview, I was able to ask all my questions. However, I had trouble asking the last question because I could not translate it. The structured interview, nevertheless, highlighted the power between me and Tita C. Structured interviews position the researcher at a higher status. They reveal the researcher's educational attainment that has led her to create the interview questions (Ryen, 2000).

Tita C also exerted power over me whether she knew it or not. I admit I was not comfortable with the interview primarily because I felt I reduced the number of hours she would have spent for her day off. Instead of sitting down with me and answering questions, she could be spending time and having a relaxing conversation with a friend. I took my voice recorder out as soon as Tita C sat down. I thanked her first for granting me the interview and then proceeded with going over the informed consent form. I did not take time to build rapport with her, thus violating what is considered ethical behavior in ethnographic research.

Like Bloom (2002), I felt as if I was intruding into Tita C's private life during the interview. Thus, I did not probe her further on most of her responses to my questions. Bloom resolved the problem by disclosing her feelings to her interviewee. They both agreed for the interviewee to ask questions about her personal life to reduce her discomfort. Bloom, however, had build rapport with her interviewee which paved for an open communication between them. The first and only time I have spent with Tita C was during the actual interview.

My research relationship with Vivian was different. The balance of power clearly shifted to her side. Her power over me started the moment we met at the restaurant. She initiated the conversation that led us to talk about neoliberal policies. She also invited me to her space. We held the interview in her office. Before we started, I had to wait for her to finish a task. As soon as we sat down, she started talking about the care facility as a state-funded facility. It was first a leisurely conversation. I did not get my voice recorder out until I asked her what her position was. Compared to Tita C, my interview with Vivian was unstructured. Out of the ten questions on my list, I only asked two. Vivian did not have any inhibitions expressing her thoughts. She did not need me to ask a question to prompt her to speak. During the interview, we had to stop on two occasions. First, she needed to sign papers. Then, her sister stopped by to ask her a question. Both occasions demonstrate her authority in the workplace and her power over me as a visitor in her space.

Ethnographic researchers agree that fieldwork has the potential to reproduce colonial relationships. Although they acknowledge that the researched has agency and

power during the fieldwork, their power is subverted to the researcher who in the end controls the data. That is, assuming the researched has allowed the researcher to collect data. Studies on ethnographic research typically focus on the work itself, but not on other factors such as the topic, the population, and the recruitment process. These factors also shape the direction of the research and the power dynamics in a research relationship. Until the researched has granted the researcher access to the community and consented to share their personal narratives, the researcher's power is placed on hold.

Implications for Transnational Feminist Solidarity

“Critical work raises consciousness of the researcher,” (Lengel, 1998, p. 242). Researching Filipina care workers has raised my consciousness to the predicaments that research methodology brings to the transnational feminist project of building women's alliances. Choosing a decolonizing methodology in Feminist Studies and Communication Studies is not sufficient to align our research with transnational feminism as a theoretical framework. As ethical researchers we need to engage in self-reflexivity to examine not just our research intentions, but also our assumptions towards the community we are studying. We need to critically examine as well the research methodology we have chosen for their impact on the researcher, the researched, and the research itself.

I have argued that revealing our self-serving research intentions to our participants are not essentially harmful if they are done with respect for the Other. In some cases, they may even help the researcher gain cultural acceptance and lead to the completion of the research. Our research assumptions may do more harm. I have

demonstrated that our research assumptions, if left unexamined, have the potential to perpetuate dominant ideologies that transnational feminist research critiques.

In conducting the present research, I used narrative inquiry because it privileges the experiences of historically marginalized women in constructing knowledge. It helps create a discursive space for them to use their voice, specifically to tell their stories using their words and their bodies. Narrative inquiry decolonizes research in this way.

However, narrative inquiry remains to have the potential to recreate colonialism that has long characterized ethnographic research before the narrative turn. Reading Calafell's (2007) preparation for her journey to Mexico City, I realized that I had been a tourist in the Filipina caregiving community. I attempted to take snapshots of their lives with my voice recorder. Like some of the indigenous peoples in Mexico City, the Filipinas who refused to be interviewed mistrusted me. Their refusal was an act of resistance against intrusion into their territory. Lying serves as a barrier to building alliances but, at the same time, could be an act of defense against structural threats. It has been said that the Spaniards easily colonized the Philippines because the Filipina/o indigenous peoples were hospitable and friendly towards them.

Narrative inquiry takes a stand against positivist research. However, it still ascribes to the scientific notion of rigor, which requires researcher to build rapport with participants. Some researchers have already questioned the need for such rigor when participants come from non-mainstream communities (Sanders, 2006). The notion of rigor requires the researcher to build rapport with the researched, but that takes a long time and calls for the researcher to invest a significant amount of time in the relationship

(Sanders, 2006). Based on my experience, building rapport with marginalized women takes even longer. Live-in caregivers, for example, do not have the luxury to spend as much time as the researcher requires to share their personal stories. They work twenty-four hours a day while on duty. On their day off, should we bother them to work with us for a number of times until we get an in-depth look into their lives? In addition, marginalized women are not easy to locate and when they are located, they may not be willing to or could not speak.

Although we as Communication Studies scholars conducting feminist research desire the Other to speak about their domination and resistance in academic research, some of them would prefer to remain silent and invisible because of potential threats to their lives. Such response to our invitation, despite our ethical intention and approach, can cause pain. hooks (2000) reminds us, however, that pain is a part of building and maintaining a loving community. Regardless of the pain that trying to make connections with the Other might cause, we should not stop reaching out to them and including them in our alliances as we fight for social justice.

Chapter Six: A Dare to Care

Joining hands with transnational feminists in the project of building women's alliances across differences, I explored how caregiving might open up a space of possibility for coalition work between privileged and marginalized women. I carried out this research project within the Filipina community in the U.S. because Filipinas particularly were historically integrated into the American labor force through caring work (Glenn, 2010). Although the women represented in this research have a common identity based on gender, race, and nationality, their identity has been demarcated by class and thus, places one of them in a privileged position and the Other, in a marginalized location. My goal for embarking in a research project on transnational feminist solidarity is primarily to challenge the neoliberal agenda of reducing the consequences of structural violence to issues of personal responsibility. Along this line, this project seeks to use Communication Studies scholarship in the pursuit of social justice and social change. I hope to create a space particularly within Culture and Communication and Organizational Communication where we can explore ways of bringing back public accountability and establishing shared responsibility for caring work as well as of bringing recognition to the socio-economic value of women's labor. Furthermore, I aim to engage the voices of marginalized women who are underrepresented in academic research.

In conducting this research, I examined the narratives of a Filipina live-in elderly caregiver and a Filipina care administrator for children with disability on caring work. I relied on the following research questions to guide me on this endeavor: how do their narratives communicate meanings about care? How can a caring practice enable privileged and marginalized women to work together in building alliances? How does a transnational feminist alliance with a commitment to care pose a challenge to neoliberalism? How can caring bring about social change and social justice? Narrative inquiry as my research methodology helped me commence this endeavor. I learned four things for sure in doing this research. First, caring is a performance of BeLonging. Second, caring is a performance of love. Third, the performance of care organizes people into a community and grants individual freedom. Fourth, caring work is transformative.

Caring and Transnational Feminist Alliance-Building

Caring is BeLonging. Caring has been socially constructed as a woman's moral duty and status obligation (Glenn, 2010). While it was not a significant problem for most white women prior to the rise of capitalism since they were confined at home, it had become a burden of oppression for them now since they were integrated into the labor force. It was nothing new for immigrant women of color who had been working the double shift since the colonial times. Global capitalism simply put the spotlight on them in academic research concerning globalization, labor migration, and gender studies. The Filipina caregiver and the Filipina care administrator who I have interviewed for this research, however, reconceptualized caring work from being a burden of oppression to an emancipating tool. Their narratives demonstrate that caring is a practice of BeLonging.

BeLonging is a desire to be with the Other. Caring manifests this desire. It motivates the Self to reach out to the Other. It is a step that one takes to cross over to the side without blurring the lines, but instead occupying the same space and sharing power with the other. It is “an act of one body encountering another” (Ellingson, personal communication, April 7, 2011).

Caring is not a simple and easy task. It involves a life-long commitment that sometimes requires self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice may not be difficult for marginalized women, but it may be so for privileged women. Moreman and Persona (2010) point this out through Anzaldua’s (1999) words “We don’t have as much to lose—we never had any privileges” (p. 165). Placing caregiving in the context of neoliberalism, self-sacrificing entails giving up greed and narcissism.

Caring as BeLonging does not force individuals to give up their entire privilege to be with the Other. It allows for flexibility of choices. Caring is a personal choice. It originates from the individual’s attentiveness to the needs of the Other regardless of race, class, age, gender, and other markers of difference. Attentiveness summons the individual to respond to that need, but leaves the individual to make the choice on whether to respond and how to respond.

BeLonging creates and connects multiple communities. Likewise, caring create multiple sites for practicing care. Caring occurs in a public space such as a care facility for children. It also occurs in a private space such as an elderly adult’s home. The ethnographic field can also function as a site for caring work.

Caring is loving. The narratives of Filipinas in this research construct the meaning of care similar to hooks' (2000) notion about love. Caring is a loving practice that makes connection possible between individuals who are not familiar with each other and maintains a just community. But in order to love, according to hooks, one must learn to trust. Trust releases the fear of the Other.

In doing this research, I realized the importance of trust in alliance-building. Trust allows access to multiple communities and therefore, engages members of these communities to speak and to listen to each other's voice. It breaks through the barriers (hooks, 2000) and breaks the Other's silence. hooks, however, warns that love is not a safe space. It does not shield members of a loving community from pain. Just as I experienced in conducting this research, love hurts when the people you choose to love do not love you back. They mistrust you. They lie to you. But as love hurts, love also heals. Caring, through its nonverbal signs of embodied caregiving, facilitates healing physically, emotionally, and psychologically (L. Ellingson, personal communication, April 7, 2011).

The caring community: A transnational feminist challenge to neoliberalism.

A transnational feminist alliance built on care can potentially shake the foundations of neoliberalism. It illuminates the race, gender, and class ideologies embedded in neoliberalism as well as calls attention to the significance of women's work within the family and the society at large. As the narratives of the Filipina caregivers show, caring work brings people with different cultural backgrounds together – the care worker, the care administrator, the care recipient, and the care recipient's family and friends. It

renders visible the interdependence of human beings, which neoliberalism tucks under the guise of personal responsibility and individual freedom.

While neoliberalism castigates poor women and women of color for depending on the state to take care of their welfare, it ignores the dependence of America on the same women to perform caregiving so that they will be free to meet the other demands of life. Caregiving in the U.S. is undervalued both in the private and the public space. It is undervalued even in a space traditionally reserved for women such as the healthcare system (L. Ellingson, personal communication, April 7, 2011). Physicians who are mostly men, for example, occupy top positions in the organization. They earn high wages compared to women who provide him support—from the telephone operator to the domestic workers who maintain the sanitation of the medical clinic (L. Ellingson, personal communication, April 7, 2011).

Caring is transformative. When I started working on this project, my advisor told me to write myself into my research. I understood what she meant, but as a novice in performative writing, I did not know how to perform writing. Nevertheless, I tried. I began by writing in my personal voice. Then, I inserted my personal stories. My body, however, felt stiff as it moved through the pages of my first three chapters. I did not feel sexy at all (Warren, 2003). When I came to writing my participants' narratives about caring, my body started relaxing. I learned to sway to the rhythm of their voices. Their stories moved me. Caring, in this case, has transformed me.

Although the transformation that I described occurred at the personal level, the transformative potential of caring manifests more at the political level. Caring work

raises consciousness to the injustice of racism, heteronormativity, and capitalism.

Neoliberal advocates castigate poor women and women of color for depending on the State to look after their welfare and accuse them of being lazy as well as having low morality. They have forgotten that the U.S. nation-state depended on these women's free labor to care for White upper class American families and cultivate agricultural lands prior to the rise of global capitalism. Caring work revives cultural memory.

Overall, this study contributes to Feminist Studies, Culture and Communication, and Organizational Communication. It expands on transnational feminist work of alliance-building across differences by bringing together privileged and marginalized women in coalition work that seeks to disrupt dominant power. Although this study is limited to women who belong to the same ethnic community, alliances built on care can be extended to include privileged and marginalized women from various ethnic communities. The commitment to care crosses over boundaries. In this regard, this study has worked through identity politics. Furthermore, it calls attention to the significance of women's work in society by reconceptualizing caring as a commitment that anybody can undertake and thus, detaches caring work from the woman's body. The alternative signification of caring, in this way, becomes a tool for organizing women.

Directions for Future Research

Transnational feminist work of alliance-building must also include men. This research shows that the intersection of racism, heteronormativity, and capitalism at work in caregiving has also marginalized men, particularly those of Asian descent. Men who provide care might be potential allies because they are degraded similarly to women. The

devaluation of caring work and degradation of their masculinity in relation to caring work might develop in them empathy for women. In addition, their involvement in caring work can possibly change their perception towards women's work. Research on caregiving has primarily concentrated on women although there are a significant number of men who also provide care within the family (Kramer, 2002). Ignoring men's experiences of caregiving in transnational feminist alliance-building and in academic research also perpetuates the gendered and racialized division of labor in particular and legitimizes dominant ideologies in general. Including them in our coalition work could help bring back public accountability and establish shared responsibility for caregiving. As Kramer (2002) argues, "comprehensive, responsive, and responsible social policies and programs for families may only develop when we openly acknowledge and understand the contributions and challenges of all caregivers" (p. 3). Starting from this point, transnational feminists can build alliances with communities other than women's communities.

In this age of neoliberalism, the works of transnational feminists in building alliances have gained more significance. They pose a challenge to neoliberalism by empowering communities. They also pose a challenge to individuals by calling for them to make a choice and make sacrifices. The U.S., as well as other nation-states, has for a long time been sacrificing women to meet the demands of global capitalism and achieve economic development. Poor women, women of color, and Third World women particularly have become the sacrificial offering. This time, transnational feminist alliance-building dares those in power to care for and care about them.

At a women's gathering that I attended, I spoke to a master's student who asked me what my doctoral degree program is and what my dissertation is about. I responded that I am in the Culture and Communication program. I explained as well that I am exploring the possibility of building alliances between privileged and marginalized women engaged in caring practice through a transnational feminist framework. Then, she asked me, "So, why are you doing this research? Are you a social worker or a healthcare practitioner?" She did not get it, I thought. I already said that I am a Communication Studies scholar. After a careful consideration of her question, I gained recognition of her perception towards the interconnection between transnational feminist alliance-building and communication.

The Communication Studies discipline, although firmly grounded in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, is not static. From a critical cultural perspective, communication is action. Communication constantly flows and moves because it neither has a beginning nor an end. In the communication process, identities are fluid. Individuals have the freedom to engage in and disengage from a communication interaction. Through communication, individuals are able to build multiple communities and bring them together. Transnational feminist alliance-building, thus, finds solidarity with Communication Studies. As scholars of this discipline, we hold the power of critical cultural consciousness, rhetoric, and embodied text to reconceptualize meanings and influence perceptions to improve public policies and human condition. Communication Studies opens up possibilities for scholars to produce meaningful work if only we would care to use research to advocate for social change and social justice.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for Caregivers

1. What made you take this job?
2. How did you find out about it?
3. Describe your daily work routine.
4. If you don't mind me asking, how much do you get paid per hour or month? Do you receive benefits? If so, what are these benefits?
5. Do you think your hourly or monthly rate is enough to compensate your labor? Why or why not? If not enough, how much do you think you deserve to get?
6. Are you supporting a family? Is your pay enough to support your family?
7. Have you asked or thought of asking your employer for a raise? If you have already asked, would you mind sharing your employer's response? If you have not asked or thought of asking, why not?
8. Describe your relationship with your employer.
9. Is there anything you would like to improve about your work conditions (i.e. wage, schedule, duties, promotion)? What would it be? What could or would you do to make the improvement?
10. Have you heard other people's stories or perceptions about adult caregiving as a job in this country? What are these? Which among these perceptions did you share then?
How do you feel about this job now?
11. Do you perceive your employer as a worker too? Do you perceive a common struggle(s) with her?

12. Do you think caregivers and employers may form an alliance to improve women's status regardless of their race, class, and nationality?

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Employers

1. What made you invest in this business?
2. How many clients do you currently have? How would you describe them in terms of their health or need condition in general?
3. How many caregivers do you currently employ? Are they all women and of Filipino/a descent? If yes, would you consider hiring a white male person as a caregiver?
4. Describe your relationship with your Filipino/a caregivers (and non-Filipino/a caregivers, if any).
5. Would you mind telling me how much you pay your caregivers per hour or month? What is/are your basis/es for their rate? Do you provide benefits? If not, why?
6. What are the duties you assign to caregivers? Do you perform these duties at the nursing home once in a while? Do you perform these duties at home? Do you think their pay is enough to compensate for their labor?
7. Would you mind telling me whether you give your caregivers a raise and how often? If you do not give them a raise, what is/are the reason/s? Would you consider giving them a raise?
8. Do you encourage them to acquire other skills that would help them acquire economic mobility?
9. Have you heard other people's stories or perceptions about adult caregiving as a job in this country? What are these? Which among these perceptions did you share then? How do you feel about it now?

10. Are you supporting or helping support a family? If yes, would you have another source of income without this nursing home? Without your caregivers, do you think you would be able to manage this nursing home?
11. Do you perceive yourself as a worker too? Do you perceive a common struggle(s) with your employees?
12. Do you think caregivers and employers may form an alliance to improve women's status regardless of their race, class, and nationality?

Appendix C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Exploring the Possibility of Transnational Feminist Solidarity through Caregiving in the U.S.

You have been selected to participate in this study. This study seeks to find out whether privileged and disadvantaged women in the Filipino/a community in the U.S. perceive a common struggle(s) as women involved in caregiving in the U.S. This study also seeks to find out whether Filipinas in the U.S. can form an alliance based on their common struggle for the purpose of achieving social equality for all women regardless of race, class, and nationality. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Communication Studies. The study is conducted by Beverly R. Natividad. Results will be used to contribute to existing research on transnational feminism through academic publication and to receive a grade in the course. Beverly can be reached at (909) 289-1424/bnativid@du.edu. This project is supervised by the course instructor, Dr. Bernadette Calafell, with the Department of Communication Studies, University of Denver in Colorado 80208. Dr. Calafell can be reached at (303) 871-4322 or bcalafell@du.edu.

Participation in this study might take about 1 to 1 ½ hours of your time. Participation will involve responding to questions. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort, you may discontinue the interview at any time. I respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty.

Your responses will be identified by a fictitious name only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your identity. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Susan Sadler, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-3454, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign below if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study titled *Exploring the Possibility of Transnational Feminist Solidarity through Caregiving in the U.S.* I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____ Date _____

I agree to be audiotaped.

I do not agree to be audiotaped.

I agree to participate in a follow-up interview, if necessary.

Signature _____ Date _____