CHAPTER THREE

# THE TRANSNATIONAL FAMILY

MOST OF THE DOMESTIC WORKERS I MET in Rome and Los Angeles are members of transnational families. By this I mean that they are part of a family whose members are located in at least two countries. Although not occupying the same residence, family members in transnational households share resources, maintain a sense of collective responsibility for each other's well-being, and uphold the duties expected of them as kin. In these households, migrant domestic workers often act as breadwinners, sending monthly remittances to their elderly parents, children, and sometimes other kin. In my initial study, I found that 77 percent of research participants in Los Angeles and 89 percent in Rome maintain transnational households. While working in Italy or the United States, their families—spouses, children, and/or parents—remain in the Philippines. Twenty years later, migrant domestic workers still maintain transnational families.[1]

Initially documented among contemporary migrants by Linda Basch and her colleagues (Basch et al., 1994), the formation of transnational households

is not exclusive to Filipino labor migrants. The burst of studies in the last ten years suggests that transnational families are in fact a norm in migrant communities, including among Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Hondurans in the United States (Schmalzbauer, 2004; Dreby, 2010; Abrego, 2014); Filipinos in the United Kingdom (Madianou and Miller, 2012); migrants in Europe (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002), and among Indonesian migrants (Silvey, 2006). Yet, transnational families are not particular to present-day migrants. The earliest Chinese migrant workers in the United States, guest workers in Western Europe, and Mexican braceros in the southwestern United States, to name a few examples, adopted this type of household because of disparate levels of economic development between sending and receiving countries and laws against their integration (Glenn, 1983), similar to current conditions. Yet differences do exist between transnational households in the past and present. Whereas those in earlier migrant communities were composed primarily of a male income producer living apart from female and young dependents in the sending country, contemporary transnational households include women migrants (Basch et al., 1994).

Contemporary transnational households also involve a different temporal and spatial experience. They inhabit postmodern spaces as relationships in these families function through the process of "time-space compression . . . , the speed-up in the pace of life, while overcoming spatial barriers so that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us" (Harvey, 1989: 240). Although transnational family members perform daily activities across vast geographical distances, they overcome spatial barriers through the rapid flow of money and information. Due to advancements in technology, information about family members can be received instantaneously, communication can be constant, and money can be transferred to urban centers of Third World countries immediately (Madianou and Miller, 2012).

Migrants create transnational households to maximize resources and opportunities in the global economy. They mediate unequal levels of economic development between sending and receiving nations, legal barriers that restrict their full incorporation into the host society and polity, and the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments (Basch et al., 1994; Laguerre, 1994; Glick-Schiller et al., 1995). At the same time, transnational households form because of family ties and extended kin support (Foner, 1997). In short, transnational families form from the interplay of structural and cultural factors.

## TRANSNATIONAL FAMILY FORMATIONS IN THE FILIPINO DIASPORA

Although beginning with the household as a central unit of analysis could dangerously promote the assumption that the family represents a singular collective interest and may conveniently mask social inequalities within it, I find that the household provides a useful point of departure for analyzing the complexities of migration (Thorne, 1992). Offering a typology of migrant households will allow me to document how migration reconstitutes households and family relations.[2]

There are generally two types of households in Filipino migrant communities—proximate and transnational. Proximate households contain family members who live in close geographical proximity. In Rome and Los Angeles, the transnational household has historically been more dominant among domestic workers. When I revisited the field in 2011 and 2012, transnational families were still a common strategy of household maintenance among them. In Rome, for instance, many parents still preferred to raise their children in the Philippines due to the limited mobility options for the second generation. As one father told me, "No, I do not want them to join me. I do not want my children to become domestic workers in Rome. I would not be proud." In Los Angeles, proximate households likewise remain a rarity among domestic workers who tend to migrate at a later age, when their children are adults; are often disqualified from bringing their children as dependents if entering with an immigrant visa; or, if entering clandestinely, often cannot afford to obtain a tourist visa for other members of their family.

Proximate households tend to form in temporal stages of migration, with one parent migrating before other members of the family and the rest individually following in different stages. Trina Jusay's family followed this trajectory. A teacher in the Philippines, Trina, a forty-five-year-old domestic worker when I first met her in 1996, followed a female neighbor to Rome in 1981—seven months after the birth of her only daughter and when her two sons were still fairly young, at three and six years old. While Trina's husband followed her the next year, Trina's children migrated much later, the youngest at the age of six in 1987 and the two older children at the ages of sixteen and twelve in 1990. Although Trina's family now manages a proximate nuclear household, this was only after a transnational phase of ten years.

Transnational households can be further divided into three subcategories: one parent abroad, two parents abroad, and adult child(ren) abroad. One parent abroad transnational households are those with one parent—a mother or a father—producing income abroad while other family members carry out the functions of reproduction, socialization, and the rest of consumption in the Philippines. In the second category, both parents work abroad and the children usually reside together in the Philippines under the care of other relatives. Finally, there are adult children whose earnings as migrant laborers provide necessary or additional financial support to relatives in the Philippines.[3]

*One Parent Abroad*

The most common form of transnational household I found among domestic workers has one migrant parent—usually a mother—working outside of the Philippines for a prolonged period of separation from her or his family. The predominance of this type in my sample not only indicates that many women migrate independently from the Philippines but also suggests the reconfiguration of the gender division of labor in families. The question, then, is whether husbands and fathers left behind in the Philippines nurture the children under their care. Not all do. Instead of providing hands-on care to their children, many fathers who stay behind in the Philippines choose to leave the primary care of their children to other female relatives including older daughters, mothers and mothers-in-law, sisters and sisters-in-law, and aunts (Parreñas, 2005). Sometimes, fathers are altogether absent, as many migrants are single women (including separated and never-married women as well as widows) who had been raising their children on their own even before migration. Yet, as we see from the following story of Vicky Diaz, some fathers do provide day-to-day care. Two stories, one of a woman in Los Angeles and another in Rome, illustrate the struggles transnational mothers face in balancing the emotional and material needs of the children they leave behind in the Philippines.

In 1988, Vicky Diaz—a thirty-four-year-old mother of five children between the ages of two and ten years old—left the Philippines for Taiwan. Vicky had been neither content with her salary as a public school teacher in the Philippines nor comfortable with the insecurities of running a travel agency in Manila. Although made more lucrative by the greater demand for employment

outside of the Philippines in the last ten years, the business of travel agencies had not been as profitable in the late 1980s. Lured by the financial rewards of employment outside the Philippines, Vicky decided to move to Taiwan, where doing domestic work would give her a more secure income.

In Taiwan, Vicky worked as a housekeeper and a factory worker, but mostly as a janitor, for which she earned approximately US$1,000 a month. Vicky, who speaks English very well, also subsidized her earnings by teaching English part-time at nights. Although satisfied with her earnings in Taiwan, the greater enforcement of restrictive polices against migrants in the early 1990s drove her to leave Taiwan and return to the Philippines in 1992. However, that trip turned out to be just a stopover before migrating to the United States:

> From Taiwan, I stayed in the Philippines for only three months. I used this time to fix my papers to come here. After Taiwan, my real target was the States. It was because I knew that America is the land of promises and the land of opportunities. I had several friends who went to America and never went back to the Philippines. I figured it was because life was wonderful in the United States. . . . So, why not give myself the same opportunity?

Only a few months after her return to the Philippines, Vicky used her savings from Taiwan to pay a "travel agency" US$8,000 to use another woman's passport to enter the United States. As Vicky told me, "You know, in the Philippines, nothing is impossible if you have the money."

Considering her middle-class status after running a travel agency in the Philippines and her ability to raise such a huge sum of money for her trip to the United States, one could easily wonder why Vicky chose to endure such a prolonged separation from her family. When I interviewed her in 1996, Vicky had spent a total of only three months in the past nine years with her husband and children in the Philippines. Clearly an absentee mother for most of her children's adolescence, Vicky explained that it had been for her family's benefit that she opted to work outside the country:

> They were saddened by my departure. . . . The children were not angry when I left because they were still very young when I left them. My husband could not get angry either because he knew that was the only way I could seriously help him raise our children, so that our children could be sent to school.

Vicky insisted that her family needed her higher earnings outside of the Philippines. Although aware of her children's persistent requests for her to return to the Philippines, Vicky was not convinced that her family could sustain its middle-class status without her earnings.

In Los Angeles, Vicky was initially employed as a domestic worker, primarily caring for a two-year-old boy for a wealthy family in Beverly Hills. While the mother "just [sat] around, smoking and making a mess," Vicky cleaned, cooked, and cared for the boy for $400 a week, clearly a sharp contrast to the $40 she was paying her own family's live-in domestic worker in the Philippines. Mainly, Vicky did not like being a housekeeper because of the physically demanding load and the excruciating loneliness, heightened by the contradiction of caring for someone else's children while not caring for her own:

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

Not completely indifferent to the separation that her family has endured, Vicky did express feelings of regret over missing the formative years of her children's adolescence: "What saddens me the most about my situation is that during the formative years of their childhood, I was not there for them. That is the time when children really need their mother, and I was not there for them." Yet, for Vicky, the economic rewards of separation softened its emotional costs:

> In my one year in the U.S., I was able to invest in a jeepney.[4] I wanted to do that so that no matter what happens with me, my husband does not have a hard time financially. . . . *Of course, I have neglected them, and the least I could do to make up for this is to make their lives a little bit easier. I could ease their lives for them materially*. That's how I console myself. . . . Besides the jeepney, there's the washing machine and TV. In the Philippines, it is hard to get to buy these things, right? [Emphasis added.]

To overcome the emotional gaps in her family, Vicky commodified her love and compensated for her absence with material goods. Although Vicky claimed that she worked outside of the Philippines so that her family would not become

destitute, it is actually more accurate to say that Vicky worked in Los Angeles to sustain a comfortable middle-class life for her family in the Philippines. Vicky told me that she hoped her family would eventually reunite in Los Angeles because her family's opportunities in the Philippines were dismal. Without legal documents, however, she has not been able to sponsor her family's migration. Obtaining legal status had been the biggest challenge for Vicky and had been the main obstacle blocking the reunification of her family.

Unlike Vicky, Judy Reyes's primary motivation for migrating did not have to do with economics. In the Philippines, she had a rewarding career, a job she loved, and a salary that, along with her husband's, afforded her family a comfortable middle-class life in Manila. Migration had actually been Judy's way of escaping a horrible marriage. Judy went to Rome in 1991, leaving behind three daughters and one son between the ages of two months and nine years old. Although it had been her ambition to go to the United States or Canada, Judy had to settle for the more viable destination of Italy, where she had two sisters who had been working in Rome since the early 1980s. The two-week trip to Italy cost her US$6,400, depleting her savings and leaving her indebted to one of her sisters in Rome.

Life in Rome has been far from comfortable or enjoyable for Judy. Reflecting on her experiences, Judy recounted three major traumas: the harrowing voyage to Rome through a war-torn country in Eastern Europe, her downward mobility from her position as a registered nurse in the Philippines, and the pain she felt over family separation, most especially from the son she had left when he was just a two-month-old infant, four years before our interview. Although she could reconcile the downward mobility in her labor-market status, Judy was still coping with the distress of family separation:

> The first two years I felt like I was going crazy. You have to believe me when I say that it was like I was having intense psychological problems. I would catch myself gazing at nothing, thinking about my child. Every moment, every second of the day, I felt like I was thinking about my baby. My youngest, you have to understand, I left when he was only two months old.

Judy carried a tremendous amount of emotional strain—guilt over her absence, especially missing her son's formative years; the burden and anguish over lost time with her children; and the sadness of not being familiar with

how her family was developing, such as not knowing who prepared her children's breakfast every morning.

In any given month, Judy sent her children US$300 to $500. Even so, they were forced to live apart in the Philippines due to their father's irresponsibility. The money that she sent to subsidize her husband's income was not enough to keep the children together, as he continued to spend money on "women" and "going out with friends." Judy's children were divided among different relatives—two lived with their father in Manila, another in the province with her maternal grandmother, and the youngest also in Manila but with her sister-in-law.

Due to her husband's irresponsibility, Judy was anticipating their permanent separation: "I have a joint account with my child. It is my secret account so I am prepared no matter what happens to the two of us. I experienced what it was like to take care of my children on my own—financially supporting them with my salary without any help from him. It was hard." Nonetheless, she also held on to the possibility that her husband would somehow change for the better, hoping that her time in Rome would make him see his past errors:

> He finally realized that he needs me now that we are apart. [She cries.] . . . I have not shown him any ill feelings. I have been very diplomatic in how I tell him what I did not like in our relationship. People have told me that I am such a martyr. But I tell them that I have four children, and it is important to me that my four children have a relationship with their father.
>
> Once my children can think for themselves, maybe we can separate. But if I cannot bear our relationship anymore, that is when I am going to decide. I need to raise my children first and let them know that they have a father. . . .
>
> He keeps on saying that he wants it to work, but he is with his other family all of the time. I ask him why he even maintains a relationship with us because he hardly gives us any time. I told him that it probably would be better if he packed his clothes and moved to his other family. But he is embarrassed because the other woman is not educated and is a gambler. . . .
>
> His brothers and sisters tell me to have a little bit more patience. They tell me that they know that their brother is wrong, and he will probably change. They have cried to me, asking me to come back, and I told them I will only come back once their brother has changed.

Though her in-laws were trying to convince her to stay in a bad marriage, Judy had a sinking feeling that her husband would never change. To avoid the socially and culturally influenced pressures from family and community to keep her marriage intact—even with an unfaithful husband—Judy planned to prolong her stay abroad. When I met her, she had no immediate plans for reunification but foresaw her maintenance of a transnational family until her children completed their schooling.

### *Two Parents Abroad*

Though less common than one-parent households in the diaspora, I did encounter transnational households with both parents abroad. Two such families, both in Rome,[5] illustrate distinct parental attitudes toward separation: One set of parents consciously tried to ease the emotional tensions in their transnational family, whereas the other was less willing to confront them. These divergent attitudes might have something to do with the difference in their transnational family make-up: In one family all of the children lived in the Philippines, whereas in the other the children were divided between Rome and the Philippines.

With the help of her sisters-in-law, Lolita Magsino migrated to Rome in 1984. Her husband, Antonio, followed her ten months later. When leaving the Philippines, he left four young children between the ages of two and seven years old under the care of Lolita's mother. When we spoke in 1995, Lolita had no regrets about her decision to relocate to Italy:

> I have been here for eleven years. . . . It is ingrained in my head when I came here because it reminds me of how many years I have been struggling. . . . I followed my sisters-in-law, who have been here since 1981. Within ten days, I had a job. I knew that it was going to be domestic work because that was the job of my in-laws. . . . I came from a very poor family. I am used to working. It is nothing to me. I lack knowledge, so any job is good enough for me. As long as you are hardworking here, you have money. . . . I came, and my husband followed me after ten months.

In the Philippines, Lolita and Antonio had lived in a nipa hut[6] with their four children, barely making ends meet with the money they earned farming and selling vegetables. They took advantage of the opportunity to go to Italy to secure a more stable future for their children.

Lolita and her husband worked as domestic workers for only five years. Beginning in 1990, she started working as a full-time vendor of Filipino food in Rome. Lolita began selling food near a central bus transfer point where Filipinos and a few Peruvian women stopped between jobs. Very business minded, she and her husband both started businesses to serve the growing migrant community in Rome. While she worked as a vendor, he fixed cars for a living. Profits from their businesses enabled Lolita and her husband to provide a comfortable life for their children. Eventually Lolita was even able to formalize her business and open an actual eatery.

Lolita passed away in 2010. Other members of the community told me she died of a heart attack when visiting her family in the Philippines. When I met Lolita and Antonio in the mid-1990s, they lived with three of their children in an apartment in the center of Rome. But none of these children was among the four she was visiting in the Philippines when she unexpectedly passed away. Since migrating to Rome, she had given birth to three more children, all of whom she decided to raise in Italy. The difference in her relationship with her two sets of children had been very stark—when I met her, Lolita had managed to visit her children in the Philippines just once after more than a decade in Italy. Although she could have attached them to her permit to stay as early as 1990, she chose not to. In fact, her older children in the Philippines had not yet met their younger brothers born in Rome when I had interviewed her in the mid-1990s. When I met Lolita, I was surprised to learn of her "two sets" arrangement:

*RP:* Do you have children in the Philippines?

*LM:* Four. We left them with our mother.

*RP:* Do you miss them?

*LM:* Yes. We are here sacrificing for them, so that they are able to be educated. That is why we can bear leaving them in the Philippines. We sacrifice for the happiness of our children. We had no resources in the Philippines. If we had stayed in the Philippines, we would not have been able to send our children to school. That is how it was.

*RP:* I've noticed your children here, so some have been able to follow you?

*LM:* No, I left four in the Philippines, and three, I gave birth to in Rome. I have seven children.

*RP:* Can you talk about your children?

*LM:* My oldest is seventeen years old. He is a boy. Then there is a fifteen-, thirteen-, and twelve-year-old. Here, they are six, three, and one-and-a-half years old. [Long pause.]
I was working in houses until 1989, and since then, selling cooked food has been my livelihood.

When I first inquired about her children, Lolita described them only according to age, pausing for quite a long time, as she seemed to contemplate whether she should continue talking about them. In the end, she opted to redirect the interview toward her work experiences, leaving me to conclude that she had difficulty facing the contradiction of raising two sets of children.

When I continued to inquire about her children, she became uncomfortable, responding coldly and mechanically:

*RP:* Have your children met?
*LM:* No. But my children in the Philippines have seen my children here in videos that I have sent home. I talk to my children in the Philippines once or twice a month.
*RP:* Do you miss them?
*LM:* Yes.
*RP:* What does it feel like being apart from them?
*LM:* After being apart for a long time, you stop being lonely. It is because you have to remember that you are here to sacrifice for them. It is important not to think negatively.

Avoiding discussions about the emotional strains of geographical separation in her family, Lolita argued that focusing on the "negative aspects of their relationship" would not do them any good and would only be self-defeating. Physical distance seemed to have fostered detachment and emotional distance in Lolita's family, a reality underscored in her statement, "After being apart for a long time, you stop being lonely."

When I inquired about her sentiments regarding her children in the Philippines, Lolita opted to redirect our discussion to the material goods she has been able to provide them, becoming much more comfortable and informative:

From coming here, I have been able to have a house built in the Philippines. It is fairly small with nine bedrooms, and four bedrooms we rent out to students. It is

close to the private school in our town. . . . We use the money paid by the boarders to pay for the utilities and the food. But we also send our children money every month. We send them [US$250 to $333] at the end of the month for their schooling, and during Christmas, we send them [US$667]. We send them [US$1,000] at the beginning of the school year, when they have to buy school supplies. They need it to buy things.

Through the years, ties with her children in the Philippines had been commodified, based mostly on the monthly remittances she was obligated to send.

Lolita had two different plans for her children in Italy and the Philippines. Although she planned to send her children in Italy to college, she intended to give each of her children in the Philippines an inheritance of a plot of land:

I am unable to go home frequently because I have so many children. I have to save every cent I earn for their future. What is important for me is being able to give each one of them land so that, when they do get married, they will have a place to have for themselves. So, I don't know when I am going to go home. I plan to stay here as long as my knees are strong.

Although it seems that her children in the Philippines would always remain there and her children in Italy would stay in Italy, it is important to recognize that she provided for all of them. Lolita did not necessarily abandon any of her children, despite the different ways she opted to parent them. Still, these differences seemed difficult for Lolita to resolve. Long after the interview, during one of my many visits to the bus stop, Lolita surprised me when she brought up her children in the Philippines: "My youngest in the Philippines recently told me: 'Your children over there in Italy are those you love, they are your real children.' It hurts, but you know that you are sacrificing here for them. Everyone struggles here." Both parents and children struggle emotionally with the maintenance of transnational households, which is a challenge parents often try to resolve via frequent communication and the provision of material goods. Yet, as suggested by Lolita's comments, material provisions that families secure in transnational households do not necessarily erase the emotional challenges wrought by physical distance.

Likewise struggling with the emotional difficulties of transnational family life, Luisa and Luciano went through a few different family formations before they settled on maintaining a transnational household. In 1981, Luisa—a single

woman and the only college graduate in her family—followed her cousin to Rome to help her parents pay for her younger siblings' education. In 1987, she married Luciano, a Filipino domestic worker she had met in Rome. During the first few years of their marriage, both Luisa and Luciano worked as live-in domestic workers and maintained a nontraditional proximate household, seeing each other only on Thursdays and Sundays. After giving birth to her first son in 1987, Luisa continued to live apart from Luciano and, without his assistance, struggled to care for their baby while still having to work as a live-in domestic worker. Juggling two full-time responsibilities proved impossible and left her on the verge of a nervous breakdown:

After I gave birth to my first son, I had some sort of nervous breakdown because the child did not sleep at night. . . . The child would go to sleep at 4 in the morning, and I would have to get up at 6:30 to prepare myself because at 7:30 the breakfast of my employer and the children had to be prepared. During the day, the baby was still crying and crying.

Toward the end, I myself was so depressed. When the baby started crying, I would start crying. Everything I held fell. There came a time that even though I was very, very, very hungry, I could not eat because even as I held a spoon, my whole body would start shaking. I was very exhausted.

My husband, Luciano, lived with his employer, and I lived with mine. And his employer was terrible; he wasn't allowed to sleep outside, not even once was he allowed to come over and help me. I had to look after that kid on my own for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for months. When the baby was almost four months old, I went to see a doctor because I had lost eight kilos in one month. I looked like a corpse. I felt like I was going crazy. When I dropped a glass, I would start crying. When Luciano called and I heard his voice, I would start crying. I felt hopeless. . . . I was just working and working. I did not have time to rest, and I was not eating well.

The demands of domestic work left Luisa physically unable to care for her child. As a family, they had very limited options; they could not live together, and they needed Luisa's second income because they both still had financial responsibilities to relatives in the Philippines. Luisa and Luciano did not have relatives they could rely on for child care or financial assistance in Rome.

Literally on the brink of physical collapse, Luisa had no other choice but to stop working. To finally give her body its much-needed rest and her baby his proper care, Luisa went back home: "So, I decided to go back to the Philippines. I told Luciano that whether he liked it or not, we were going to go home. So, I went to the Philippines and stayed in the Philippines for five months. I rested. Then I came back here and left my baby in the Philippines. Then before the baby was two years old, I took him back [to Rome]." Unable to bear the separation from their young child, Luisa and Luciano decided to bring him back to Rome within less than a year. Although with difficulty, Luisa managed to care for their son while keeping a full workload of various "part-time" cleaning jobs by bringing him to work with her. They were finally able to rent a room in an apartment with other Filipinos. As Luisa was left doubly tired by having their son with her the whole day, Luciano was often in charge of preparing dinner and other housecleaning chores. However, the birth of their second son a year later ended this manageable arrangement of family work. Now with two children in Rome, Luisa and Luciano found themselves shouldered not only with greater child care responsibilities but also with more expenses. Hence, they decided it was best to send their infant son back to the Philippines. They could not afford to live off Luciano's wages alone, and after Luisa's previous experience with their oldest son in Rome, they knew that it would be impossible for her to work and care for an infant at the same time.

After two years of maintaining a transnational household with each child in a different country, Luciano and Luisa decided it would be best if they left both of their children in the Philippines. Unlike Lolita Magsino, Luisa and Luciano were conscious of the detrimental effects that raising children in two different places would have had on the child in the Philippines. "I preferred that both of my kids grow up in the Philippines. . . . To me it's worse for one to be here and one in the Philippines, because then one will have a reason to be jealous of the other. One will think that we care about the other more than we care for him. I don't want one to grow up resenting us."

Luisa and Luciano opted to raise both children in the Philippines and not in Italy largely for practical reasons. Both of them would have to work full-time to afford their higher living costs, but only one of them would be able to do so because of child care demands. Leaving their children in the Philippines would also enable them to provide financial assistance to their extended families. Raising two children in Rome, even if already of school age, was

also less of a viable option because of the informal nature of domestic work. Luisa explained:

> What I also experienced was when one of my children got sick, I had to stay at home for twenty days. So, I did not work for twenty days, but before those twenty days were over, the other one got sick. So, I had to excuse myself for another twenty days. Forty days I was in the house without any salary. Our work here as a part-timer is "no work, no pay."

As domestic workers, they do not receive employee benefits to ease the costs of reproduction, such as subsidized day care facilities, sick leave, or maternal leave. Family and friends in the community usually work full-time and cannot help the parents with child care. Parents are thus compelled to leave their children in the Philippines or send them back there, where at least they would have the support of a wide kin network.

While her mother took care of their two children in the Philippines, Luisa and Luciano worked part-time for four and two families, respectively. Conscious of the physical toll such a full schedule could take on each other's bodies, they had set up an egalitarian division of labor in which Luciano did more housework because of his lighter workload. Pooling their monthly income of more than US$2,000 in 1996, Luisa and Luciano rented a room for US$400 a month and paid no more than US$267 for household expenses. They sent US$333 to their children in the Philippines, while the rest of their income went to their savings and property investments there. When I met them in the mid-1990s, Luisa and Luciano had modest goals. They hoped to build an apartment complex with four units, three of which they would rent out as their source of fixed income once they return to the Philippines. Although still quite tentative, they planned to eventually reunite as a family in the Philippines. But, until that happened, they made sure that they saw their children regularly, visiting them during life-cycle events like birthdays every year.

### *Adult Child(ren) Abroad*

The subcategory of transnational households with adult child(ren) abroad is where I place most single domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles. This was Luisa's case when she first moved to Rome, prior to meeting and marrying Luciano. In the Philippines, adult children have the responsibility of caring for elderly family dependents; although they tend to share and divide the

work with brothers and sisters, most of the responsibility often falls to single adults without children, particularly women. The identification of this type of household for single adult migrants highlights the deeply instilled cultural value of familism in the Philippines.

Not one of my interviewees has failed to provide financial assistance to his or her family. Although I expected to find strong ties between adult single migrants and parents in the Philippines, I was surprised that family interdependency extends to include financially supporting brothers and sisters, as well as their respective families. Of 105 single women surveyed in 1996, fifty-five sent remittances once a month, twenty-eight every two to three months, and eleven occasionally; only eleven did not remit any funds. Of the women who remitted monthly, the average amount had been US$360. Women who remitted every two to three months sent on average US$489. Those who remitted occasionally sent on average US$667. Fewer of their male counterparts remitted funds regularly, and those who did usually sent less. Of thirty-two single men surveyed in Rome, only eleven remitted funds every month and five every two to three months. Those who remitted monthly on average sent their families US$252, which is significantly less than what women sent.

Single women usually sent more because of the greater cultural expectation of daughters to provide for their families and the more stable employment of women than men. Qualifying these figures, almost all of the female domestic workers I interviewed took the responsibility of covering the costs of at least one younger relative's college education, but more often than not they put at least two relatives through college. Although some send greater remittances than others, and although some limit remittances to life-cycle events or when requested, most send money to families in the Philippines regularly. By adopting the role of income producer for extended families in the Philippines, single adult women such as Valentina Diamante and Maria Batung maintain transnational households in migration. Hence, like most of the single women in my study, they cannot be regarded as single householders.

Now married with her husband and children in Rome, Valentina Diamante was once a single domestic worker who in her mid-twenties followed three aunts and three sisters to Rome in 1990. Her migration was made possible by the female migrant network sustained in her family, with one sister financially sponsoring the migration of a younger sister as one comes of age.

In the Philippines, Valentina had only attended a year of college, majoring in hotel management. Not enjoying school, she decided that she could better help her parents with the schooling of her younger siblings by following her sisters to Rome. When we met in 1996, Valentina worked as a live-in worker for a divorced Italian mother of two children. She earned a monthly salary of US$667. True to her intention of coming to Rome to help her family, Valentina sent almost all of what she earned back to the Philippines: "I send money monthly. It's because the others don't so much because they have their own families. I don't care that I am sending more than them. I think about my family more often than I think about myself. Sometimes, actually most of the time, I send them [US$667]." Most months this left her without spending money, but Valentina claimed that this did not bother her because, as a live-in domestic worker, she had no personal expenses; her employer provided her with food, toiletries, and even clothing. On her day off, she did not even have to pay for public transportation because one of her older sisters picked her up from her employer's house.

Even so, it was still surprising to learn that she did not keep some of what she earned for herself:

> That's what my employer told me. She asked me why I don't open a bank account, and I told her that it really is not possible because my sisters and brother are still going to school. Maybe I will start thinking about saving money for myself after one of them graduates. Right now, I have a bank account, but I only have 2,000 pesos [US$80] in it. [Laughs.] It's so embarrassing. I didn't want to actually, but my friend forced me to open one. That's my first bank account. I just opened it this year.

While many adult single women send half of their monthly earnings to the Philippines, Valentina is an extreme example of someone who put aside her own needs for her family.

I actually spent quite a lot of time with Valentina. One day, when I was visiting her at her employer's home, a letter arrived from the Philippines. On reading it, she suddenly became distressed and could not help but comment sarcastically that she always gets a headache when she receives a letter because it is almost always a request for money. I asked to read the letter and found out that her parents were asking for an additional US$200 to pay for her sister's graduation dress, the cost of her other sister's participation as a muse in a town

fiesta, and the party her parents felt obliged to give because of their daughter's role in the fiesta. Valentina was upset not about having to send them money but about not having the money to send them. As it was the middle of the month, she had already sent them her entire pay of US$667 two weeks earlier. I asked her why she did not get angry, because the request seemed unfair and frivolous. She explained to me that it was her duty to help them. Besides not needing the money herself, she explained that her parents were not the ones who decided to have their daughter participate in the fiesta. They themselves were being pressured by the community, and it would be an embarrassment for the whole family if they did not throw an elaborate party to celebrate their daughter's selection to represent the town. The townsfolk, who assume they are rich because of their daughters in Italy, would think badly of what they would perceive as her family's selfishness.

I could not believe anyone could be so self-sacrificing and was stunned that she did not seem resentful. That night, as it was her day off, I jokingly gave her US$1.30 to bet in *jueting*, a small-scale lottery run by men in the Filipino community, and told her that maybe she would win the money that she needed to send to her family. Every Thursday and Sunday, people can select two numbers from one to thirty-two and bet US$1.30 to win a pot of around US$300. I got into the habit of betting regularly but never won. To my amazement, Valentina won that night. I figured it was her good karma for all the sacrifices she had made for her family; finally, while she was able to send her family the money they had requested, she also had some to keep for herself.

Another single domestic worker who provided a great deal of support to her family was Maria Batung, who had been working for a Filipino family in the United States for more than twelve years and supported her family in the Philippines with her earnings. Prior to migrating, Maria also worked as a domestic worker—a nanny—because without a college degree or appropriate networks she did not have access to other types of employment in Manila. Maria had actually been attending college prior to entering domestic work, but she had to give up her educational aspirations because her parents, whose sole income had been her father's sporadic earnings as a carpenter, could not afford to send her or any of her five brothers and sisters to school.

In Manila, she usually worked for foreigners, mostly diplomats and businessmen. In 1980, ten years after she started working as a domestic helper, Maria

accepted a former employer's offer to move to London with them. Although she could have continued working for the English family, Maria decided, after four years in London, to take up another former employer's offer, but this time for a job in the United States. Her present employers were migrating to the United States to establish an import-export rattan furniture business in Southern California and, by investing capital in the United States, qualified to bring a small number of employees with them, including Maria. They covered all of her travel expenses and the costs of obtaining legal papers. With their sponsorship, Maria was able to obtain a green card to stay in the United States permanently.

Maria was very satisfied with her work, earning far more than she ever did in London (US$150 per month), always having a manageable workload, and not having to deal with demanding or strict employers:

> I earn enough so that I could help my family in the Philippines. I get more than $1,000 a month, and everything is free. They pay for my Social Security, and they handled my papers. They pay for my ticket home every year. When I go, they also give me vacation pay for two months. That is why I don't have a problem here. Everything is free, and they also cover my insurance. . . . It is OK. Anytime I want to leave, I can. . . . That is why I lasted long with this family. If that were not the case, I would have probably returned to the Philippines a long time ago.

Of all the employment benefits she receives, the one Maria appreciated the most was her annual two months of paid vacation because it gave her time to spend with her father. Very satisfied with her job, Maria planned to work for her employers until she is old herself.

With no personal expenses to cover, like Valentina, Maria sent most of her earnings to her family in the Philippines. By the time I met her, she had sent numerous relatives to college. Maria invested in the education of her siblings as well as nieces and nephews, because she wanted to make sure that no one else in her family "settled" for domestic work as she was forced to do almost thirty years ago:

> I send my father money, and my nieces and nephews I equally sent to school. For every single sibling of mine, I sent one of their children to school. So there is no jealousy. The rest they could send to school on their own, but each one of them I sent at least one of their children to school. . . . So, I am very happy. Although I was not

able to finish school . . . I was able to ensure [they] finished their education. It is hard when you don't finish. I told them that they would have a hard time if they did not have a degree and that it was necessary that they finish school.

Because of her remittances, Maria had not accumulated any savings when I met her in the mid-1990s, which had not concerned her. With her legal status, she was secure that she would eventually qualify to receive Social Security benefits once she retires as her employers contributed to this fund every month.

Maria's earnings not only covered younger relatives' college education but also assisted her family with their day-to-day living expenses:

The last time I sent money it was for $500. That is the lowest. It is mostly $1,000 or $600 or $700. So I have no savings. My bank is with all those that I sent to school. I also had a house built in the Philippines where my father lives right now. I had that house remodeled and everything. My father was telling me that maybe when I get older I would regret what I did because they would no longer recognize me. But I told him that they can do what they want to do, but I am happy that I was able to help them.

Maria's generosity had been voluntary, and her most satisfying rewards have been the love of her family and their appreciation for her tremendous financial support. Although very appreciative of the money and material goods Maria has provided them, her relatives want her to come home soon and settle down in the Philippines so that they can build a more intimate relationship based not only on the monthly remittances she sends them. A single adult migrant in a transnational family, Maria Batung worked in Los Angeles to sustain her family in the Philippines. The responsibility for extended kin that Maria maintained through migration is notably not an exception but a trait common among other single migrant domestic workers whom I met in Rome and Los Angeles.

## THE POSTINDUSTRIAL FAMILY: STRUCTURAL FACTORS IN TRANSNATIONAL HOUSEHOLD FORMATIONS

Numerous scholars have challenged the monolithic construct of the family as a "firm, unchanging entity, always similar in shape and content"; instead, they posit that the family is a social institution that adopts various strategies in response to external structural, cultural, and ideological forces in society

(Thorne, 1992: 6). Although there are debates on what constitutes legitimate family forms, my discussion of the family avoids questions of legitimacy and morality. Instead, I focus on questions of malleability, particularly highlighting the external forces that mold the formation of families into transnational structures.

Shifts in economic arrangements have historically coincided with shifts in family organization. According to sociologist Judith Stacey (1991), the family can be traced historically from premodern to modern to postmodern structures and arrangements. In preindustrial societies, the essential functions of the family—production, reproduction, consumption, socialization—generally stayed within its institutional boundaries. Typically encompassing wide kin networks, premodern families maintained economically self-sufficient and land-based agricultural units that produced their own food and clothing (Kessler Harris, 1981; Mintz and Kellog, 1988). The coming of the industrial era in the late eighteenth century transformed household arrangements, although slowly, to the modern family. In contrast to the premodern family, it inhabited a private space—a "haven in a heartless world"; sustained a clear-cut division of labor between the (productive) income-generating father and the (reproductive) nurturing mother; and relied on love as its enduring bond and stronghold (Stacey, 1991). In further contrast to premodern families, modern households were typically enclosed and mobile nuclear units. In the late twentieth century, contemporary economic transformations, or global restructuring, led to another shift in household arrangement, this time from the modern to the postmodern family.

According to Stacey (1991), the decline of unionized manufacturing jobs in postindustrial societies has contributed to the breakdown of the family wage system—the backbone of the modern family—and has resulted in greater dependence on the wage earnings of women, the decline of the nuclear family, and the diversification of household forms. Households now encompass varied social arrangements and relations. They include dual wage-earning households, domestic partnerships, single-parent families, and divorced families. Unlike premodern and modern families, the postmodern family is not bound to a definitive model with set characteristics; thus it embraces the diversity of family forms.

Representing a postmodern family, transnational households are one of the many family arrangements that have subverted modern family norms.

Fitting the "two-tier workforce" in the global economy, transnational families include low-wage migrant workers and professionals (Reich, 1991). The latter includes "astronaut families" with "parachute kids," such as children from wealthy families in Asia who are educated in nations with universally recognized educational systems (Ong, 1996). The ability of wealthy transnational families to cross borders freely distinguishes them from those of low-wage migrant workers, whose visits with family members are more sporadic. A lack of funds, job restrictions, or one's undocumented status restrain the movement of low-wage migrant workers, as strict border regulations limit the ability of dependents to join them.

What are the structural factors that propel the formation of transnational households among secondary-tier migrant workers in the global economy? Migrants respond to various social and economic realities of globalization, the first of which is the unequal development of regions. Although the meager wages of low-paid migrant workers afford their families a comfortable middle-class lifestyle in the sending country, they cannot provide a comparable lifestyle in receiving countries. As illustrated by Luisa Balila's decision to leave her children behind in the Philippines, and Vicky Diaz's observations on how much more she can purchase in the Philippines with her low wages, the migrant family transcends borders and the spatial boundaries of nation-states to take advantage of the lower costs of reproducing—feeding, housing, clothing, and educating—the family in the Third World. Its spatial organization directly responds to the forces of global capitalism, as the family's geographical split coincides with the uneven development of regions and the unequal relations of states in the global economy.

As shown by Judy Reyes's concerns over the lack of mobility her children would have in Italy, migrants also form transnational households in response to nativism—"neoracism" and xenophobia—in receiving societies.[7] Nativist sentiments against migrants still brew throughout the United States and the northern region of Italy (Feagin, 1997; Golash-Boza, 2012). For this reason, migrant parents may not want to expose their children to the racial tensions and anti-immigrant sentiments fostered by the social and cultural construction of low-wage migrants as undesirable citizens (Ong, 1996).

Finally, migrants turn to transnational households to negotiate restrictive measures against their integration into the host society. In Italy, the long-term status of Filipino migrants as "guest workers" has encouraged the maintenance

of transnational households, as has the disqualification of adult children from joining their parents in the United States. Many of my interviewees in Los Angeles had actually been caught in the legal bind of either being undocumented, like Vicky Diaz, or having obtained legal status only after their children reached adult age, at which point they would no longer be eligible for immediate family reunification. In other words, although they may have wanted to sponsor their children, the laws prevented them from doing so.

The formation of transnational households corresponds with the opposite turns of nationalism in globalization, meaning the opening of borders to goods and labor and simultaneous closing to people (Sassen, 1996). Receiving societies have most likely encouraged the formation of transnational households because they get the benefits of low-wage migrant labor without having to support their reproduction. In other words, although receiving countries need migrants' low-wage labor, they have wanted neither the social nor the economic responsibilities that arise when these workers have children. Thus, transnational households, though themselves a strategy of resistance in globalization, maintain the inequalities of globalization. From transnational families, receiving countries benefit from the minimized wage demands of a substantial portion of their workforce. Such economic benefits translate to increased production, resulting in growth and profits for the higher-tier workers in receiving countries.

Transnational households should not be praised as a small-scale symbol of the migrant's agency against the larger forces of globalization because their existence marks an enforcement of border control on migrant workers. Transnational households signify segregation. They result from the successful implementation of border control, which prevents families from reuniting. Family separation is often prolonged and may even extend to span a life cycle. Among my interviewees, for example, the length of separation between mothers and their now-adult children stretched to as long as sixteen years.

## THE PREINDUSTRIAL VALUE SYSTEM: CULTURAL FACTORS IN TRANSNATIONAL HOUSEHOLD FORMATION

Transnational households have come to signify the decline and disintegration of family values. Because they fail to fulfill the ideological notion of a traditional Filipino family, transnational households are considered "broken homes."

Transnational households are considered "broken" in a number of ways. First, the maintenance of this household diverges from traditional expectations of cohabitation among spouses and children. Filipino families are traditionally nuclear in structure. Second, they do not meet the traditional division of labor in the family, as transnational mothers do not live up to the social expectations for women to perform domestic chores. Notably, this expectation still stands despite women's higher degree of participation in the labor force in the Philippines (Medina, 1991). Third, they move away from traditional practices of socialization in the family. Whereas socialization is expected to come from direct supervision and interaction with parents as well as other adults, the geographic distance in transnational households hurts the ability of mothers to directly supervise their children.

At the same time that it is considered a threat to the traditional Filipino family, transnational households can only form because of the strong sense of family allegiance maintained by its members. Notably, the formation of transnational households depends on the persisting cultural value of *pakikisama* (mutual cooperation or familism); that is, sentiments of collectivism and mutual obligation among kin. Transnational households would not be able to form and reproduce without the cultural value of *pakikisama* and the mechanisms strengthening such an allegiance, including mutual assistance, consanguineal responsibility, "generalized family exchange networks" (Peterson, 1993), and fosterage. As such, transnational households reveal the resilience of the Filipino family.

As already mentioned, transnational families rely on sentiments of consanguineal responsibility, that is the extension of responsibility to include parents, siblings, and even nieces and nephews. The high level of interdependency in extended families is first illustrated by the tremendous sense of responsibility that they have for extended kin in the Philippines. Many single domestic workers, like Maria Batung, shoulder the financial costs of reproducing the extended family by investing in the education of younger generations. Although married domestic workers with children usually pay for the schooling of only their own children, those who had migrated as single women support extended kin prior to marriage. Of thirteen migrant workers who at one point had been single women in Los Angeles, five sent at least three or more nieces and nephews to college. Others have also provided valuable financial support

to their families. Besides subsidizing the everyday living expenses of elderly parents, some purchased a house where their parents and siblings, including those with children, now live, and sent at least one younger relative to college.

Of eighteen women without children in Rome, five had houses built for their families and still subsidize the day-to-day living expenses of their parents. Others send monthly remittances, anywhere between US$67 to $333, with those who send less sharing the responsibility with siblings also working outside the Philippines. Finally, most of them have covered the educational costs of the younger generation in their families. Most feel a strong moral obligation to provide support to their families. As Gloria Diaz told me, "When I don't send money, I feel guilty because my mother is alone, and it is my obligation to help."

As a consequence of their financial contributions, many migrant Filipina domestic workers claim that they have not been able to accumulate a sizable amount of savings. Ruth Mercado, for example, supports her parents and her brother's family in the Philippines with the remittances she sends every month:

> I have not been able to save any money at this point (after seven years in Rome). Even though I am the youngest (of four children), I am the breadwinner of my family. I send them [US$333] every month. Life is hard when you are single. My sisters are married, and so my parents do not expect as much from them. My brother lives with my parents, and he does not have a job, but has a lot of children. . . . So, I support his family. . . . At least I am able to help my family. Let's say I continued my career as a policewoman [in the Philippines], my salary would have just been enough for myself. Even though my life is physically demanding and I am far apart from my family, it's OK because I am able to help them.

In acknowledgment of their extensive support, younger members of their extended family often consider women like Ruth to be second mothers. Nieces and nephews refer to them as "Mama" or "Nanay" (Mom) as opposed to just the customary "Tita" (Aunt). For domestic workers, their financial assistance to the family gives them the most tangible reward for their labor. At the same time, their generosity guarantees them a well-established kinship base if they choose to return to the Philippines. This is premised on the cultural value of *utang na loob*, literally meaning debt of the soul, in which favors are returned with lifelong debt.

Cooperating to send younger members of the extended family to college also operates on the system of "generalized family exchange" among kin (Peterson, 1993). In such a system, the success of one member of the family translates to the success of the family as a collective unit. Peterson defines this family exchange system as an open reciprocal exchange: "Generalized exchanges are those in which A gives to B, B gives to C, C gives to a D, and D gives to an A" (1993: 572). By sending one or more persons to college, domestic workers assume that those they send to school will reciprocate by later supporting the education of their younger siblings and relatives. These younger relatives are then culturally expected to provide care and support for the domestic worker once she chooses to return and retire in the Philippines. Valentina Diamante's migration is embedded in this family exchange system. Valentina managed to relocate to Rome only with the help of her older sister, and in exchange she is expected to provide greater support to their family in the Philippines than the sister who covered the cost of her migration.

The high level of interdependency among extended families is also reflected in the reliance of migrant parents on grandparents, aunts, and other relatives for the care of dependents left in the Philippines. In the Philippines, it is not uncommon for families to take in extended family members whose own immediate families may not be able to provide as much material or emotional security. Fosterage of children is in fact a common practice among extended kin in the Philippines (Peterson, 1993). For example, Cecilia Impelido, a street vendor in Rome, was raised by her grandmother for fourteen years. The arrangement, she claims, strengthened kinship ties to her maternal grandmother in the province, as it eased the financial costs of reproduction for her parents in Manila. As shown by the dispersal of Judy Reyes's children to various households, transnational families are embedded in the cultural practice of fosterage.

Parents outside of the Philippines rely on other relatives to act as their children's "guardians." In exchange, remittances sent by parents to dependents in the Philippines benefit other members of the family. Jennifer Jeremillo's remittances to her children in the Philippines extend to benefit her elderly parents: "Right now, I send [US$333]. I have to pay for the domestic helper, and then I have a regular allowance for my kids, and then the rest is for my mother. I always send that amount, and that's about 8,000 pesos [US$320];

5000 [US$200] is for my parents. My parents are using the money to renovate and expand the house."

Transnational households strengthen extended family kinship, with children (and also elderly parents) acting as the enduring bond of interdependency. Migrants rely on extended kin to care for their dependents, whereas extended kin raise their standard of living with the financial support that migrant workers provide. The extended family bolsters options for individuals otherwise bound by duties and responsibilities to dependents in the Philippines. Thus, transnational households rely on the resilience of extended family bonds. The persisting cultural value of familism assists with the formation of transnational households as much as the structural forces of globalization propel it.

## WHEN CHILDREN MIGRATE

In *Families Apart*, the geographer Geraldine Pratt (2012) depicts the reunification of mothers and children in Canadian-Filipino transnational families as one of profound distress. Children suffer when migrating to follow their stranger mother. Their isolation aggravates the cultural challenges of integration, as migrant mothers in Canada work long hours while their recently arrived children struggle in school and long to reunite with family and friends in the Philippines. In Rome, I likewise saw children struggle, sharing the same dilemmas as their counterparts in Canada, but I also saw them thrive. There I found three groups of reunited children: those who migrated as adolescents, those who migrated as teenagers, and those who followed as adults. Their degree of integration largely depended on what point in their lives they migrated. Those who came as adolescents were more likely to attend university or technical school and hold semiprofessional or professional jobs in Italy; those migrating as teenagers became proficient in Italian, gaining access to retail or restaurant jobs; and those who arrived in Italy as adults were likely to face language difficulties and follow their mothers into domestic work. The number of school-age children who followed their parents was relatively small. An elected city councilman in Rome informed me that there are approximately 16,000 Filipino youth enrolled in school in Rome.

According to prominent members of the community, including religious clergy and migrant advocates, most children join their migrant parents as

teenagers. They note that rarely do children grow up in Italy from adolescence, as the absence of child care options usually deters parents from raising young children in proximity. Yet, there is a benefit to raising children in Rome, as they are more likely eventually to have access to higher-status employment. However, there are limits in their mobility. Reflecting not only the relatively small number of adolescents raised in Italy but also the racial barriers that Filipinos still confront, the second generation largely remains underrepresented in university. For this reason, rarely has the second generation been able to have access to professional jobs.

One thing that deters the second generation from pursuing higher education is the migration system. Once migrant children turn eighteen years old, they can no longer stay in Italy as their parents' dependents. Those born in Italy, who also grew up and went to school there, can apply for citizenship, but those born to undocumented mothers as well as those who had not been continuously enrolled in Italy's educational system do not qualify. On turning eighteen years old, children must either apply for citizenship or, if unqualified, attain their own residency card, which grants more preferable terms to workers than to students. One thing that encourages the second generation to enter the workforce instead of going to college is the fact that students get a permit to stay for only six to nine months, which is significantly shorter than the two-year residency permit granted to those employed as domestic workers. Although the law inadvertently pushes the second generation to seek low-wage jobs, particularly domestic work, some do attain higher-level employment, but at most become only retail managers, hotel supervisors, or office workers. Yet, despite the glass ceiling, the second generation still see their situation as an improvement from that of their parent's generation, who, according to Myra Mirando, who migrated to Italy at the age of sixteen, have accepted the limits in their mobility: "It is as if our parents surrendered. It is as if they have accepted that they will just be at a certain place, that they can't go any higher than that."

Children are also deterred from pursuing an education by the racism they confront in school. According to Myra, it is not unheard of for Italian students to bully Filipinos in school, especially the newcomers with language difficulties. Perhaps it is for this reason that one often sees groups of Filipino youth hanging around the central train station of Termini during school hours.

One afternoon, one of them sat next to me while I waited for potential interviewees near a McDonald's in the basement of the central train station. Assuming he was in high school, I asked why he was not in school. He told me that he had cut class that day to avoid being bullied. He explained that there were only two other Filipino students in his school, and they were his only friends. Unfortunately, both were absent that day, so he decided to cut class because being in school without them was "unbearable," in his words.

I did not catch this young man's name, but I recall how his spiked hair reminded me of the hairdos prominent in the 1980s among various pop groups including Echo and the Bunnymen. He was quite soft spoken. I learned that he had been what the community refers to as a "packaged child"; he was born in Italy and then sent back to the Philippines as an infant. According to staff members of the Philippine Embassy in Rome, an average of two to three infants are sent home to the Philippines every month. The young man I met returned to Italy at the age of fifteen years old and found himself having to repeat a grade due to his poor language skills. He admitted that his Italian is not stellar, so much so that he often did not fully understand the taunts he received at school. In response to my question of whether he planned to go to college, this young man, who is now sixteen, told me that he planned to start working as soon as he finished high school, explaining, "Any job would do, as I long as I am able to help my parents out financially."

Children who follow their parents as adults or near-adults are often funneled into low-wage jobs. According to Donna Mercado, a bank teller who had migrated at the young age of ten, "Those who run after family reunification are the ones with greater problems. They face difficulty adjusting to the language and they have a harder time adjusting to their parents." Near-adult migrants are those who migrate at seventeen years old, during their last year of eligibility for family reunification. Although they enter legally as a dependent of a *carta di soggiorno* or *permesso di soggiorno* holder, these migrants have to obtain their own residency permit—independent of their parents—after they turn eighteen years old. Language difficulties deter them from pursuing higher education, and they almost always end up doing low-wage work.

Luis Flores, who works as a domestic worker in tandem with his wife in the outskirts of Rome, followed his mother to Italy after he had dropped out of engineering school at the age of twenty-one. He had, ironically, left behind

two children when he migrated. When I asked why he was not raising his children in Italy, he responded:

> What we have seen is that if children are born or raised here, they stop going to school and instead start working when they reach eighteen years old. . . . We want our children to go to college. We do not want them to end up like us, working as domestic workers. We do not care how much they end up earning, if they do not earn enough to support us, as long as they do not end up as domestic workers.

Indeed, many children are reluctant to follow their parents to Rome because they are aware that they would have to give up school once they get to Italy. Jennifer Salaveria was one such reluctant migrant when she followed her parents there at the age of sixteen. She had no intention of migrating to Italy but instead wanted to attend college in the Philippines. Her parents had convinced her to go by telling her she was going to Italy only on vacation. Once there, she learned that they had actually planned for her to stay with them permanently. Though still somewhat bitter about her parent's decision, Jennifer values the labor-market opportunities she has had in Italy. She works not as a domestic worker but as a retail clerk in a fashionable leather goods store in the center of Rome. Her language skills are impeccable, but they did not come easily—she had to attend two years of night classes for five days a week from 4 pm to 8:30 pm while working for seven hours as a nanny during the day.

Interestingly, many of the second generation I met in Rome can be described as reluctant migrants. Many had not been eager to join their parents in Italy and, like Jennifer, were tricked into going. Donna, the young woman who migrated at age ten, still teases her parents about her "vacation" in Italy, often commenting on how long it has been. According to Donna and her peers, parents tell their children that they will be going to Italy only on vacation so as to avoid conflict, because they know that their children often do not want to lose the close ties they had cultivated with family and friends in the Philippines.

The family is not always a source of immediate support for the second generation. According to them, distance can hurt the development of affinity. As Myra describes, "Even if you completed a bond because they came home frequently, called often, there was still a lack. There is something missing. It is not until after one year, or two years, that you feel comfortable enough to chat and joke around with them. . . . I know it is worse for others, those who

do not see their parents for nearly ten years." Reuniting with her parents also did not come without conflict for Donna, who resented them for the isolation she experienced after migrating to Italy: "It was difficult at first because in the Philippines I was able to easily go out, visit my neighbors, and play. Here, there was nothing. You go out only to find work. Otherwise, you are just at home."

Despite the struggles of reunification, many children come to appreciate the economic rewards of migration. Many also find resolution after their initial conflict with their parents, eventually learning to appreciate the value that their parents have placed on familial proximity when they forced their migration to Italy. Lastly, they learn to see the formation of the transnational family not as their parents' fault but as a reality imposed by structural forces, including barriers to higher education, racism in the classroom, the absence of public child care support, and their parents' low wages. They come to understand the maintenance of transnational families, and the challenges of reunification, as a struggle they share with their migrant parents.

In 1994, Linda Basch and her colleagues predicted that transnational families will "continue as an arena of social relations" and will remain an intergenerational part of migrant communities as long as migrants face structural barriers to their integration (1994: 242–43). Indeed, this is true. Twenty years after my initial field work in Rome and Los Angeles, I find that migrant domestic workers still form transnational families. Many of their children eventually migrate but often as semiprofessionals or professionals to other destinations in the diaspora, including Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Canada, and the United States. The continued migration of the children of migrant workers tells us that transnational families often cannot discontinue or decrease their dependence on foreign earnings across generations. Because migrant parents invest most of their earnings in the family's day-to-day expenses, they are unable to invest in income-generating resources (small businesses, for example). Without a sufficient means of productive labor in the Philippines, migrant parents prolong their tenure abroad. The cycle continues across generations, as the earnings of the now-adult children with college degrees cannot cover the costs of reproducing their own families. With forces beyond the control of the individual migrant, the economic insecurities resulting from globalization in the Philippine economy continue to generate transnational families.

The stories that I have featured here illustrate that transnational families represent creative responses to and adaptive strategies against the economic displacement of workers in developing countries. Yet the various forms of transnational households that I have illustrated not only reveal the agency and resistance of migrants against structural forces in society, but they also point to an emotional dislocation that migrants experience. Transnational families are agonizing for both parents and children. To some extent, geographical distance unavoidably engenders emotional distance and strain among members of transnational families. Separation inflicts emotional injuries that family members must cope with in their everyday lives. This is a particular dislocation that should be acknowledged as part and parcel of the migrant experience of domestic workers, and one that I will address more systematically in the next chapter.