Vicky Diaz, a 34-year-old mother of five, was a college-educated schoolteacher and travel agent in the Philippines before migrating to the United States to work as a housekeeper for a wealthy Beverly Hills family and as a nanny for their two-year-old son. As Vicky explained in an interview with Rhacel Parreñas,

My children … were saddened by my departure. Even until now my children are trying to convince me to go home. The children were not angry when I left because they were still very young when I left them. My husband could not get angry either because he knew that was the only way I could seriously help him raise our children, so that our children could be sent to school. (qtd. in Parreñas 2001: 87)

In her book Servants of Globalization, Parreñas (2001), tells a disquieting story of what she calls the ‘globalization of mothering’. The Beverly Hills family pays ‘Vicky’ (which is the pseudonym Parreñas gave her) $400 a week, and Vicky, in turn, pays her own family’s live-in domestic worker back in the Philippines $40 a week. Living like this is not easy on Vicky and her family.

Even though it’s paid well, you are sinking in the amount of your work. Even while you are ironing the clothes, they can still call you to the kitchen to wash the plates. It … [is] also very depressing. The only thing you can do is give all your love to [the two-year-old American child]. In my absence from my children, the most I could do with my situation is give all my love to that child. (qtd. in Parrenas 2001: 87)1

Vicky is part of a global care chain: a series of personal links between people
across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring. A typical global care chain might work something like this: an older daughter from a poor family in a Third World country cares for her siblings (the first link in the chain) while her mother works as a nanny caring for the children of a nanny migrating to a First World country (the second link) who, in turn, cares for the child of a family in a rich country (the final link). Each kind of chain expresses an invisible ecology of care, one care worker depending on another and so on. A global care chain might start in a poor country and end in a rich one, or it might link rural and urban areas within the same poor country. More complex versions start in one poor country and extend to another slightly less poor country and then link to a rich country.

Such global care chains are now on the rise. For some time now, promising and highly trained professionals have been moving from ill-equipped hospitals, impoverished schools, antiquated banks, and other beleaguered workplaces of the Third World to better opportunities and higher pay in the First World. As rich nations become richer and poor nations become poorer, this one-way flow of talent and training continuously widens the gap between the two. This is the brain drain. But now in addition a parallel, more hidden and wrenching trend is growing, as women who normally care for the young, the old, and the sick in their own poor countries move to care for the young, the old, and the sick in rich countries, whether as maids and nannies or as day-care and nursing-home aides. This is a care drain.

The movement of female care workers from South to North is not altogether new. The causes of this increase in scope and speed are many. One is the growing split between the global rich and poor. Since the 1940s, the gap between North and South has widened. In 1960, for example, the nations of the North were twenty times richer than those of the South. By 1980, that gap had more than doubled, and the North was 46 times richer than the South. In fact, according to a United Nations Development Program study, 60 countries are—in absolute terms—worse off in 1999 than they were in 1980 (New York Times 2001). Multinational corporations are the 'muscle and brains' of the new global system. As William Greider (1997) points out, and the 500 largest such corporations (168 in Europe, 157 in the United States, and 119 in Japan) have in the have increased their sales sevenfold last twenty years. Though multinationals create some jobs in poor countries, through the small enterprises and farms they put out of business, they are one engine of this growing inequality.

As a result of this polarization, the middle class of the Third World now earns less than the poor of the First World. Before the domestic workers Rhacel Parreñas (1999: 123) interviewed in the 1990s migrated from the Philippines to the United States and Italy, they had averaged $176 a month, often as teachers, nurses, and administrative and clerical workers. But by doing less skilled—though no less difficult—work as nannies, maids, and care-service workers, they can earn $200 a month in Singapore, $410 a month in Hong Kong, $700 a month in Italy, or $1,400 a month in Los Angeles. To take another example from an extraordinary
documentary, ‘When Mother Comes Home for Christmas’, as a fifth-grade dropout in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Josephine Perera could earn $30 a month plus room and board as a housemaid, or she could earn $30 a month as a salesgirl in a shop, without food or lodging. But as a nanny in Athens she could earn $500 a month, plus room and board. In the absence of a public and structural solution to the gap between the rich North and the poor South, women like Vicky Diaz and Josephine Perera close the gap privately, by moving from South to North—at great emotional cost.

Even as the gap between the globe’s rich and poor grows wider, the globe itself—its capital, its cultural images, its consumer tastes, and peoples—have become more integrated. Thanks to the spread of western, and especially American, movies and television programs, the people of the poor South now know a great deal more about the rich North than the rich North know about them. But what they learn is what the rich North has. Indeed, in front of the global TV, the South is daily exposed to a material striptease.

Rising inequality and the lure of northern prosperity have contributed to what Stephen Castles and Mark Miller call a ‘globalization of migration’ (1998: 8; see also Zlotnik 1999). For men and women alike, migration has become a private solution to a public problem. Since 1945 and especially since the mid-1980s, a small but growing proportion of the world’s population is migrating. They come from and go to more different countries. While migration is by no means an inexorable process, Castles and Miller observe that, ‘migrations are growing in volume in all major regions at the present time’ (1998: 5). The International Organization for Migration estimates that 120 million people moved from one country to another, legally or illegally, in 1994 (Castles and Miller 1998). Of this group, about two per cent of the world’s population, 15 to 23 million are refugees and asylum seekers. Of the rest, some move to join family members who have previously migrated. But most move to find work.

In addition, half of all the world’s migrants today are women. In Sri Lanka, one out of every ten adults—a majority of them women—work abroad. (That figure excludes returnees.) As Castles and Miller explain:

Women play an increasing role in all regions and all types of migration. In the past, most labour migrations and many refugee movements were male dominated, and women were often dealt with under the category of family reunion. Since the 1960s, women have played a major role in labour migration. Today women workers form the majority in movements as diverse as those of Cape Verdians to Italy, Filipinos to the Middle East and Thais to Japan. (1998: 9)

Many such female workers migrate to fill domestic jobs. Demand for domestic servants has risen both in developed countries, where it had nearly vanished, and in fast-growing economies such as Hong Kong and Singapore, where, write Castles and Miller, ‘immigrant servants—from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand,
Korea and Sri Lanka—allow women in the richer economies to take up new employment opportunities’ (1998: xi).

Vastly more middle-class women in the First World do paid work now than in the past. In the United States in 1950, for example, 15 per cent of mothers of children aged six and under did paid work while 65 per cent of such women do today. Seventy-two per cent of all American women now work. Most also work longer hours for more months a year and for more years, and hence badly need help caring for the family (Hochschild 1997). The grandmothers and sisters who 30 years ago might have stayed home to care for the children of working relatives are now out working themselves. Just as Third World grandmothers may be doing paid care work abroad, so too more grandmothers of the rich North are working—another reason First World families are looking outside the family for good care.

Women who want to succeed in a professional or managerial job in the First World also face strong pressures at work. Most careers are still based on a well known, male pattern: doing professional work, competing with fellow professionals, getting credit for work, building a reputation, doing it while you are young, hoarding scarce time, and minimizing family work by finding someone else to do it. In the past, the professional was a man; the ‘someone else’ was his wife. The wife oversaw the family, itself a flexible, preindustrial institution concerned with human experiences which the workforce excluded: birth, child rearing, sickness, death. Today, a growing ‘care industry’ has stepped into the traditional wife’s role, creating a very real demand for migrant women.

But if First World middle-class women are building careers that are molded according to the old male model, by putting in long hours at demanding jobs, their nannies and other domestic workers suffer a greatly exaggerated version of the same thing. Two women working for pay is not a bad idea. But two working mothers giving their all to work is a good idea gone haywire. In the end, both First and Third World women are small players in a larger economic game whose rules they have not written.

The impact of these global rules extend to many who have no voice. For many, if not most, women migrants have children. The average age of women migrants into the United States is 29, and most come from countries, such as Mexico, where female identity centers on motherhood, and where the birth rate is high. Often migrants, especially the undocumented ones, cannot bring their children with them. So most mothers try to leave their children in the care of grandmothers, aunts, and fathers, in roughly that order. A orphanage is a last resort. A number of nannies working in rich countries hire nannies to care for their own children back home either as solo caretakers or as aides to the female relatives left in charge back home. Carmen Ronquillo, for example, migrated from the Philippines to Rome to work as a maid for an architect and single mother of two. She left behind her husband, two teenagers—and a maid (Parreñas 1999).

Whatever arrangements these mothers make for their children, most feel the separation acutely, expressing guilt and remorse to the researchers who interview
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them. Says one migrant mother who left her two-month-old baby in the care of a relative, ‘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’ (Parreñas 1999: 123). Recounted another migrant nanny through tears, ‘When I saw my children again, I thought, “Oh children do grow up even without their mother”. I left my youngest when she was only five years old. She was already nine when I saw her again, but she still wanted me to carry her’ (Parreñas 1999: 154).

Surprisingly, more women than men migrant workers stay in the North. In staying, these mothers remain separated from their children, a choice freighted, for many, with terrible sadness. But as much as these mothers suffer, their children suffer more. And there are a lot of them. An estimated 30 per cent of Filipino children—some eight million—live in households where at least one parent has gone overseas. These children have counterparts in Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Latin America, and the former Soviet Union.

How are these children doing? Not very well, according to a survey which the Scalabrini Migration Center in Manila conducted with more than seven hundred children in 1996. Compared to their classmates, the children of migrant workers more frequently fell ill; they were more likely to express anger, confusion, and apathy; and they performed more poorly in school. Other studies of this population show a rise in delinquency and child suicide (Frank 2001). When such children were asked whether they would also migrate when they grew up, leaving their own children in the care of others, they all said no.

Faced with these facts, one senses some sort of injustice at work, linking the emotional deprivation of these children with the surfeit of affection their First World counterparts enjoy. In her study of native-born women of colour who do domestic work, Sau-Ling Wong (1994) argues that the time and energy these workers devote to the children of their employers is diverted from their own children. But it is not only time and energy that are involved, but love itself.

But is it only time and energy that are ‘drained’ or is it love itself? In a sense time and energy are resources like minerals extracted from the earth. The nanny cannot be in two places at once. Her day has only so many hours. The more time and energy she gives the children she is paid to love, the less time and energy she can give her own children. But is love itself also a resource? And if it is a resource, can children have a ‘right’ to it? In its wisdom, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child implies that love, too, is like a resource. It asserts all children’s right to an ‘atmosphere of happiness, love, and understanding’.

But if love is a resource, it is a renewable resource. For the more we love and are loved, the more deeply we can love. Thus, love is not fixed in the same way that most material resources are fixed. It creates more of itself. We are talking, then, of a global heart transplant, and one which will bear on the lives of many people for years to come.

But how are we to understand the ‘extraction’ of love from the South and its import to the North? We get some help at this juncture from Freud, according to
whom we don’t ‘withdraw’ and ‘invest’ feeling but rather displace or redirect it. The process is an unconscious one, whereby we don’t actually give up a feeling of, say, love or hate, so much as we find a new object for it—in the case of sexual feeling, a more appropriate object than the original one, whom Freud presumed to be our opposite-sex parent. While Freud applied the idea of displacement mainly to relationships within the nuclear family, it seems only a small stretch to apply it to relationships like that of nanny and the employer’s child.

The way some employers describe it, a nanny’s love of her employer’s child is a natural product of her more loving Third World culture, with its warm family ties, strong community life, and long tradition of patient maternal love of children. In hiring a nanny, many such employers implicitly hope to import a poor country’s ‘native culture’, thereby replenishing their own, rich country’s depleted culture of care. They import the benefits of Third World ‘family values’. Says the director of a co-op nursery I interviewed in the San Francisco Bay Area,

This may be odd to say, but the teacher’s aides we hire from Mexico and Guatemala know how to love a child better than the middle-class white parents. They are more relaxed, patient, and joyful. They enjoy the kids more. These professional parents are pressured for time and anxious to develop their kids’ talents. I tell the parents that they can really learn how to love from the Latinas and the Filipinas.

When asked why Anglo mothers should relate to children so differently than do Filipina teacher’s aides, the nursery director speculated, ‘The Filipinas are brought up in a more relaxed, loving environment. They aren’t as rich as we are, but they aren’t so pressured for time, so materialistic, so anxious. They have a more loving, family-oriented culture’. One mother, an American lawyer, expressed a similar view:

Carmen just enjoys my son. She doesn’t worry whether … he’s learning his letters, or whether he’ll get into a good preschool. She just enjoys him. And actually, with anxious busy parents like us, that’s really what Thomas needs. I love my son more than anyone in this world. But at this stage Carmen is better for him.

Filipina nannies I have interviewed in California paint a very different picture of the love they share with their First World charges. Theirs is not an import of happy peasant mothering but a love that partly develops on American shores, informed by an American ideology of mother-child bonding and fostered by intense loneliness and longing for their own children. If love is a precious resource, it is not one simply extracted from the Third World and implanted in the First; rather, it owes its very existence to a peculiar cultural alchemy that occurs in the land to which it is imported.

For María Gutierrez, who cares for the eight-month-old baby of two hardworking
professionals (a lawyer and a doctor, born in the Philippines but now living in San Jose, California), loneliness and long work hours feed a love for her employers’ child. As María told me:

I love Ana more than my own two children. Yes, more! It’s strange, I know. But I have time to be with her. I’m paid. I am lonely here. I work ten hours a day, with one day off. I don’t know any neighbors on the block. And so this child gives me what I need.

Not only that, but she is able to provide her employer’s child with a different sort of attention and nurturance than she could deliver to her own children. ‘I’m more patient’, she explains, ‘more relaxed. I put the child first. My kids, I treated them the way my mother treated me’.

I asked her how her mother had treated her and she replied:

My mother grew up in a farming family. It was a hard life. My mother wasn’t warm to me. She didn’t touch me or say ‘I love you’. She didn’t think she should do that. Before I was born she had lost four babies—two in miscarriage and two died as babies. I think she was afraid to love me as a baby because she thought I might die too. Then she put me to work as a ‘little mother’ caring for my four younger brothers and sisters. I didn’t have time to play.

Fortunately, an older woman who lived next door took an affectionate interest in María, often feeding her and even taking her in overnight when she was sick. María felt closer to this woman and her relatives than she did to her biological aunts and cousins. She had been, in some measure, informally adopted—a practice she describes as common in the Philippine countryside and even in some towns during the 1960s and 1970s.

In a sense, María experienced a pre-modern childhood, marked by high infant mortality, child labour, and an absence of sentimentality, set within a culture of strong family commitment and community support. Reminiscent of fifteenth-century France, as Philippe Ariès describes it in *Centuries of Childhood* (1962), this was a childhood before the romanticization of the child and before the modern middle-class ideology of intensive mothering (Hays 1996). Sentiment wasn’t the point; commitment was.

María’s commitment to her own children, aged twelve and thirteen when she left to work abroad, bears the mark of that upbringing. Through all of their anger and tears, María sends remittances and calls, come hell or high water. The commitment is there. The sentiment, she has to work at. When she calls home now, María says,

I tell my daughter ‘I love you’. At first it sounded fake. But after a while it
became natural. And now she says it back. It’s strange, but I think I learned that it was okay to say that from being in the United States.

María’s story points to a paradox. On the one hand, the First World extracts love from the Third World. But what is being extracted is partly produced and ‘assembled’ here: the leisure, the money, the ideology of the child, the intense loneliness and yearning for one’s own children. In María’s case, a premodern childhood in the Philippines, a postmodern ideology of mothering and childhood in the United States, and the loneliness of migration blend to produce the love she gives to her employers’ child. That love is also a product of the nanny’s freedom from the time pressure and school anxiety parents feel in a culture that lacks much of a social safety net. In that sense, the love María gives as a nanny does not suffer from the disabling effects of the American version of late capitalism.

If all this is true—if, in fact, the nanny’s love is something at least partially produced by the conditions under which it is given—is María’s love of a First World child really being extracted from her own Third World children? Yes, because her daily presence has been removed, and with it the daily expression of her love. Even though the nanny herself does the extracting, both she and her children suffer a great loss. As one young woman from the Dominican Republic who was left behind from the age of twelve to fourteen reflected, ‘I kept feeling, ‘couldn’t we do this together?’ And now I’m 33 and I think those were two years we can never re-live. They are lost’. Such separations are, indeed, globalization’s pound of flesh.

But curiously, the employers in the North know very little about it. A Mexican nanny’s love for her American employer’s child is a thing in itself. It is unique, private—we could even say ‘fetishized’. Marx talked about the fetishization of things, not of feelings. He might note how these days we make a fetish of an SUV, for example—we see the thing independent of its context. We disregard the men who harvested the rubber latex, the assembly-line workers who bolted on the tires, and so on. But just as we mentally isolate our idea of an object from the human scene within which it was made, so, too, we unwittingly separate the love between nanny and child from the global capitalist order of love to which it very much belongs.

The notion of extracting resources from the Third World harks back to imperialism in its most literal form: the nineteenth-century North’s extraction of gold, ivory, and rubber from the South. That openly coercive, male-centered imperialism—which persists today—was always paralleled by a quieter imperialism in which women were more central. Today, as love and care become the ‘new gold’, the female part of the story has grown in prominence. In both cases, whether through the death or displacement of their parents, Third World children pay the price.

In the classic nineteenth-century form of imperialism, the North plundered the natural resources of the South. Its main protagonists were virtually all men: explorers, kings, missionaries, soldiers, and the local men who were forced at
gunpoint to do things such as harvest wild rubber latex and the like. European states lent their legitimacy to these endeavours, and an ideology emerged to support them: ‘the white man’s burden’ in Britain and *la mission civilisatrice* in France. Both, of course, stressed the great benefits of colonization for the colonized, and enlisted some of the colonized to actively cooperate with, and even administer colonial rule.

Nineteenth-century imperialism was more physically brutal than the imperialism of today, but it was also far more obvious. Today the North does not extract love from the South by force: there are no colonial officers in tan helmets, no invading armies, no ships bearing arms sailing off to the colonies. Instead, we see a benign scene of Third World women pushing baby carriages, elder care workers patiently walking, arms linked, with elderly clients on streets or sitting beside them in First World parks.

Today, coercion operates differently. While the sex trade and some domestic service is brutally enforced, the new emotional imperialism does not, for the most part, issue from the barrel of a gun. Women choose to migrate for domestic work. But they choose it because economic pressures all but coerce them to. The yawning gap between rich and poor countries is itself a form of coercion, pushing Third World mothers to seek work in the First for lack of options closer to home. But given the prevailing free market ideology, migration is viewed as a ‘personal choice’. The problems it causes we see as ‘personal’ problems. But a global social logic lies behind them, and they are, in this sense, not simply ‘personal’.

Through this social logic, migration creates not a white man’s burden, but a dark child’s burden. We need much more careful research on the children left behind if we are to find out how such children are really doing. We need to know further, how these children grow up and what happens to them when they too become adults and have children. For anecdotal evidence suggests that the young daughters of women who leave children behind to migrate for work—when they themselves are grown and have children—also leave their children behind to migrate for work.

How then are we to respond to all this? I can think of three possible approaches. First, we might say that all women everywhere should stay home and take care of their own families. The problem with Vicky is not that she migrates, but that she neglects her traditional role as mother. A second approach might be to deny that a problem exists: the care drain is an inevitable outcome of globalization, which is itself good for the world. The supply of labour has met a demand for it. The market is working and the market is always right. If the first approach condemns global migration, the second celebrates it.

According to a third approach—the one I take—loving, paid childcare with reasonable hours is a very good thing. And globalization brings with it new opportunities, such as a nanny’s access to good pay. But it also introduces painful new emotional realities for Third World children. We need to embrace the needs of Third World societies, including their children. We need to develop a global sense of ethics to match emerging global economic realities. If we go out to buy
a pair of Nike shoes, we want to know how low the wage and how long the hours were for the Third World worker who made them. Likewise, if Vicky is taking care of a two-year-old six thousand miles from her home, we should want to know what is happening to her own children.

If we take this third approach, what should we or others in the First World do? One obvious course would be to develop the Philippine and other Third World economies to such a degree that their citizens can earn as much money inside their countries as outside them. We would then change the social logic that underlies the care drain. Then the Vickys of the world could support their children in jobs they’d find at home. While such an obvious solution would seem ideal—if not easily achieved—Douglas Massey, a specialist in migration, points to some unexpected problems, at least in the short run. In Massey’s view, it is not underdevelopment that sends migrants like Vicky off to the First World but development itself. The higher the percentage of women working in local manufacturing, he finds, the greater the chance that any one woman will leave on a first, undocumented trip abroad. Perhaps these women’s horizons broaden. Perhaps they meet others who have gone abroad. Perhaps they come to want better jobs and more goods. Whatever the original motive, the more people in one’s community migrate, the more likely one is to migrate too.

If development creates migration, and if we favour some form of development, we need to find more humane responses to the migration such development is likely to cause. For those women who migrate in order to flee abusive husbands, one part of the answer would be to create solutions to that problem closer to home—domestic-violence shelters in these women’s home countries, for instance. Another might be to find ways to make it easier for migrating nannies to bring their children with them. Or as a last resort, employers could be required to finance a nanny’s regular visits home.

A more basic solution, of course, is to raise the value of caring work itself, so that whoever does it gets more rewards for it. Care, in this case, would no longer be such a ‘pass-on’ job. And now here’s the rub: the value of the labour of raising a child—always low relative to the value of other kinds of labour—has, under the impact of globalization, sunk lower still. Children matter to their parents immeasurably, of course, but the labour of raising them does not earn much credit in the eyes of the world. When middle-class housewives raised children as an unpaid, full-time role, the work was dignified by its aura of middle-classness. That was the one upside to the otherwise confining cult of middle-class, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American womanhood. But when the unpaid work of raising a child became the paid work of child-care workers, its low market value revealed the abidingly low value of caring work generally—and further lowered it.

The low value placed on caring work results neither from an absence of a need for it nor from the simplicity or ease of doing it. Rather, the declining value of childcare results from a cultural politics of inequality. It can be compared with the declining value of basic food crops relative to manufactured goods on the
international market. Though clearly more necessary to life, crops such as wheat and rice fetch low and declining prices, while manufactured goods are more highly valued. Just as the market price of primary produce keeps the Third World low in the community of nations, so the low market value of care keeps the status of the women who do it—and, ultimately, all women—low.

One excellent way to raise the value of care is to involve fathers in it. If men shared the care of family members worldwide, care would spread laterally instead of being passed down a social class ladder. In Norway, for example, all employed men are eligible for a year’s paternity leave at 90 per cent pay. Some 80 per cent of Norwegian men now take over a month of parental leave. In this way, Norway is a model to the world. For indeed it is men who have for the most part stepped aside from caring work, and it is with them that the ‘care drain’ truly begins.

In all developed societies, women work at paid jobs. According to the International Labour Organization, half of the world’s women between ages 15 and 64 do paid work. Between 1960 and 1980, 69 out of 88 countries surveyed showed a growing proportion of women in paid work. Since 1950, the rate of increase has skyrocketed in the United States, while remaining high in Scandinavia and the United Kingdom and moderate in France and Germany. If we want developed societies with women doctors, political leaders, teachers, bus drivers, and computer programmers, we will need qualified people to give loving care to their children. And there is no reason why every society should not enjoy such loving paid childcare. It may even be true that Vicky Diaz is the person to provide it—so long as her own children come with her or otherwise receive all the care they need. In the end, we need to look to Article 9 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child [NEEDS REF]—which notes that a child ‘should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding’, and ‘not be separated from his or her parents against their will…’ Article 9 sets out an important goal for the world order, for the United States, and for feminism. It says we need to value care as our most precious resource, to notice where it comes from and to care where it ends up. For, these days, the personal is global.

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Notes

1 In 1997, I lived for six months in Trivandrum, in the state of Kerala, India, as a Fulbright Scholar, a state in which many men and women worked abroad, especially in the Arabian Gulf. But it was not until I read Parreñas’ dissertation on careworkers that I was moved to reflect on love as a form of gold, interview Philippina and Thai nannies living in Redwood City and San Jose, California and reflect on this form of
psychological colonialism. I was also very moved by the film ‘When Mother Comes Home for Christmas’, directed by Nilita Vachani. On the whole, until very recently there has been little focus on a ‘care drain’, even among academics who focus on gender issues. Much writing on globalization focuses on money, markets and male labour. Much research on women and development, on the other hand, has focused on the impact of ‘structural adjustments’ (World Bank loan requirements that call for austerity measures) and deprivation. Meanwhile, most research on working women in the United States and Europe focuses on the picture of a detached, two-person balancing act or the lone ‘supermom’, omitting child-care workers from the picture. Fortunately, in recent years, scholars such as Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1986, 1991, 1994), Janet Henshall Momsen (1999), Mary Romero (1992, 1997), Grace Chang (2000) and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992, 1997, 2001) have produced important research on which this article builds (see Arlie Hochschild 2000; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). Many thanks for research assistance to Bonnie Kwan.


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